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**SUBJECT: CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION GRANT: ACCESS  
COMMUNITY TRUST**



## **Reducing youth anti-social behaviour in Lowestoft through street-level engagement; reporting the results of a 3-month pilot.**

The report presented below details the work conducted by Access Community Trust in reducing anti-social behaviour (ASB) via the street-level engagement of 8-18 year olds in Lowestoft's Town Centre between 25/06/14 – 25/09/14.

### **The problem**

“An increase in calls to the local police in relation to large groups of youngsters (numbers of 30 – 40 are being reported) creating problems for local businesses and issues such as underage drinking and smoking are being reported alongside the anti-social behaviours such as causing damage to property.” – PCSO Michael Soanes, of the Lowestoft North Safer Neighbourhood Team

### **The Task**

To work with a minimum of 40 individuals on a one to one basis during the three month pilot by delivering outreach support in the form of two members of staff engaging at 'street' level with those young people who are congregating in large groups, contributing to ASB or generally being a public nuisance.

Support will include signposting to other services, giving access to meaningful activity and positive use of time interventions (delivered by the staff) and/or referral to specialist agencies in respect of drug/alcohol/mental health or other issues.

Education and Employment opportunities will also be explored by the staff with individuals who are able to engage on this level.

### **Support of Police & Crime Plan objectives**

**Vulnerable young people** – working with this target group who are committing crime and/or being involved in low level illegal street activity.

**Substance misuse** – working with young people using or contemplating using substances. Making correct referrals to appropriate agencies and providing diversional activity.

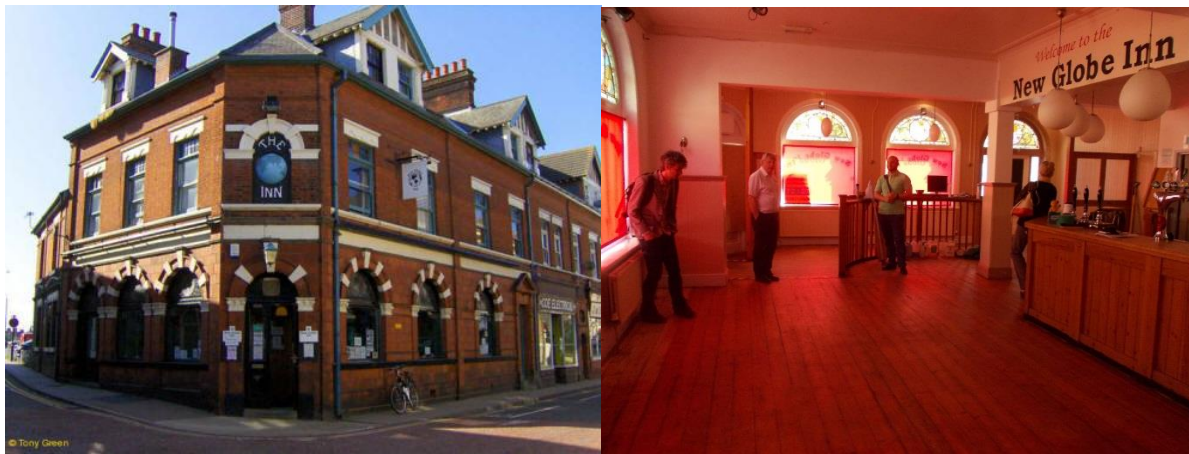
**Creating a safer night time economy** – reducing ASB on the streets, reducing intimidation, liaison with police, town pastors etc.

## **The approach**

Two members of staff conducting weekly outreach work within the town centre that seeks to engage 8 – 18 year olds in parallel with the opening of a Lowestoft-based aspirational youth venue between 5pm and 9pm each Thursday.

Street-level engagement takes the form of brief, informal and friendly chats with individuals or groups of young people and the promotion of our youth venue both verbally and by flyer.

Our aspirational youth venue called “Access The Globe” is located at 131 High Street Lowestoft, at the site of the former Globe Inn.

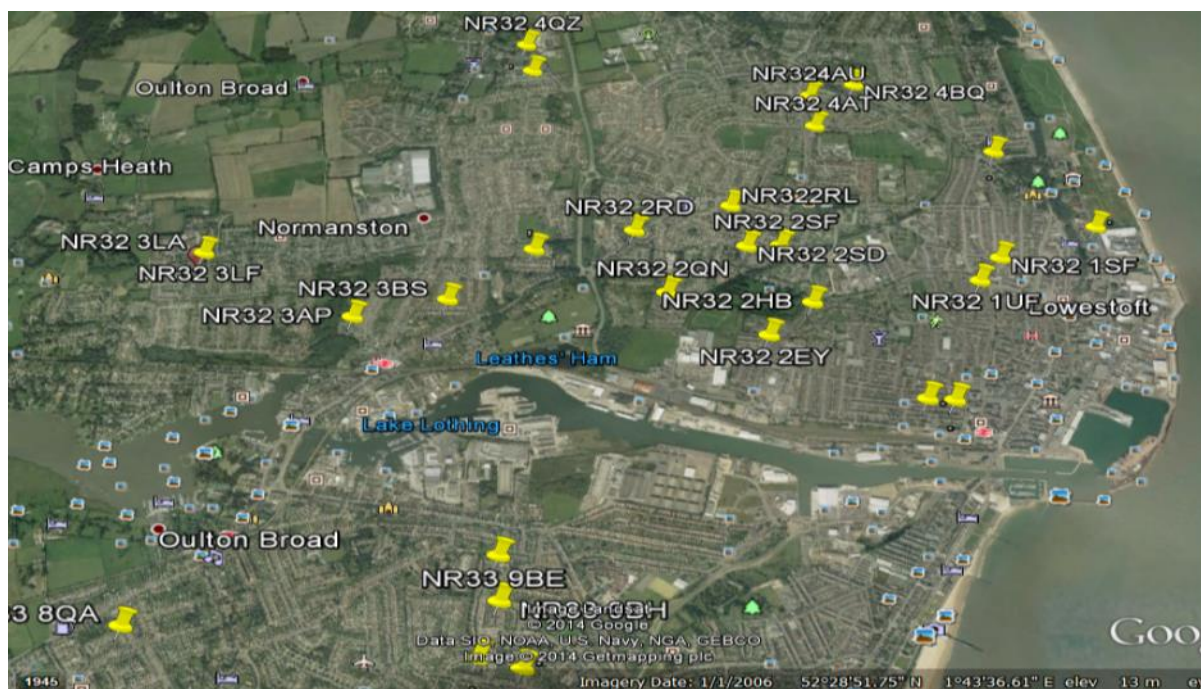


We welcome all young people, irrespective of group size and invite them to spend time at the project, socialising with each other and building trust and rapport with staff. Free hot and cold refreshments are always available in addition to free Wi-Fi access.

### **Stats at a glance:**

- 81 individuals engaged with
- 296 visits to the youth venue
- 42 instances of providing advice and guidance
- 91 uses of IT
- 217 hot meals served to 69 individuals
- 2 individuals referred to our in-house Education, Employment & Training Mentors
- 1 individual referred to NHS Stop Smoking Services
- 2 individuals participated in pilot of Homework Club

It became readily apparent to the staff involved that the young people we were engaging had previously lacked meaningful evening activities in which to participate. All the young people we have encountered to date have been aged 8 – 18 years old and reside almost exclusively within the Kirkley and Harbour Wards of Lowestoft.

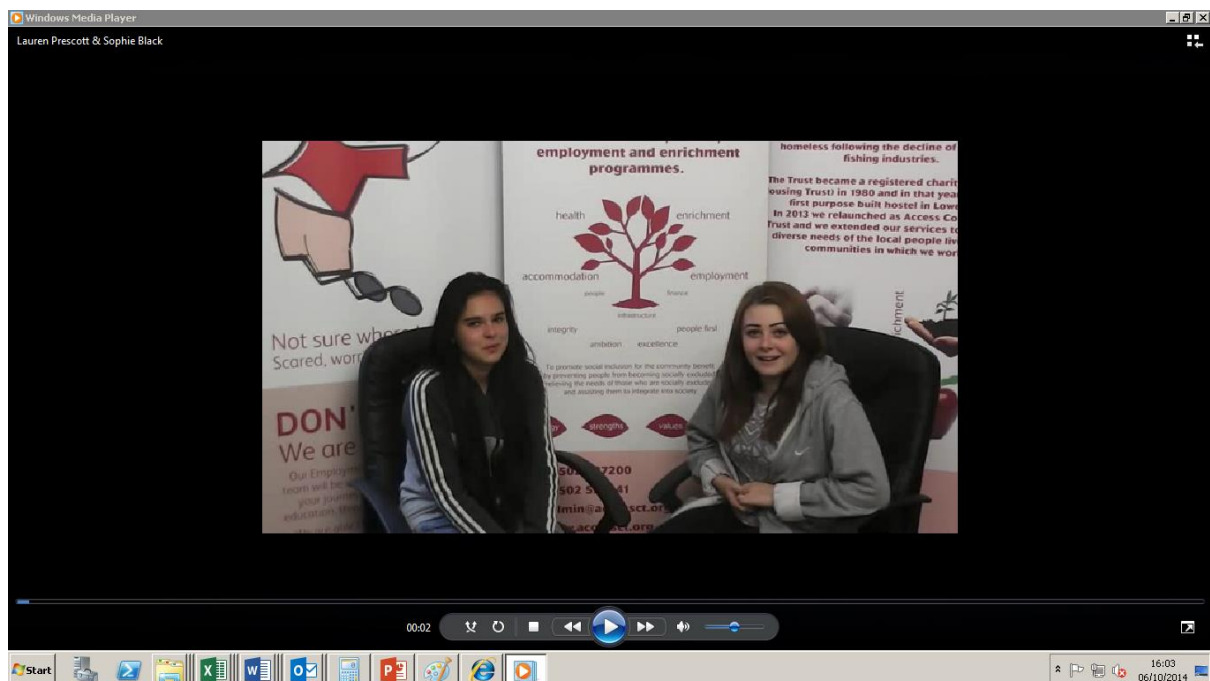


The majority of the young people we have seen currently attend Ormiston Denes Academy (62.7%), 11.8% at Pupil Referral Units and the remaining 25.5 % split reasonably equally between Benjamin Britten High School, Lowestoft College and school leavers.

### **Awareness and publicity**

We continue to raise local awareness our project and have publicised our presence within the town through direct communications at street level and the provision of posters and flyers to local businesses and schools. In addition, we also held an open evening on August the 14<sup>th</sup> which saw representatives from The Police, Lowestoft Vision, The Lowestoft Mayor, our local MP and Ormiston Denes Academy staff. This event received media coverage in the form of a press release in The Lowestoft Journal on August the 29<sup>th</sup> – article attached.

**What the young people have to say:** On the 4<sup>th</sup> of September we invited young people to participate in a video interview where they could tell us what it was like to be a young person in Lowestoft.



Example questions and answers:

**What do you think of Lowestoft** – *“Rubbish, we get accused of everything first and get the blame for everything”*

**What’s good in Lowestoft** – *“Everyone talks about coming here (The Globe), It’s that or McDonalds and the arcade. Everyone gets excited for a Thursday night”*

**What would you change about Lowestoft** – *“What wouldn’t I change about Lowestoft. The violence, safety for teenager, there is nothing to do, you have to pay for everything. All we do on a week night is go to meet everyone, hang out in McDonalds and go to the arcade if anyone has any money left.”*

**What do you like about The Globe** - *“Being here sorta makes me feel comfortable, because I haven’t had a very good past, and when I come here I feel that I can talk to people and be myself and not have to worry about things. Anyone is welcome.”*

**If the Police asked you, how would you reduce youth anti-social behaviour in the town?** – *“Start up more things like this, because it gets them off the street. People do it [ASB] because they get bored”*

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## **Case studies**

### **CB – Age 16**

**Before engaging with our project** – Previous issues with the Police arising from time spent congregating on the streets; riding scooters in public areas, free-running on rooftops, causing a public nuisance and exhibiting behaviour in school which was a cause for concern.

**Staff observations** – CB was one of the first young people to attend The Globe and was quick to positively engage with staff and tell us about his past. He appears to have a positive influence over many of the other young men in the group as they look up to him and is growing to be a role-model for the rest of the group. CB has expressed an interest to compete in amateur martial arts/boxing and is receiving support to help set measurable targets to begin a career of boxing/martial arts. CB has responded positively to the idea of receiving support for his academic homework from school and is working with staff to identify suitable time to do this.

### **BW – Age 13**

**Before engaging with our project** – BW is the eldest of 3 children who are cared for by their father, of which the youngest suffers with severe behavioural problems. When we first engaged with him he was experiencing regular physical and verbal bullying from other young people which was leading to self-harm on many occasions. Each week BW would recount the week's instances of bullying and we would notice fresh cuts on his arms regularly. Even the group of people he chose to congregate on the streets with clearly did not have his best interests at heart and would steal from him on occasion.

**Staff observations** – We have seen a dramatic change in BW over the 12 weeks we have known him. He no longer associates with the same crowd he was previously having negative experiences with and has successfully avoided further bullying as a result of avoidance and also increased confidence and a positive change in personal-wellbeing. This increased confidence and social ability has lead him to recently find a girlfriend who he enjoys spending time with and cooking for at The Globe each Thursday. BW has sought our assistance in giving up smoking and is in contact with NHS stop smoking services as a result. Furthermore, he used our 1:1 homework facility to gain assistance in filling the application for Police Cadets which he hopes to join soon.