



Crime Reduction & Community Safety Group

Tilley Awards 2007

Application form

Please ensure that you have read the guidance before completing this form. ***By making an application to the awards, entrants are agreeing to abide by the conditions laid out in the guidance.*** Please complete the following form in full, within the stated word limit and ensuring the file size is no more than 1MB. Failure to do so will result in your entry being rejected from the competition.

Completed application forms should be e-mailed to tilleyawards07@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

All entries must be received by noon on **Friday 27th April 2007**. No entries will be accepted after this time/date. Any queries on the application process should be directed to Alex Blackwell on 0207 035 4811. Any queries regarding publicity of the awards should be directed to Chaz Akoshile on 0207 035 1589.

Section 1: Details of application

Title of the project:

Talk, Don't... Walk

Name of force/agency/CDRP/CSP:

Cheshire Constabulary / The Relationship Centre

Name of one contact person with position and/or rank (this should be one of the authors):

Detective Sergeant Sarah Hall

Email address:

sarah.hall@cheshire.pnn.police.uk

Full postal address:

**Cheshire Constabulary Police Headquarters
Clemonds Hey
Oakmere Road
Winsford
CW7 2UA**

Telephone number:

01244 614526

Fax number:

If known please state in which Government Office area you are located e.g. Government Office North West, Government Office London etc: **Government Office North West**

Name of endorsing senior representatives(s): **David Bertenshaw**

Name of organisation, position and/or rank of endorsing senior representatives(s):

Cheshire Constabulary, Superintendent (Support), Northern Area

Full address of endorsing senior representatives(s):

**Warrington Police Station,
Arpley Street,
Warrington
Cheshire
WA1 1LQ**

Please tick box to indicate that all organisations involved in the project have been notified of this entry (this is to prevent duplicate entries of the same project):

Section 2: Summary of application

In no more than 400 words please use this space to describe your project (see guidance for more information).

Talk, Don't...Walk is a unique project which addresses the issue of young runaways. To runaway is an extreme response at any age and indicates that there are serious issues behind it. These are always connected with relationship problems and if left unresolved the young person's behaviour will deteriorate to the point where they are rejected completely by their families and are then forced to leave the family home. Identification and early intervention by Talk, Don't...Walk prevents this downward spiral and the associated trauma and emotional damage.

The journey began in 2002 when Cheshire Constabulary statistics showed that running away was a growing problem in the Warrington area with 820 reported incidents of young people missing in that year alone. Research showed that there were no services meeting the needs of the runaway group and their families until the situation had reached crisis level. A multi agency steering group was established with the voluntary sector organisation, The Relationship Centre taking the lead position with Cheshire Constabulary, Warrington Borough Council, Warrington Primary Care Trust, Connexions and Millennium Volunteers utilising their divergent resources and expertise in a co-ordinated manner.

The project provides a central and co-ordinating focal point of contact for the runaways and the myriad of organisations available to help. Talk, Don't...Walk provides a holistic, neutral and non-threatening environment, in which runaways and **as importantly** their families and/or carers can address the underlying issues to reduce and prevent further runaway incidents. Through assessments based on the runaways needs the true problem(s) can be identified and solutions developed and provided to the young runaway and their family/carer.

In doing this the project has not only reduced the number, frequency and instances of young people missing from home by over 300 but also reduced recordable crime within the group by 51% as well as informing over 16,000 people of the risks to health, involvement in crime and improved the safety, educational and social development for young people who have run away from home.

Talk, Don't...Walk is the only preventative service for young people and their families in Warrington. It is unique in that it engages all family members and identifies the causal issues for running away and tackles them. With a charity at the lead Talk, Don't...Walk enables access to statutory services in a non stigmatising manner and is a remarkable success story of true partnership working across and including all sectors.

Section 3: Description of project

Describe the project in no more than 4000 words (see guidance for more information in particular Section 7 - judging criteria).

A “runaway” is a young person under the age of 16 who has absented themselves from home without the permission of parents or legal guardians and who has been reported missing from home to the police.

‘Talk, Don’t...Walk’ is a unique project, that provides support, advice and information to young runaways and their families. The team offers a holistic approach and aims to ensure the safety and well being of children and young people by focusing on preventing further incidents and offering alternative strategies.

“Still Running II” (The Children’s Society, 2005), national research into young runaways, indicates that an estimated 97,500 young people run away each year, noting that 11% of all children and young people run away overnight before the age of 16. The research confirms strong links between running away, problems at school, drug misuse, offending behaviour, poor family relationships and significant experiences of maltreatment.

Furthermore; “Looked after young people are 3 times more likely to run away, than children living at home.” (The Children’s Society, 1999)

Since early 2002, a working group of professionals involved in the field of child welfare within Warrington became increasingly concerned regarding the increasing number of runaways with the subsequent adverse effect on both the young person and the community in relation to anti-social behaviour, truancy and poor educational development, involvement in crime and risk taking activities.,

Prior to the start of “Talk, Don’t...Walk” there were 820 recorded incidents of young people running away from home and care in Warrington every year. The cost to Cheshire Constabulary in 2002 was £2,789,254.60. (This was made up of the cost of investigating the ‘missing’ episode as well as the cost of investigating the crimes they were involved in – both as victims and offenders, whilst missing.)

Local research carried out by Cheshire Constabulary in late 2002, as well as identifying the scale of the problem, also identified service delivery problems due to a lack of early identification and intervention systems for runaways with a fragmented and ad hoc service delivery by existing organisations. A lack of focus on the causative factors had immediate negative impact upon the individual who had run away and failed to address the dysfunctional family as the principal cause of runaway behaviour. Being reactive and directed at the runaway only rather than the underlying cause, that of family relationship breakdown, the project intended to address those issues with multiple stakeholder involvement in developing a coherent, complementary and inclusive support service for runaways and their families that will impact positively on their health, well being, learning opportunities and life chances.

At that time there were very few projects in the UK that addressed holistically, the issue of runaways. A steering group was established to conduct research locally and nationally, through attending conferences and targeting particular agencies such as Young Offenders Institutes, to assess what services had been offered in the past and/or were currently available. Two projects were found which delivered reactive services to runaways – Safe In The City (Manchester) and A.S.T.R.A, (Gloucestershire) but the delivery of a holistic service to runaways AND their families/carers had not been attempted before. Also, by comprising the steering group of local agency representatives’ historical knowledge of local families where running had been previously identified as an issue was assessed. The team also met with key policy advisors and discovered that there were no projects working in a holistic way with families or in partnership with stakeholders and identified that many other approaches were very fragmented. None of these projects were identifying and working with the relationship issues which were the key to the running behaviour.

The steering group identified that professionals often viewed this group as labour intensive and difficult to engage, usually because by the time professionals have become involved, the runaway and the family have had a series of unhealthy and non-productive relationships with agencies.

Whilst the A.S.T.R.A project offered a web-site for parents whose children have runaway that was all that was offered. Talk, Don’t...Walk differs in that it offers the additional professional intervention on a personal level to the parents as well as the children/young people who have runaway and returned.

The few projects that did exist nationally tended only to provide services for the young runaway and not the other family members who are often a major factor in the reasons for running away. Therefore the young people were often returned back to the potentially unsafe and unhappy environment from which they had run in the first place without

any effort to redress those issues.

The project team therefore believed that existing support for young runaways across the country was generally inadequate and patchy and wanted to trial an alternative model that if successful could be rolled out nationally.

The project aim was therefore to take the next step in providing a holistic approach to tackle the gap in service delivery with the innovative feature of provision of an "honest broker". The voluntary sector through The Relationship Centre brokers a positive outcome for the runaway and family by co-ordinating and integrating the existing divergent services available bridging the silos within the statutory sector and providing a non stigmatising entry point for the young person and their family .

Through consultation with other agencies, the results of a questionnaire sent to "at risk" groups – i.e. young, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, disabled, BME groups and young women subject to arranged marriage - and additional feedback from service users intergenerational issues were identified within families where running could be seen to be a main risk indicator. Parents reported an inconsistent approach to the issues from agencies with no preventative services available prior to crisis intervention.

It was also found that early risk indicators e.g. Domestic Violence, substance misuse, mental health, communication issues etc. were often not followed up and that needs were only met when at crisis point and when it was often too late.

Detailed discussions with regional and national organisations made possible the development of the project in a format enabling replication in other areas.

The steering group decided upon five overarching strategic objectives for the project:

- Reduce the frequency and instances of young people missing from home.
- Reduce the risks to health, involvement in crime and improve safety, educational and social development for young people who have run away from home.
- Deliver accessible services to young people and their families.
- To provide an independent, safe and neutral environment in which the reasons for running away can be addressed in a safe and non-judgemental way.
- To establish and maintain a systematic and conjoint method of agency response.

Further measurable targets were established and recorded quarterly throughout the 3 year project:

Measurable target 1 - A reduction in police recording of the number of runaways

Measurable target 2 - Reduction of repeat/multiple runaways.

Measurable target 3 - Number of runaways referred to the project returning to education/voluntary and/or paid employment setting.

Measurable Target 4 - Reduction in the recordable crime within the group, the target was a reduction of 6.5%.

Measurable Target 5 - Reduction in referrals to the pupil referral unit.

Measurable Target 6 -Total number of young people directly engaged with the service. The target figure for the project lifetime was 207.

Measurable Target 7 - The total number of contacts made to the service.

The project took a truly multi-agency approach, through the vehicle of the voluntary sector organization, The Relationship Centre and Cheshire Constabulary working closely with Warrington Borough Council, Warrington Primary Care Trust, and Connexions Cheshire & Warrington as well as other agencies to provide a holistic and cohesive service to the runaways and their families and/or carers to address the issues on why they have left the home in the first instance.

Talk...Don't Walk is unique in many ways. Notably, it is led by a voluntary sector organisation, The Relationship Centre, which coordinates and directs the relevant statutory agency partners. It is also innovative in its approach to helping the young people (members of the family all receive individual therapy, creating awareness of personal issues before bringing them together for family mediation), and in focusing on prevention / early intervention rather than reacting to a crisis further down the line. These two fundamental ways of working presented a major change to operational focus and presented significant challenges at a local level for the project, the stakeholders and also changed the choice and format of services received by the client.

The first 6 months of the project focused on recruiting and training experienced staff, establishing relationships with

stakeholders through regular steering committee meetings, conducting a series of briefings with front line practitioners around referral criteria and services available and establishing a name and logo for the service through consultation with young people. The project also established specific policies and procedures particularly around child protection and information sharing with other agencies, before starting to accept referrals on to the programme.

The next 18-24months were focused on service delivery and working directly with families and agencies to raise awareness of the dangers of running away, discuss alternatives and reconnect families through tailored individual and group interventions. The benefits of the project to the runaway and their family can be summarised as follows:

Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
Prevent escalation	Reflection and action	Stability in the family unit
Re-establish lines of communication within the family unit	Consolidate family relations	Emotional literacy for all
Reduction in risk taking activities, anti-social behaviour and crime	Reduce risk of entry into the criminal justice system	Enhanced employment prospects
Reduce educational/employment disruption	Increased self worth	Leading to full citizenship
Understanding the need for stability	Recognition of the importance of healthy stable relationships	Disruption of cyclical intergenerational behaviour patterns
Earlier identification	Access to assessment service	Directed to the appropriate service with less duplication
Avoid crisis	Reduce waiting time	Reduction in damage to individuals and family group

The project can also be seen to benefit the community and wider populace by increasing the visibility of police officers, who are released from the time consuming constraints placed upon them by the missing from home reporting and investigation system. Benefits through the reduction of crime and anti-social behaviour and the prevention of crisis situations connected with this group also incurs tangible and significant cost savings to the police and partner agencies.

As well as continuing with service delivery, the final 12 months of the 3 year project were focused on raising awareness of the exit strategy, the issues around sustainable funding and evaluating the success of the project.

Crucial to the success of this project in terms of outcomes for Children and Young people and to attract sustainable funding in the future, was the need for the service to meet the Every Child matters agenda.

1. Stay Safe: protect children from harm, neglect, discrimination and exploitation.

Young people who runaway are proven to have a much higher risk of sexual exploitation, particularly those children who are looked after. Involvement in crime both as offenders and victims. Living on the street which is often a natural progression for those who runaway leads to young people neglecting their own safety and well being.

2. Be Healthy: improve the emotional well being of children and young people particularly those in vulnerable groups.

To runaway is an extreme response at any age and indicates that there are serious issues behind it. These are always connected with relationship problems and if left unresolved the young person's behaviour will deteriorate to the point where they are rejected completely by their families and are then forced to leave the family home. Although Children's Services are then responsible for managing these cases identification and early intervention by Talk, Don't...Walk prevents the need for this traumatic response and the emotional damage associated with it.

3. Enjoy and achieve: raise the attainment level for children in vulnerable groups including children in deprived areas. Reduce the levels of exclusion from schools and increase the achievements of those children excluded.

These young people often require the intervention of mental health services due to the associated emotional disturbance. They often develop very unhealthy coping mechanisms, including drug and alcohol misuse and self harm. As the teenage years are the time when young people establish their sense of self worth and respect if they are not in a stable and emotionally warm environment then this development does not happen properly and they become involved in sexual contacts that lead to pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, as well as affecting their long term sense of self worth and emotional well being.

4. Make a Positive Contribution: more places to go and things to do for young people.

Children and young people need a stable lifestyle to enjoy and achieve, running away at best interrupts this and at worst prevents this from happening. Those from the deprived areas are proven to be far less likely to be reported as missing than children from other areas. There is also a much higher likelihood of these young people being excluded

from education, as this is a natural progression from the disruptions of their home lives. Talk, Don't...Walk also puts young people in touch with services and organisations that may be able to help them. The activities provided by the youth federation are made available to the young person who comes through the service due to the connection of the project with the federation via the project chair who is also Chief Executive Officer of youth federation.

5. Looked After Children: reduce the gap in outcomes between looked after children and the general population.

By applying Talk, Don't...Walk to the looked after children the project ensures that they are given the same opportunities as children in the general population. All foster children and those accommodated in St Kath's Local Authority Children's Home who are reported missing are automatically referred to Talk, Don't...Walk and the worker builds an independent relationship with the young person which meets the young persons needs and also ensures that the local authority are meeting the requirements of the 2002 Department of Health guidelines.

The overriding principles that have been implemented to achieve this were to:

- Work in partnership with statutory, voluntary and private agencies to ensure a coordinated response and aid the development of strong integrated universal services.
- Help to increase the capacity of those services to meet the diversity of need.
- Provide a quality preventative service based on the Common Assessment framework.
- Incorporate children, young people and parent's views in the design of services.
- Share information and involve stakeholders in any planning activity.

The cost of implementing and running the "Talk, Don't ... Walk" project on a yearly basis over 3 years was £147,000. Two thirds of this cost was funded by the Dfes, Invest To Save, with the remaining third funded through local stakeholders. A very significant element in the formation of this highly effective project was the commitment of resource by Cheshire Constabulary, not only through the provision of office equipment but also in the form of a very experienced detective with a substantial background in the fields of abuse within relationship contexts. It is through that officer that runaway details are fed into the project and from there a consistent approach is applied to the return home interviews enabling the causative issues to be identified and addressed whilst also providing a very useful intelligence gathering opportunity for the police in a hard to reach sector of the community.

The "Talk. Don't ...Walk" project had clear measurable targets that were set at the very beginning and subsequent reporting has been carried out on a quarterly and annual basis.

At the end of Year 2 the following is a general summary of TDW achievements:

- The project has made cost savings of **£1,064,679.00**.
- Over 16,000 Warrington people have been directly informed about the dangers of running away
- Over 390 young runaways and their families in Warrington have actively engaged in the preventative work of the project. There has also been numerous contacts and interest from all over the British Isles as well as internationally with over 30,000 hits on the website.
- The team have developed an inclusive client led service

TALK, DON'T ... WALK – RESULTS SO FAR (13 March 2007)

Measurable Target	Target Description	Actual Results (as at 28th February 07)	Project Target (for period 1.4.04 to 31.3.07)
1*	Reduction in police recording of number of runaways	256 (as at 13 March 07)	207
2*	Reduction in number of repeat/multiple runaways	99 (as at 13 March 07)	59
3	Number of runaways referred to project returning to education/voluntary or employment setting	207 (as at 13 March 07)	207
4*	Reduction in recordable crime within this group	43.5% (as at 13 March 07)	6.5%
5	Reduction in referrals to Pupil Referral Unit	0 (as at 13 March 07)	2
6	Total number of young people directly engaged with the	212(as at 13 March 07)	207

	service		
7	Total number of contacts made to service	405(as at 13 March 07)	400

* target is reported annually

Please note that the final year evaluation report will not be available until the end of April 07but it is expected that all targets will be met and exceeded.

The Talk, Don't...Walk project has been one of only three short listed projects for the Community Care Awards 2006 in the Supporting Young People and Families category. It has received the Big Difference Charity of the Year Award 2006 and team members have been invited to Downing Street in recognition for work with young people and community excellence as well as being invited to inform on a parliamentary briefing paper by a local Member of Parliament. The issue of runaways has gained media recognition through project initiatives of a Guinness world record, a celebrity web chat and a website which has so far received over 6,000 unique visitors with interest expressed from both national and international sources.

The project has developed professional training and awareness raising and has a 24hour helpline working in partnership with the National Runaways Helpline.

Many of our stakeholders are situated in the same community building alongside the project and so families have taken advantage of the close proximity and well established referral relationships the service has with the other agencies. The project location was carefully chosen as nearly all the young people and their families have multiple issues. By working in partnership with a Youth Advice Shop teenage pregnancy and sexual health advice referrals has facilitated more young people to make informed choices. Young people who have issues around substance misuse have also been referred to Phaze, situated within the Connexions service.

Schools were also identified as key locations for the delivery of sessions, providing a familiar, safe environment and allowing the worker to meet with the young person initially away from other family members. The project saw an increase in referrals from those schools where sessions were delivered on a regular basis. Connexions Personal Advisors also became an important referral source and additional support to the young person whilst in school.

The project team has delivered over 50 awareness raising assemblies within mainstream and special schools including the Pupil Referral Unit in relation to the dangers of running away and the importance of personal safety.

The project team has played an integral part in the pilot of the Common Assessment Framework in Warrington and has assisted in the planning process and the identification of future core issues and gaps in service delivery. The parents support group and newsletter have become invaluable vehicles for networking, peer support and maintaining post programme support, to encourage families to sustain the changes and improvements they have made.

A key lesson we gained from this experience was that a small project CAN make a real and lasting difference to its community and the people served. Often larger charities and statutory authorities can seem detached from their communities and results in the service user feeling that they are not listened to and feel disempowered by the very process that is supposed to help. The project we developed and the services we now offer are distinct in that we applied a simple and logical approach to family relations and to the issues that led to the young person running away without waiting until it became a serious or crisis situation. Families preferred the neutrality of a charity led arrangement and were less guarded and talked more openly about the issues. As a result, individuals and family relations were re connected and strengthened by replacing miscommunication, dominance and fragmented emotions with respect, appreciation, tolerance and a greater understanding.

From an operational perspective we found that having a skilled worker attached to the programme from the statutory sector meant that we were able to break down the 'silos' that have in the past prevented joined up working and through improved communications, we have had better relations with key agencies which resulted in positive outcomes for the young person and their families.

The following quotes, statements and case studies summarise the impact this project has made on the community:

Helen Southworth (MP): 'I'm supporting the project, and have been over a period of time, and have every intention of continuing, to ensure it remains as a service for my constituents.'

Chief Constable of Cheshire Peter Fahy: "These kinds of projects are paramount in proactively offering support to young people and their families before it reaches crisis point. The 2nd year results show that the Talk Don't Walk

project is effective and is proving that early intervention can have long-term success." (1st August 2006)

Steve Hoy, Chief Executive, Connexions Cheshire & Warrington "I would like to congratulate everyone at Talk, Don't...Walk, the staff, the young people and their families for winning this award (Big Difference). Talk, Don't...Walk has proved to be extremely effective in reducing the number of young runaways in the Warrington area. I am pleased that Connexions is a partner in this successful and unique project and thrilled that it has finally got the recognition it deserves"

Julia Donnelly, Social Worker, Warrington: 'We're relieved that this service is here. And again, that's about we know that it will be taken seriously – referrals will be taken seriously. The people in TDW that I've dealt with are very, very dedicated.'

Andy McCullough, The Railway Children: "Talk Don't Walk have got a really warm, flexible approach which includes a mixture of the rigor of Police work, the more creative, laid-back approach from youth work but also counselling and social work methodology which means they continually question their practice."

Feedback from one young person who engaged with the project was "*Things had got really bad with my mum, I didn't think she understood what I was going through and she didn't seem to have much time for me and I don't think I had much time for her. When we got involved in the project, it was great for me to be able to talk to someone else and for them to hear my point of view, it helped my mum too, and we now make time for each other which is great.*"

The Talk, Don't...Walk Project is a truly inspirational example of multi agency problem solving at its best. The issue of runaways has been brought to the fore and tackled as never before with astounding quantitative results for the organisations involved and immeasurable personal results for the individuals and families affected.

Section 4: Endorsement by Senior Representative

Please insert letter from endorsing representative:

Talk Don't Walk is a highly imaginative response to the problem of young runaways – an issue which puts the young people themselves in physical and moral danger not only for their personal safety, but also from a higher risk of committing crime. Because of TDW, there have been 250 fewer runaways than previous trends would have suggested, with a significant decrease in the number of repeat runaways. Crime within the target group is also reduced by more than 40%. These results are significantly better than the project targets: they represent real benefits both to the young people involved and to the people of Warrington, not least because the many hours that police officers and other professionals would have spent on these cases can be used to deal with other problems that exist in the borough.

Such is the success of the TDW project in contributing to this element of public safety and to the reduction of crime and disorder within Warrington, that we are looking to adopt its practices elsewhere in the police area and I am very happy to endorse this application for the award.

David Bertenshaw
Superintendent
Northern BCU
Cheshire Constabulary.

Checklist for Applicants:

1. Have you read the process and application form guidance?
2. Have you completed all four sections of the application form in full including the endorsement from a senior representative?
3. Have you checked that your entry addresses all aspects of the judging criteria?
4. Have you advised all partner agencies that you are submitting an entry for your project?
5. Have you adhered to the formatting requirements within the guidance?
6. Have you checked whether there are any reasons why your project should **not** be publicised to other police forces, partner agencies and the general public?
7. Have you saved your application form as a PDF attachment and entitled your message 'Entry for Tilley Awards 2007' before emailing it?

Once you are satisfied that you have completed your application form in full please email it to Tilleyawards07@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk. Two hard copies must also be posted to Alex Blackwell at Home Office, Effective Practice, Support & Communications Team, 6th Floor, Peel Building (SE Quarter), 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF.