

U-NITE IN ROCHDALE

Organisations Involved & Contact Details

Organisation: Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council (UK)
Contact: Tom Byrne
Principal Community Safety Officer Police
Phone: +44 01706 924978
Email: tom.byrne@rochdale.gov.uk
Web: www.rochdale.gov.uk

Aims & Target Group

Aims: U-Nite is a community cohesion event held by Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council (UK). It aims to build understanding between young people aged 12 to 19 from different socio-economic groups, ethnic backgrounds and areas. It also puts young people in touch with officers from the borough's voluntary and statutory agencies in a non-confrontational environment.

Target Group: Young people aged 12 to 19 from different socio-economic groups, ethnic backgrounds and areas. Its target group include harder-to-reach groups of young people. 152 young people with an average age of 14 and a half attended.

Project Description & Components

The event was held in two parts. During the day, a series of workshops were held at the Middleton campus of Hopwood Hall College. In the evening there was a disco at the Rochdale campus of Hopwood Hall College. A lunch buffet and evening meal were provided, as was transport to and from both events.

Workshops

There were eight workshops throughout the day. Four encouraged team building. These were:

- drumming with 'Pandemonium',
- team building with the fire service,
- team building with the army, and
- team building with 'Fairbridge in Rochdale'

Four were more serious and tackled issues. These were:

- Dispersal orders and anti-social behaviour procedures, facilitated by Greater Manchester Police and the council's anti-social behaviour team,





- Safe on the streets, facilitated by the Young Asian Women's Forum and the council's youth empowerment worker,
- Understanding discrimination, facilitated by the Rochdale Centre for Diversity's senior diversity officer and the Greater Manchester Police's community affairs inspector, and
- Drugs and alcohol awareness, facilitated by the council's drug and alcohol action team and the Early Break Drugs Project.

There was also an informal area where agencies displayed information stands and answered questions relating to education, training, employment, health and police issues.

Process

The first U-Nite event was held on the 11 August 2004 to bring together young people aged 14 to 19 from different ethnic backgrounds. The 120 young people that attended were mainly from local youth groups. The event was funded by Government Office for the North West (GONW) via Greater Manchester Police Authority. It was organised by a range of agencies who, due to its success, decided to repeat it annually. It was held again in subsequent years.

Working in Teams

After a quick registration, the young people were divided into nine teams. Each included participants from different age groups, genders, cultural backgrounds and areas. Each team had a police officer or police community support officer as leader. Young people and officers could raise questions and challenge responses throughout the day in a non-confrontational team environment.

Incentives and Prizes

As an incentive, the teams were marked on their punctuality, behaviour, attitude, communication, **understanding** and teamwork by the workshop facilitators. The best team won a white water rafting trip to Llangollen in North Wales. The best individual in each team won a £25 Argos voucher.

A voucher was also presented to a young girl who was injured in an event and could not participate for the rest of the day. Everyone received a green charity wristband and a t-shirt with the U-Nite logos at the start.

Outcomes

Everyone who attended thought U-Nite 2006 was successful. They felt they learnt about themselves, people from other backgrounds and different agencies operating in the borough.

It was encouraging to see these young people being so positive with one another so soon after the London bombings. The post evaluation's top response – that it was about breaking down barriers – supported this.

The organisers and facilitators also learnt a great deal about the needs and aspirations of the borough's young people. Feedback from evaluations and workshops will be circulated to service providers.

A range of external agencies were invited to attend and observe the day with a view to future participation. All of the agencies that were invited have requested invitations for next year.





Challenges & Obstacles

The key challenge is to repeat the project annually. The U-Nite event was funded by Government Office for the North West (GONW) via Greater Manchester Police Authority and this funding is neither on-going nor a vast amount. In order to repeat the project annually and expand it, Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council faces a real financial challenge ahead. Also, a range of agencies were involved in organising the event and their future support is not guaranteed.

What could be improved:

- Identify and rationalise future funding and spend to make the project sustainable.
- Continuous recruitment to the steering group (particularly young people) in order to update the event programme as some of the young people who attended previous events felt that some of it was becoming predictable.
- Improve how we recruit Asian girls to the event. The event was attended by approximately one third each Asian males, white males and white females. There were no Asian females for the second year running and yet in both of these years one of the workshops has been facilitated by the Rochdale Young Asian Women's Forum.
- For disabled participants, there were no problems encountered due to the small number involved and their willingness to participate. However, there is a need to plan for larger numbers, which will necessitate developing new procedures for some of the more physical activities.

Funding

The Oldham and Rochdale Partners in Action Housing Market Renewal Fund paid for the event. The venues were donated by Hopwood Hall College.

Images

