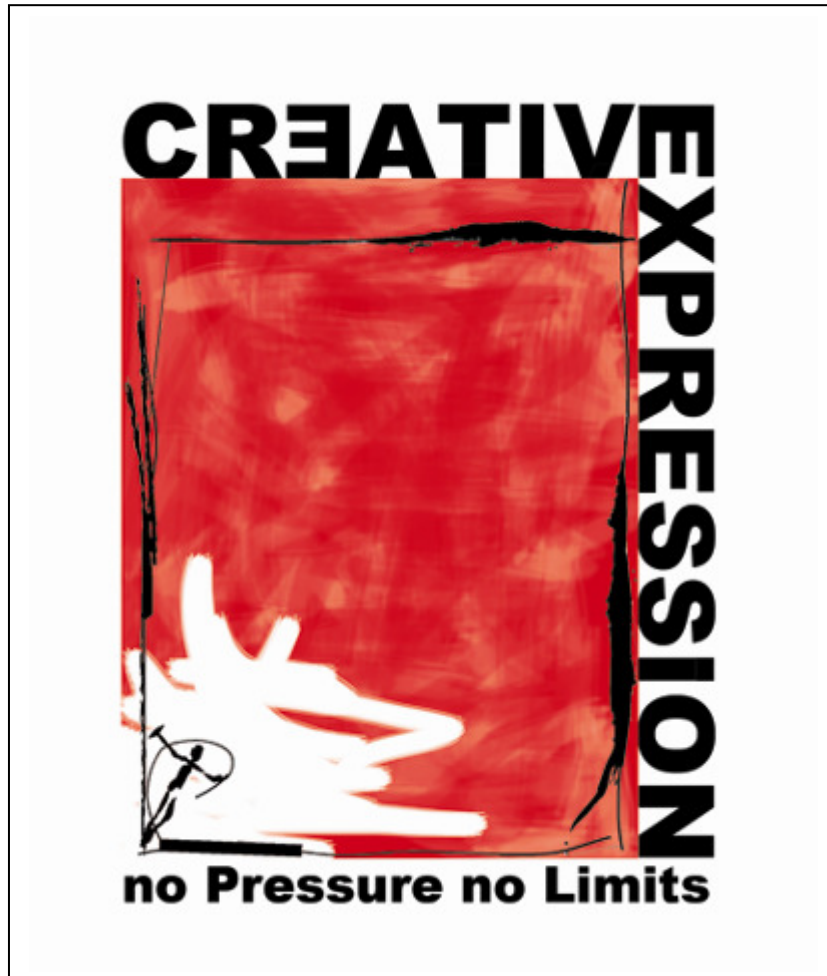


# BLAST PROJECT 2008-2011 Cornwall



**BLAST is supported by  
Cornwall Council**



## Cornwall Youth Offending Team ~ Creative Arts& Health Project

### Summary

Creative Expression is engaged in partnership with Cornwall Youth Offending Team to work with young offenders and those at risk of offending and NEET situations in the county in 2007/2011.

The Cornwall Youth Offending Team works with young people aged between 7 and 19 years of age at varying levels of antisocial and/or offending behaviour. The pilot project will primarily work with the young people at the most severe end of disaffection and volatile behaviour, those who are labelled 'hard to reach' or 'hard to engage with'.

Many of the young people referred to this project will have issues relating to their offending such as substance misuse, homelessness, unemployment, and lack of finances, lack of education/exclusion from education violent and sexual abuse, neglect and exclusion from society, often combined with learning difficulties and mental health issues.

Research demonstrates that such young people need to access services not part of mainstream provision because they have not been successful in achieving within the normal routes of learning and development. Furthermore our clients will have mostly failed to engage with initiatives not personally tailored to their needs and have not been able to integrate into systems which could offer help and support.

It is recognised that in developing an interest in the activity the young person may:

1. Initially see this as an opportunity to express the issues that concern him/her about the areas of life that have been blockages to self development (arts psychotherapy sessions) then
2. An activity that provides a route to further learning and skill development.
3. Be the catalyst to allow the young person to vent concerns and build up social self-esteem in such a way that he/she is able to move on to other learning, development and employment activity, and through that to reduce re offending.

The main Art& Health Forms we offer are:

Drama Music	Crafts/pottery/felt /willow/wood
Dance/Movement	Outdoor activities/Adventure
Visual Arts	Circus skills
Photography/Film	Comedy
Digital Media	Writing/poetry
Career planning and personal development	Dyslexia /visual thinking support

## Client Remit

Some of the young offenders will be placed on an Intensive Supervision and Surveillance programme (ISSP) by the courts. These young offenders are the 'high risk' offenders either through their persistency of offending or through the seriousness of their offences, and the ISSP is imposed as an alternative to a custodial sentence. As part of the ISSP young people are required to undertake a minimum of 25 hours a week supervision of which 15 hours should be related to education and training. Using the creative arts project identified, young people subject to an ISSP would receive additional support and guidance in turning their offending behaviour into more positive development and behaviour.

Other young people using the project activities will be subject to Supervision Orders. Although not quite at the level of those on an ISSP, this project will work with them to steer them away from progressing in their offending lifestyle and into education, training or employment.

The project could also be used with those of bail from the Court, through Bail Supervision. This is a Court ordered bail condition requiring the young person to have at least 3 weekly contacts for the duration of their bail. The successful and constructive completion of the bail period could have an effect on their Court disposal and again lead them away from criminal activity and into education training or employment.

Final user group are referrals from 'The white gold project' a police initiative to engage positively with young people at risk of offending and antisocial behaviour.

The project sets out to give as broad and relevant support as possible, therefore the approach incorporates work with the families/carers, siblings and education and training providers. Often the assessment on young people indicates that therapeutic intervention for the parent and their mental strength is at the heart of the child's personal and educational success. Therefore we want to offer therapeutic input to ensure that all parties use their resources effectively to support positive steps for the young person to re-engage and to start creating their lives.

The young people will be referred to after a comprehensive assessment by the Youth Offending Team and will then be assessed to see which activity may be of benefit to him/her.

## Aims and Objectives

The project's aim is to engage around 100 participants per year in tailored and highly personalised creative, educational, and therapeutic intervention in order to gain confidence, improve social skills, increase willingness, and ability to engage in group and mainstream activities and to reduce the risk of offending and re-offending.

Additionally and crucially, emphasis is on the therapeutic input of the offered activities that enable the clients to manage and/or resolve traumatic blockage by using psychotherapeutic methods. Improved emotional and behavioural stability will allow clients to progress into group activities and finally to engage in mainstream provisions for recreation, education and employment. This will reduce ongoing mental-health problems and related issues of drug and alcohol abuse, violence, self-harm, poverty and homelessness.

To project will engage 10 local artists, sports tutors and 4 arts psychotherapists and offers them the support in order to increase their ability to work with this particular client group. Generally, the engagement aims to increase their ability to work effectively in arts & health settings and other 'social arts' contexts.

26 parents and family members will receive specific support to manage their relationship with our client better and to improve their personal emotional well being and behaviour resources. This aims to give long-term benefit for families and the communities in which they live.

Through our outreach element, professionals are offered consultation and training to gain more effectiveness to work with severely disaffected clients. Some of the art work produced will be part of shows and exhibitions, promoting arts and health activities in the region as well as each artist within the team.

### Methods

The project is integrative to the work each participant already receives through other engagements and input, e.g. school, Youth Offending Team, White Gold and other recreational organisations. By tapping into existing knowledge and interventions all agencies can use their efforts most effectively to support the client jointly. We achieve this, through thorough assessment procedures and a high supervision input for key workers and arts tutors/arts therapists.

The Creative Arts Project will offer a range of activities that the young person will identify with and be interested in, taking up the opportunity to learn more about themselves, social responsibility, and integration through the specific activity.

### **Special Benefits of Creative Work**

One main aspect of creative work is the integration of difficult personality-aspects during the process. Unlike the common education and work settings, creative intervention concentrates on stimulating positive, original thoughts and actions in clients. This stimulation takes place via the creative medium and is not restricted by educational standards or communication skills. A participant in a prison project expressed it as follows: *"Never mind if you can talk posh or not, you will be heard and seen. You can produce something of your own regardless of your background, education, and personal history . You can use weird and unsocial emotions as a force to create, not destroy!"*

As Creative Intervention works with materials and actions not generally used in every day life, fixed behaviour patterns cannot be applied. That enables us to trigger openness! Openness to look, think, feel about oneself, openness to connect emotions and experiences to the surroundings and openness to explore new techniques and behaviour patterns. The great advantage for Creative Work is the use of the medium as a safety net.

We believe that the creative work can change people's behaviour positively because understanding and self-judgement takes place. And by wanting to perform well with the medium new skills will be learned, physically and mentally.

Some clients are socially unconfident (ie. over-confident/aggressive/violent), traumatised or otherwise unable to cope with the demands of social interaction in everyday life. Combined with the possible intensity of the emotions triggered by the material in a creative setting, behaviour can explode. Therapeutically untrained providers might not have the experience and legal status to cope with such

behaviour, therefore creative work without qualified therapeutic background concentrates on the present and future behaviour. It will generally not address traumas and psychotic behaviour/emotions directly.

### **Special Benefits of Creative Therapeutic Work**

Creative Therapists have had intensive training in psychology, psychotherapy and counselling. That takes the work with our clients beyond the balancing interaction into a field of healing. Healing, being the incorporation of traumatising, personality-threatening experiences (past, present and future aspects). By using the arts materials to identify and express these aspects during the time of the interaction mental traumas and unwanted behaviour is manipulated positively and possibly resolved in order to achieve a balanced and social capable person.

Creative therapies will take up personal conflicts on a deeper level and will try to consciously deal with these. A therapy is successful when the client gains a realistic sense of acceptance and control over his or her disrupting emotions and behaviour. The specific Creative Psychotherapeutic and client orientated approach works on behavioural disorders and traumatic developments, which created anti social behaviour patterns, when required. Subconscious and blocked social resources are addressed and strengthened.

Creative Psychotherapy is a post graduate qualification registered with the Health profession Council if the UK ([www.hpcuk.org](http://www.hpcuk.org)).

If you would like to discuss anything in further detail, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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