

HEMSWORTH SRB 5- SPARKS

THE FOLLOWING PAPERS ARE
SUBMITTED FOR
CONSIDERATION BY THE
HOME OFFICE POLICING AND
REDUCING CRIME UNIT FOR
THE

TILLEY AWARD 2001

PROJECT LEADER
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WEST YORKSHIRE POLICE

Disaffected Youth

This project focused on young persons, those responsible for low value, high volume crime, mainly committed to fund their substance abuse. They were also responsible for problems of nuisance in the Hemsworth area. We aimed to divert them from their negative lifestyle by providing opportunities and support.

Prior to this much of our time was spent dealing with the results of the disaffection and not the root of it. By responding to the public after the crime/nuisance had occurred we were not resolving anything. Our objective was to impact on the cause by providing alternatives and help.

The problem was identified via:

1. Policing experience
2. Crime statistics
3. Community meetings
4. Scanning calls made to the Police
5. Members of the public

By working with other agencies we provided opportunities and support for this vulnerable section of the community. As the policing strategy developed 'Sparks' was formed, a multi agency group funded by the government. The project targeted the young substance abuser, mainly heroin addicts, who wanted help. By getting a group together with similar problems and providing expert help from other agencies, we hoped to bring them back into the community. This developed further into helping the youngsters in their last school year, particularly the ones dropping out of formal education. By speaking to local heroin addicts we highlighted these were vulnerable people and often turn to substance abuse because of low self esteem and consequently committed crime to fund their lifestyle.

We used the money to take them out of their current environment allowing them to book their own trips etc and also to provide amenities to alleviate their boredom, another factor in turning vulnerable inadequate people to substance abuse.

Measuring the impact of this project has been difficult. The crime figures show a dramatic reduction in all crime apart from theft from vehicles. The decrease is significantly steeper than neighbouring villages. The scheme has proved popular and been taken up by approximately 40

people. Our initial efforts with the group of heroin addicts proved fruitless, out of 12 contacted the majority only attended once, the exception to the rule being Andrew Biscup. He is still attending and has enrolled on a course through College. The real results will not be known for sometime, by supporting the younger generation now our aim is to ensure they don't turn to substance abuse as an escape.

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CRIME FIGURES

DATE	THEFT OTHER	THEFT FROM MN	TWOC	BURGLARY OTHER	BURGLARY DWELLING
APRIL 98' APRIL 99'	187	140	40	161	269
APRIL 99' APRIL 00'	272	75	35	139	210
APRIL 00' APRIL 01'	196	88	20	113	130

HEMSWORTH SRB 5 - SPARKS

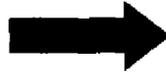
HIGH VOLUME LOW VALUE CRIME.
HIGH LEVELS OF DRUG ABUSE.
LOW EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT.



RE OPEN HEMSWORTH POLICE STATION USING SPECIAL FUNDING.
FORGE LINKS WITH OTHER AGENCIES, HOUSING, EDUCATION, SOCIAL SERVICES, PROBATION, NEIGHBOUR HOOD WATCH, and LANDLORD ASSOC.



ORGANISE EVENTS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE. FOCUS ON CAUSATION FACTORS.
GAIN CONFIDENCE OF AFFECTED GROUPS.
GATHER DETAILED INFORMATION.
CONTINUOUS ENFORCEMENT OF LEGISLATION.



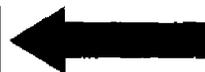
SPARKS PROJECT APPLIED TO HEMSWORTH.
OBJECTIVE: TO RAISE ABILITY OF INDIVIDUALS TO BREAK THE DOWNWARD SPIRAL OF THEIR LIVES.



HIGH DROP OUT RATE.
NO SUCCESS STORY



ASSESSMENT AND CONCLUSION.
THIS PROJECT HAS POTENTIAL TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVE



RECOMMENDATION THE AGE OF THE GROUP BE LOWERED.
SEEK TO INTERVENE AT AN EARLIER STAGE.

Description of Protect

Hemsworth is a small village in West Yorkshire, situated close to Wakefield. It has a population of 9,400 and covers an area of approximately one square mile. There is a small shopping area at its centre, and it is surrounded by farmland.

The village is very insular, and the majority of people remain in the area generation after generation. People are proudly working class and still feel passionately about the miner's strike in the early eighties.

Housing in the area is a hybrid of private, private rented and council property. In some areas conditions are poor, but these border more affluent estates. The private rented houses are without doubt the most neglected.

Hemsworth is at present is facing a number of social problems, many of which are interlinked, including high volume low value crime, this projects objective was to divert offenders from this type of crime by increasing self esteem and supporting them in their efforts.

Below is a simple table taken from police figures illustrating crime trends.

Hemsworth	Burglary Dwelling	Burglary Other	Theft from Mv	Twoc	Theft of Mv
1998	174	127	141	40	36
1999	290	147	85	31	41

Much of the crime in the area can be classed as opportunist, local and short-term.

Many offenders have never been out of the area; they only feel comfortable within their own environment. Little skill is involved, in committing crime they avoid alarmed houses, banks etc. They want a simple quick fix, small rewards but with instant success.

Drug use, especially Heroin is prevalent amongst the 16 -25 age group. However, it also affects children as young as 12 -13. Heroin

1 quickly **becomes an expensive habit**, which **impacts firstly on the family** unit and then **on the** community.

1 A common theme running through many of these people's lives is the downward spiral caused by their addiction. Whatever the reason, once hooked on the drug, it takes hold and the addict will do whatever is necessary to fund it. Initially things are taken from their own homes and sold or swapped. These possessions could be their own, parents, siblings, partners or friends. This usually leads to arguments and the person involved being left homeless, as the family feels betrayed by a person once close to them.

1 **Attached is a survey taken within Hemsworth of known drug-users. This was taken with their help, not from people in custody but from local people wanting to talk about their problem. Boredom and peers pressure are a common theme.**

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HEMSWORTH DRUG QUESTIONNAIRE						
NAME	AGE	AGE WHEN STARTED USING	TYPE OF DRUG USED	REASON FOR STARTING	AMOUNT USED PER DAY	DOES PERSON LISTED WANT TO GET OFF DRUGS
MARTIN	32	26	AMPHETAMINE (AT CLUBS) THEN HEROIN	EXPERIMENT FRIENDS ON IT	NOT KNOWN	YES
PAULINE	18	18	HEROIN (SMOKE)	EVERYONE ELSE ON IT	2 X WRAPS	YES
KEVIN	25	24	HEROIN SMOKE / INJECT	FRIENDS TAKING IT, BOREDOM	5 X WRAPS, . DEPENDING ON MONEY I HAVE	YES
CAROLINE	20	18	HEROIN (SMOKE)	GIRLFRIEND OF ABOVE, TRIED TOGETHER	5 X WRAPS	YES
DEAN	18	16	HEROIN (INJECT)	BOREDOM AND PEER PRESSURE	2 - 3 X WRAPS	YES
CLAIRE	17	15	HEROIN (SMOKE)	BOREDOM, PEER PRESSURE	2 - 3 X WRAPS	YES
LEE	20	17	HEROIN (INJECT) CRACK COCAINE	EXPERIMENT BOREDOM	AS MUCH AS CAN AFFORD	YES
ANDREW	21	19	HEROIN (SMOKE)	FRIENDS ON IT, BOREDOM	CLEAN NOW	NIA

TIM	22	18	HEROIN (INJECT)	FRIENDS ON IT BOREDOM	4 X WRAPS	YES
BARRY	26	23	HEROIN (INJECT)	FRIENDS ON IT, BOREDOM	AS MUCH AS CAN AFFORD	YES
KERRY	23	20	HEROIN (INJECT)	BOREDOM, PEER PRESSURE	2 X WRAPS	YES
CHRISTIAN	21	23	HEROIN (SMOKE)	FRIENDS ON IT, BOREDOM	2 - 3 X WRAPS	YES

Other crime is also committed to fund the habit, perhaps shoplifting at first but this often leads to other thefts and burglaries.

It is apparent that Hemsworth suffers unusually high amounts of claims from the Benefit Agencies for crisis loans. A crisis loan is given if the claimant reports their benefit lost or stolen. Figures shown below exemplify the high number of crisis loans paid, compared to neighbouring Wakefield, who have twice the amount of people eligible for them.

Year 2000	HEMSWORTH	WAKEFIELD
September	170	289
October	182	275
November	203	293
December	183	293

Academically Hemsworth under achieves, compared to the national averages for GCSE results. After speaking to staff at the High School the majority of children are already behind compared to other wards within the Wakefield area.

The children are tested in their first year and perform badly, on the whole, when measuring reading, writing and language skills.

Hemsworth is in fact the most deprived ward, using the Indices of Deprivation 2000, within the Wakefield area. Interestingly they also show that Hemsworth has the worst health record and highest unemployment within the ward.

A combination of all the above factors have led to a section of the community having low self-esteem, no motivation and being disaffected.

The majority of people affected are aged between 15 and 25. They wander the streets of Hemsworth day and night. These people are reliant on state benefits and have no interest in obtaining work, further education or training.

This section of the community are chiefly responsible for the majority of crime, nuisance, benefit claims etc. They are isolated, compelled to associate with other 'victims', unemployed, poorly

educated, and lack the self-confidence to break the described downward spiral. They have low expectations and live for their next 'fix'. The community as a whole is deeply affected by this small group of young adults.

However in April 2000 Hemsworth Police Station reopened providing a base for policing at the heart of the community. A Sergeant and five Constables working alongside two part-time support staff are based at the station.

Below is a breakdown of arrests by the SRB5 Hemsworth Police team in their first year highlighting the ages of the offenders

AGES	Vehicle Crime	Drugs	Burglary	Warrant	Theft	Other
Upto18	2	0	4	3	2	6
18—21	3	11	6	14	6	5
21—25	2	14	7	28	11	15
25+	2	9	2	27	9	24

Short-term solutions such as arrest and prosecution appear to be having no effect. Other agencies such as drug link, dash, appear to have only short-term success and are only one stage on a longer journey. In order for the youths to feel able to obtain some education or training and apply for a job, they need to increase their self-confidence, and require support and help both parental and from agencies within the community.

It was decided to address these problems and we looked at ideal solutions.

Raising self-esteem came high on the agenda. Self-esteem is generally a product of getting a job and the root to it, for without self-esteem the person won't make the application in the first place. Improving self-esteem involves many changes and is reliant on the individuals' opinion on themselves. It was felt that if we could raise self confidence, provide support for their educational and training needs and perhaps on occasions take them away from their current environment to show them what was possible then this would help them feel more positive about themselves.

Improved job prospects in the area, hand in hand with retraining and adult education is also important. Close ties were formed with Wakefield College to concentrate on further education and training.

As mentioned the group targeted had never had a job, were poorly educated and on the verge of, if not, already having a criminal record. It was hoped by giving them extra tools for the workplace finding employment might become easier.

Educating the rest of the community was also an important issue. Police attendance at the local schools was focused at both junior and senior levels again to build bridges with the next generations and to increase awareness.

Parental ignorance also needed to be addressed. Part of the cycle of deprivation was at home. Ignorance of the effect of Heroin led to siblings been excluded from the family unit, driving them further into the drug environment. Ties were established with local drug initiatives. It was hoped that a group would be formed to support the parents affected by these problems and in turn to offer advice and information providing a strategy to support the family unit.

Youth services were also contacted to provide alternatives to the disaffected wandering the streets. The local youth club Platform One was contacted and Sport in the Community was involved in the setting up of events, not aimed at established teams but targeting groups on the streets with nothing to do. With this multi-agency approach we hoped would alleviate some of the boredom factor mentioned by many of the young disaffected group. This was a root to the formation of Sparks the proposed solution to disaffected youth.

More traditional policing methods were also incorporated. A lot of effort was put into crime prevention, target hardening, neighbourhood and shop watches. Crisis crime, committed to fund a drug habit, focus on easy targets, if it became increasingly hard to commit the crime could it deter the root of the problem, Heroin? By involving as much as the community as possible we hoped to give some ownership of the problems in the area to the people it was affecting.

At its conception in April 2000 officers from the SRB5 policing team, made a concerted effort to target the drug dealers. They spent six weeks of high visibility foot patrol, stop searches and execution of drug warrants. This had two main affects, firstly it disrupted the drug dealers and users in the area and secondly it

reassured a previously unhappy community that at last Police were addressing the problems of the area. After attending a number of community meetings it was apparent that the public no longer had faith in the policing of the area, they felt let down and neglected. The residents were passing information to the police but they felt it wasn't been acted upon. Leaflets and questionnaires were also distributed asking the community what they thought of local policing, what improvements they would like to see and if there were any information they would like to pass to us confidentially. The response was a lithe poor but worked well as it enabled the public to meet us face to face and to feel they had input into their community policing.

As well as this traditional approach to policing the SRB team also spoke to the groups that were wandering about building a good working rapport. This was improved after a series of 'football matches' played at local fields between the team and the youngsters. The games were very adhoc who ever came played and there was no kits or boots etc this later developed into a football tournament.

From these meetings an agenda to improve their quality of life was obtained and it was also an excellent opportunity for us to explain some of the nuisance problems they were causing. Within days complaints of nuisance had dropped dramatically. The group had moved to land away from the residential areas and we worked closely with the council to get seating and rubbish bins for the area they were socialising in.

Another problem in the West End area of Hemsworth was empty boarded up buildings. These premises were being entered and used for taking drugs, drinking and causing damage. With the help of local landlords the area was checked daily and the premises kept secure. Any boards that were ripped off were replaced immediately. After the six-week period the boards remained on the premises, houses were no longer been used for unlawful purposes and the landlords saved money because they no longer had to make weekly repairs. On top of this the estate was visually improved hopefully creating a better environment to live in.

Benefit Fraud.

Meetings have taken place with the local DSS addressing many problems that we shared. Reporting of stolen or lost benefits was prolific It was agreed that any claimants would be sent to Hemsworth Police Station to report the matter and that every detail would be obtained prior to any report been made. Any doubts would be passed onto the DSS. It was hoped by making this procedure as thorough as possible that it may put off fraudulent claimants who obviously see this as an easy way to finance their habit.

Unfortunately the DSS was tied to providing crisis loans if such losses were reported even if they felt the case wasn't genuine.

Below are figures showing the current amount of crisis loans given.

FEB 99	48 Loans Issued
FEB 00	168 Loans Issued
FEB 01	204 Loans Issued

We had hoped to make such claims more difficult hopefully to deter fraudulent claims. This would help the benefits office and also perhaps reduce the money being used to buy the drugs. As can be seen the figures rose dramatically from 1999 to 2000 and although the figures again have increased it is by a lower percentage.

Education

Links have been established as follows

- **A competition aimed at children aged between 7 and 11 creating a crime prevention poster was a great success. The winner's work was displayed throughout the community.**
- **Officers acted as Father Christmas in local schools.**
- **Another project is currently in its infancy. The winners will become a Police, Officer for a day, complete with a Police uniform**
- **Police attended a local High School to take part in a law week they answered questions and this two-way exchange of information dispelled myths on both sides.**

We are now approachable and often give advice whilst out on patrol. For the children to believe what we are saying they must trust and respect us. This as impacted in other ways. Instances of

nuisance have dropped in the area, releasing Officers to concentrate on other things.

By working with this section of the community we hope to provide information, help, and support hopefully preventing them turning to drugs and crime. If children can be educated earlier about the effects and dire consequences of drug abuse then hopefully they won't turn to them when the opportunities arise.

To continue building ties with the youth of the community

- A football tournament was organised. Almost 200 young people aged between 13 and 17 were involved.
- On a similar theme a pool competition was also held. Unbelievably during the semi-finals and finals there was absolute silence and although people were knocked out at various stages all remained until the end. Free food was provided at no cost to the Police.

Such events were held to build up a rapport with the police and to give the youngsters something to do. As I have previously identified boredom is often blamed for experimenting with drugs and petty crime.

We have also worked closely with youth services. They have successfully obtained funds for an activity bus that will operate in Hemsworth, again giving the youngsters something to do.

Funding as also been obtained for football to be held at Hemsworth High School two nights a week. This will again provide activities and continue to develop community relations. This action was a direct result of asking the groups of teenagers what they would like to do. During the winter month's local residents reported concerns about gangs congregating in the area. The majority of these weren't committing offences or nuisance. However the elderly of the community felt uneasy and threatened. The easy option was to deflect the problem elsewhere, however by moving the problem on no solution would be found_ It also was apparent that by continually moving the groups then a lot of the rapport built up would be lost.

All the above schemes have cost the Police nothing_ Trophies and activity costs have been donated by external agencies.

We needed to work with the older children already falling out of the normal education system. These are the most vulnerable in the community and with these in mind we work with other agencies creating the 'Sparks' initiative_

Support for the Family unit.

To provide help for the young adults it was important to address the problems and ignorance within the family. The adults in the household of the, drug user are from a generation unaware of the addictive nature of Heroin. They were brought up in what was relatively a drug free society with 'acceptable' vices such as drinking and smoking. This lack of understanding and support is reflected on their inability to accept drug addiction as an illness.

We were fortunate enough to be invited to a series of meetings setting up such a support group. This group is made up of drugs support workers and the parents of drug users. It provides education, support and advice from people with life experience of such problems. Many of these people felt alone and unable to talk to family members or friends such is the stigma still attached to drugs. However in this safe environment experiences and advice could be exchanged. We were also able to give advice and answer any questions in a very informal atmosphere. This group has already identified a local house that will act as a youth centre in the evening. The house will be run voluntarily from the parent group

Sparks

Officers were involved in the birth of 'Sparks', a government funded initiative aimed at groups of disaffected people. The concept was an invitation to people on the street to visit the group at the local community centre build up a rapport by funding various trips, events etc and hopefully increase their self esteem, creating opportunities for further education and training. People using the facilities provided would be asked to complete a simple biography and then any problems or needs would be addressed on a one to one basis, providing support, advice and help. The agencies involved include Groundwork, Learning partnership, Wakefield College, Hemsworth and District Community Initiative, Hemsworth High School, Youth Service, Accord, and Careers.

beaten his drug addiction. He attended several of our days out and meetings and has gone from strength to strength. He is now looking for employment.

After this setback we decided to aim at the next generation of potential offenders/drug abusers. This group, officially still at school had already dropped out of formal education; attendance at school was poor or none existent. By providing help and support we hoped to get them back on track. Many of the drug users had blamed poor education etc as a source of their plight and by addressing this at a stage earlier perhaps we could have an effect. By ensuring the first contact with the Police was a positive note we hoped to develop better interpersonal relationships with a vulnerable part of the community

Meetings were held at the High School and individuals identified who may gain from this scheme. These people were approached either in person, if they were still at school, or by letter if they hadn't attended for a period of time. The response has been excellent.

The events organised were

- Ten-pin bowling
- Go-Karting
- Fishing
- Cinema
- Beauty Day

Other sessions were based at the Initiative centre and included the completion of questionnaires and 'Sats' based computer programmes (school based exams). As their confidence grew they opened up a little describing their family life and telling of their previous experiences with the Police. It also illustrated the dealings their family had had with us.

These trips showed a different side to the local Police. This has gone a long way in helping deal with the local youths of the area. We are no longer seen as a 'uniform' that simply moves them on but as people that are prepared to provide opportunities and take an interest in their welfare. It has also helped them understand why the Police have to take some of the actions they do, for example when complaints of nuisance and annoyance are made.

Another example of a success is a sixteen years old youth that attends. I have acted as Mentor and quickly built up a good rapport. Two of his brothers are currently in prison and he is obviously teetering on the edge of offending. However we are now at a stage where he has asked and been given trips in the Police car, Police public order kit to wear and he feels confident enough to exchange experiences that have affected him appertaining both to his private life and criminal matters.

This scheme is ongoing. The latest trip is being organised by the group themselves, giving them the extra responsibility most of us take for granted. They have booked transport and tickets to the local cinema deciding amongst themselves what to watch, eat etc. Hopefully this will increase self-confidence and add to their social skills. By working together it brought them closer.

The numbers attending are growing week by week. Word of mouth spreads what we are doing quicker than any advertising would.

I believe that improvements can be made to the scheme that is still in its infancy. Perhaps by targeting disaffected youths at the beginning of a school year and working with them in a more relaxed atmosphere, having the time to address the individuals needs, we would be able to encourage them to obtain academic qualifications. The people targeted are from unsupported backgrounds where it matters little if they attend school_ They have no aim in life and have no positive role models.

During these trips and discussions we have established individual needs. By having a mentoring scheme we continue to guide the participants on a one to one basis.

Sparks has been very successful as a pilot scheme, which is continuing to develop. it has been used by the Government to set up the Connexions scheme.

Results

As shown previously crime figures were on the increase from 1998 to 1999, the table below shows crime statistics for the year 2000 after the introduction of the Hemsworth Policing team. It also gives a comparison with two neighbouring villages over the same period

	Burglary Dwelling	Burglary Other	Theft from My	Twoc
Hemsworth				
1999	290	147	85	31
2000	118	112	79	26
S. Kirkby				
1999	182	128	124	25
2000	126	96	92	16
S. Elmsail				
1999	230	178	103	50
2000	176	142	138	25

It can be clearly seen that crime in the Hemsworth area has dropped dramatically.

Conclusion

- Disaffected youths in particular substance abusers are the principal offenders.
- It is possible to make contact with disaffected youth.
- Established substance abusers and older offenders who have evolved a strategy for survival are not easily retained in programmes.

Recommendation

- Direct efforts to younger offenders or better yet potential offenders who have not yet fully abandoned education providing support and encouragement.

SPARKS FLOW CHART

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**DRUG USERS
DISAFFECTED
YOUNG PEOPLE**



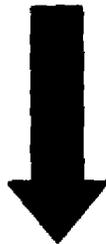
**AGENCIES
INVOLVED
CONTACT LIST**



**INDIVIDUAL
LEARNING
PLAN**



**COREGROUP
SPARKS
MENTORS**



**SUPPORT
NETWORK
AND
DEVELOPMENT**



**EXIT
STRATEGY
REVIEW**