

REGIONAL ANTI-DRUG

Druglink summarises the outcome of the government's attempt to give the glossy ad-agency treatment to local drug campaigns

AN EXPERIMENTAL partnership between local drugs and health workers, central government, and commercial marketing expertise bore fruit this spring. In England, Wessex, Trent and South East Thames regional health authorities unveiled local campaigns designed to pilot the government's plan to add a second tier to its UK-wide campaign. 'Local' campaigns are also being run in Scotland and Wales.

In organising this second tier, government put some of the most vocal critics of its national campaign — local drugs and health workers — in the driving seat. They were given the money — £100,000 per English health region — the freedom and the marketing consultancy and support to implement at least some of their fondest dreams about how to tackle drugs campaigning. Here's some highlights of what they did.

Trent aims for the cinemagoer

Trent chose to mount a number of independent campaigns organised by different health districts. At £42,000, the largest slice of the region's allocation went to fund Leicester Health Authority's campaign, featuring a 60-second cinema ad being screened in every cinema in Leicester for 30 weeks from 14 April. The aim is to use the techniques of youth-orientated lager ads to encourage cinemagoers to pick up a drug education leaflet available in the cinema. Inside is an explicitly harm-reductionist message on solvents as well as alcohol. Cut-out coupons allow readers to order packs of further information.

Youth-orientated plays are central to the campaigns in North Trent and Nottingham districts. The Channel Theatre Company is taking its *All Fixed Up* production on a five-week tour of schools in North Trent (see S.E. Thames for more on the play). In Nottingham, two productions aimed at different racial groups are playing in youth clubs, accompanied by training days for youth workers to help them deal with the fallout from the plays.

Wessex goes for the facts

Unlike the other two English regions, Wessex's "Get Drugwise" campaign is centrally coordinated by the region's drug problem team and public affairs department, rather than a collection of separate district campaigns.

'Public affairs' experience showed in the spate of ten press releases describing the campaign, and in advance publicity aimed at encouraging the press to play a positive role as part of the campaign rather than as critical bystanders. It worked — of all the campaigns, Wessex's press coverage was probably the most extensive and consistently sympathetic, giving much broader publicity than the specific cam-

paign could have achieved.

Pride of place probably goes to Project Icarus's *The Substance in Question* video. Their production has Peter McCann of BBC's *Tomorrow's World* delivering drug facts and drug consultant Dr Philip Fleming discussing drug problems, while ex-users give at times glowing accounts of how it all felt when it was new.

It's hard not to see the video as a *Drug Abuse Briefing* on wheels — parts of the script are strikingly similar to the text of ISDD's booklet, and the dispassionate objectivity of Peter McCann's presentation is distinctly ISDD-like.

Confusingly, some of the material for public consumption in Wessex carries the slogan, "There's No Such Thing As A Hard Or Soft Drug. A Drug... Is A Drug... Is A Drug" — not at all the message of the video aimed at a professional audience. "Get Drugwise" book-marks, the worst offenders in this doubletalk strategy, are being distributed in their thousands from public libraries and NHS premises.

For their £100,000, Wessex workers will also get a computerised drug information bank which will, the promise is, "be available to any authorised user in the world who has a suitable computer and a telephone line".

Scots adopt 'fanzine' methods

Scotland's £200,000 campaign was designed, said Health Minister Michael Forsyth, "to address the issues of AIDS and drug misuse in a way which is relevant to the lifestyles of the majority of young people". From 6 March a series of six full-page ads appeared weekly in tabloid papers, encouraging young readers to pick up their copy of *Scene*, a full-colour magazine, 200,000 copies of which are being given away in John Menzies record shops and through health education departments across Scotland.

The ads also give potted drugs/AIDS facts. The first AIDS 'fact' says, "As far as sex goes, the one sure way to avoid AIDS is to practise chastity before marriage and fidelity within it." The second is hardly more likely to appeal to the young record-buying public: "It's up to us to do something about the spread of AIDS. Like not injecting drugs and not having sex. Or using a condom if you do have sex."

Radio ads attempt to direct listeners to the press ads, promising that there they will find the skills they lack to introduce the subject of a condom into lovemaking and to resist drug offers.

Wales ponders a video

Funding arrangements in Wales mean they can decide how to spend their £100,000 at leisure. By mid-May they'd plumped for a drama video for 16-21 year olds to be shown in schools and elsewhere from the autumn term onwards.

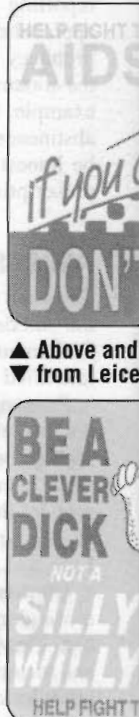
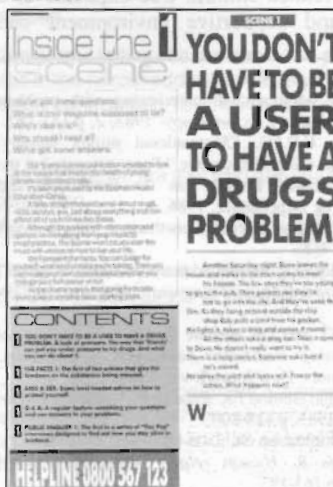


▲ British Telecom donated phonecards for Brighton's youth workers.



▲ A page from the leaflet given away in Leicester's cinemas.

▼ Inside *Scene* young Scottish readers find glossy 'Just Say No' type advice.



▲ Above and ▼ from Leicester

▼ Coca



CAMPAIGNS



SPoons AND FLUSHING CUPS

These can also carry viruses so try not to share, but, if you do, **CLEAN THEM TOO.**

FILTERS

Use a new filter for each person.

FIXING

Try and use different veins and stick to your arms.

Keep away from sores and arteries.

If you are not sure, we can advise you about cutting the risks from fixing.

MEDICAL PROBLEMS

If you have abscesses, infections etc. we can help you get medical care.

DISPOSAL

Used needles are BAD news! We arrange for confidential, safe disposal.

It's helpful if you place the used needle inside the plunger and put it safely inside a coke or beer can, coffee jar etc.

Up-front advice from the Stockwell Project ▲ that passed Department of Health scrutiny.

Poster from Lambeth's Afro-Caribbean Association.

WHO'S THE CHARLIE NOW!

DRUGS AWARENESS PROGRAMME

- COMMUNITY DRUG PROJECT
703 0559
mon-fr 2.00pm - 5.00pm
- ANGEL PROJECT
226 3113
mon-fr 2.00pm - 5.00pm
- LAMBETH DRUGLINE
274 4000 ext.276
mon-fr 10.00am - 1.00pm
- D.A.P.
DRUGS AWARENESS PROGRAMME
328 4851
mon-fr 11.30am - 12.00pm

Diversity in S. E. Thames

South East Thames is running separate campaigns in different districts. In Brighton, the Drug Advice and Information Service (DAIS) chose to extend their experimental telephone fact-line first tried in spring 1988.

In the 1989 version a two-minute message dealt with four activities identified by DAIS as high risk areas for the 16-25 year olds targeted by the campaign. These were: mixing drugs and alcohol; unsafe sex; sniffing gases; using unidentified 'pills'.

To get the youngsters ringing in, DAIS bought air-time on the local commercial radio station, dropping their ads in among the station's pop and phone-in programming. The ads raised drug harm questions which listeners were encouraged to resolve by phoning the fact-line. Youth workers in the area were kept informed with the help of phonecards donated by British Telecom.

As part of the campaign organised by Dartford's Druglink advice project, the Channel Theatre Company (also touring North Trent) played its *All Fixed Up* production aimed at 14-18 year olds before audiences in all the area's secondary schools. Their portrayal of a young man's descent into heroin addiction was "excellent, sympathetic and non-moralistic", said Kent's newsletter for drug workers.

On 8 April Dartford's pilot package of cabaret acts with a compere and DJ, all plugging anti-drug and safe sex messages, took place in, of all places, a pub.

Lambeth's Afro-Caribbean Community Association opted to go for the south London cocaine problem with their "Who's The Charlie Now!" poster and leaflet. The leaflet advises on how to overcome cocaine dependency.

The Stockwell Project's leaflet for injectors gives up-front advice on injecting that would have been unthinkable in a government-funded publication before HIV legitimised harm reduction. Beyond its first line — "It's better not to inject, but ..." — the advice is about how to stay healthy if you *are* injecting, not how to stop.

Stockwell Project and Druglink shared a leaflet for GPs offering help in organising joint detoxification programmes, with the GP providing primary health care and drugs, and the drugs project providing the social and psychological support.

Bexley too tried to involve GPs, this time in treating dependence on tranquillisers. A local helpline for tranquilliser users was set up with the help of BBC's Broadcasting Support Services. The helpline was publicised partly through a door-to-door leaflet drop in association with the *Kentish Times*. GPs were approached through a seminar, through information packs sent via family practitioner committees, and by the offer of a free call to the helpline.

See page 5 for how the campaigns were rushed through to beat the 31 March deadline

Interested?

For more information...

You could wait for the handbook on the English campaigns. No anticipated publication date is available but the last quarter of 1989 is a fair bet. The handbook will include the materials used in the campaigns, the experiences of those using them, and the results of the evaluations. Obviously *Druglink* will list the handbook but it might also be worth phoning our library from September to see if it's arrived.

In the meantime ISDD's library holds a file of many of the materials used in the campaigns in England and Scotland, plus press releases, etc describing the activities. Phone 01-430 1961 to make an appointment.

If a particular campaign has taken your interest, more information may be available from these drugs or health workers, who were involved in the campaigns in their different districts.

Trent

South Lincolnshire: Kate Gorman, Health Promotion Officer, 052 98687.

Leicester: Robin Burgess or Tina Barnes, Leicester Community Drug Services, 0533 470200.

South Derbyshire: Phil de Silva, South Derbyshire Community Drug Team, 0332 292416.

Nottingham: Ira Unell, Mapperley Hospital Drug Dependency Unit, 0602 691300, or Pam Allen, Health Promotion Officer, 0602 481800.

South East Thames

General: Andrew Partington, Press Office, South East Thames RHA, 0424 730073.

Brighton: Laura Gamble, DAIS, 0273 21000.

Dartford: Druglink drug advice project, 0332 93728. Also Phillip Dart, Channel Theatre Company, 0843 588260.

Stockwell and Lambeth: Lorraine Hewitt, Stockwell Project, 01-274 7013. Also the Afro-Caribbean Community Association, 01-326 4651.

Bexley: Bexley Health Promotion Unit, 01-300 9701.

Wessex

Contact:

— Wessex RHA's Public Affairs Department, 0962 63511;

— Dr Philip Fleming (regional consultant in drug treatment) or John East (principal adviser to the region's drug problem team) on 0705 324636;

— Project Icarus, 0705 324248 (their *The Substance in Question* video is available outside Wessex at £34.50).

Scotland

Contact the Scottish Health Education Group, 031 447 8044.