

Healthy Horizons

Brief Description

Healthy Horizons based in Lowestoft, Suffolk is part of Shaw Trust, a national charity that provides training and employment opportunities for disabled and disadvantaged young people each year.

The project delivers tailored programmes of personal development, work preparation skills and practical work based learning which are particularly suited to young people whose needs are not fully met through a school curriculum or those who would benefit from practical work experience. The overriding focus is on inclusion, development and progression towards further education and employment.

The Healthy Horizons programme is an alternative curriculum project that works with high schools in Lowestoft and the surrounding area. It works with up to 14 young people who have been referred each day who attend during term time on a day release basis for a minimum of one school year.

The project is designed to promote all aspects of health, teamwork, job skills, self-esteem and confidence and offers regular sport activities and accreditation in a variety of courses. There is also an opportunity for young people to access work experience programme.

Funding

Funding for this programme initially came through the Department of Health funded Young People's Development Programme (YPDP) pilot that ran from 2004 to 2007.

The project proved so successful that it is now funded mostly by the schools themselves at a cost of £2,200 per student per year, and covers all accreditation, activities, supervision and delivery.

Staffing

The Project Manager oversees the Healthy Horizons programme and the Work Experience Programme, which is delivered by a Project Development Officer, one full time Training and Placement officer, one part time Training and Placement officer and one Sessional Worker.



Nature of Provision

Target Groups

The project works with both male and females aged 13 to 16 who have been referred by their schools. All are chosen because of an identified need for access to support and stability that they are not able to receive through school. They are often disengaged and at risk of exclusion, have low self-esteem, and in need of extra learning support. They can be difficult to work with in large groups, have anger issues and struggle with authority, be withdrawn and unresponsive at school. Additionally they can experience problems at home or with peer relationships.

What are the main health approaches and activities offered?

Healthy Horizons provides young people involved in the project with an educational element using the *Getting Connected* accreditation framework. The project delivers sessions on drugs and alcohol; sexual health; emotional health and wellbeing; healthy eating; relationships; teamwork; beliefs, rights and responsibilities. Daily activities that include a variety of physical exercise sessions ranging from football and tennis to 'Lazer Quest' and ice-skating also take place. This is to encourage fitness but in the most enjoyable ways possible. Groups have also visited a local residential activity centre

which enabled them to experience new challenges.

The project has recently added a popular healthy menu lunch selection to complement sessions around diet and nutrition. Young people are given a choice of food options and then help with the preparation and serving.

Health Horizons has also provided educational visits in the programme to support its approaches. These have included visits to a prison, fire station, family planning clinic and Norwich City Football Club. Visits encourage good teamwork and group relationships as well as demonstrating possible future careers and promoting positive role models. Music sessions and cartoonist art sessions are also being developed as part of a future programme.

How are young people involved in shaping the project?

In one-to-one and group sessions young people lead discussion based on an agreed subject that day. The project often gives groups choices of activities to encourage discussion and helps develop young peoples negotiation skills and issues around conflict resolution. Evaluation by young people is encouraged through questionnaires and feedback on the programme is also received directly from schools.

How does the project respond to the needs of different young people – particularly the most marginalised?

Each young person has their own action plan defining their targets and is assessed on their personal needs. Extra support both educationally and emotionally is provided when needed. Health Horizons works closely with schools and if required with a parent to ensure each individual gets the most positive experience from the project. One-to-one sessions and mentors are also available and services provided by other agencies can be used when required.



Outcomes

How do young people benefit from their involvement in the project?

The project offers young people stability and support and advice on all aspects of health. It helps engage them in learning in a different way from school and can achieve high levels of attendance.

The overall aim is to offer a positive experience that they have fun, stay active and have an opportunity to gain accreditation.

How do others benefit from the project?

Schools benefit by achieving attendance targets as well as extra accreditation opportunities. And the project offers an alternative

to excluding a young person. It contributes to greater awareness of the dangers of certain risk taking behaviours such as unprotected sex, drug and alcohol use, smoking, overeating and lack of exercise. Healthy Horizon's work experience programme also helps local businesses and prepares young people for the world of work.

The project also works around young people's home life and relationships with their families. Feedback received has shown this work has led to cases of much-improved attitude and behaviour at home.

How does the project contribute to local health priorities?

The project promotes and delivers a range of work in the following areas:

- Sexual health

- Drug and alcohol education
- Physical fitness
- Healthy eating and nutrition
- Emotional and mental health

How is progress captured/measured?

Young people's progress is monitored and measured through:

- Attendance – Attendance at the project is registered and feedback from schools has been positive. Involvement in the programme has shown that young people engage in more provision and activity when back at school.
- Observation.
- Accreditation – Certificates are kept on file for each young person and copies are sent to schools and parents. An achievement evening is held at the end of the year where young people, parents

and staff from the agencies that referred young people are invited to celebrate their achievements.

- Verbal and written feedback.
- Student questionnaires – Based around the *Getting Connected* units and undertaken through a series of ongoing discussions. At the end of each unit young people complete questionnaires about their own learning experience and how they feel they have progressed. At the end of each half-term one to one sessions are held and progress reports filled in to gain a better understanding of how the young people feel about the programme.

Measuring Effectiveness

How is the project's work assessed and developed?

The project uses Shaw Trust's management system to record outcomes, attendance and distance travelled. Feedback from the schools and young people is considered along with adherence to funder's guidelines and requirements.

What factors help the delivery of healthy youth work?

'We have a specially designed unit which includes a new fitted kitchen and computer room' says Project

Manager Kim Croysdill. 'We have been very fortunate to add a further three computers which now makes six for young people's use. All have internet access for sessions, research and games. There are staff offices and a recently added pool room, table tennis and indoor games room. We have some new equipment for badminton, basketball, dodge ball and other indoor ball games. This area has proven a success and is extremely popular. It is also useful when the weather is bad. There is also a classroom though this is an informal setting. All of these resources enable us to deliver learning and support in the most effective way for the clientele we have. All staff are updated regularly with their own individual training needs and all engage well with young people. We all believe fully in the project and what it delivers and are active and motivated.'

Partnerships

What other agencies do you work with?

Norcas (drug and alcohol charity)
Lowestoft Family Planning Clinic
Crime Concern/Positive Futures
Waveney District Council (sports facilities)
Local High Schools
External training services for accredited courses
Other external activity facilities





All agencies work together to promote health and provide education and facilities to the young people who are referred to Healthy Horizons. Work with the local high schools has given the project a greater understanding of individual needs and requirements enabling it to develop and provide a full range of services that address needs.

Strategic Impact

Do you consider the project to be innovative, in terms of healthy youth work?

Kim Croysdill feel that the project 'has had a huge impact on the local school system. Where we initially started with approximately thirty young people we now are working with over fifty-five. This figure does not include the numbers of young



people we have worked with on the Work Experience Programme at Healthy Horizons. It has provided a much-needed service for year nine students who struggle with integration into high school. It also offers stability to the same students while working through the subsequent years 10 and 11. Additionally we feel it innovative in that it offers life skills alongside health and education with an emphasis on fun and activity.'



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