Signposts Stafford

The project is aimed at men who are fathers and young men who are likely to be fathers in the future, in particular those for whom there are issues of:
- family breakdown
- on out of work benefits,
- criminal & anti-social behaviour
- drug & alcohol misuse
- actual or threatened homelessness.

Tying in with the BRFC definitions of ‘Troubled Families’ and the issues we have identified as being common in these men with whom we currently work.

Initial engagement will be through participation in a programme of activity-based sessions using drumming, held weekly over 6 weeks. Alongside there will be 2 additional sessions where they will make drums. These will teach skills and build up relationship between the men and with staff/volunteers running the group. Alongside these activities specific input will be offered around legal, financial, emotional & sexual health issues for men. Through these sessions they will learn relationship, parenting, life and work skills to become more effective fathers, co-parents and members of their community. They will do this by learning skills to help them and their families to be safe, healthy and well, responsible and informed.

The second aim of the project will be that as relationship and trust are built further between the men and staff/volunteers through participation in the group, further individual life and work skill needs will be identified. These will be met through other learning opportunities offered through the main Signpost centre, including money management education, job club provision to teach skills and offer support needed to become work ready. Learndirect online courses will be offered to provide specific relevant qualifications to complement this process. Staff and volunteers will offer a mentoring role to support this process. These inputs will be delivered through the well-established and experienced community hub of the Signpost Centre. Current staff services and the infrastructure of the Signpost Centre will offer a strong foundation to underpin these extra provisions and give continuity of practical and emotional support for these men and their families.

The legacy of staff training, of skills learnt by the men and purchase of drumming equipment through this project will enable the input to be offered on an ongoing basis, and to a wider section of the Highfields community (both by and for the community). These will be used to work with those already identified as ‘Troubled’ families (Signposts is currently applying for accreditation through the BRFC project), but also to prevent other vulnerable families from becoming ‘Troubled’. This will be achieved by providing them with the tools they need to be more effective parents, to build stronger relationships and be more engaged as members of the community, and by teaching life skills which move them towards being work ready and off benefits. Through becoming more educated and self-reliant, resilience will be built within the families and communities of Highfields.

The information you provide will be used to identify the impact and outcomes of your project to achieving the Building Resilient Families and Communities outcomes:
- Children back into school
- Reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour
- Parents on the road back into work
- Reduction in costs to the public purse
- Increasing resilience of families and communities, leading to reduction in demand on specialist and targeted services.

13. Please indicate which one or more of the following outcomes you expect to achieve from the project:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improve children’s attendance at school</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Reduce anti-social behaviour / criminality</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help adults into work (or help them to become 'job ready')</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build resilience within families and communities, to reduce dependency on targeted and specialist services</td>
<td>x</td>
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**Evaluation**

As part of the agreed conditions of your grant, you are expected to return this Monitoring and Evaluation Form six months, then 12 months from receipt of funding.

**Name of Organisation:**
Signposts (Stafford) Ltd

**Organisational Address:**
The Signpost Centre
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**Name of Project Lead / Contact Person:**
Linda Stone

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01785 223860

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**Which geographical area/s is the project targeted? (please tick all those that apply)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographical Area</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stafford</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staffordshire Moorlands</td>
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<tr>
<td>Newcastle</td>
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<td>Lichfield</td>
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<td>Tamworth</td>
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<tr>
<td>East Staffordshire</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Staffordshire</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cannock Chase</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Please describe how your project has contributed to the relevant outcomes and explain how you can evidence the achievement of the outcomes and provide any documentary evidence to support this.

N.B. Not all of the following outcomes will be relevant to your organisation / project. Therefore you only need to provide information on outcomes which are relevant to your organisation / project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reducing anti-social behaviour and / or criminality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How has your project contributed to achieving this outcome?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The drumming part of the project provided a positive diversionary activity for those taking part at a time of day when the centre is normally closed (evenings) when ASB or criminality are more likely to take place. Since several of those taking part in the project have previously been involved in the criminal justice system as well as alcohol and drug abuse, this project has provided positive activities including making drums and playing them together as a group. Service users discovered new skills and gained confidence in old skills, resulting in improvement of confidence and self-esteem.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Many of the service users were struggling with addictions directly caused by their low self-esteem. Given that ASB and criminality are commonly linked to substance misuse, the participation in a positive diversionary activity that resulted in improved self-esteem had a positive effect on reducing ASB and criminal behaviour.

What evidence do you have?

During the drumming course, two of the young men involved reached a crisis point in one of the sessions, whereby they were made homeless. They were also heavily abusing alcohol and had no income, even in the form of benefits. The course provided them with a positive diversionary activity on that particular evening and also in subsequent sessions, which prevented any immediate ASB or criminal behaviour which could have resulted either as expression of their anger about the situation or as a means of gaining finance in illegal ways.

During any previous crises the pattern has been that they get very drunk, get into fights or cause vandalism, often resulting in being arrested. One of the young men found he was particularly skilled at drumming, and therefore his self-esteem was visibly boosted.

By taking part in the course we built relationship with them. They then went on to access help from staff at Signposts. This enabled them both to access and subsequently maintain housing and local government benefits. One of the young men as a direct result of staff intervention has now been in continuous employment for several months and is looking to secure his own tenancy. Both have reduced their alcohol intake to a safe level, which vastly reduces the risk of criminal behaviour (almost all of their previous criminal incidents had been connected to high levels of alcohol intake). Since one is now working and the other is now receiving benefits, this reduces the likelihood of future criminal behaviour to gain
Another man was struggling with alcohol addictions for about 14 years. During the course he was in the early stages of abstinence from alcohol. The course gave him a positive activity outside of our opening hours, which helped to distract him from the effects of withdrawal, thereby reducing the risk of him drinking, which usually led to ASB.

“My family and I have had a really rough time the last few months – everyone has had something go wrong – we lost our house, I’m off sick from work, my wife’s work wanted to finish her off, my son with special needs was driving us all mad and my daughter got pregnant. The pressure meant we nearly split up and I kept falling out with the kids. We thought we were going to be homeless. Doing the drumming with my son was great – I found it really stressful at first but found it got easier – I even did the concert! My family and I all started getting help from staff at Signposts – we’ve now got a home, we’re still together, my son’s started college and my other one is working. We’ve also sorted things out with our daughter and are all set to help her when she has the baby. I’m now looking at new possible jobs. We know where to come now when we need help”

Please give details of your key achievements over the past six months:

1. Overcoming the many challenges to engage 10 families in the drumming project including 5 drumming sessions, 2 drum making sessions and a final performance to an invited audience
2. Celebration activity attended by 6 young men and 2 volunteers
3. Training completed for 9 staff / volunteers in the Outcomes Star measuring tool ready to use with clients
4. LearnDirect account set up and training received in the running of it
5. Training in running of CAP money management course completed by member of staff and first course about to begin
6. Training for running of CAP Job Club completed by volunteer and due to start in October
7. Debt/money management drop-in begun

The key outcomes from the above have been

a. Building of new relationships in the community within and across generations
b. Strengthening of existing relationships.
c. Building of relationship with staff, volunteers and other positive role models as a basis to facilitate future input.
d. Significant increase in confidence and self-esteem of participants through engaging with drumming project – especially through learning new skills and being part of a group.
e. Staff and volunteers learned new skills and confidence both formally and informally, which they can apply to future work
f. Evidence of increased resilience of service users in crisis moments.
g. Service users growing in self-esteem and confidence allowing them to find work or become more proactive in seeking employment and training – 4 currently now employed and one completed 3 weeks of training for new career route, one exploring new career routes as an alternative to remaining on sick leave in current post

**Please give details of how the project has been evaluated:**

We have used multiple ways to evaluate the effectiveness of the project. Service users were asked to complete a questionnaire to ascertain current skills in order that we could evidence the learning of new skills.

We focused on self-esteem and confidence as we believe this is often a key factor in society that leads to ASB and criminal behaviour. Observations were carried out by staff and community professionals to track and record growth and development in this area.

Photographs and video to evidence new skills

Video interviews at the end of the drumming part of the project to record impact

Diary sheet for each drumming session – recorded 4 key areas
- Positive outcomes / comments
- Concerns
- Useful info/other feedback
- Action points

Debrief sessions at end of each session to tailor project to perceived needs

Final performance to family, friends & key community figures to showcase skills (see the following links)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=T6AQMCundNo
https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=wnRvoK9crBY
https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=5L0hUOFN7e4

In the main Signpost Centre daily diary sheets are completed to record subsequent outcomes of work with clients