

Enthusiasm, Allenton, Derby

A voluntary, community organisation aimed at 11-18 year olds most at risk of offending and social exclusion that provides them with opportunities to fulfil their true potential; reduces anti-social behaviour and reduces the risk of young people entering into the Criminal Justice System.

No Enthusiasm for Gangster Lifestyle



The service delivered by Enthusiasm integrates into Neighbourhood working and links closely with the police, Housing Managers, parenting support organisations, youth organisations, Connexions, local businesses, schools and general organisations working within the locality.

Enthusiasm engages with local people who not only provide intelligence but also solutions to problems, thus regenerating the community from within. The organisation operates bases across Derby for young people to access its services and has recently opened its first venture in nearby Nottingham.

“I got involved five years ago when there was a nightclub here and I thought 'wow' because it had the kinds of things I hadn't seen before like table tennis and a pool table and DJ decks,” says James Robinson, who grew up in Allenton.

“I got referred by my school as part of a Youth Improvement Programme because of problems with anti-social behaviour. It's helped me a lot because it showed me that there's a lot more to life than crime. I can play the decks, the X-box, or pool and help other young people rather than going around smashing things up.

“I was an apprentice for a year but now I'm a 'mentor' myself to some of the young people - I talk to them about school, home, anger and anything really that they need to talk about.

“I'm living proof that Enthusiasm works- I'm a lot more mature now and I know what I want, which is to help kids in the area with the same sort of problems and issues I had when I was younger. I'm in charge of two youth clubs now and I do a lot of youth work - organising litter picks, helping old people in the area, working on allotments.

“The kids feel they can relate to me. I live here, I've been in gangs and I've done it all but I got out and now I want to show others that they can turn their lives' around too. I hope 'Enthusiasm' goes national and other kids around the country can gain what I've gained.



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Chris Doyle, a senior manager with Enthusiasm agrees: “I grew up in a deprived area of Derby, the parks were run down, houses were trashy with burnt out cars in the streets and there was nothing to do.

“I've been involved with Enthusiasm since I was 12 and I'm 25 now. I'd seen various youth initiatives which had let me down but not in this case. I came in the summer holidays Monday to Friday and had loads of fun - some fantastic activities including DJing and volunteering. It gave me positive channel for my energy instead of drink, drugs and fighting.

“I was caught in a nightclub with Ecstasy tabs and looking back my choice was either to end up in prison or dead - or to turn my life around. I needed to get away from the gangster lifestyle and 'Enthusiasm' helped me do that.

“Enthusiasm gave me a lot of training and guidance. I became a youth worker to give something back and I'm a senior manager here now with responsibility for operations across Derby. I manage 15 people and go to meetings with Neighbourhood Managers, Social Workers and others working with young people.

“We're not a 9-5 organisation; we'll take calls at all hours. The youth workers here are part of the community and so they can relate to the kids who live here. We will talk about love, care and respect with the kids because often they don't get that in other areas of their lives. We're not successful with everybody but if we can help a few kids change their lives to something more positive then that makes it all worthwhile.”