

Youth Sector Tobacco Prevention Group

Tobacco Prevention Activity, Resource and Future Support Survey

Executive Summary

March 2015

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ASH Scotland, Fast Forward, NHS Health Scotland, Young Scot, Youth Scotland, YouthLink Scotland and Local Authority Youth Work Managers Scotland have formed the Youth Sector Tobacco Prevention Group (YSTPG). The YSTPG is motivated by Action 13 of the Tobacco Control Strategy, and takes as a starting point that youth work activity effectively engages young people, particularly in more deprived communities. The core motivation for the YSTPG is to consider the role of youth work practice in reducing tobacco use by young people engaging with community youth groups and organisations.

In order to gather the information needed to develop a fuller understanding of current tobacco prevention activity in youth work settings and the resources needed to more effectively address tobacco in youth work settings in the future, the YSTPG developed and distributed a Survey Monkey survey. The survey asked youth work practitioners to detail their existing activity on tobacco, highlight any available resources they are aware of and share their views on the support that would help them to address tobacco in the future.

In addition, the survey included a small number of free-comment questions focusing on any evaluation or feedback relating to tobacco prevention activity and resources. The free-text information provided by respondents on these questions will provide the basis for further qualitative fieldwork and analysis with survey respondents.

A total of 130 people completed the survey from a range of 125 different organisations, covering 11 NHS board and 23 local authority areas.

Whilst a sample size of 130 completed surveys is encouraging, it is important to recognise that such a self-selecting survey does not provide a definitive picture of current tobacco prevention activity in community youth work settings in Scotland, nor is it fully representative of the views of all staff working for organisations and groups that engage with young people in community youth work settings across Scotland.

That being said, the results of the survey do provide a series of useful and interesting indicators on current tobacco prevention activity and resource development that offer significant scope for further investigation, analysis and action, whilst also supporting the ongoing activities of the YSTPG.

The key issues highlighted by the results from the survey were:

Existing tobacco prevention activity

- Almost all of the survey respondents felt that smoking and tobacco use was an important issue for the young people that they work with.
- The impact of smoking and tobacco on the health of young people, the impact of tobacco on the health of other people and reduced disposable income were all seen to be particularly significant.
- These issues were generally reflected in the style and content of current tobacco prevention provision delivery, suggesting that there may be an opportunity for YSTPG activities to support and develop the delivery of a broader and more diverse range of tobacco prevention approaches in community youth work settings.

Resources used to support existing tobacco prevention activities

- Given that a substantial number of resources have been developed in partnership with local NHS boards, it is understandable that many current resources tend to focus on more health orientated issues such as the direct impact of tobacco on health, second-hand smoke and quitting smoking.
- The survey highlighted significantly lower levels of activity and resources focusing on issues such as tobacco industry marketing tactics, environmental effects, cost of tobacco and illicit tobacco. This might suggest an opportunity for future YSTPG activity to support youth organisations to approach tobacco prevention from a broader social citizenship perspective.

Support and guidance that youth workers might need to effectively address tobacco prevention and education in the future.

- Encouragingly, almost all of the respondents advised that they would use an online resource base focusing on tobacco. The proposed content for an online resource page was also viewed very favourably.
- Respondents advised that they would generally be keen to access tobacco awareness training, helping to fill some of the knowledge gaps on smoking and tobacco issues highlighted in previous research¹ and consultation with youth workers carried out by ASH Scotland.
- Whilst the YTSPG has already started to establish the direct delivery of tobacco awareness raising sessions, the substantial level of interest in accessing online tobacco awareness training modules offers another potentially interesting area of activity for YSTPG members to consider.

It is clearly important that the future development of tobacco prevention activity in youth work settings needs to take into consideration some of the unique and challenging circumstances of working directly with young people in specific community settings. That being said, the results from this survey suggest that there is definite scope and a will to support and deliver a broader range of tobacco prevention and education activities with youth organisations and youth workers working with young people in community based youth settings.
