

Report to Communities Select Committee

Date of meeting: January 2017

Subject: Community Services Reality Roadshow 2016

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Committee Secretary: A. Hendry (01992 564246)



Recommendations/Decisions Required:

That the Committee notes the success of the Reality Roadshow initiative, which is a personal safety and awareness event aimed at Year 9 pupils and is now in its seventh year of delivery.

Report:

Background

The Reality Roadshow initiative is a personal safety and health & wellbeing event that brings together a host of statutory and voluntary agencies, to deliver a full day of educational workshops to Year 9 (14 year old) pupils at secondary school in the district. It is specifically tailored to address young people's issues that have been identified as a priority concern locally.

Co-ordinated by the Council's Community Health and Wellbeing Team, each year Reality Roadshow provides over 900 pupils in the District with expert advice and guidance on making the right choices in life for good health and wellbeing.

The day starts with an interactive drama production delivered by the Arc Theatre Company which tackles the high level priority of child sexual exploitation (CSE) and the law around producing and distributing indecent images of people under the age of consent. Pupils then rotate through different classroom based workshops which are approximately 40 minutes in duration

1. Theatre Performance

The theatre production by the Arc Theatre Company is a 30 minute interactive piece performed in an assembly style setting to all Year 9 pupils. The performance focuses on the issues of staying safe whilst using social media (Snap Chat/Twitter/Facebook) as well as the grooming of young people, in particular girls. This bespoke production has been developed specifically for Epping Forest Reality Roadshow in line with emerging concerns and trends reported by schools in the area. The production explores issues relating to teenage relationships and online safety.

2. Workshop Themes

Pupils participate in either 5 or 6 workshops depending on individual school timetables and each session is specifically designed to address current issues facing local young people. The workshops delivered in 2015/16 are as follows:

- The Consequences of Crime – delivered by Essex Magistrates
- Online Internet Safety – Essex Police

- Sexual Health – Essex County Council
- Legal Highs and Substance Misuse - Alcohol & Drugs Advisory Service (ADAS)
- Alcohol Awareness - AlcoHELP
- Healthy Relationships and Domestic Abuse - Safer Places
- Gangs and peer pressure – Sparks 2 Life

3. Outcomes for Pupils

The impact of the Reality Roadshow programme on participants is significant. The messages given are clear, concise and evidence based and serve to highlight the consequences of negative behaviours or poor choices. The programme promotes the opportunity for young people to make changes in their lives and to receive support and advice from the various agencies available locally.

- Pupils are equipped with current and appropriate information and are able to make informed choices
- Pupils have the opportunity to hear and learn from the real life stories of recovering addicts and ex-offenders
- Pupils are able to ask for help and support about issues they may encounter
- Pupils are signposted to agencies that can offer further support, and how to access this
- The agencies web links are uploaded onto the pupil pages of the school's website, thereby enabling anonymous access to information covering the support services available

In addition to benefiting the pupils directly, Reality Roadshow also indirectly benefits parents and carers, through empowering the young people to be able to make the right choices in life regarding relationships, alcohol, substances and so on; their home life is therefore likely to improve, as well as their educational attainment and life chances.

4. Outcomes for school and teaching staff

With the reduction of curriculum time for personal, social and health education, Reality Roadshow covers key areas of 'general' education that many young people miss out on. The programme is tailored specifically for individual schools and aims to accommodate work programmes and provide minimum disruption to the school timetable.

- Schools select a date that is convenient for them
- The material provided informs, supports and bolsters the schools' Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE)
- Teachers are provided with up to date information and therefore better able to support pupils and access further help.
- Links are established between the school and specialist agencies, who can offer further support if necessary
- Schools are provided with evaluation feedback from pupils and teaching staff from the event and this can be useful evidence to support Ofsted Inspections.

5. Reality Roadshow 2017-16

Reality Roadshow was delivered to schools on the following dates -

- Davenant Foundation School – 19th April 2016
- Debden Park High School – 9th & 22nd October 2015
- Epping St Johns School – 13th July 2016
- King Harold Business and Enterprise Academy – 18th July 2016
- Roding Valley High School – 12th April 2016
- West Hatch School – 18th November 2016

The Ongar Academy will be incorporated into the Reality Roadshow annual programme during the academic year of 2017/18 once there is a Year 9 cohort in place.

6. Pupil Evaluation

In order to ensure that Reality Roadshow continues to be a successful and informative event, each participating Year 9 pupil is required to complete a feedback questionnaire which is anonymous. The questionnaire seeks to ascertain whether the young people have a better knowledge post roadshow, of the situations that may lead them into harm. The questionnaire also asks if the pupils now have a better understanding of the support agencies that are there to help them, should they be faced with any of the issues addressed during the day. Finally, the questionnaire also asks pupils to inform the Council of any issues that are facing them that they may want more information on, so that we are able to keep the roadshow relevant in terms of new and emerging topics.

The feedback from pupils that have taken part in Reality Roadshow so far this year identifies that 75% of pupils rate Reality Roadshow as excellent or very good. It has also shown that mental health, drug misuse and domestic abuse are the areas of most concern amongst the pupils that have participated.

The following quotes about Reality Roadshow were received from pupils this year:

- "I learned the importance of making the right choices in life"
- "I think every school should have Reality Roadshow"
- "Excellent day, they have to come back again!"
- "I have gained more information and each workshop was on an important topic"
- "Great workshops and good interactivity"

7. Teacher Evaluation

To monitor the expected outcomes for teachers, every teacher involved in the Roadshow throughout the day is asked to feedback on the scenario they have attended. They are asked what they feel worked and what did not work, as well as any areas of concern they may have, and what they believe could be improved for each scenario and for the whole day. Usually this feedback is very positive and teaching staff are delighted with the additional support and information that they gain from the day.

Reason for decision:

This report serves as an information item for the Community Services Select Committee.

Options considered and rejected:

N/A

Consultation undertaken:

Evaluation form is completed by teachers and pupils. Informal feedback is also obtained from workshop providers.

Service review:

Each Reality Roadshow is discussed via a team briefing and review of teacher and pupil feedback.

During the planning process for the new academic year a meeting is held to review Reality Roadshow and decide priorities for the forthcoming events. Changes to the programme are then made accordingly.

Resource implications:

Personnel:

Staff from the Council's Community Health and Wellbeing Team organise, manage and facilitate Reality Roadshow, along with partner agencies that deliver workshops.

£5400 was secured from the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Hidden Harm Fund and this ensured that Reality Roadshow could be delivered at the schools with no cost to themselves.

The Community Health & Wellbeing Team has also recently secured three years of funding from via the Epping Forest Youth Strategy fund from Essex County Council. £4,500 has been awarded for each year to support the continued delivery of Reality Roadshow.

Land: N/A

Community Plan/BVPP reference:

Corporate Plan Medium Term Aim 3

Relevant statutory powers: N/A

Background papers: N/A

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications: N/A

Key Decision reference: (if required)

N/A