

# Alcohol training for youth providers project 2006–08

## Evaluation report



Alcohol Concern  
Making Sense of Alcohol

Alcohol Concern is the national agency on alcohol misuse. We work to reduce the incidence and costs of alcohol-related harm and to increase the range and quality of services available to people with alcohol-related problems and their families.

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## Executive summary

In 2006, with funding from Comic Relief, Alcohol Concern developed training and accreditation to support youth providers to work more effectively with young people around their alcohol use. The project successfully achieved its aim, to improve youth providers' knowledge, skills and confidence in identifying problem drinking amongst young people and to enable them to intervene appropriately.

Following a pilot training programme in 2006, a national training programme was rolled out across all government office regions in England as well as Northern Ireland and Wales. Two training courses were developed and delivered; Alcohol and youth skills and Advanced alcohol and youth skills. Alcohol Concern worked with the Open University to develop qualifications to support the training based on drugs and alcohol national occupational standards (DANOS).

Educari was asked to evaluate the training courses and the impact the training had on participants' work practice.

In total 57 training courses were delivered to approximately 712 youth providers, which included youth workers, youth offending teams, substance misuse workers and police.

The courses were extremely well-received by the participants and there is positive evidence of how highly participants thought of the training. Nearly all participants learned something from the courses and many had very positive things to say about them. The tutors received high praise from respondents and there was consistency of delivery from the tutors. Youth providers who participated saw the content as relevant to their work.

The training was reportedly successful in providing activities and tools, advising/informing young people, building confidence, improving the delivery of work with young people

and increasing youth providers' knowledge and understanding around alcohol.

While the data represents the subjective views of the course participants, given the weight of numbers, the positive direction of the changes and the positive comments from participants, it can be concluded that this programme was successful in achieving much of its overall aim: 'to improve skills, confidence and expertise of providers working with young people around alcohol and be able to intervene appropriately'.

Participants had used what they had learned in their work practice and were engaging young people around alcohol issues in a wide range of settings. Evidence confirms that the courses were appreciated for their useful and varied practical activities and tools, the range of topics covered, new ideas and opportunities for networking.

The training was also successful in helping those who managed, supported or trained people who worked directly with young people.

Future training needs were identified, including advanced courses, specialist training for different youth providers, training focusing on mental health, sexual health and motivational interviewing (MI). Other needs included resources to support working with young people around alcohol, including posters, leaflets and drink diaries, as well as downloadable resources from Alcohol Concern's website.

## Introduction

This report aims to provide an outline of the delivery and outcome of the youth provider training project, an Alcohol Concern project funded by Comic Relief.

The report shows the progression of the project, how the training was developed and delivered, how it was evaluated and the outcome of the evaluation.

Alcohol Concern asked Educari to input and analyse questionnaire data from the training courses. Educari compared pre and post self-assessments and analysed qualitative responses that participants gave at the end of the courses. They also carried out further evaluation to examine implementation of learning from the courses in participants' work practice. This was done via an email survey and follow-up telephone interviews.

## Background

In 2006, with funding from Comic Relief, Alcohol Concern developed training and accreditation to support youth providers to work more effectively with young people around their alcohol use.

The aim of the project was to:

- improve youth providers' skills, confidence and expertise in identifying problem drinking amongst young people
- enable youth providers to intervene appropriately with young people with drink problems.

The objectives of the project were to:

- develop, pilot and deliver accredited training modules for youth providers working with young people with drink problems
- evaluate the training module itself and its impact on youth providers' interventions with young people with drink problems.

## Project development

The project was coordinated by a training development coordinator and supported by a project administrator. The training was delivered by a training officer and freelance trainers.

## Developing the training

Training modules were developed by the training development coordinator with the support of two external consultants.

A one-day training course was devised as an introductory course and included basic alcohol awareness. A second day was then developed as a follow-up, which included elements of engaging with young people and offering brief advice and support.

The two-day course was also adapted to make it suitable for youth providers working in the criminal justice sector.

With further consultation and advice from workforce development specialists in the drug and alcohol field, relevant DANOS were identified, which the training was matched to.

The following DANOS units were identified:

### **One-day course**

- AA1 – recognise indications of substance misuse and refer individuals to specialists
- AB5 – assess and act upon immediate risk of danger to substance users.

### **Two-day course:**

The same as above plus the following:

- AF1 – carry out screening and referral assessment
- AH10 – carry out brief interventions with alcohol users.

### **Accreditation**

Alcohol Concern worked with the Open University to develop two qualifications:

- professional certificate in alcohol and youth skills
- advanced professional certificate in alcohol and youth skills

The qualification is based on successfully proving skills and competence in selected DANOS units. People undertaking the accreditation are observed and assessed in the workplace by an expert witness, or their line manager and develop a portfolio showing their knowledge, understanding and skills. This portfolio is then externally verified by the Open University.

## **Pilot phase**

To ensure the training was effective and met the needs and expectations of youth providers, a pilot training programme was developed and delivered in eight government office regions and in Scotland.

A total of 150 youth providers participated in the pilot training from different sectors and a range of young people services.

An evaluation of the pilot was undertaken along with feedback from the trainers and the training programme was adapted for the national rollout. The full evaluation report on the pilot phase is available from Alcohol Concern.

## **National rollout**

From October 2007, the training programme was rolled out nationally across the UK; covering the nine government office regions in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Jersey. Training was scheduled to take place in Scotland, but, due to low up-take, courses were cancelled.

The training was delivered in two ways:

- open courses – where the training venue was booked and participants applied to go on the course through Alcohol Concern
- in-house courses – where another organisation provide a venue and participants to attend the training.

The in-house courses proved to be a more popular option and in some cases open courses were cancelled due to low numbers or no uptake. There were 47 in-house courses and 10 open-courses.

### Number of open and in-house, one-day and two-day courses

Course	Open	Inhouse	All
One-day	4	19*	23
Two-day	6	28	34
<b>Totals</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>57</b>

\*A one one-day course was delivered in an evening and one two-day course was delivered in one day; they are included as 'one-day in-house'.

57 courses were delivered and of these, 23 were one-day courses and 34 were delivered as two-day courses. There were 91 days of training delivered.

The following is a breakdown of how the training was delivered across different regions:

### Number of courses held in different areas

Area	1-day	2-day	All
East Midlands	1	2	3
East of England	1	1	2
London	2	2	4
North East	1	0	1
North West	5	10	15
South East	3	12	13
South West	0	1	1
West Midlands	3	0	3
Yorkshire and the Humber	2	3	5
Jersey	0	1	1
Northern Ireland	1	1	2
Wales	4	1	5
<b>Totals</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>57</b>

An estimated total of 712 youth providers participated in the training across the UK.

There were 1,377 completed questionnaires, which included 665 pre-intervention questionnaires (225 for the one-day course and 440 for the two-day course) and 712 post-intervention questionnaires (251 for the one-day course and 461 for the two-day course). There were some courses where the pre-forms were not used on the course. It is uncertain about the exact numbers attending each course but 712 probably represents the best (albeit conservative) estimate of the total number of participants. The average number of participants per course was 12.

### Monitoring of participants from national rollout

Each participant was required to complete a monitoring form and a total of 671 completed the forms.

This showed that 68% of participants were female (n=459). The majority (93%) were aged between 22 years old and 59 years old. Most participants (95%)\* identified with being white British or any other white background, with a smaller number of participants (5%)\* identifying with other ethnic backgrounds.

\*Some respondents selected more than one category for ethnicity and therefore the total number of responses for this section is 836.

## Evaluation

### Course evaluation

The one-day and two-day courses were evaluated using separate pre- and post-intervention questionnaires. Both questionnaires asked for personal data and listed statements which respondents were asked to score on a scale of 1–10.

Alcohol Concern asked Educari to analyse questionnaire data from the training courses. Educari's full report and analysis is available as *Evaluation of Alcohol Concern's Alcohol Training for Youth Providers* (Wyvill and Ives, Educari 2008).

The courses were extremely well-received by the participants. Nearly all participants learned something from the courses and many had very positive things to say about them. A range of professionals (including youth workers, health workers, drug and alcohol workers and the police) saw the content as relevant to their work. There appeared to be no significant differences between the open and in-house courses, apart from the very low numbers on many of the open courses.

Both one-day and two-day courses showed significantly higher scores from pre-to post-intervention. For one-day courses this ranged from 5.5 and 7.0 pre to 8.2 and 8.8 post (out of 10) on all questions. For the two-day courses, post-intervention scores were significantly higher than pre-scores, varying between 5.5 and 7.1 pre-and 8.6 and 9.0 post (out of a possible 10).

For example 91% of respondents increased their understanding of the range of actions they could take when a young person might be misusing alcohol and how to decide what action was most appropriate.

The vast majority of results were positive; this indicates that nearly all respondents

thought they had either 'understood' more or felt more 'confident'.

The relationship between pre-intervention score and a post score cannot entirely reflect the amount of learning that has taken place, or the degree of confidence that has been gained, because the range of possible score differences depends on the pre-intervention score, which is, in any case, subjective.

The tutors received high praise from respondents. There were no apparent differences between the responses of participants to courses taught by different tutors, implying that there was consistency of delivery. Neither were regional differences apparent, which implies that the content was suitable for professionals across the country.

Tutors adapted the course contents to suit the trainees on specific courses.

### Analysis of open-ended questions

Analysis is made where pre-intervention and post-intervention questionnaires were matched as some participants did not write their names on both sheets.

On the one-day course 240 participants responded to the question 'What aspect of the course has been most useful?' with many giving more than one answer. Responses included:

- 19% said that all or most of the course was useful
- 13% said activities and games was most useful
- 11% said knowledge and understanding gained was most useful
- 10% said activities around the effects of alcohol was most useful
- 10% said the 'line of lash' activity was most useful.

Other aspects of the course as a whole which participants found the 'most useful' included interactive group work, discussions, the resources and handouts, the tutor and the opportunity to network with others.

The evaluation established that what a respondent found most useful tended to be very individual; there were no clear trends.

On the two-day course, 414 participants responded to the above question; again, many gave multiple responses.

- 18% said that all was 'most useful'
- 17% said activities on MI were most useful
- 16% said brief interventions and case studies were most useful
- 14% said 'line of lash' activity was most useful
- 13% said the tools for engaging with young people was most useful
- 10% said the knowledge and understanding gained was most useful

As with the one-day course, people found the activities and games, resources and handouts, the tutor and the networking most useful.

The activities which the greatest number of respondents found 'most useful' were brief interventions/case studies and MI.

### **Suggested improvements**

Of the (235) people who completed post-intervention questionnaires on the one-day course, 41 (17%) said that there were no aspects they would recommend improving; 143 (61%) left this question blank. Some suggestions for improvements included less role play, more or earlier information before the course and more on the law.

Of the (433) people who completed post-intervention questionnaires on the two-day

course, 175 (40%) people said that there were no aspects they would recommend improving; 103 (24%) suggested improvements; the remaining 155 (36%) left this question blank. Some suggestions for improvements included again, less role play, improving use of handouts, more on biological/physiological effects and more focus on brief interventions.

When one-day course participants were asked what would enable them to work effectively with young people around alcohol, suggestions included:

- PowerPoint presentation and course handouts – emailed
- practical ideas and games for working with young people
- approaches to use with 11-year-olds
- ideas for approaching young people who are under the influence of alcohol
- resources for working with young people including:
  - laminated photos (particularly showing medical effects of alcohol)
  - appropriate and attractive illustrated leaflets, eg, one on units
- more information on the law (particularly as it applies to young people) including email updates
- more practice in MI techniques
- more training to keep participants up to date
- a higher level course
- information about relevant national and local agencies including contact details
- information on popular drinks that young people prefer – units, % alcohol etc.

The things that two-day course participants asked for to enable them to work effectively with young people around alcohol included:

- practical ideas, games and interventions for working with young people
- more/cheaper resources (age, sex, ability-appropriate) for working with young people including:
  - laminated photos (particularly showing medical effects of alcohol)
  - appropriate and attractive illustrated postcards and leaflets (including one on units) and a unit calculator
  - handouts (including handouts on harm minimisation and personal safety)
  - DVD/video
  - multi-sensory resources
- more training to keep participants up-to-date
- more training in MI techniques
- a higher level course
- information about relevant national and local agencies including contact details
- updated information (including in-depth)
- an information website.

## Further comments

Nearly everyone who gave a further thought, reflection or comment about the one-day and the two-day courses wrote something positive about the course as a whole, the way it was organised, the activities, the facilitators (most were mentioned by name) and the handouts.

Examples of comments from both courses include:

*“Good to see Comic Relief funding such an important project.”*

*“A very good course excellently delivered. Good group dynamic, all encouraged to participate.”*

*“A really useful refresher course which will help me in my work. The facilitator was brilliant – a friendly person, good communicator, very knowledgeable. Thank you.”*

*“Tutor was an excellent course leader, all materials and PowerPoint presentations were relevant and useful. This has been one of the most useful courses I have attended and I will recommend it to all my colleagues. The tutor ensured everyone was able to participate and all.”*

## Conclusions of training courses evaluation

While the data represents the subjective views of the course participants, given the weight of numbers, the positive direction of the changes and the positive comments from participants, it can be concluded that this programme was successful in achieving much of its overall aim: ‘to improve skills, confidence and expertise of youth providers working with young people around alcohol and to enable them to intervene appropriately’.

## Evaluation of impact on work practice

Educari was asked to carry out further evaluation to examine implementation of learning from the training courses in the work practice of participants. The full report is available as *Further Evaluation of Alcohol Concern's Alcohol and Youth Skills Training* (Wyvill and Ives, Educari 2008).

Educari evaluated via an email survey and follow-up telephone interviews. An email survey was sent to the 67% who provided email addresses (476 participants); 121 responses were received (a 25% response rate); of these 30 were able to be contacted for a follow-up interview and 19 telephone interviews were conducted (a 63% response rate).

29 males and 90 females responded to the email survey. The majority (70%) described themselves as face-to-face workers, followed by managers (21%) and trainers (11%).

Most of the participants described the type of work they did as youth work, or described themselves as having multiple roles. The majority of respondents (32%) said that alcohol and/or substance misuse was the main focus of their work.

### Overall impression of the course

Most participants had gained something from the course they attended.

- 78% felt that the course had helped them 'to understand more about alcohol issues and young people'
- 70% felt it had improved their 'skills in tackling alcohol issues with young people'
- 66% felt 'more confident in working with young people around alcohol issues' as a result of the course
- 42% thought that it had helped them 'to manage, support or train other people who work with young

people around alcohol issues'

- The course also helped some respondents to change their attitudes; 37% changed their attitudes to alcohol and young people
- 21% changed their attitude to their work.

### Working with young people

The majority of respondents said that they worked with young people and the majority gave examples of how the course helped them in their work. Respondents reported using activities and tools from the course; being better able to advise and give young people information; being more confident in their work; and being able to facilitate alcohol focused group and one-to-one sessions.

Responses included:

*"I now use line of lash, strength games, scenarios etc that were introduced on the course both on a one-to-one and group basis. I have used tools learned on the course during interventions with young people presenting with alcohol issues."*

*"I am able to advise young people and have plans to deliver a series of sessions to a group of 16-year-olds."*

*"After receiving the training I had more confidence to deliver group work sessions about alcohol with young people, particularly in relation to alcohol levels, units and the law."*

*"The course spurred me on to do focussed work on alcohol-only education in a school session that deals with all aspects of health education."*

## Managing, supporting or training people who work with young people

32% of respondents said that they managed, supported or trained people who worked directly with young people and gave examples of how the course had helped them with their management, support or training, including using activities, tools and information in their work and planning.

## The impact of the courses on their work

Respondents were asked how their learning on the courses affected their work.

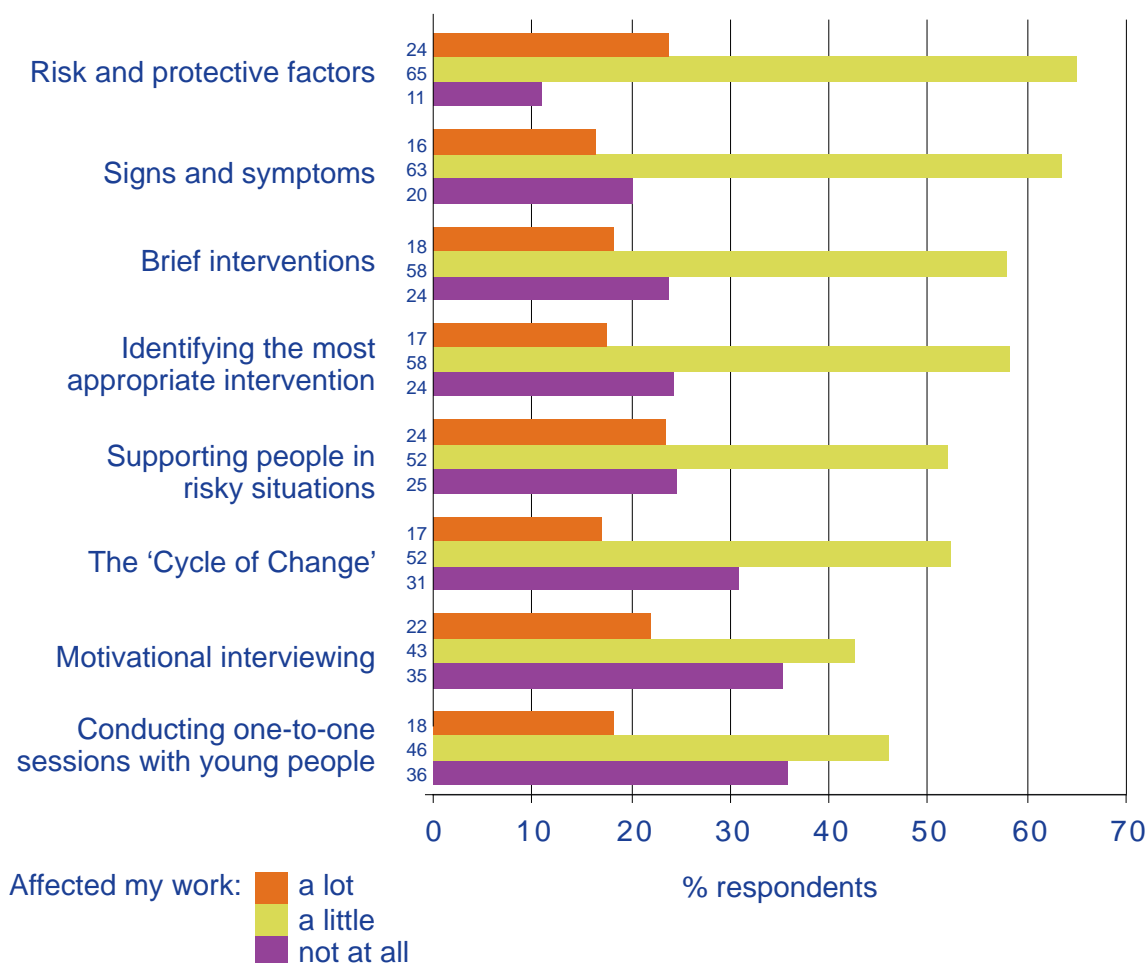
64% of respondents listed all topics covered on the course as affecting their

work and of these, at least 16% said it had affected their work 'a lot'. The course topic that most affected respondents' work was 'risk and protective factors' (89%).

Other topics that had affected respondents' work included:

- signs and symptoms (80%)
- brief interventions (76%)
- identifying the most appropriate intervention (76%)
- supporting people in 'risky' situations (75%)
- the 'cycle of change' (69%)
- MI (65%)
- conducting one-to-one sessions with young people (64%).

## The extent to which various sessions affected participants' work



## Future training needs

Respondents were asked about their training needs. Two thirds (66%) of those responding said they wanted a more advanced course and just under a half (45%) said they wanted more practice on MI. Other training needs included:

- one-to-one work
- cognitive behavioural therapy and other therapeutic interventions when dealing with addiction and making cultural changes
- managing challenging behaviour
- lone working
- more participative tools to use on the streets to illustrate effects of alcohol
- MI (from someone who attended the one-day course)
- practical course – first aid etc
- regular refreshers
- working with people who experience drug and alcohol addiction; working with people around drugs, alcohol and mental health.

## Other comments

29 respondents wrote additional comments, some of them covering more than one area. 10 people made some sort of apology about why they hadn't implemented their learning sufficiently or why their responses sounded less positive than they wanted. For example: 'The course I attended was useful as a refresher course. My answers to question 6 are in light of the fact that the information provided was not new information to me, but great as a reminder. I did find the practical resources introduced useful, particularly the 'Line of Lash' activity which I have used with a number of young people since'.

## Results from telephone interviews

From the email survey, 31 people said that they were willing to take part in a telephone interview. Attempts were made to call all of these and a total of 19 telephone interviews were obtained, a response rate of 63%.

The results from the telephone interviews are discussed under the following headings:

- experience of the training
- using the training in their work
- barriers and opportunities
- future needs.

### Experience of the training

The range of workers interviewed was wide and included CARAT workers in prison, YOT workers, Connexions workers, youth workers, social workers and community workers. All were positive about the training course which they attended and nearly all could give an example of something that they had used from the course in their work.

### Using the training in their work

Most respondents were able to give examples of how they had used the training in their work. A youth advice worker had used some of the exercises to explore alcohol use with young people. The training helped in getting young people to look at the balance between alcohol's positive short-term effects and the long-term potentially negative effects and helped in assisting young people to look at their personal safety under the influence of alcohol.

When working with older young people, the training around MI was implemented when using a local assessment tool.

One Connexions worker said they were able to apply some of the learning from the training on working with young people around other issues, including managing debt.

## Barriers and opportunities

Most interviewees did not point to barriers to implementing alcohol-related work, apart from the usual issues of lack of time and financial resources. There was also the barrier of some young people not being willing to address their alcohol issue.

However, for prison-based workers there was a specific issue about not being able to address alcohol issues unless they were linked to offending. Ways were found around this (for example, most alcohol users in prison had tried cannabis, and alcohol could be addressed alongside illegal drugs), but it was an unsatisfactory situation.

## Future needs

Some respondents identified future training needs, including:

- a continued focus on successful interventions
- additional practical skills for working with clients: 'they always need refreshing'
- how to work with parents – for example, parents who are allowing their children to drink inappropriately, or parents who themselves have alcohol or other substance misuse problems
- 'how to get communities fired up about alcohol'
- more networking opportunities
- information on new trends, such as changing patterns of drinking
- mixing drugs (particularly alcohol and cannabis) and the effects
- training in DANOS competencies for interventions with young people with problematic alcohol use
- specialist training in foetal alcohol spectrum disorder and how to work with pregnant women on this topic
- other specialist courses, on MI, for example, which, even though some knew

about it, they would attend because it 'helps to revisit these topics'

- *'a course that stretched me a bit more'*.

Several respondents were concerned about the connections between alcohol use and other problematic behaviours; especially mental health and sexuality. This included worries about the ways some young people were using alcohol as a disinhibiting agent, as an aid to having sex.

Other respondents felt that they 'knew enough' or that in future they would like a refresher course: 'you can never get too much training, everyone has different ideas and it increases your menu of options'.

There were also requests for:

- posters
- resources that explain units
- tools, such as drinking diaries for young women that highlighted the calories in alcoholic drinks
- resources to use with young people
- material to raise parents' awareness of their children's drinking
- locally-relevant materials.

Some participants requested access to free downloadable resources from Alcohol Concern's website.

## Conclusions on impact on work practice

The overall conclusion is that the courses were exceptionally well thought of by the participants, who had used what they had learned and were engaging clients around alcohol issues in a wide range of settings.

Both the telephone interviews and email survey provided positive evidence of how highly respondents thought of the training courses and the course tutors, evidence that confirms the findings of the original evaluation of the training course. In particular, the courses were appreciated for:

- useful and varied practical activities
- the range of topics covered
- new ideas
- opportunities for networking.

The training was reportedly successful in helping those who worked directly with young people. Most of these gave examples of the ways in which the training had helped them, including:

- providing them with activities and tools
- advising/informing young people
- building confidence
- improving their delivery of one-to-one sessions
- increasing their knowledge and understanding.

The training was also successful in helping those who managed, supported or trained people who worked directly with young people.

## Accreditation evaluation

The project tried to ascertain what impact accreditation has had on those who are working towards an Open University award. Brief telephone interviews took place with 10 participants who are going through the accreditation process, or with their line managers, asking them a series of questions about the value, the process and areas for improvement around accreditation.

The accreditation process was difficult to complete for a number of participants. This was mainly due to their work environment changing; for example, restructuring at work, change in roles and change in management support.

Participants thought the Open University award was useful, as they thought it was good to have a qualification that recognised competencies as well as understanding. Some participants were unable to complete the accreditation, as their work practice did not allow for opportunities to demonstrate some of the skills. For example, some participants' main role was to deliver drug and alcohol education programmes in primary schools and they therefore found it difficult to demonstrate and give evidence on how they would screen and refer or offer brief advice and support around alcohol.

From a line managers' perspective, having someone with accreditation in a specialist area was seen as very helpful and was seen to 'add value' to the organisation. An accredited person in the organisation was seen as 'very useful for future projects and funding applications'.

The induction session before starting the assessment process was seen as crucial and participants suggested that this should happen very early on in the process. Some participants were not clear what the assessment process involved, for example what was involved in collecting a portfolio of evidence, or having line management involvement as an expert witness.

The costs of going for an award (in comparison to participating just in the training) was inhibitive for some people. As the training was subsidised and cost for attending the training was low, Open University costs (for registration and an award), seemed comparatively high, especially for some small organisations and for organisations where more than one person was participating.

The collecting of evidence for a portfolio should be part of general work practice and not seen as 'additional' work; however feedback indicates that this is only possible if the role involves working directly with young people.

There needs to be a clear and explicit outline of the accreditation process available to all participants to encourage them to take part and to fully understand what the assessment involves. Briefings for line managers or service providers would also be useful.

Overall, accreditation with the Open University was seen as a credible and useful award to gain, as it is based on DANOS and recognises the competency of the participant as well as their understanding. It is seen to add value to the organisation's workforce and to personal development in the substance misuse field.

## Conclusions

### Recommendations from Educari and future needs identified by participants

The evaluation and the further follow-up evaluation demonstrated very positive attitudes towards the training and identified a high degree of implementation, both by those who worked directly with young people and those who managed, supported or trained those who work with young people.

Recommendations for Alcohol Concern for future training and projects include:

- future courses to include aims related to attitudes
- running specific training for those who manage, support or train others which includes skills to pass on knowledge, activities and tools to others
- providing 'higher level' courses for those already working in dedicated drug and alcohol posts
- providing tailor-made training courses for specific organisations or groups of individuals
- providing specific training for various groups of workers, for example, those working in youth justice or in mental health
- providing training and more practice around MI and on working with young people who are uninterested or in denial about their alcohol problems
- providing alcohol training that also explores mental and sexual health
- providing relevant posters, leaflets and other resources (for example, drinking diaries)
- developing materials to raise parents' awareness of their children's drinking
- making available downloads of resources from the Alcohol Concern website
- providing clear guidance on accreditation with the Open University and on the assessment process and the benefits to the individual and their organisations.

### Alcohol Concern's response

Alcohol Concern feels that there is further work to be carried out and additional youth providers' 'needs' to be met, particularly around developing the knowledge and skills of those working with young people in a universal setting and further enhancing the knowledge and skills of those in dedicated substance misuse posts.

Alcohol Concern is developing and working with a consortium of regional training providers to continue the delivery of this training programme at a local level and will update the training manual to include more advanced resources.

Alcohol Concern will be exploring ways to make online resources available for youth providers, as well as seeking opportunities to develop other resources, including young people information leaflets, posters and other tools.

This report aims to provide an outline of the delivery and outcome of the youth provider training project, an Alcohol Concern project funded by Comic Relief.

The report shows the progression of the project, how the training was developed and delivered, how it was evaluated and the outcome of the evaluation.

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Making Sense of Alcohol