

Wheelbase

SAFER FUTURE COMMUNITIES
Empowering local voluntary & community partnerships

Founded in 1991 to address the problem of high levels of vehicle crime in Radford, Nottingham, Wheelbase has since developed into a provider of alternative education, an Independent Special School and a provider of a diverse range of youth club style activities.

For over two decades, Wheelbase has used the thrill of engines and the exhilaration of riding, driving and racing machines to reach out to troubled young people, drawing them away from their problems and back into education, within a stimulating and inspiring environment.

Many of the young people referred to the school have been affected by a range of problems including criminal behaviour, turbulent home life, learning difficulties, truancy, drug and alcohol abuse, social exclusion and lack of ambition or self esteem. Wheelbase teaches them mechanics, literacy, numeracy and life skills, enabling them to restore their self-

respect, change their behaviour and go on to lead happier and more successful lives, armed with accredited qualifications.

From its conception as an idea by two police officers and a probation officer to work with hardened motor vehicle offenders and with those in danger of offending and becoming socially excluded, Wheelbase is now registered as an Independent Special School with Ofsted, each year successfully enabling young people aged 14 and over to gain GCSE equivalent qualifications in Maths and English and industry standard motor vehicle qualifications.

In addition, two members of Wheelbase's board of governors are senior police officers and the school offers placements for trainee police officers and community safety officers, benefiting both the young people and the police by enabling them to interact on a social level rather than in conflict situations.

The skills developed by the school help the young people move into further training



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and employment, decreasing their likelihood of offending and taking part in anti-social behaviour. Of the 16 year 11 learners at the school in 2011/12, all gained qualifications, two went into employment, one returned to Wheelbase for extra part-time literacy support and 12 went on to local colleges to complete level one and level two vocational courses.

Nationally around 20% of individuals arrested and proceeded against for notifiable offences are under 18, costing the country's police and justice systems around £4billion a year, according to Youth and Justice Board figures. This does not include youth unemployment, which is estimated at costing the country £97,000 over the lifetime of one young person not in education, employment or training. Therefore Wheelbase's early intervention work tackling truancy and exclusion is vital to the prevention of youth crime and the saving of substantial amounts of public funding.

The success of Wheelbase, which has an 81% average attendance can be seen in the results of a survey that showed only 28% of the school's students reoffended in the 12 months since leaving Wheelbase, compared with an average of 72% reoffending by similar young people not involved in the school.

The annual cost of running Wheelbase is in excess of £600,000. Alongside the charges for the day school (their main income is contracted work with education) the charity's work is also funded by a core grant from Nottingham City Council's Voluntary Sector Investment programme, recent funding from Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Futures, Big Lottery - Reaching Communities and Lloyds TSB, alongside general fund raising.

For further information on Wheelbase visit www.wheelbase.org.uk.

