ON THE STREETS
PEER-TO-PEER COMMUNICATIONS

IT DOESN'T HAVE TO HAPPEN

Peer-to-peer communication is a unique and powerful tool. Young people are far more likely to accept information from their peers, rather than from adults. Street marketing or peer-to-peer communications are about young people talking to each other about the issues that affect them.

Street marketing teams

Street Marketing Teams (SMTs) are specially trained teams of young people who go out and talk directly to other young people in places where they are comfortable.

You will need approximately 10 young people aged between 10 and 18. Members of the team should be responsible and able to add credibility to your SMT work.

In order to find young people, you need to target areas where they're likely to hang out, such as skate parks or shopping centres. You could also contact Connexions, Youth Offending Teams, Youth Services, Care homes, Local youth groups/centres, Positive Futures, Young People's Substance Misuse Service or schools and colleges. You could also advertise on local radio or youth websites (see the "in the news: using the media" guide) but be careful how you describe your campaign activities. Phrases such as 'a community initiative' are likely to turn people off, where as 'young people supporting one another at street-level' will have far greater impact and appeal. You could offer incentives, such as a gift voucher for everyone who agrees to join your Street Marketing Team. Local businesses could support your campaign by helping towards the cost of the vouchers.

You will need to familiarise your Street Marketing Team with the campaign, and prepare them for the task ahead. Training will help to build team spirit and establish good working relationships within the team, which will be reflected in your campaign. It will also enable you to provide the campaign background to the project, and to prepare your team for situations they may encounter when they take the It Doesn't Have to Happen message to the streets.

Plan

- Think about when you want your Street Marketing Team's activity to take place. Are there events that you can tie it in with, for example Halloween, Bonfire night or the school holidays? Put together a timetable by working back from this date.
- Plan events and locations. Your activity needs to take place somewhere that is popular with young people. What do they do in their spare time? Where do they go during the day? What do they get up to at weekends? Where do they hang out? Places to consider include: high streets, shopping centres, leisure centres, sporting arenas, housing estates, skate parks, parks, youth and community centres, bus and train stations, 24-hour garages, off-licences and cafes. Whatever location you settle on, be sure to seek permission before embarking on your street marketing activities. Contact your local authority and/or police to let them know what's going on.
- What information and materials can you hand out on the day? Make sure you have enough time to produce these.

Deliver

- On the day, always have at least one adult with each group, and make sure everyone has that adult's phone number on them.
- Give your team follow-up request forms so that if anyone needs more information, you have enough details to deal with their query.

Evaluate

- What worked well?
- What could you do better next time?
- How can you learn from the experience?

SOME KEY DOS AND DON'TS

DO

> Involve: use the input of your Street Marketing Team members, to encourage pride in the project

> Encourage: it takes courage to talk to people on the streets. Prepare Street Marketing Teams for any rudeness they may encounter, and offer constant encouragement

DON'T:

> Be too ambitious: set sensible objectives for your SMTs

> Rush recruitment or training: be sure that your team members are confident, credible and reliable. Train them to deal effectively with every conceivable scenario

> Take risks: If you have any doubts about a particular place or project, make a different plan

IMPORTANT PAPERWORK

On the day, you must have an assessment report, an incident or injury report, consent forms, evaluation forms and insurance documentation. Because street marketing work involves direct contact with members of the public, it is crucial that you have public liability insurance.