

AVA Young People's
Participation Project
South Yorkshire

End of Project Report March 2016 Chilypep



Acknowledgements

We would like to say a huge thank you to the following organisations who have worked alongside us to deliver the Sheffield and Rotherham AVA project:

- Against Violence and Abuse (AVA)
- Sheffield Young Women's Housing Project
- Vida Sheffield
- Rotherham Rise
- Rotherham Integrated Youth Support Service
- Sheffield Voluntary Sector Children and Young People's Domestic Abuse Network
- Together Women Project

We would also like to thank those organisations and groups who have supported us during the project:

- Sheffield Womens Equality Hub and Violence Against Women and Girls sub group
- Sheena Amos Youth Trust
- NSPCC
- EDEN Film Productions
- Park Academy School
- Haven House
- Sheffield Futures Taking Stock Project and Young Advisors
- Sheffield DACT
- Sheffield City Council

The project has only been possible through strong partnership work with other organisations who have worked together to support young people to be involved and shared their expertise and resources. The partnership with AVA has brought extensive experience and support, and will mean that young people's voices will be heard at a national as well as local level. The Young Women's Housing Project, Rotherham Rise and IYSS have supported the project from the beginning and workers have been involved throughout. We have also benefited greatly from the involvement and support of members of the Voluntary Sector Children and Young People's Domestic Abuse Network who have been the project steering group.

We would also like to thank Mary Crowder who volunteered on the project for almost three years, and whose commitment, expertise, help and support was invaluable to staff and young people

Most of all we would like to say a big thank you to the young people and women who took part in the project. Domestic abuse can be a difficult subject to talk about and your willingness to take part in the project activities and share your experiences made this report possible – thank you!

This project was funded by The Big Lottery Reaching Communities Fund.

A huge thank you to *The Free Radicals*, a Sheffield band who held a fundraising gig to raise additional funding for the project



Background

Chilypep is a nationally registered charity based in Sheffield where the majority of our work has taken place. We take a 'strengths based' relational approach, empowering young people to meaningfully participate in decisions that affect their lives and build their social capital, focusing on areas of high disadvantage and marginalised communities of interest, identity and belonging, as well as those furthest from services and support.

We support young people who face additional barriers and whose voices are rarely heard, and our work priorities are based on the needs and issues identified by young people.

Over the last 5 years, our work is recognised as good practice by organisations including Paul Hamlyn Foundation, through our partnership in the Sheffield Right Here pilot, NHS England and Yorkshire and Humber Youth Work Unit, and has influenced local and national participation practice.

Young people have told us we have had a positive impact on them, including: their sense of citizenship and belonging through volunteering and supporting others; improving mental health and emotional well-being by building resilience, and reducing stigma and isolation through group work, mentoring and befriending; increasing education, training and employment prospects, by providing accredited and informal training programmes, and developing personal and social skills; improving their relationships with family, friends and others, and within and between communities, through peer support, personal growth, communication skills, increased confidence and self-esteem; and increasing their capacity to respect and embrace 'difference', by building understanding and tolerance.

In 2013 Chilypep were invited by the national women and girls organisation AVA to develop a Peer Educators participation project with them as part of a wider pilot project across the UK.

Introduction

The AVA Young People's Peer Educators Participation Project (AVA-YPP) was a pilot project across four areas of the UK, for young people who have experienced domestic or sexual abuse, or really care about the issue and want to improve things for young people affected by it.

It aimed to develop participative models of work that would support the wellbeing of young people affected by violence and abuse, raise awareness about the issues surrounding abuse and improve the services children and young people receive.

The project was led by AVA, with Chilypep as the main delivery partner, and was funded by The Big Lottery Reaching Communities Fund. The project ran over a three-year period from 2013 to 2016, and evaluated by The University of Bedfordshire across the UK.

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“I didn't know the signs of Domestic Violence before it progresses but now I do - but if I'd known before maybe I wouldn't have got in a Domestic Violence situation.” Peer Educator

Summary of project

The overall aim of the AVA project was:

“To deliver therapeutic group work and leadership development to disadvantaged and marginalized young people in order to improve their understanding of domestic and sexual violence, to improve their emotional wellbeing and to empower them to influence peers and also to advocate for the needs of themselves and others within social care and education services.”



There were two strands of work:

1. To pilot a therapeutic group work model with young women across two project sites in Sheffield and Rotherham, focused on improving their emotional wellbeing and their awareness of domestic and sexual violence. This involved a six-week programme of workshops exploring the effects and impacts of domestic abuse, spotting the signs of abusive relationships and improving knowledge of services supporting victims.
2. To pilot a youth leadership development (Youth Educators) in four areas of the UK, to improve young people’s emotional wellbeing, their understanding of domestic and sexual violence and that of their peers, whilst increasing opportunities for and the abilities of young people to influence services aimed at them in relation to domestic and sexual violence. This involved young people taking part in accredited leadership and campaigning training and developing an action plan to take forward in their area. This included young men and young women. Young people taking part were required to undertake Domestic Abuse Awareness Raising training before they took part in the leadership course, to ensure they had enough understanding of DSA in its wider context

The main outcomes for the project that we hoped to achieve were that:

1. Young people directly taking part in the project report improved emotional wellbeing and peer support
2. Young people directly taking part in the project and their peers demonstrate improved understanding of domestic and sexual violence, accessing support and advising friends
3. Young people directly taking part in the project will increase their skills and abilities to influence the way young people’s services are delivered

Chilypep role was to coordinate the Youth Educator Panel across Sheffield and Rotherham, and deliver the ASDAN accredited leadership training across four of the sites of South Yorkshire, Cambridge, Sutton and Newham. Unfortunately, Newham were unable to take part, as the young people had not done Domestic Abuse Awareness Raising training.

Leadership Training across the pilot sites

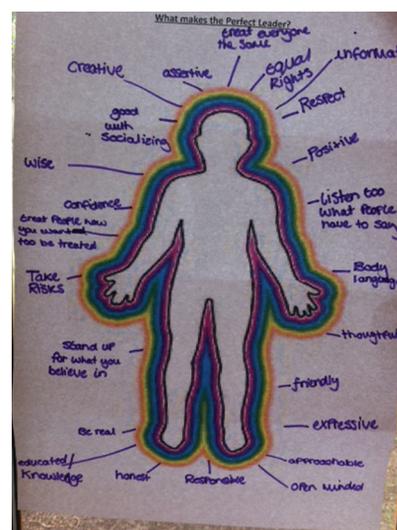
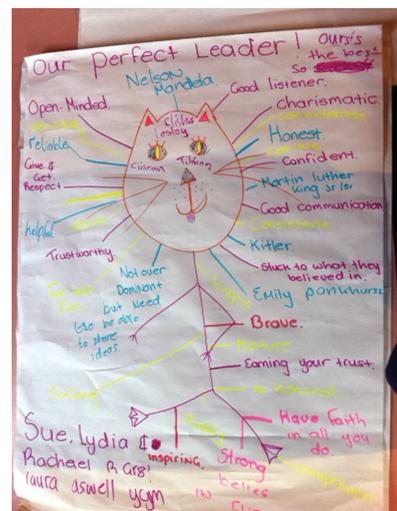
Aim: For young people to acquire the skills and confidence needed to start leading the development of an action group in their local area

Topics covered included:

- Young People’s Rights, needs and issues in relation to Domestic and Sexual Abuse
- Representing and involving others
- Exploring diversity and equality of opportunity
- Public speaking and confidence building
- Running campaigns, and setting up Action groups
- Identifying the issues and priorities for young people and what action they can and want to take
- Project Planning/Action Planning
- Running Meetings (how often, structure, practical arrangements)

Number of Youth Educators ASDAN awards:

Area	Personal and Social Development Awards	Leadership Awards
South Yorkshire	13	18
Cambridge	11	11
Sutton	10	10
Total	34	39



The sessions were delivered across three areas each with different groups of young people. Cambridge and Sutton were delivered as residentials and the South Yorkshire group as a Two Day Training Programme, which was run in both Sheffield and Rotherham.

The group’s action plans are summarized below:

Sutton’s Youth Educators were a group from a local Pupil Referral Unit and local youth group. The PRU group made a film about the effects of Domestic Abuse, while the youth group had an Action Plan titled ‘Picture Perfect’. It aimed to campaign for a change in size, and shape of mannequins in shop windows. Their aim was to inform young people that beauty comes in all shapes and sizes.

The Cambridge group was from a Pupil referral unit. They designed and made a film that showed the impact of domestic abuse on young people.

The South Yorkshire Programme

The AVA project in South Yorkshire launched with an event for professionals working with young people, to engage and involve them and the young people they worked with in the project. Young people who were already volunteering at Chilypep developed a presentation for the event and delivered this to attendees.

Following this, young people were recruited to the group from across the area at information and induction events at which workers from across the statutory and voluntary sectors were invited to bring along any young people they had who may be interested in joining the project.

It was decided that only young people who were already receiving services or support from other agencies would be invited, and that their workers needed to agree to attend the first few sessions and offer ongoing support outside of the group sessions. This was in case the young people were triggered by some of the content or activity, and needed extra support from people they had strong trusting relationships with and was particularly important at the early stages of their engagement.

At the first session, it was an all-female group, and after much discussion, they decided that they wanted it to remain as such. Other pieces of work, such as a film project, have included young men.

The young women began by completing training sessions around the issue of domestic and sexual abuse; these were delivered as fortnightly group sessions. The group then progressed on to completing the ASDAN leadership award.

It became apparent that trying to involve young people in one group from Rotherham and Sheffield was unmanageable. A separate programme was



developed in Rotherham in year two, although one girl from Rotherham chose to continue with the Sheffield Group.

Through the leadership programme the group developed their own action plan and we then supported and worked with the group to achieve the goals set out in the action plan.

Over the three years, the group membership has changed with some leaving for university and others leaving the area. However, many have stayed involved with AVA project and one Youth Educators has begun a role as a volunteer with Chilypep. The group that remains has stayed true to the initial action plan and has found the project has naturally evolved into other areas and opportunities.

We have worked hard to maintain links across Sheffield and Rotherham collaborating with projects including Young Women's Housing Project, Haven House, Rotherham Women's Refuge, IYSS in Rotherham and Together Women Project.

Domestic Abuse Awareness Training

The first stage of the project for the Youth Educators was to complete the domestic abuse training sessions.

Originally, we had planned to deliver six sessions, but this increased to ten as we recognised that all the young people had different levels of understanding and experience of domestic abuse, and some needed more time to explore the issues and their feelings and responses. In the training, the group had the opportunity to explore their understanding and feelings about domestic and sexual abuse, and begin to talk about what they want to influence and change. They covered a range of topics including definitions of DSA; Child, Early and Forced Marriage; Female Genital Mutilation; teenage/peer relationships; women's rights; and barriers to getting help and support.

The group reviewed the resources available from the 'This is Abuse' campaign including the 'Expect Respect' toolkit and developed how them for use within a peer education setting.

A turning point in the group's development was a session where everyone (young people and staff) took part in an exercise that allowed the group to anonymously share their experiences of DSA either as children or/and as young people/adults. The group realized they all shared similar experiences and this allowed them to relate to each other more and feel more comfortable together. There was a noticeable increase in group members' participation and engagement since this exercise, as well as a sense of a deeper bond and stronger relationships between the group members.



Leadership Training

Over a series of sessions and full days, the group completed a 30-hour Leadership and campaigning course.

Following completion of the DSA and leadership training the group created their campaign aims and targets, which they called 'Protect, Promote, Improve', and wrote their action plan.

They named their group YWAVE (Young Women Against Violence Empowered), and designed their own logo.

The group agreed on two streams of work to meet their campaign aims.

1. The development and delivery of Healthy Relationship Workshops to young people in schools and colleges, and local youth groups and settings
2. A research and consultation project, speaking to young people and professionals in Sheffield about the needs of and services available to children and young people affected by domestic abuse, and produce a report to be presented to local decision makers.

"It helped me to realise how early it can start and signs of abuse."

Peer Educator



What young people have been doing as Peer Educators!

July 2014: Houses of Parliament trip

As part of their leadership and campaign training, the YWVAE group was invited to attend a trip to Houses of Parliament with local MP Paul Blomfield.

Six young people took part in the trip, which included a tour of the Houses of Parliament and a question and answer session with Paul Blomfield.

Each member of the group asked Paul a question related to domestic abuse services for young people in Sheffield.



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“The trip was amazing; I got to speak to people about the work that the group was doing and even got to know some very strong minded lovely people.” Peer Educator

November 2014: Awareness raising session

The first awareness raising session was delivered to Shelter’s Girls Group. The session was delivered by a Youth Educator and supported by staff; the sessions covered understanding healthy relationships and spotting signs of abusive behavior.

The Peer Educator received positive feedback from both, following the first workshop it was suggested that the session could be improved by adding in personal account experience of domestic abuse.

The second session was delivered to a mixed group of young people living at Aldine House Secure Unit and was run in partnership with VIDa. The Youth Educator took on board feedback from the Shelter session and spoke and answered questions around her experiences of growing up with domestic abuse. The young people in the group found this really powerful.



Making Our Voices Heard!

November 2014

Sexual Exploitation Question Panel

The YWAVE group was affected by the local news reports of the scale of sexual exploitation taking place in Rotherham when the Jay report was released. They wanted to ‘do something’ so they initiated and coordinated a ‘Big Conversation’ between young people and the local authorities in Sheffield.

Five meetings were held with eight interested young people from YWAVE and other youth groups across

the City. They developed their knowledge and understanding of the issues surrounding CSE and then wrote questions they wanted to ask the panel.

The event at the Town Hall brought together 11 young people from across Sheffield (2 from the planning group and 9 Young Advisors) to participate in a question and answer session with local decision makers, including councilors, police, health and social care and representatives from the safeguarding board. The event fed into Sheffield City Council’s own enquiry into sexual exploitation within the city and featured in their report.



“All the stuff that’s been going on in Rotherham around sexual exploitation is really affecting their project and the young women are clearly asking about it and wanting to hold events and talk to policymakers about how they can improve things locally... They’ve come down and spoken to their MP at the Houses of Parliament, they’re putting on a charity gig night with bands to raise money.”
Worker

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June 2015

Exploring Domestic Abuse and Sexual Exploitation in Teenage Years Conference

The Rotherham Group

After recruiting a group of young people from Rotherham College and Rotherham Youth Service we delivered the Awareness Raising and Leadership training again in year two

They also presented the findings from a consultation with students in Rotherham they had carried out as part of the research and consultation project they were doing from their campaign action plan. The conference was attended by 120 people, and included guest speakers Jo Sharpen from AVA, David Gadd from the University of Manchester, and Yasmin Rehan.

Feedback from delegates showed that the audio recordings had significantly influenced their understanding of young women’s experiences of services.



Healthy Relationship Workshops and Evaluations

May 2015

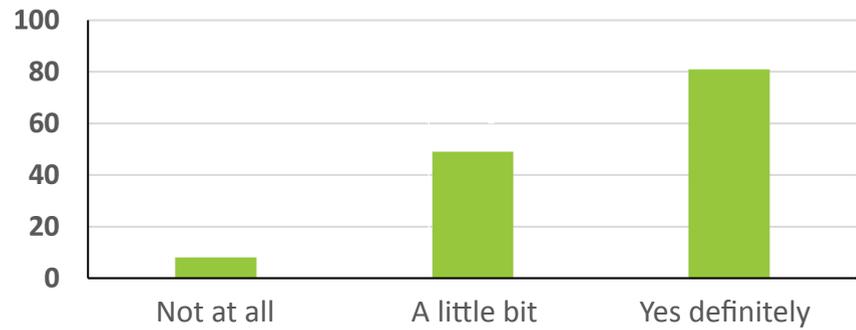
Hillsborough and Peak College

Chilypep were invited in to Hillsborough College to talk about the projects we are running across the City, and raise awareness for some of the issues they are working on.

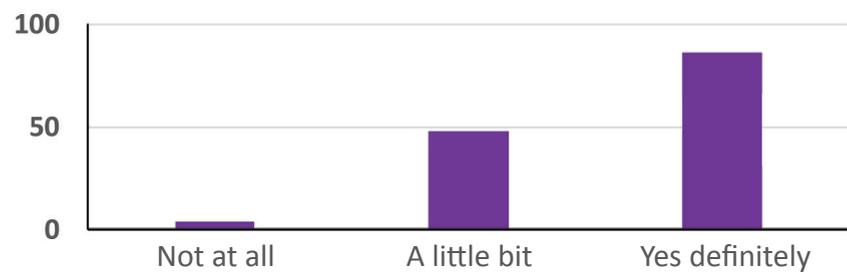
As part of the day peer educators promoted the AVA project and delivered the Healthy Relationship Awareness Raising Session to the students. In total 139 young people took part in the workshops and completed an evaluation form regarding the session.

We used the day to promote the opportunities available for young people to get involved with the AVA project and had students sign up if they would like to get further involved.

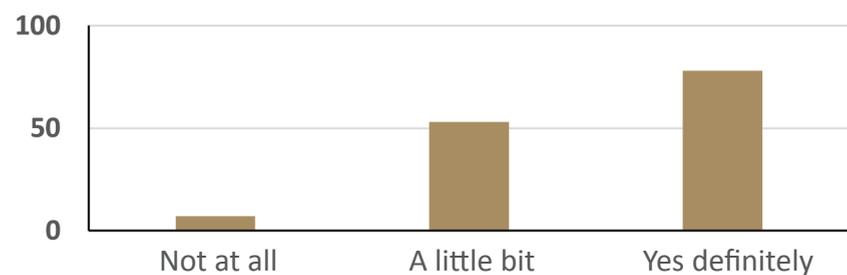
Do you think you know more about Teenage Relationship Abuse now?



Do you think you know more about where to get help from if you or a friend were in danger of abuse now?



Do you think you know more about what a healthy relationship is now?





July 2015

National Citizenship Scheme workshops:

Peer educators prepared and delivered a 90-minute workshop delivered to four groups of young people as part of the NCS Training Programme. One of our Peer Educators supported by a staff member delivered these.

In total 74 young people, aged 15-24 took part in the workshops. The session aimed to increase knowledge around healthy relationships and understanding of abuse.

Here is some of our Feedback:

56%

Felt that they now knew more about Teenage Relationship Abuse.

59%

Stated that they definitely knew more about Healthy Relationships.

71%

Said they would now definitely know where to access help and support around Domestic abuse.

September 2015

Sexual Consent Sessions at the University of Sheffield

We have been involved with a pilot scheme with local organization 'theCHAT' to deliver a workshop around sexual consent to new first year students at the University of Sheffield as part of Fresher's Week.

The purpose of the session was to improve understanding of what is consent and how to ensure this is achieved. We delivered 4 x 1 hour sessions to a total of 80 students, aged between 18-21.

We are awaiting the evaluations from the sessions as these are being collated by the University of Sheffield, however initial feedback on the day stated that the sessions were informative and the young people found the discussions valuable.

95%

Of students at the University stated the session was effective at increasing understanding of consent



Lights, Camera, Action!



July - October 2015

Film Making

The Youth Educators have been working on producing a film that raises awareness of teenage relationship abuse. We received some additional funding from the Womens Equalities Hub at Sheffield City Council to support this.

The young people have worked together to storyboard their ideas for the film, with their main aim was to produce a film that can be shown to other young people within schools, colleges and youth groups that will help young people identify unhealthy relationships and where to go to access help.

The young people were recruited to take part in the project from across the City, and we engaged young people who had personal experiences of abuse from

two local projects – Haven House and Young Women’s Housing Project, alongside the Youth Educators from Chilypep.

The group met weekly to discuss structure and ideas for film whilst also completing further awareness raising activities around teenage relationship abuse. We enlisted the help of local film company E.D.E.N Film Productions who supported the young people in producing the film. The young people were involved in every aspect of the film making process from initial ideas and aims, through to storyboarding, filming and editing.

The film was showcased at the Women’s Hub meeting and at an event with DACT at Sheffield Hallam University.

To watch the film please visit the Chilypep YouTube page and search: Sheffield Speaks Out
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DOt2f3-r3bY>

Case studies

Case study 1 - Maariyah

"It has almost been 2 years since I got involved with the AVA project. After volunteering at my local youth service center I decided that it would be a good experience if I got involved in something different."

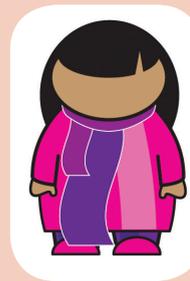
"After meeting with the group for the first time, I was eager to get going. From there, the group met every other week for training. Even though the training itself wasn't overly exciting, I still enjoyed going. I learned a lot about domestic abuse in general, services available for people suffering from abuse, different campaigning methods and how to deliver focus groups."

"I had the opportunity to travel to London to visit the Houses of Parliament, which was amazing, got to speak to people about the work that the group was doing and even got to know some very strong-minded lovely people. It was upsetting to hear some of the fictitious and even real cases of abuse that people were put through; however, I found them to be very inspiring."

"I would definitely encourage other young people to get involved in something similar to the AVA project."

"I really want other young people to take an interest in politics and have a voice."

Peer Educator



Case study 2 - Kirsty Hartley

"I have been involved with the AVA project from the beginning, I was looking for something to get involved with and it sounded like a good opportunity."

"I started off being part of the group and completed all the training with other Youth Educators."

"Over the last two years, I got more and more involved with the YWAVE research project; I led focus groups with young people and conducted service providers. I was nervous about doing this at first but the more I did I enjoyed it."

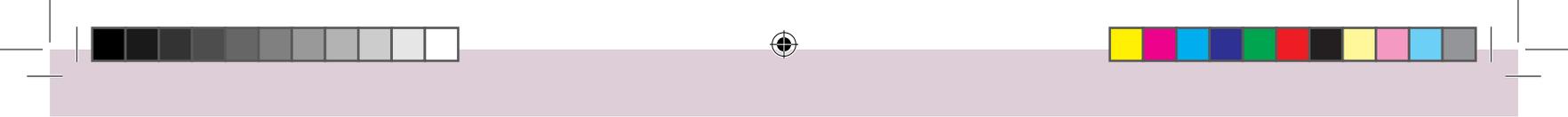
"I also planned and ran awareness raising sessions for young people around healthy relationships."

"I analyzed all the research findings and worked with Mary, a research volunteer, to write the research report. I didn't think I would get the opportunity to do a lot of the stuff that I have done, but I am really proud of what I have achieved!! Now I'm a volunteer at Chilypep and hope to go to University one day"



A member of the group was interviewed and spoke on BBC Radio Sheffield about her experiences of domestic abuse as a child and how this affected her growing up.

She spoke about how the support she has received from local services (YWHP) has helped her deal with this, and what services young people need to be able to deal with issues like DSA.



YWAVE Research Process and Findings

YWAVE Research

The Youth Educators supported by our volunteer researcher Mary Crowder have collected 258 responses to their questionnaire. The questionnaire asks about current knowledge and experiences of domestic abuse, teenage relationship abuse, healthy relationships, education and knowledge of services.

The purpose of conducting the research was to highlight current gaps in service provision and levels of understanding young people in Sheffield have of domestic abuse.

The research group has conducted focus groups with young people who have been affected by or have experience of domestic abuse. Interviews have also been conducted with front line workers and managers of services across the city.

Kirsty Hartley has written the research report, one of original members of group, and it can be read in full at: www.chilypep.org.uk/resources/reports

Summary of survey findings

Most young people reported that they have a good understanding of healthy relationships, and some have learned about both healthy relationships and domestic abuse in school or college. The majority of young people recognised domestic abuse as a serious crime that can happen to anyone.

Nevertheless, the overwhelming majority of questionnaire respondents agreed that schools and colleges should offer more education and training on both these topics. The survey tells us nothing about the content of existing healthy relationship and domestic abuse education but findings do strongly suggest that it is not fully meeting the needs of many young people.

A large majority of young people are familiar with at least some of the signs of domestic abuse, while almost half know someone who has experienced domestic abuse, and almost one in five have been directly affected. This suggests that, directly or indirectly, domestic abuse is a feature of the lives of a high proportion of young people.

Many young people report that they would go to the police if they, or someone they knew, was experiencing domestic abuse. Overall, however, young people are most likely to turn to friends, family, teachers or another adult with whom they have a trusting relationship. Only a minority appear to be aware of specialist domestic abuse services. These findings suggest that the police, other professionals, and the wider community, all have a role to play in encouraging young people to seek support. The survey findings also suggest that having someone to talk to and emotional support are as, if not more, important for young people than more formal counselling and practical support services.



Partnership work and strategy

Emma Manser – Project Worker at Young Women’s Housing Project.

I first got involved with the AVA project when we were invited to a launch event run by Chilypep who were hoping to recruit young people to be a part of the project. I knew it would be something the young women I work with would be interested in so I supported six women from YWHP to attend the group sessions. I agreed to support our women in attending the groups each fortnight, as I knew it was difficult for many of them to attend and having a familiar face there helped. I also knew it would be a topic that many of them would find emotive due to their past experiences.

The women really enjoyed the sessions and were enjoying being part of a group. After speaking to Lesley, I increased my role to helping her facilitate the DA training sessions. Due to the AVA project receiving extra funding, I was seconded to work 4hrs a week solely on the AVA project. This was great, as we really needed the extra staff time to support the young women with the goals set out in their action plans.

It has been really rewarding to see the young people develop their skill and grow in confidence. I have also learnt a lot personally developing new ways of working with young people.

It has been great to see the project through from start to finish and the young people have achieved so much.

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Deborah Guy, Children and Young People’s outreach support worker at Rotherham Rise.

I was seconded to work in partnership with the IYSS (Integrated Youth Support Service) in Rotherham and this included the AVA project.

We conducted research within an open day at local college and questionnaires were provided to young people attending RCAT and Dinnington, which gave us an insight to the thoughts and feelings of young people regarding healthy/unhealthy relationships.

Following on from the research undertaken with College a small group was established and domestic abuse training /awareness raising was delivered to the group.

Some of the young people took part in our own conference regarding domestic abuse/CSE and young people. This involved two young people telling their own story and experiences of living with domestic abuse.

We did make links to ITV fixers to come on board to produce a short film, however this wasn’t successful.

A shift in my role enabled me to work in partnership with Lesley and Emma more directly on the project leading up to the conference.

Partnership Work

Together Women Project implemented the first stage of a pilot project to run more girls’ groups across the City.

This was in response to a piece of research that Together Women Project completed last year to understand what young girls’ needs were within the City. Members of our group contributed to the research at the time.

Chilypep were asked to work in partnership with Together Women to design, deliver and engage young women in a programme based on the key findings of their research. We co-delivered 12 weeks of workshops with a group of 12 Roma Slovak girls at a local secondary school.

The workshops delivered sessions on healthy relationships, sexual exploitation, social media, self- esteem and mental health. We are aiming to develop the programme further based on feedback from participants and that future groups will be delivered across the City.



Outcomes

The project has met many of the outcomes it set out to achieve.

Members of the Peer Educator groups have experienced improved emotional well-being, confidence and self-esteem, and supported other young people to increase their knowledge and awareness of domestic abuse and healthy relationships. Many have developed supportive relationships with each other, or gone on to other groups and volunteering, whilst others have left for university or to pursue further education or training.

Whether the research painstakingly carried out over 18 months will have an impact on improving services and giving a voice to the young people who took part remains to be seen, as at this point it has not been published, but all partners and young people still involved are committed to doing their best to ensuring it does.

Perhaps the biggest positive over the life of the project has been seeing one of the original members of the Youth Educator group in Sheffield progress on to becoming an official volunteer with Chilypep. Through the skills Kirsty has developed as a result of being part of the AVA project, she has been motivated to become more heavily involved in supporting and delivering the awareness raising sessions to other young people. Kirsty has conducted many of the research consultations and focus groups and also provided administration support to the whole Chilypep organization.

Kirsty has analysed and written up the findings from the YWAVE research into the final report, this is something we are all really proud of. It has been wonderful to see her confidence grow and skills develop over that last 2 and half years she has been involved with the AVA project. We can't wait see where she progresses from here!

External evaluation

University of Bedfordshire is evaluating the impact of the AVA project as a whole across the four pilot sites. They will be producing their own report with their findings however, their initial evaluation has found:

- Strong evidence of improved awareness and understanding of domestic violence among participants
- Evidence of a range of positive contributions to participants wellbeing
- Evidence of a range of positive contributions to participant's life opportunities
- An accessible programme for a diverse* range of participants including those facing disadvantage or traditionally marginalised from services (*with limitations)
- A programme which has been highly valued by the majority of partner practitioners

Key Findings

Strong evidence

- Improved awareness and understanding of domestic violence among participants
- Contributes to improved wellbeing of participants in a range of ways
- Improved life opportunities for participants (training, education, employment) - some significant

Moderate evidence

- An accessible programme for a diverse range of participants including those facing disadvantage or traditionally marginalised from services
- Young people's ability to educate and influence peers about domestic violence is improved

Limited evidence

- Young people's ability to influence services is improved
- Improved services for young people with experiences of domestic and sexual abuse

Evaluation and Learning

Positives

- Time: The three-year funding allowed long pieces of work to be undertaken alongside smaller stand-alone pieces. The opportunity for young people to engage through long term involvement has allowed them to achieve maximum development
- When staff were able to support young people to attend, they engaged well with the project
- Ownership and passion: The young people who engaged in the South Yorkshire group all had underlying passion and drive to make a difference to others affected by domestic abuse
- The project provided an independent forum for young people to have their voices heard
- Organically grown: 100% driven by young people
- Flexibility: We were able to respond to the needs of young people and be flexible with their engagement and how we delivered the project
- Positive relationship with lead organisation AVA and trusted to 'get on with it'

Challenges

- Not enough resources or money to develop the project to its full potential, so additional funding was sought
- Asking staff to commit to supporting young people to engage at the training stage was a barrier for young people to attend as staff didn't have the capacity
- Some staff felt unsupported by their organizations which limited their ability to engage
- Working across two sites was logistically challenging and we ended up running two projects which drained resources even further
- Being a voluntary sector project sometimes left us feeling disempowered and unable to access or influence at a strategic level, for us and the young people
- Disjointed relationships between organisations meant we felt we were not always 'linked up' so ended up working in Silo's at times.

Learning from AVA Project

Partnership working was key to the success of AVA project but also acted as a limitation to recruiting young people. In future, we would ensure that we had buy in from organizations at a senior level and there is a clear understanding of expectations of both staff time and outcomes for them.

At times we were too ambitious with what we wanted to achieve within the constraints we had regarding resources. This left us frustrated at times and in hindsight, we could have reined ourselves in more.

The young people who formed the group were all at different levels of ability and recovery so this meant we had to be mindful and gentle with our approach to training sessions.

We learnt to be flexible in our approach, understanding that young people may not be able to attend every session or commit to each activity or piece of work. We recognised early on that we needed to create many opportunities for them to engage in different ways, and support with practical things like childcare, transport and refreshments were crucial to helping them stay engaged.

We learnt to be skilled jugglers!!! Juggling projects and young people across two sites with multiple ideas and differing levels of availability and resources.

Chilypep's Top Tips!

- Be realistic with time commitment expectations of both staff and young people.
 - Be prepared to go off plan; be willing to change, adapt, take risks and recognise when to stop and do something else!
 - Have an open door policy; if young people can return to the group at any time they will!
 - Work with organizations with a similar ethos regarding young people
 - Our work is based on the seven Youth Work Principles – this was crucial for us in delivering this project:
1. Young people choose to take part.
 2. Start with the young person's view of the world.
 3. Treat young people with respect – by listening to what young people say.
 4. Seek to develop young people's skills and attitudes rather than remedy 'problem behaviours'.
 5. Help young people develop stronger relationships and collective identities.
 6. Respect and value difference.
 7. Promote the voice of young people – all young people have a right for their voices to be heard.

What next for AVA project and Youth Educators in South Yorkshire?

Although the AVA project in South Yorkshire will end at the end of March 2016, we hope to have a lasting impact and legacy in the area.

We are hosting a conference on 4th March to showcase the work and achievements of the group.

We will be presenting our research findings to strategic boards and cabinets across the City, and we hope that this will influence service provision for other young people in the future.

It would be great for young people's voices and hard work be recognized and to have a positive impact.

The work of the project and the research findings have been used to support a partnership bid between those organisations in Sheffield involved in AVA to the Big Lottery Women and Girls Initiative, which will allow us to continue and build on the work the AVA project has done. Peer Educators will be central to the success of this and we hope some of them will remain to work on this exciting project, should we secure the funding

We hope that all the young people who have been involved with the AVA project, for however long or short a time, take away positive memories and new skills that they can use as they move on to next stage of their lives.

Useful contacts

For contact details of any of the organisations mentioned in this report please contact:

Lesley.Pollard@chilypep.org.uk

Contact information of organisations from the South Yorkshire AVA project:

Chilypep

11 Southey Hill,
Sheffield S5 8BB.
Tel: 0114 234 8846
Email: info@chilypep.org.uk
www.chilypep.org.uk

Against Violence and Abuse (AVA Project)

Fourth Floor, Development House,
56 Leonard Street,
London EC2A 4LT.
Tel: 0207 5490 280
Email: ifo@avaproject.org.uk
www.avaproject.org.uk

Young Womens Housing Project (Y.W.H.P.)

P.O. Box 303,
Pond Street,
Sheffield S1 1YD.
Tel: 0114 268 0580.
www.ywhp.org.uk

Rotherham Rise

(formerly Rotherham Womens Refuge)
PO Box 769,
Rotherham S60 9JJ.
Email: enquiries@rotherhamrise.org.uk
www.rotherhamrise.org.uk

Sheffield Voluntary Sector Children and Young People's Network

c/o Vida Sheffield
Knowle House
4 Norfolk Park Road
Sheffield S2 3QE
Tel: 0114 275 0101
Email: admin@vidasheffield.org.uk
www.vidasheffield.org.uk

Other useful information:

Helplines

- Sheffield Domestic Abuse Helpline
0808 808 2241
- Childline
08001111
- National domestic abuse helpline
0808 2000 247
- Respect Phone line
0808 802 4040/0808 801 0327

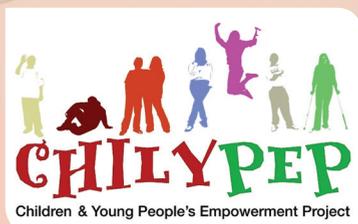
For help and information search:

- <http://thisisabuse.direct.gov.uk/>
- www.thehideout.org.uk
- www.respectphoneline.org.uk
Or email info@respectphoneline.org.uk

If you are at risk of or are being hurt call the police on 999

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- The Big Lottery Reaching Communities Fund
- The Brelms Trust
- The Freshgate Trust
- Sheffield Town Trust
- The JG Graves Charitable Trust



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Patron: The Rt Hon Lord David Blunkett of Brightside and Hillsborough

