

Review of Entry Policy for Young People's Centres – December 2010

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Introduction

In April 2010 a management review was conducted around the management of the Sweatbox Young People's Centre.

The review was triggered in response to newspaper publicity promoting the use of breathalysers at the Sweatbox Friday night event 'The Sweaty'. While organisers justified the use of breathalysers in response to a growing concern about young people's use of alcohol, questions were raised as to the appropriateness of their use within a youth work setting. Further scrutiny raised questions around health and safety practices in managing what had become a popular event, with over 300 young people in attendance on an evening.

In conclusion the review made nineteen recommendations around three key areas; entrance policy/security, health and safety practices and the development of a broader programme of targeted youth work.

Scrutiny has requested a review of the entrance policy IYSS adopts for young people accessing youth centres across the county which would incorporate a review of the recommendations made in April 2010 in relation to the particular issues at the Sweatbox. (Appendix 1 outlines the nineteen recommendations and to what extent these were implemented.)

Entrance Policy

Within each of the centres across Oxfordshire a variety of approaches will be used to engage with young people; large events, group work and one to one work. A blanket approach therefore to establishing an entrance policy does not fit all circumstances. IYSS entrance policy is therefore informed by a broad set of guidelines and policies including;

- Health & Safety Policy/Procedures: Risk Assessment/Management
- Staffing Ratios
- Safeguarding Young People
- The Drugs and Alcohol policy - guidance in respect to ensuring young people are aware that no illegal drugs or alcohol can be consumed in or taken to youth work sites.
- Boundaries Code of Conduct
- Anti discriminatory practice
- Aggression: Harassment of employees by clients
- Accident and Incident: Verbal & Physical abuse reporting
- Youth work membership form
- Closure of Youth Centres Guideline
- Complaints policy
- Fire and Insurance – In relation to maximum numbers of young people who can safely access a site at one time
- Police Powers of entry to youth centres
- Young people and the law
- Young person's charter

During the review process the Health & Safety's report pressed upon the need for appropriate and dynamic risk assessments to ensure that appropriate measures

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were put in place to minimise and manage the risks posed to staff and young people alike according to the activity/event that was being run. These recommendations have been implemented across the service placing dynamic risk assessments at the heart of the entrance practice for each particular event.

Subsequently we have seen a significant improvement in the health and safety grades awarded by the corporate Health and Safety team; 100% of youth centres are now graded fair or above (76% of centres graded good or above.)

The Friday night Sweaty now has in place comprehensive risk assessments that incorporate the recommended security measures identified in the management review; bag searches, observational assessment of young people at the door as well as maintaining relationships with the Police and street pastors. This has resulted in a reduced number of incidents. Issues around young people's use of alcohol still exist, however there are now clear measures in place reviewed and agreed with management to ensure the welfare and safety of both the young people and staff.

Conclusion

There is a qualitative difference between running an event for large numbers of young people and a youth work activity. Where an event attracts large groups of young people organisers need to ensure a comprehensive risk assessment is carried out paying particular attention to security measures – the risk assessment developed at the Sweatbox provides an appropriate model for this. For youth work activity where the objectives are more about personal development, challenge and progression and the numbers are more likely to be 30 or 40 young people entry policies are proportionate and do not contain the level of security adopted for recreational events targeting 300 young people.

The six month review has borne out the conclusion that the county wide policies and revised practices around entrance are adequate and there remains no reason to use breathalyser tests to determine whether a young person should be allowed access to a youth work setting.

APPENDIX 1

Entrance Policy and Security

Entrance Policy/Security		
Number	Recommendation	Outcome
3	First Friday Night Sweaty on the 21 st May 2010 to be a ticket only event and limited to a maximum attendance of 250	The event is ticketed and attendance has been limited to a maximum of 250.
6	A countywide focus group to be set up to include the Area Youth Worker to discuss issues surrounding the use of breathalysers at young people's centres. In the meantime, no alcohol breath measuring equipment to be used	<p>Consensus across IYSS management has been that breathalysers should not be used as a tool to assess whether a young person can access a youth centre.</p> <p>A risk assessment for the Sweaty is required and in place to ensure that the risk to young people obtaining alcohol externally and bringing into the centre is reduced to the lowest level. Measures are in place to alleviate the risk such as excluding intoxicated young people from the building but taking into consideration the welfare of the young person and situation and includes contacting parents/carers where appropriate. The Drugs and Alcohol policy also gives wider guidance in respect to ensuring young people are aware that no illegal drugs or alcohol can be consumed in or taken to youth work sites. Staff are also trained to provide accurate information and help young people think about the choices involved in relation to drugs and alcohol use through educational activities such as group work, debates and discussions.</p>
7	A commitment from Thames Valley Police to continue with their presence at Friday night events	Thames Valley Police continue to support the events.
8	A commitment by the street pastors to continue the excellent support work around the venue	Street pastors continue to support the work around the venue
12	Continue with Licensed Security Staff on Friday nights	Licensed Security staff are used in accordance with the Sweaty's risk assessment.
13	Youth workers and/or security staff to search all young people's bags for drugs, alcohol or weapons for	Bag searches have been implemented. Where numbers have fallen below 100 and/or where the group of young people

	the first four events, this will be a condition of entry.	attending is well known random bag searches have been implemented.
14	No readmission policy rigorously applied	Readmission policy implemented when numbers exceed 150 young people according to revised risk assessments.

Health & Safety Practice

Health & Safety Practice		
Number	Recommendation	Outcome
1	That completed risk assessments are recorded for all activities that are delivered from The Sweatbox. These risk assessments are approved and signed by the Area Youth Worker and his line manager (to be completed prior to the Friday Night Sweaty being re-launched, leading to a Safe System of work being produced). As this is a large event with high attendance the Area Youth Worker must seek health & safety advice from Oxfordshire County Councils Health & Safety Team. Any proposed changes need to be reconsidered and the risk assessment amended and revised	Upon inspection, risk assessments are recorded for all activities delivered from the Sweatbox and countersigned by line management. Revised Friday night Sweaty relaunched. Health & Safety risk assessment is informed by OCC Health & Safety Team.
4	The first four Friday Night Sweaty events to be monitored. If the events take place without any significant disruption then, in agreement with line manager and senior management, the attendance can be increased from 250 leading to a maximum attendance of 300 after the opening event.	First four events monitored. Attendance significantly reduced.
10	All staff to have Health & Safety training as soon as possible relevant to their role	All staff completed health and safety training
11	Area Youth Worker to attend Health & Safety Managers course (2 days) by end of July 2010 and to liaise and agree on all aspects of health & safety with his line manager	Youth Worker has completed the health and safety managers course
16	Area Youth Workers who run similar events to meet on a	Shared practice amongst the South Staff Team who run similar events – i.e.

	quarterly basis to look at good practice and operational issues.	Abingdon, Didcot and Wantage
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Development of Youth Provision

Number	Recommendation	Outcome
2	The Friday Night Sweaty is delivered on a weekly basis during term time with an alternative programme to be offered during school holidays as staffing allows. Taking into consideration that the school undertake maintenance and lease out their facilities during the Summer. If the Area Youth Worker identifies a resource issue he will refer the issue to his Line Manager	The Friday night Sweaty is delivered on weekly basis.
5	A meeting to take place to consider the possibility of moving Friday night events away from The Sweatbox to a more suitable venue i.e. Sports Centre	Attendance at event has significantly diminished. No other venue has therefore been considered
9	Continue with discussions regarding offering youth provision in Grove from the Cornerstone Café	No additional sessions have been delivered in Grove. The programme within The Sweatbox has however broadened its reach and is accessed by young people throughout Grove and Wantage
15	The Area Youth Worker and his team to increase the amount of targeted work aimed at the most vulnerable young people within the locality. If the Area Youth Worker identifies a resource issue he will refer the issue to his Line Manager	There are clear attempts by the Area Youth Worker to broaden the work with young people in the locality. For example Tuesday night Sweaty has been developed which now averages approximately 100 young people a week. In response to local concerns around young people congregating in parks the Area Youth Worker has also initiated some detached youth work. In addition around 200 young people attended the holiday provision this year.
17	The Sweatbox to continue to offer provision to young people throughout the year, including school holidays during the week and Friday nights. If the Area Youth Worker identifies a resource issue he will refer the issue to his Line Manager.	

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<p>18</p>	<p>King Alfred's Community College to take an active part in the 'Tell Us Survey' which indicates the number of young people who are engaged in Positive Activities. These figures will indicate the high level of attendance at The Sweatbox.</p>	<p>The 'Tell us Survey' is no longer being used by the government. However, the PIPA survey (Participation in Positive Activities) however was conducted at King Alfred's Year 10s in July 2010. The results show a take up figure for young people at King Alfred's of 49.5% - this is below average for schools in Oxfordshire. This figure does not directly correlate to Sweatbox take up but shows overall take up of positive activities by young people in the school.</p>
<p>19</p>	<p>A review of the Sweatbox offer including Friday Nights to take place in October 2010</p>	