

Youth Empowerment Services+
Service Evaluation Report
2013-2014



www.yesplus.org.uk

**“Supporting young people and ex-offenders in
personal development and crime reduction”**

Company Registration No. 7142210. Charity Registration No. 1136013

Executive Summary

- YES+ deliver services to young people identified as being at risk of offending or re-offending
- YES+ support the rehabilitation of ex-offenders by giving training and employment opportunities
- In 2013-14, YES+ delivered 705 sessions to young people
- In 2013-14, 5102 young people accessed YES+ services
- In 2013-14, YES+ supported the rehabilitation of 12 ex-offenders
- YES+ provide accredited programmes for young people (AQA Unit Award Scheme)
- YES+ expenditure for 2013-14 was £302,929 – this equates to £59.37 per young person accessing our services
- Each young person excluded from mainstream education incurs a minimum cost of between £5,000 – £7,000 per annum
- Costs of social exclusion, including unemployment and entry in to the criminal justice system run into tens of thousands of pounds over prolonged periods
- YES+ provide extensive training and qualification opportunities to its ex-offender staff team
- YES+ has a proven model of supporting ‘through the gate’ resettlement and rehabilitation of ex-offenders
- YES+ are committed to enhancing our evaluation framework and evidence base during 2014-15

Introduction

The primary focus of this evaluation report is to provide quantitative and qualitative data to demonstrate evidence of the impact of Youth Empowerment Services+ (YES+) two main aims.

The following information has been gathered and collated by the YES+ Team.

Aim 1: To promote a positive change in the attitudes of young people which supports a reduction in offending and anti-social behaviour and reduce the risk of becoming NEET

There are many different reasons why young people commit crime or are identified as being at risk of exclusion and/or offending.

YES+ services are designed to explore the underlying causes of criminal and anti-social behaviour, including:

- Family dysfunction
- Low attainment/disengagement with education
- Peer association
- Lack of pro-social activities
- Difficulty managing personal emotions
- Substance misuse
- Gang affiliation.

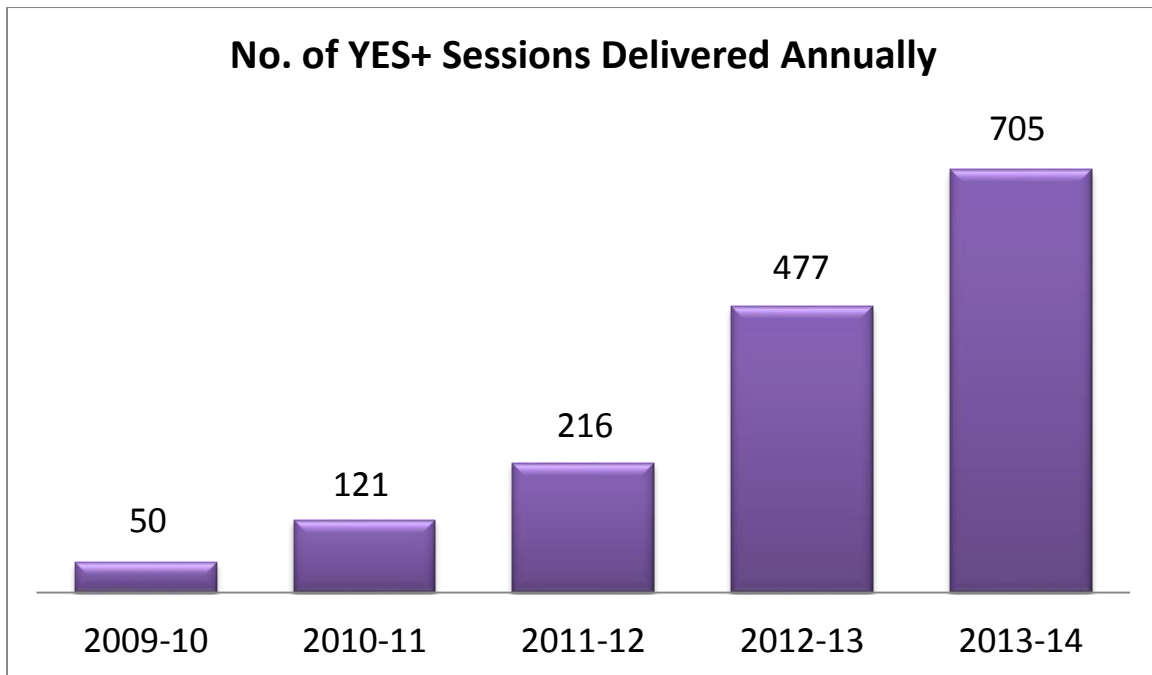
The purpose of this evaluation is to provide data to demonstrate evidence of impact incorporating a variety of outcomes which support the overall aim of diverting young people from crime and reducing risk of re-offending, including impact on associated factors.

Quantitative Data

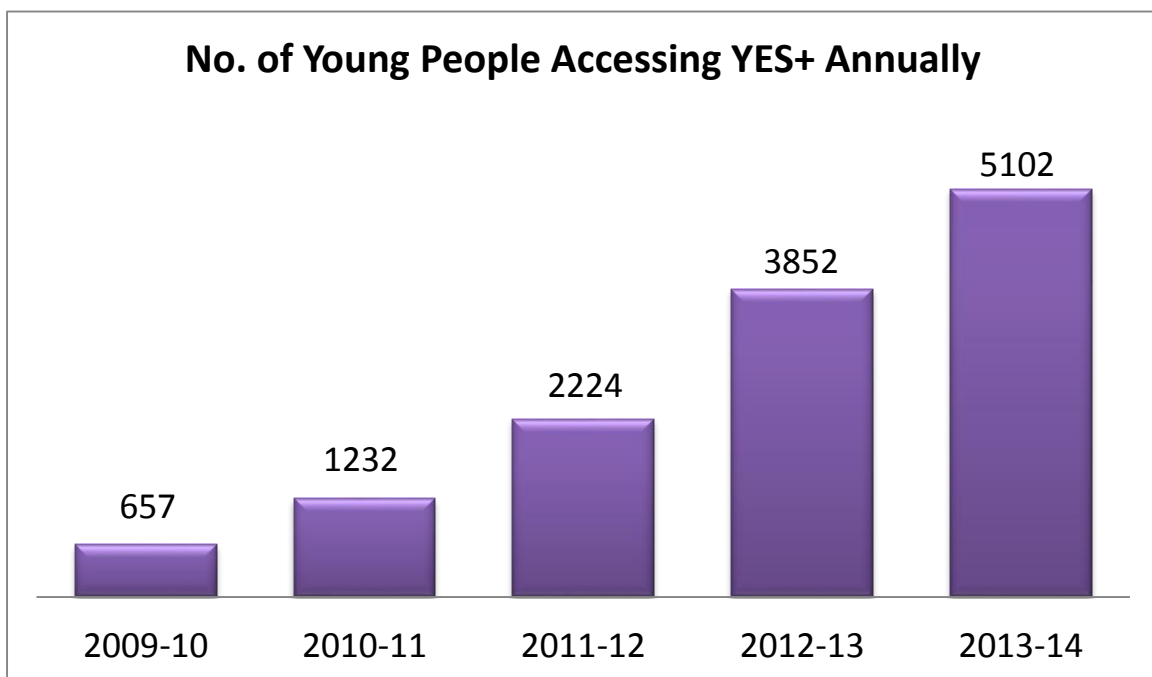
Outputs 2013-14

Sessions delivered: **705 sessions** incorporating the following services:

- 12 session risk reduction group work programmes
- 6 session risk reduction group work programmes
- Anger management programmes
- Gender specific risk reduction programmes
- Sexual exploitation and healthy relationships programmes
- One-off crime diversion/awareness workshops
- One-to-one support sessions
- Specific issue workshops
- PSHE workshops



Number of young people accessing YES+ services: 5102



Overall age range: 11ys – 23yrs

Main age range: 14yrs – 16yrs

Number of agencies accessing YES+ services 2013-14: 47 including:

- Mainstream Schools
- Alternative Education Providers
- Local Authorities
- Youth Justice Service (Kent & Merton)
- Police referrals
- Princes Trust
- YISP
- Police Missing Persons Unit
- Various other third sector youth support organisations

Outcomes

Young People Self- Evaluation Forms

The following data has been compiled using our self assessment evaluation forms – which ask the following questions:

- *Q1. You better understand the consequences of offending and ASB*
- *Q2. You better understand the realities of prison life*
- *Q3. You better understand that every crime has a victim*
- *Q4. You better understand how victims may be left feeling*
- *Q5. You have a choice whether to offend or not*
- *Q6. You are responsible for your actions*
- *Q7. You have gained information to help you make better choices*
- *Q8. You are less likely to offend in the future*

Data:

	AGREE	DISAGREE	NOT SURE
Q1	488	2	10
Q2	484	2	14
Q3	480	4	16
Q4	468	8	24
Q5	458	12	30
Q6	487	4	9
Q7	492	1	7
Q8	448	14	38

Stats taken from 500 completed evaluation forms
(random selection)

We are again greatly encouraged by the outcomes from our young people self assessment evaluation forms and believe they clearly support Aim 1. The correlation between information giving, increased understanding and awareness and likelihood of future offending produces a valid indicator of attitudes in terms of responses given in evaluation forms. Our evaluation data suggests we can be confident that by giving information and challenging anti-social attitudes we are creating an arena for young people to reflect on future choices. YES+ are currently exploring options for further development with regards to our evaluation framework.

AQA Unit Award Scheme

The Unit Award Scheme (UAS) is a 'can do' accreditation scheme for recognising learning and success. It rewards participants for personal progress and achievements which are often not recognised by more formal qualifications. AQA have awarded YES+ with the status to deliver the accreditation and staff have undergone relevant training. The pilot group of 4 young people have completed the knowledge input for 'Understanding the Effects of Crime' at Level 1 and 'Participating in Discussion' at Entry Level. We are awaiting our first assessment. We are confident that the new AQA scheme will provide further evidence of effectiveness and improved outcomes for young people.

Development Outcomes for Young People

Facilitators have been piloting the recording of development outcomes for young people. The recording of 'change' is based on facilitator observation and consultation with the young people and service user staff. In the initial pilot 14 groups were looked at with the following results:

Outcome	No. of Groups	Slight Change	Slight/ Significant Change	Significant Change	% Showing Change
Communication	5	2	1	2	100%
Confidence and Agency	9	3	1	5	100%
Planning and Problem Solving	2	1	0	1	100%
Relationships and Leadership	10	3	1	6	100%
Creativity	0	0	0	0	
Resilience and Determination	8	2	0	6	100%
Managing Feelings	5	3	0	2	100%

We are currently assessing the use of development outcomes for the future – specifically how we include more objective evidence in data collection. We aim to include this tool in the wider review and enhancement of our evaluation framework.

Qualitative Data

Client Evaluation (Service Users)

YES+ is proud to report again this year that evaluation from service users has been extremely positive. 100% of service users say they would use our service again, and this is validated by repeat bookings and further requests for inputs. 100% of service users also say they are satisfied with the quality of service, pre and post consultation and that the product met the aims and objectives of the service. To date, YES+ has not received any complaints in relation to the service or the professionalism of its staff.

Data from Service Users

Evidence from service users – including anecdotal evidence – is fundamental in monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the services we provide. Gathering all available evidence, which can be fed into our framework of reflective practice, allow YES+ managers to strive for informed and carefully considered effective working practices.

Below are a selection of comments from service users (verbatim from written testimonials, available on request):

“We have been working with YES+ since September 2013, and they have rapidly become one of the most effective providers of support and intervention programmes for our most challenging and vulnerable students at both Harris Academy Merton and Harris Academy Morden. The facilitators have conducted all sessions in a highly professional manner. They are organised, efficient and come armed with a bank of well-produced resources.. They are able to engage all students at every session to ensure the best possible learning outcome. Collectively we have seen positive changes in the participants’ behaviour and general attitude. This has been evidenced in a variety of ways including increases in positive incidents and reductions in negative incidents.”

Harris Academy Merton and Morden

“There has been a marked improvement in many attitudes regarding appropriate anger and subsequent reactions when on the school campus, engagement/attendance is above 90% evidence of the value the young people put on the sessions and therefore it’s’ success”.

Reigate Valley College PRU

*“The YES+ project has truly been one of the most effective and inspirational programmes we have ever had in school, the impact it has had on our young people has been hugely positive, the young people look up to the facilitators as positive role models. The sessions have gone a long way in reducing the risks our young people take, by improving thinking and decision making skills both within and outside of school, and in comparison to academic year 2011-12 **our exclusion figures have reduced by 47% in 12-13**, which I believe the YES+ programme has contributed to”.*

Project 15 PRU, Thanet

“It has been a very effective programme meeting the needs of our young people and reducing the risk of exclusions and unacceptable behaviour both in school and outside in the community. We have had some marked improvement in engagement and self-evaluation of risk taking and thinking about consequences before we act.”

Hartsdown Academy, Thanet

“Many of the young people at Bishop David Brown come from very complex backgrounds and a service like YES+ is desperately needed. BDB is situated in a district which is the most deprived in Surrey with 40% of its population unable to read or write. It is also in the top 14% of most deprived areas nationally. YES+ courses have undoubtedly had an impact on the young people that have been involved, with the school noticing the following benefits:

- Reducing re-offending*
- Improving school attendance, behaviour and social skills*
- Increasing understanding of the dangers and risks associated with offending and substance misuse.”*

Bishop David Brown School Woking, Surrey

Quotes from young people accessing YES+ (taken from post evaluation feedback forms completed by young people):

“The programme has helped me realise the path I was on. I am going to make better choices and stop hanging around with certain people.”

“It has been fun, I wish I could keep doing it. I know now why I get so angry and it has helped me to talk about it rather than take it out on other people – especially my mum.”

“The facilitators have really helped me and I know that if they have turned their lives around then so can I.”

“It is the first time I have really talked about myself and my family. I do not want to be in any more trouble and I know how to make better choices.”

Feedback from Parents:

RE: YES+ mentoring project with MB

“I am writing to express my appreciation for the on- going work that YES+ has been doing with my son M. M commenced one to one meetings with N in the spring of 2013. M was causing great concern as his disruptive behaviour, disengagement to education and lack of motivation this was leading to increased exclusions and potential long term problem with authorities. After their initial meeting and agreement to work together, M seemed encouraged and supported, stating, and I quote ‘I can really talk to N’ and ‘N understands me’. M looked forward to the weekly sessions set, and after the first three sessions with N, I started to realise a difference in M’s attitude. M started to take responsibility of his own actions and displayed a different outlook towards his future. M’s behaviour within the home improved almost immediately, which had a very positive knock on effect for the rest of the family (and me!). When M started working with N, he had little inner confidence and low self - esteem. Over the last 8 months the change has been tangible. His confidence and approach to new situations is now excellent, ensuring him a place within a college. He has matured, and his relationships with those close to him have improved to the point that M is now being respected for what he is achieving. We are really hoping

that N will continue to mentor M as this on- going support and guidance is making a big difference to M's approach to his education and overall attitude to life. I will always be grateful for the work N has done with my son, and feel sincerely that his efforts have been life changing”.

Parent

Email from a parent to the school:

“Dear Mrs S

May I please take this opportunity to thank you. I have recently spoken to xyz about the short course she went on (Youth Empowerment) and how it has changed her outlook on life in general. She did say that she wants to improve at school and get all her grades. I was a bit apprehensive of the course but now all I can say is a big thank you. I hope other children get the chance to have the experience xyz has and to learn from it.”

Parent

“Just a quick note to say thank you for inviting J onto the YES+ anger management programme. We have worked a lot on improved communication at home, and J seems to have matured a great deal over the last couple of months. I have no doubt the YES+ course (which J also said he enjoyed) has played a role in this”.

Parent

Case Study – Young Person:

M is a 17 year old female who has just completed a Level 2 Health and Social Care course at her local college. M was a participant on the YES+ risk reduction programme when she was 13 and attending mainstream school. Her school had referred her to the YES+ programme amid concerns over her attendance, attitude, concerns around early drug and alcohol use and other vulnerabilities which had brought the attention of local agencies, including the police for shoplifting. M completed a short duration programme with YES+ but was permanently excluded shortly after. She then attended a local alternative education centre where YES+ provided a weekly input. She again participated in the YES+ risk reduction programme, of longer duration than the first programme. YES+ was, at that time, delivering a personal safety programme for vulnerable young females in partnership with the local YISP and police. M was also a referral to that programme. M participated well in both programmes and connected to the YES+ facilitators and began to show improvements both in school and in her risk taking behaviour outside of school. Over the following year M appeared to settle and mature eventually completing her Year 11 studies and then enrolling at college. M states that the YES+ programme played a pivotal role changing the path she was on. She no longer engages in risky behaviour, has no other recorded offences for over two years and presents as a mature and sensible 17 year old. YES+ has very recently offered M a youth work apprenticeship, which she has accepted and is due to start in July 2014. We are proud of her achievements and aim to harness her personal experiences to support other young females referred to YES+ programmes.

Testimonials from Professionals:

Testimonials providing anecdotal evidence of effectiveness and client satisfaction are available from the following service users:

- Merton Youth Justice Service
- Kent Youth Offending Teams (KIASS)
- Harris Academy Merton & Morden
- Guildford PRU
- Thanet YISP
- Reigate Valley College PRU
- STEPS, Alternative Education Provision, Woking
- Fullbrook School, Woking
- Others on request

Aim 2: To support the process of rehabilitation and resettlement of ex-offenders by offering employment and training opportunities

Pathways to Offending

The Home Office National Reducing Re-offending Action Plan that was published in 2004 and set out the Governments plans to reduce reoffending by ex-prisoners based on an identified seven factors or 'pathways'.

These are:

1. Accommodation.
- 2. Education, Training and Employment**
3. Mental and Physical Health
4. Drugs and Alcohol
5. Finance, Benefit and Debt
6. Children and Families of Offenders
- 7. Attitudes, Thinking and Behaviour**

Here, an effective multi-agency response is used to meet the specific needs of each individual offender in order to maximise the likelihood of successful reintegration into the community

YES+ Supports Pathway 2. Education, Training and Employment

75% of prisoners do not have paid employment in place on release. 55% of offenders subject to community sentences are unemployed at the start of orders. Better literacy and numeracy are key, both to improving the employment prospects of offenders and to their engagement with a range of services. However, 52% of male and 71% of female adult prisoners have no qualifications at all. Half of all prisoners are at or below level 1 in reading, 66% are at or below level 1 in numeracy and 80% are at or below level 1 in writing. Of those offenders assessed in the community, 64% are at or below level 1 in terms of numeracy and literacy. ***Level 1 is what is expected of an eleven year old.***

Education Training and Employment – April 2013 – March 2014

Once an offender is selected for employment or volunteering, a training needs analysis is carried out, including a learning styles questionnaire. The information gained is used to inform a training schedule. The trainers and assessors are professionally competent in their field of expertise and qualified to work at the highest level, even within accredited qualifications and awarding bodies.

Training details provided by YES+ 2013-14:

Training Details	Employed Ex-Offenders	Volunteers	Total
Introduction to Working with Young People	1	3	4
Safeguarding	5	2	7
Positive Behaviour	6	4	10
Giving Feedback	5	4	9
Drama Training	5	3	8
Mentoring Training	6	3	9
Group Work and Facilitation	4	3	7
Health and Safety Training	6	2	8

Accredited Qualifications

Level 2 Award in Working With Young People

In March 2013 4 ex-offenders had been awarded this qualification from ABC Awards and 1 ex-offender is working towards it.

1 volunteer received the Level 2 (QCF) Certificate in Counselling.

1 ex-offender received the Level 5 Effective Practice Certificate and another is registered to work towards it.

Employment

Paid employment has been offered to and taken up by 5 ex-offenders and volunteering by 2 ex-offenders.

YES+ Supports Pathway 7. Attitudes, Thinking and Behaviour

Research has demonstrated that many offenders have not developed the ability to think through their actions properly. Some do not have a proper appreciation of the effects of their actions on others. Others think mainly in the short term and react 'on the spur of the moment' in too many situations, with the result that they cannot see that their actions have long term implications that may damage both others and themselves. Others have developed anti-social attitudes or may not have the motivation to change their behaviour.

An advantage to the support of rehabilitation and resettlement given by YES+ is that the skills developed whilst working are put into practise through activities the ex-offender engages in with the young people. Ex-offenders have to continuously reflect on their past and are constantly re-evaluating where they went wrong and exploring alternatives. This ongoing process is more likely to have a positive effect on their attitudes and styles of thinking. YES+ enables ex-offenders to confront their past mistakes. Developing an experience-based commitment to change can impact positively on rehabilitation and resettlement outcomes.

Rehabilitation and Resettlement of Prisoners and Ex-offenders

To date YES+ has supported eight serving prisoners in the resettlement part of their sentences, initially offering training and volunteering opportunities. Our working partnerships with local Kent resettlement prisons (Blantyre House, Stanford Hill and East Sutton Park) has enabled each individual to receive an holistic support package which has now provided four with full time employment and one currently engaging in the early part of the training and volunteering phase. The four full time YES+ employees have all been released and now live and work successfully in the Kent area, having resettled with YES+ at the centre of their release plans. YES+ has invested considerable resources in supporting their successful resettlement and it is our vision and goal to expand this model in the future. We believe that offering real 'through the gate' opportunities to long term serving prisoners who have evidenced change during their custodial period is pivotal in the sustained long term rehabilitation process. It is our intention to present our evidence to key stakeholders (NOMS and Ministry of Justice) to explore partnership opportunities which enable an expansion of our achievements to date.

Case Study – YES+ Facilitator (in her own words):

I would like to take this opportunity to share a little bit of my experience of working with YES+. I joined YES+ about 2 years ago whilst still in custody coming towards the end of my prison term. I had served 9 years of a life sentence for the fatal stabbing of my ex partner in a domestic fight. Whilst in custody after a long period of rehabilitation, taking personnel responsibility and personnel growth I was given the opportunity to work on a scheme that involved delivering one day workshops with young women brought into the prison that were at risk of offending. This included

delivering workshops on personnel responsibility, victim empathy and prison deprivation. I absolutely loved doing these group workshops, working with young people, the training I received and also gaining knowledge and qualifications in the process. I was then transferred to open prison and whilst there was approached by YES+ and asked if I would like to come along for an interview with the prospect of doing some voluntary work out in the community as part of my resettlement package. I was interviewed and given the chance to do this. I spent several months in training learning new skills, new programmes and learning how to deliver a professional service that was effective. I was also given the opportunity to further my education by doing a Level 2 Youth Work qualification and a Level 3 QCF Working with Vulnerable Young People. As a result of all the training and qualifications I received I was then allowed to facilitate group work programmes delivering sessions to young people in schools, colleges and alternative education centres. I learnt how to deliver a professional service in a professional way whilst role modelling and remaining empathetic and understanding of the young people's needs. I would not be able to do this job had I not accepted full responsibility for my actions and the negative choices I made in the past. YES+ has helped me with my confidence and self esteem and as a result I now believe I can be a part of the solution not the problem. Last year I received a High Sheriff's award for outstanding achievement in community engagement. I was put forward for this by my line manager and boss at YES+. It was a very special day attended by my line manager and two eldest children. I have since left custody to serve life licence in the community. I have been given full time employment with YES+ and as a result now rent my own accommodation and have structure and stability in my life; I have become a responsible adult. My family are seeing the positive changes I have made as a result of the support and encouragement I have received from this amazing charity. I now use my past negative experiences and choices to help young people see that change are possible no matter how difficult life can be. Without the support of YES+ my transition back into the community would not have been so successful.

L YES+ Facilitator

Summary

In summary, the Trustees, management and staff of YES+ are extremely proud of our achievements. We continue to build our client base and have become an established and respected service provider in the areas in which we work. Our area specific projects (in Thanet, Reigate and Woking) have seen us develop effective local partnerships which enable YES+ to become an integrated part of youth services in those areas. This is a model we aim to replicate throughout our geographical region.

We have seen an increase in the amount of commissioned work from the youth justice sector, an achievement we are particularly proud of.

We have also continued to develop the nature of the programmes we offer. We now not only provide support for young people 'at risk of offending' but we have now developed and implemented programmes which support other vulnerabilities in the lives of young people. We are particularly proud of our 'Sexual Exploitation' and 'Healthy Relationships' programmes for young females and the development of our 'Healthy Relationships' programme for young males. These programmes have generated considerable interest from all agencies. YES+ has developed into a service which has the ability and capacity to provide support and learning opportunities for all young people.

We are also extremely encouraged by the development and achievements of our team of ex-offender facilitators. We have proven our ability to take offenders with considerable offending histories – many of whom have never experienced employment before – and provide the support, training and mentoring which transforms them in to professional and respected youth workers engaging in effective learning processes with some of the most challenging young people in society.

We are at an exciting point in our long term development and we would like to take this opportunity of thanking all those involved in making YES+ the success it is today.

Future Evaluation

YES+ celebrated their five year anniversary in July 2014. Evidencing our work has been a key part of what we do since we began in 2009. However, we have faced significant challenges in developing and implementing the full evidence base framework we visualised as we have grown and developed as a service. Logistical and financial constraints have held us back.

The senior management team are committed to implementing a more enhanced evaluation framework which enables us to capture and report on every aspect of our work, as well developing and writing our own evidence based literature. Therefore, we have committed funds and time to drive this forward during 2014-15, including working with Project Oracle and academics who have expressed an interest in the work of YES+.

We look forward to producing an evaluation report next year which fully represents the impact we have both with the young people and the ex-offenders we support.

Testimonials and References

London Youth Quality Kite Mark

In September 2012 YES+ was awarded a Bronze Level London Youth Quality Mark, a quality assurance, a scheme accredited by City and Guilds.

The Youth Justice Board (YJB): Library of Effective Practice.

The Youth Justice Board for England and Wales is an executive non-departmental public body who oversee the youth justice system in England and Wales.

The Effective Practice Library is the YJB's online collection of practice resources, materials and information. The purpose of the collection is to;

- provide practitioners and commissioners in youth justice with easy access to examples of effective practice from other services and providers
- allow those developing and using innovative practice to share what they have found to be effective in working with young people and delivering youth justice services

YES+ programmes are included on the YJB Library of Effective Practice:

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/youth-justice/effective-practice-library/>

Reigate Valley College - OFSTED Report 2014

YES+ provide a weekly input at Reigate Valley College (RVC) supporting both KS3 & KS4 students. The senior management team at RVC regard YES+ as a vital part of supporting student development. Earlier in 2014 RVC were inspected by OFSTED and received an 'outstanding' award – the only alternative education provision in the country to receive this. The inspection team attended a YES+ session and commented to the Head what a powerful experience it had been and later commented in the report:

“Specific projects involving working with ex-offenders from ‘Youth Empowerment’ are highly successful in helping students to make more positive lifestyle choices. In addition to turning their behaviour around, this adds to their understanding of keeping safe, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is exceptionally well promoted.”

OFSTED Report (RVC) 2104

What RVC say about YES+

“As a PRU we rely on outside professionals to enhance the alternative education we provide for our young people, many of whom are or have been involved in anti-social or criminal behaviours, have alcohol concerns and anger issues, the impact of this type of education YES+ facilitate is far greater from an outside agency than our own staff when delivering sessions around these issues. YES+ are unique in this area of pastoral education. There has been a marked improvement in many attitudes regarding appropriate anger and subsequent reactions when on the school campus, engagement/attendance is above 90% - evidence of the value the young people put on the sessions and therefore its’ success. YES+ is the only organisation equipped to deliver these essential life lessons, to enhance the already exemplary work they do with our vulnerable young people.”

Trish Colbeck – Programme Manager RVC