



www.surf4health.info

Surf4Health is a new and exciting project for young people about their health and well being. It is for all 7-18 year olds in Rotherham. Not only is the site just for Rotherham's young people, it is also designed by them.

The site will provide a directory of health and well being services in Rotherham. It will have information on key topics, and it will provide links to local, regional and national health advice pages. There will be a bulletin board so that youngsters can discuss different health issues and a medical dictionary so young people can look up common conditions and ailments. There will also be the facility to create and play your own games.

For the initial launch on 26th March, the site will cover six key topics: Nutrition, drugs alcohol and smoking, body image, mind and spirit, sexual health and sport and fitness.

The site is for young people; therefore they are the people who need to design the site. We want the site to be how they want it, we want to address issues that they want to look at and we want to display work they have written.

The main objectives of Surf4Health are:

- To provide a signposting service to Rotherham's health and welfare resources
- To support new and innovative ways of gaining information and advice
- To engage the socially excluded – we want the site to get to hard to reach young people. We aim to do this by having access to the site in youth clubs and through social workers as well as being able to access it at home. The site will also be used in schools and will be used as a resource by parents, carers, teachers and professionals.
- To encourage young people to adopt good health and lifestyle practices for life.
- And To develop the IT skills base.

There are several benefits that the web site has:

- It will improve the awareness and information of health and welfare resources amongst young people.
- It will be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- The site will contain up to date information and advice.
- The user will be able to access information anonymously, so they can use it to find out information that they were too scared or embarrassed to find out from anyone else.
- The site will assist in the development of IT skills, research skills and confidence.

Several different groups of people are involved in the project and they are involved in a number of ways.

- Young people are actively involved in the design, creation and evaluation of the site – they have been involved with cartoon workshops, focus groups, activity days and classroom activities.
- Teachers have been asked to fill in questionnaires, and have attended meetings and interviews.
- A number of professionals regularly attend our steering groups and have agreed to be on our editorial board, as well as write content for the site.
- Surf4Health has visited many community organisations inviting them to contribute information for their site.

The project is funded by Central Governments Invest to Save budget. The ISB gives money to innovative projects, which provide new ways of doing things. Successful projects can be implemented in other areas. Rotherham council, the owners of the project, are providing 25% match funding. The funding for the project runs up till March 2003. It is hoped that additional funding will be gained to sustain the project through sponsorship from local businesses and other funding bids.

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