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PROJECT TO HELP ANGRY YOUNG PEOPLE SLASHES RE-OFFENDING RATES

An award-winning project to help angry young men and women keep their cool is helping slash youth reoffending rates, according to research figures published today.

The project – D’Fuse Anger Management Programme – is a programme for young offenders whose poor control of their temper has contributed to their involvement with the criminal justice system. It is run by nurses in the Leeds Youth Offending Service.

The nurses work with the young people to help them manage their anger better, and hopefully, avoid committing further offences as a result.

The study followed 88 young offenders from 1 January 2005 to 1 April 2006, half of whom attended the programme and half of whom did not. Of those not on the programme, 44% went on to re-offend (carrying out 86 offences). However, among young people who attended the D’Fuse programme, reoffending rates dropped dramatically, to only 25% (carrying out 26 offences).

Tracey McCaffrey, team nurse, who leads the D’Fuse programme team said:

“This is great news - our professional experience has always told us that this programme was making a difference for the better, but these new figures clearly show just how big a difference that is.”

Edwina Harrison, chief officer (children’s services) for Leeds City Council’s Department of Social Services said

“Many young offenders have difficulty dealing with their anger. This report shows the great benefits that can be achieved when specialists and young people work together to help them learn to control their anger better. Every young person who is able to build a life away from crime has to be a cause for rejoicing.”

Maggie Smith, deputy manager of Leeds Youth Offending Service added:

“Leeds YOS looks for creative ways to help young people change problem behaviour. The D’Fuse anger management programme does what it says on the tin.

More than 150 young people, aged 10-17 years old have completed the D’Fuse programme. Young people on the programme have been helped to turn around persistent patterns of aggressive or violent behaviour which have resulted in them serving prison terms, or destroying relationships with families or friends. By teaching young people to manage their behaviour appropriately they are able to rebuild their lives and, most importantly prevent other people becoming victims.

Last year, D’Fuse won a prestigious Nursing Times award for Innovation in Speciality.