



SWITCH FACTSHEET

What...?

- SWITCH aims to reduce drug related crime and the anti-social impact of the drug trade in Bristol. Working in partnership with service providers and agencies across Bristol, SWITCH reaches out and works alongside socially excluded and hard-to-reach drug users and dealers. We offer them a confidential non-judgmental service with viable options to help them out of dealing.

Who...?

- SWITCH was set up by a group of Bristol drugs and alcohol agencies that identified the need for a collaborative approach to existing drugs problems. The project has received funding from New Deal for Communities (NDC) and its pilot stage runs until September 2009. Stakeholders are:
 - Barton Hill Settlement - www.bartonhillsettlement.org.uk
 - IDEAL - www.ideal-cl.org.uk
 - Nilaari - www.nilaari.co.uk
 - CAAAD - www.bartonhillsettlement.org.uk/caaad.htm

Why...?

- Research carried out by IDEAL showed that economic dealers¹ in Bristol are increasingly using drug users to distribute their drugs.
- Growing numbers of users and, as a result, dealers, has led to an increase in open street dealing. This has impacted on communities, exposing younger people to drugs and causing concerns for safety.
- The IDEAL research showed a low awareness of crack-specific services, despite 92% of interviewees stating that they used crack.
- The Anti-Social Behaviour Team at the Housing Office has identified problems in the area with dealing houses and vulnerable tenants having their flats/houses taken over.
- A combination of poverty and low skills in the Bristol NDC areas drive drug dealing through its appeal as a fast and easy opportunity to make money.
- A number of problematic drug-users and dealers have been highlighted within these areas that are unable to access services. These continue to cause harm to themselves, their families and potentially neighbours and local business.

¹ Dealers who do not take the drugs they sell and deal purely for financial reasons.

- Many issues impact on SWITCH's client group. These could be inadequate skills, lack of housing, substance abuse etc. Currently, these services are delivered individually. This often means that chaotic users or dealers fall between services.

How...?

- SWITCH believes that providing a service for both users and dealers will help reduce street dealing and the associated problems for the community. It also believes that dealing is not necessarily an individual choice and, given the opportunity, many would prefer to work in a legitimate profession.
- SWITCH consists of two experienced outreach workers with established Bristol networks. These engage with local communities, users and dealers, offering a confidential, non-judgmental service that helps them identify solutions and get out of dealing.
- The project takes a partnership approach to service delivery, working with local service providers to develop solutions for its client group. Services offered include:
 - Substance Misuse
 - Financial / budgeting advice
 - Counselling
 - Housing & Tenancy Support
 - Mental Health
 - Skills
 - Work / Volunteering Opportunities
 - Business Advice
 - Advocacy
- Staff also work with Bristol agencies such as Probation, the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit and Housing services, to provide a referral route for clients who would not normally be able to access these services.
- Working across these agencies, the service can provide an overview of issues relating to the drugs market. Though it is strictly confidential to its clients, it can identify and relay information on trends and look to pilot solutions for these.

For more information, please contact:

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Referral forms are available on our website: www.switch-changegear.org.uk.