

Story Telling Session Engaging Young People – Inverclyde Youth Health Forum

Inverclyde Youth Health Forum was set up in 2008. Inverclyde CHP were keen to engage with young people as part of the community engagement strategy and had been made aware of a Youth Forum that had been set up in Borders that had worked well. It was felt that a similar Youth Forum could be set up for the benefit of Inverclyde to get young people aware and interested in health matters. Therefore, the perfect opportunity for Inverclyde CHP to get young people interested in the health forum came at the end of the summer of 2008.

The Inverclyde Youth Festival ran over four consecutive days at various locations in Inverclyde from 8th – 11th August 2008. The festival had a different event on each day and each event targeted different groups of young people. This was Inverclyde's first ever Youth Festival and was the single largest event in Inverclyde in 2008. It was set up by Inverclyde Council's Community Learning & Development Youth Work Team and its main sponsors were River Clyde Homes, National Lottery, James Watt College, Inverclyde CHP, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde etc.

The events at the festival were aimed at 11 – 25 year olds and they were consulted on the types of activities they would like to see. During the consultation, young people told Inverclyde Council they wanted events where they could participate in a safe environment.

A Health Zone was set up at the Youth Festival in the Inverclyde Waterfront Leisure Centre by the CHP and there were various activities set up and health information was made available. Information available at the Health Zone included sexual health, oral health, alcohol and drugs and HPV immunisation. There were also activities relating to stress management such as head massage and fruit and bottled water were provided free of charge to promote healthy eating/drinking.

Incentives were made available for young people to attend the health zone such as competitions to win iPods. There was a lot of press coverage for the health zone and festival as a whole.

Courtesy of Young Scot a big brother video style diary room was set up and the young people were asked questions regarding what health means to them. The diaries were made in to a DVD for the purpose of promoting health issues (available from Inverclyde CHP) to other young people. The issues that the young people were asked about in the diary room were:

- Do you worry about health?
- Where would you go for health services across Inverclyde?
- Have you heard of the Sandyford Clinic?
- What would be the best way for us to promote good health?
- What can we do to make services better?
- What did you like about the festival?

Young people at the event were asked to fill in a card at the health zone to say whether they would be interested in getting involved in a Youth Health Forum. The amount of interest was positive and a follow up event was held in February 2009. From this follow up event a core group of 10 young people were established who agreed to take forward the youth health forum.

Running in parallel to this, Inverclyde Council is in the process of setting up a Youth Council. The Health Improvement Team who set up the Youth Health Forum is working with the Council to support the Youth Council and have the young people from the health forum involved on it.

The group is supported by the Health Improvement Practitioner – Youth Health (CHP) and a Youth Practitioner from Inverclyde Council's Community Learning and Development Youth Team and they meet fortnightly with the group. It was agreed that membership of the group should be open to people aged 12 – 25.

The Forum arranged an event for Mental Health Awareness Week. The group are also focusing on getting information out to young people about what health is and how to access services. The group are also considering health drop in sessions and how to interest more young people in their own health and the health of the community