

ShowCase

Reducing graffiti vandalism

Topic: Antisocial behaviour

Organisation: Brent Council; Uscreates

Location: Brent (London)

Dates: 2007 to ongoing

Website:

www.uscreates.com/case_studies/reducing-graffiti-vandalism

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Overview

In 2006, Brent Council was spending approximately £450,000 a year cleaning up graffiti. A review by Brent's Anti-Social Behaviour Steering Group led to the formation in 2007 of the Brent Graffiti Partnership Board, a multi-agency partnership aimed at reducing graffiti in the borough.

Based on insights gained from engaging with young people, graffiti offenders, victims of graffiti vandalism and local residents, the Brent Graffiti Partnership Board decided that stronger investigation and enforcement, combined with diversionary activities, was needed to steer young people away from taking up graffiti vandalism.

Activities have included: community public artworks; workshops in street art with 'draw off' competitions; parkour (free running); football sessions; ASBOs (antisocial behaviour orders); fines for prolific 'taggers'; and a responsible trader scheme whereby spray paints are not sold to those underage.

This dual-pronged approach has resulted so far in 40 prolific 'taggers' being apprehended, a reduction in graffiti vandalism and an increase in the percentage of residents who feel that the clean streets are a good thing about Brent.

1. BEHAVIOUR

- Reduce uptake of illegal graffiti vandalism behaviour in the London Borough of Brent
- Increase the uptake of 'diversionary' activities for young people

2. CUSTOMER ORIENTATION

- Public survey to understand the community's attitudes and perceptions towards graffiti vandalism, via a paper/online questionnaire
- RANT BOX™ – Touring video consultation in schools
- Focus groups with those who had reported graffiti on their property to Brent Council
- One-to-one interviews with young graffiti offenders

3. THEORY

- **Co-creation theory:** Involving communities in identifying their own common problems or goals and then developing strategies for achieving them. The core principle is that because social problems occur in communities, the community should be involved in the solutions.

4. INSIGHT

- There is usually one tag designer and a crew of taggers
- Most are male, aged 13 to 17, from deprived backgrounds and with a history of family problems
- The vast majority of tagging occurs in the summer months
- Prolific taggers do not connect their tagging designs with commercial skills, or lack aspiration and confidence in their abilities
- Most taggers prefer physical diversionary activities

5. EXCHANGE

- Graffiti vandalism provides the buzz or thrill of potentially getting caught
- Art is viewed as something abstract and not an appealing channel for their artistic capabilities
- Diversionary activities offered to replace the thrill of graffiti vandalism, such as parkour
- Displaying art work in public and street art workshops provides taggers with increased confidence in their design and art skills

6. COMPETITION

- Thrill of illegal graffiti vandalism
- Kudos of by being part of a crew of taggers
- Difficult home environments and lack of role models

7. SEGMENTATION

Target audience

- Those who were involved in graffiti vandalism in the borough, predominantly males aged 13 to 17
- Young people who could potentially become involved in illegal graffiti tagging

8. METHODS MIX

- Public murals created by young people
- Workshops with professional graffiti artists Monorex, to encourage young people to channel their artistic skills in a positive way
- 'Draw off' – Friendly urban art competitions between teams
- Manga art, poetry and urban art courses
- Kickz – Free football sessions with Queens Park Rangers football coaches)
- Parkour workshops
- 'Responsible Trader' scheme – Spray paints not sold to those underage
- Increased investigation and enforcement of illegal graffiti