

APPENDIX 3

MOBILE INFORMATION BUS

The purpose of the Mobile Information Bus is to encourage young people in rural areas to access information which will support them in making positive lifestyle choices.

Providing	To	Cost	Comments
Health and lifestyle advice and information on: • Drugs • Alcohol • Sexual health & HIV • Bullying • Healthy eating	Young people of secondary school age.	£45k ¹ (50% funded by NHS)	Run by NHS Grampian. Started April 2000. Visited by >15,000 young people.

Mobile Information Bus

Services and Beneficiaries

Over 7,500 young people have visited the bus in the last 3 years and the numbers have increased year-on-year. 28% of all discussions and workshops on the MIB relate to drugs and alcohol (24 drug & alcohol activities per month). The numbers of workshops delivered on the MIB during 2006 – 2008 are as follows:

	06 – 07	07 – 08
Alcohol	100	179
Drugs	53	118
Solvents	24	19
Smoking	65	114
Sexual Health	92	117
Relationships	87	118
STI's	91	108
Mental Health	24	62
Testicular Cancer	42	29
Healthy Eating	35	68
Employment	21	73
Exam stress	13	20

As well as the evening programmes of rural visits, the MIB has supported an increasing number of targeted interventions and initiatives including:

- Operation Avon*
- Community Street Football*
- Scottish Youth Parliament, Dialogue Youth
- Linkwood Community Project
- Young Carers

¹ Actual funding from last year included; £6500 from the Community Safety Partnership, £15k from the Children's Change Fund and £19k core NHS funding (who also provided a top-up for maintenance).

- Young Travellers
- Elgin Summer Scheme
- Pilmuir Community House
- Moray Safe Team
- Moray College Fresher's fair and Science fair
- Alcohol awareness campaigns, launches, galas, festivals and information events.

* Described in more detail below.

Operation Avon. The MIB supports initiatives such as Operation Avon. The operation, to tackle substance abuse in Moray, is led by Grampian Police and in addition to the MIB is supported by: Social Work, Youth Justice and the Community & Learning Development team. The operation has been running for several years and is based on intelligence indicating areas of known abuse at a particular time. The MIB makes an important contribution to this partnership, delivering key safety messages to young people on alcohol related issues. The numbers of Young People benefiting from the MIB during Operation Avon visits were as follows:

Year	Visits	Young people
2005-2006	5	35
2006-2007	5	98
2007-2008	19	392

Community Street Football. 367 youths aged 10-17 attended the MIB during the 5 months November 2007 to March 2008 touring with the street football. The sessions regularly saw groups of over 30 youths accessing the bus and playing facilitated football sessions. The partnership comprising: Sports Development, Fire Brigade, Volunteers, NHS, Community Wardens and Grampian Police were brought together by 'Street Football'.

What People Say

Comments from some of the professionals who have worked with the MIB:

As Community Beat Officer for Keith in Moray I feel that the MIB bus is a valuable resource for young people. I am periodically involved in operations to target youth problems in particular under-age drinking and these are arranged with the MIB in mind. The fact that it can be in the area where an operation is taking place is of great benefit to the Police and offers young people a relaxed environment where they can seek advice and information. – C.B.O Keith

I am the Community Police Officer for the Lossiemouth Beat area. This encompasses the villages of Hopeman, Duffus, Cummingston, Alves and Burghead. My core business is dealing with children, youths and young adults. I routinely give presentations to pupils at every stage of their development.

The main problem in our communities is drug induced anti social behaviour, which often leads onto more serious social problems and less than desirable citizens. In an effort to combat this, the Operation Avon initiative was set up some time ago. The

scheme is a multi agency approach and targets under-age drinking. These events are held throughout the Division on a near weekly basis.

Despite numerous invites to all our partner agencies, I myself have never seen any attend other than the MiB bus and its staff. Again, the MiB links in with the Street Football initiative, a multi agency approach in combating anti social behaviour.

I can honestly say that the bus is extremely well used and on its arrival is swamped with children seeking information, reassurance and in some cases, help. It is a friendly and safe place to visit. I am welcomed by staff and the children to join in conversation and the relaxed atmosphere allows an openness of views and some surprising questioning.

We live in a very sheltered part of Scotland and I often think that children, schools and current teaching curriculum's are naive. Staff and literature in the bus give concise honest and immediate information. Other services open to children and young persons are explained and all is confidential. I share information with the staff who always oblige in directing their services where needed or directed by me.

This service in my opinion should be expanded and championed as best practice. If a service requires funding, this is the one most deserving. The MiB can be depended upon and as I said earlier is the only partner agency supporting our Avon initiatives.' **C.B.O – Lossiemouth Area**

'Young people report they are not always comfortable asking their GP's 'Embarrassing' questions and equally do not always wish to ask guidance teachers or a parent. Youth workers are not available or have limited availability in all the areas the bus visits and detached youth work is currently under redesign, with more emphasis being placed on buildings based work. This further limits opportunities for young people to engage regarding health promotions materials in a setting of their choice. MIB may be the only opportunity for young people to access a young person friendly, confidential information point. It is no less than vital to the young people of Moray to have this service maintained. Further the service is admired and aspired to in other rural areas, essentially a 'flagship' of health promotions for young people.' – **Mental Health Worker – Moray**

On many occasions, young people who accessed the bus through the years, look fondly on the visits and always have a positive response to their experiences. Many of these young adults are now utilising the healthpoint service in Elgin due to signposting and great relationships that have been built between staff and young people. Here are some of the young people's comments:

'The bus helped me learn some important facts about alcohol and drugs etc. Also if I had any problems I can go and discuss them in a friendly and social environment' – **Jordan (14) male - Elgin area**

'I thought it was good and I am able to say more on the bus than I am able to during school. I found it very educational' – **Girl (15) - Portknockie**

'All we done at school was watch videos about sex education, on the bus you can talk about it and learn much more' – **Girl (16) - Portknockie**

'I feel welcome, workers on the bus are friendly and approachable, I feel I learn much more because of this' – **Boy (14) Buckie**

'I find the bus very educational and I find it useful to express my views with the health workers. Also it keeps us off the streets at night.' – **Jonny (16) Elgin area**

'I think the bus is really good as it is easy to speak to the people as it is a friendly environment. If you have problems you can get information.' – **Richie (15) Elgin area**

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing on behalf of the Street Football and M.I.B bus which takes place every Monday night at different locations across primary schools in Elgin. On hearing plans to stop the facility I feel prompted to write to you and ask why?

The Street Football provides somewhere for youths like myself to enjoy a controlled game of football and meet new friends. The M.I.B bus provides a warm safe environment where youths can go to just chill out or discuss any problems or health issues they may have. Also the parents of the younger children who visit the facility have peace of mind and know that their children are safe.

As I'm sure you will agree to take this facility away from the children would be ludicrous. If it is funds which are stopping the council from keeping the facility open then a number of children including myself have offered to take part in fund raising activities. I have enclosed a petition with signatures from a number of children who would like this facility to continue.

I thank you for taking the time to read this letter and hope to hear from you soon.

David Steele (15)

Impact

The National Outcomes and local Moray outcomes that would be adversely affected by the withdrawal of the INSO are shown in Appendix 1.

The strong partnership links and synergy between sport and healthy lifestyles would be lost without the MIB support to Community Street Football.

A rise in problems relating to drugs, alcohol, smoking, sexual health, mental health, eating disorders and relationships can be expected.