



Liverpool Culture Company and Liverpool City Council

It's not OK! A violence prevention education programme

It's Not OK! A unique project that is using culture and the arts, to tap into the creativity and energy of young people and tackle issues surrounding violence. Part of the Liverpool Culture Company's Creative Communities programme the project addresses domestic violence, racial and alcohol-related aggression and gun crime.

The main aims of the project are: to challenge views that violence is an acceptable form of communication; to look at the impact of violence on a community; and encourage young people to work together and believe in each other.

These aims will be achieved during a year, in several stages as follows:

- a total of eight schools in the Alt Valley area of Liverpool took part in the first part of the project with a team of creative professionals, who spent two days at each school to produce a play
- a total of 40 pupils took part in each workshop, where personal, social and health education was at the heart of each session
- performances of the play in school assemblies helped to spread the important anti-violence messages throughout the schools
- all the pupils were subsequently united for a special performance at the professional Neptune Theatre, in front of parents and guests

This part of the project will be rolled out to a further 24 secondary schools, by the end of 2006.



The next stage of the project involves working with the city's youth offending team. The media group, 'Ariel Trust', will provide four, eight-week radio courses training young people from the youth service and youth offending teams, to create a radio campaign challenging violent behaviour.

These will be aired on local radio stations and targeting specific age groups and population groups. Participants, who make the adverts, will receive a certificate and a CD of the advert, as a record of their new skills in researching, script-writing and radio production.



The third stage is to make a film with a group of young people sourced from the Connexions youth service, which specifically targets the deprived Old Swan, Kensington, Everton and Breckfield neighbourhoods.

It will look at violence within the media and rap music industries as well as exploring the deeper issues of domestic, racial violence and gun crime with young people and their parents.

The film will be premiered at a high-profile venue in the city and a documentary of the 'It's Not OK' project will also be showcased. A special exhibition will be displayed at the same venue.

Throughout the project, the media are being urged, through press releases, photo calls, and invitations to events, to spread the message that violence is not OK.

Young football fans will be targeted at the Liverpool and Everton derby day with a showing of the 'It's Not OK' film on the stadium screen. While Saturday afternoon shoppers and many more young people will be shown the same film on the BBC big screen, which is situated in the city centre. Staff and volunteers will be on hand, at both screenings, to give out flyers and offer advice, while radio adverts, made by the young offenders in the second stage of the project will run concurrently.

Next year, the project will take a fascinating new turn with a book commission that will capture the project so far, through poetry, prose and creative writing. Plus, a young persons' conference will feature expert speakers and teenagers recounting their first-hand experience of some of the issues surrounding

violence. This will result in a violence prevention action plan for the city, which is drawn up by young people.

The physical legacy of the project will be a copy of the film and book, which will be available to borrow with an accompanying exhibition tour in libraries throughout Liverpool.

The educational legacy of the project will be much more wide-reaching, with every child of secondary school age, plus many more – who are not in mainstream education, coming into contact with the message that violence is not OK.

The panel will include:

- a total of 1,280 young people engaged in multi-art workshops
- family audiences in 32 schools totalling 6,400
- school audiences exceeding 32,000
- radio production tuition for 60 young people
- production of film and CD with 16 young people involved
- film screenings on derby day with an anticipated audience of more than 100,000
- young person's conference with approximately 1,280 participants
- creation of a central coordination point for Violence Prevention Education, which brings external agencies together with a long-term aim, to look at city-wide violence prevention
- project is supported by NRF, Liverpool Culture Company, Connexions youth service, Liverpool City Council Community Safety team, including: Merseyside police; Merseyside probation service; an anti-social behaviour unit, Youth Justice and Liverpool's LEA

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