

The Phoenix Project

Introduction

The Phoenix Project works with young people aged between 11 and 17 who have offended or are at risk of offending. It operates across the City.

The course is delivered by Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service in partnership with Sunderland's Youth Offending Service (YOS) and is a four day course consisting of mainly practical activities. Students wear fire kit and learn practical fire fighter skills, as well as some class room work where students are given general fire safety information and discuss anti social behaviour and hoax calls.

The aim is to instil self-discipline, team work, self-esteem and confidence and increase awareness of the consequences of the young people's behaviour, both good and bad.

48% of attendees do not re-offend at all within 12 months of completing the course whilst 86% showed a decrease in their offending seriousness score, with the average rating dropping from 7.09 to 2.16. (Source: Sunderland University Evaluation, 2006) and if a person does not re-offend within 12 months, this is seen as a significant behaviour change.

Current Provision

The Project has a Service Level Agreement with the YOS to deliver places for 120 young people and was able to achieve 126 young people completing the course, representing a 93% completion rate. Over the past three years, the number of participants from the **Coalfield Area was 52, representing 16% of the total**. Washington has the highest number of referrals at 47: 37%. The referral system from the Police, schools, youth providers and other agencies through the Youth Offending Service 'captures' all potential beneficiaries.

Areas for Development

Phoenix is successful in changing behaviour, but there is a need to encourage more young people to change their behaviour and not to re-offend. This led to the introduction of the 'Respect' course in 2007 as a stage two course, three months after the Phoenix Course, for those who have stayed out of trouble during that time. 86% of students given the incentive of the Respect course did not re-offend. This compared to a figure of 54% (up from the 52% from the 2006 evaluation) for those not given the incentive to attend.

However, it has been established that if a person does not re-offend for a period of 12 months, the likelihood is they will not return to offending behaviour.

To further the provision, to achieve this 12 month continuum, a further course has been developed – 'Advanced Phoenix', a three day course, which includes a two day residential. This course takes place six months after the respect course for people who have not re-offended. Whilst this course has yet to receive the detailed evaluation of the Phoenix course, it is clear from cumulative evidence the continuum of provision maximises non re-offending.

Whilst the Phoenix Project is core funded through the Fire and Rescue Service (F&RS) and the Service Level Agreement, the Respect and Phoenix Advanced courses were developed with 'one-off' funding from the YOS and the F&RS.

Proposal

The additional funding gives total Phoenix provision as:

- 15 Phoenix course;
- 9 Respect courses;
- 6 Phoenix Advanced courses.

From March 2010, funding for the later two courses is not secured.

As all the Area Committees have identified Phoenix within their 'Safe' priority, a multi area SIB bid is proposed, as follows:

Respect and courses x 9 x % of Area's attendees

Advanced courses x 6 x % of Area's attendees

The total city wide costs are:

Respect - £21,735,

Advanced - £19,260.

Total - £40,995 per year. Coalfield Area Committee at 16% = £6,559 per year

Total required from Coalfield for 2 Year project = £13,118