

SOCA (Serious Organised Crime Agency) has the power to confiscate the assets of convicted criminals. A proportion of this money has been committed to the SOCA Community Fund which is being used to support a wide range of local projects.



In Bradford the SOCA Community Fund has enabled Joint Activities Service (JAS) PALZ to deliver a range of positive activities in the Buttershaw/Woodside area. This additional funding has made a positive impact on the lives of young people and JAS PALZ has now become part of referrer's core provision for at risk young people, often providing the only individually tailored service which young people access.

By the end of the January 2010 the SOCA-funded project had engaged with 31 young people, all aged up to 13 years. They were referred from a number of sources including Education Bradford, Social Care, West Yorkshire Police, Youth Offending Team, Health and parents/ guardians. The activities included bikability, swimming, running and the Mock Youth Court (which is described in more detail below).



The aims of the JAS PALZ programme are to:

- 1 Intervene with young people under 13 years of age who are at risk of offending and who are disengaged from mainstream school activity.
- 2 Reduce youth crime and anti social behaviour.
- 3 Improve school attendance and attainment.
- 4 Develop socialisation skills and improve engagement with the local community.

The Mock Youth Court Event

The event took place at the local magistrates court in Bingley and a group of 34 attended the evening. The event started at the door of the court where the whole group were made to pass through security and the metal detector!

The court was hosted throughout and the proceedings were explained. The young people were asked questions as the court progressed and it was noticeable the level of knowledge some of the young people had on criminal justice. The young people were really intrigued in the entire evening and loved being able to decide the verdict at the end of the event. Yet the young people had to back up the decisions they were making and the consequences of making those decisions - **"It was more difficult to decide...I thought he'd done it but then I didn't really know why. They said I had to have a reason."**

The impact of this evening is still noticeable; with young people slipping it into conversation. In addition there have been comments from parents/ guardians - **"He was telling us all about it when he came back, about what he saw and how he got to decide. He still talks about it now. I think it scared him a bit too."**



"My colleagues and I greatly enjoyed hosting the Mock Court evening for the youngsters from the Joint Activities Service. We were very impressed by the interest that they took in what magistrates do and the questions that they put to us. Although we stage mock courts for the general public each year this was the first occasion on which we have put on one of these events for young people. Its success will no doubt encourage us to stage similar events in the future. Should you wish to repeat the experience with other groups we will be happy to accommodate them."

John Parker, Magistrates in the Community Coordinator, Keighley Magistrates Court

Quotes and Feedback

"It's really sad that the project might be ending. Me and [PALZ staff member] have great conversations, and she gives me a boost and advice. The twins have only been going a short time, but I can see a difference. They get upset if they have been bad, and I say they can't go to PALZ."

Parent

"[PALZ] it's the most valuable resource we use because there is so little access to anything else! The young people really look forward to it and love telling me what they have done and where they have been."

Referrer SENCO local school

Buttershaw/Woodside PALZ

- 42 young people referred
- 31 young people engaged (Q3 - Dec '09)
- 100% of the cohort engaged in sessions.
- Only 2 young people disengaged - one due to transition to other after-school activities

Each young person had an average of 4.9 hours of contact per week

For more information about JAS/PALZ and the SOCA Community Fund contact Anna Shepherd, Deputy Coordinator on 01274 613141