Valley and Vale Community Arts
Celfyddydau Cymuned Cwm a Bro

#NOBLURREDLINES:

a report



An exciting and unique Participatory Theatre project to address issues of sexual consent and compliance with young people.

Ali Franks - Applied Drama Practitioner (Valley and Vale Community Arts)
Dr Tamse Preece - Head of PSE (Bryntirion Comprehensive School) & Specialist Consultant on Sexual Health, Substance Misuse and Adolescent Social Networking.

"You won't believe how many of us have sex with our boyfriends when we don't really want to.."

- A Year 9 Student, Bridgend



Initial Project Aims and Objectives (May 2014)

- To promote an understanding of key issues surrounding sexual consent, compliance and acquiescence
- To illicit and sustain dialogue between young people and professionals regarding the ethical, safety and legal implications of sexual intercourse in and outside of relationships and the wider issues of respect for self and others, communication and fair play
- To create a quality resource that engages young people and professionals. This resource will be cross-media to include: an extended theatre performance, focused theatre in education workshops, a DVD, supporting paper resources, mobile phone application
- To initially liaise closely with the students and relevant staff of the 11 Bridgend comprehensive schools, Bridgend College and the specialist educational settings to develop a common, consistent and sustainable understanding of sexual consent.

Impact for the young people

#noblurredlines will give young people the opportunity to analyse and challenge culture values and norms surrounding consent in a creative forum. We aim to empower them to consider their own values and challenge the values of others, so they become discriminatory in their access to new media and popular music, popular culture. Through the exploratory workshops they will have the opportunity to recognise their own motivations behind the actions and behaviour. Through this process we aim to create a self awareness in which young people are able to consider their own motivations and those of others; to signpost and provide supporting resources for young people in need.

Brief (May 2014)

***#noblurredlines* will be a creative, educational resource to address issues surrounding sexual consent, compliance and acquiescence. It will consist of:**

- Full theatre performance of 45-60 mins
- Two gendered theatre-in-education workshops
- Focused workshops for young people who have self-identified as having specific interest
- Performance and training for safeguarding professionals in schools, community settings and sports settings
- A broadcast quality film resource for sustained work in schools

#noblurredlines will commence with the opportunity for professionals to view and participate in the educational experience, thus providing the opportunity to address areas of consistency, sign-posting and core-training needs.
The play will follow a group of young people on a night out and, through dialogue, anecdote and performance elicit themes and raise questions regarding sexual consent, compliance and acquiescence. The play will contain reference to violent sexual assault but will more explicitly aim to access more ambiguous themes relating to behaviour, attitude and personal and societal values.
The subsequent gendered theatre-in-education workshops will provide a safe but tightly structured forum to explore the gender-specific themes raised in the performance with the input and support of multi-agency professionals.
Supporting resources to include a professionally filmed and developed DVD and educational pack will facilitate ongoing learning provision as best suited to each school or organisation.



What is the need? – Evidence

We have drawn our evidence from a number of sources. Alongside anecdotes from our own work with young people we have also held focus groups locally, taken legal advice from a criminal barrister and drawn on recent research conducted around self harm, suicide and social networking. These are some of our findings:

- Young people are increasingly required to carry out risk-taking behaviour in order to remain visible on social media.
- Displacement of children from physical spaces to their virtual equivalents removes modifying and reinforcing adults.
- Criminal Barrister reported incidents in which young men have vomited in disgust whilst watching their behaviour on CCTV.
- During a group session in which a group of girls challenged their friend regarding her behaviour with multiple, high-status young men the girl was asked as to her motivation. She replied that she would gain confidence from being able to say that *they* had chosen to have sex with *her*.
- An intoxicated girl was sexually assaulted by a group of boys at an end of term party. She claimed not to remember the assault and chose not to make a formal complaint. During the investigation made by the school one boy stated, 'It wasn't just me…'
- A year 9 student stated, 'You wouldn't believe how many of us have sex with our boyfriends when we don't really want to.'
- During the focus group, two separate individuals recalled (during KS4) the practice of groups of boys regularly receiving oral sex from a girl who was known to be very vulnerable.
- Office of the Children's Commissioner (England) November 2013, "Sex without consent, I suppose that is rape": How young people in England understand sexual consent" http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/force_download.php?fp=%2Fclient_assets%2Fcp%2Fpublication%2F744%2FSex_without_consent_I_suppose_that_is_rape_newprint.pdf



The Process: Devising, Scripting and Rehearsals

Devising workshops took place in June and July 2014 with a group of young actors who had come to the end of their acting studies at Gower College and hoping to attend Drama schools. We were really aware of the need to safeguard ourselves and our actors from the outset due to the nature of the project and initial workshops focussed on building trust and setting boundaries regarding our involvement. The team also worked closely with a local criminal barrister to fully understand the law around consent and compliance and have the opportunity to explore the mindset of victims and perpetrators.



Following on from initial devising workshops Tamse and myself wrote the initial script over the summer ready for rehearsals to begin in September. Part of our research included one of our young actors taking us out on a student night in Swansea and continuous dialogue with young people from Tamse's ongoing research and our actors.

Rehearsals started in September with a hope to tour in January. Due to overriding commitments of the team, this was delayed and, although we performed an early pilot of the project in January, the tour was then booked for March 2015.

Rehearsals were very much actor led with continuous reworking of ideas and script development, leading to what we believe was an incredibly authentic piece of theatre.

> "This is the best piece of Theatre-in-Education we have ever had at school"
>
> *Head of Sixth Form, Pencoed Comprehensive.*

The Tour

We had hoped to take *#noblurredlines* to every 6th form in Bridgend. Unfortunately, this was not possible, partly due to funding, (see below), and partly due to lack of response from schools. We did however book a tour of 9 performances with the following schools and organisations:



Bryntirion Comprehensive School, Bridgend
Bridgend Youth Service, Think About Sex Event - 2 performances booked.
Porthcawl Comprehensive School, Bridgend
Pencoed Comprehensive School, Bridgend
Cynffig Comprehensive School, Bridgend
Bridgend Alternative School Provision - PRU and Key Stage 4 - KPC, Bridgend
Llanwern High School, Newport
Ysgol Bryn Castell, Bridgend

BYS was performed to pupils in Key Stages 3&4
Llanwern High School,YBC and PRU were all performed to pupils in Key Stage 4
Bryntirion, Porthcawl, Pencoed and Cynffig were performed to pupils in Key Stage 5

The audiences ranged from 15 pupils to 170, depending on location.

All audiences engaged in the gendered workshops. In one school we had a pupil who overtly identified as 'gender fluid" who attended both male and female workshops, and in another school one pupil identified as homosexual and wanted to attend both workshops. Obviously there would have been other pupils within the schools who would have identified as homosexual, transgender, or gender fluid but they did not identify themselves overtly to us and attended the assigned workshop.

All the venues were accessible except for Pencoed where the performance space was in a 1st floor drama studio. One pupil was unable to attend due to his use of a wheelchair, (although one of our actors who is also a carer offered to assist the young man by carrying him up), however the performance was filmed by the school so the pupil could still participate in the show.

Funding

We started *#noblurredlines* with no secure funding in place. We were extremely keen to get moving on the project as it was needed, we believed with great urgency. Since conception of the project we received funding from Esmee Fairbairn Foundation which covered the Applied Drama Facilitator salary for the project and from Communities First, Bridgend which covered evaluation, marketing and performances for the Communities First postcodes.

We had a number of meeting with funders who were very keen to be involved in the project, understood how essential it was and expressed a keen desire to support it. However, as time went on these potential funders failed to come up any money to back *#noblurredlines*. One of these partners even then requested two free performances of the project when we were booking the tour.

We asked for a donation from schools when they booked the performance to cover the cost of our actors. Due to this shortfall in funding we were unable to complete some parts of the overall project - the training event for teachers and the DVD resource. All other funding needs were met by Valley and Vale Community Arts reserves. (see appendix for the budget breakdown).



"Completely unpatronising and age appropriate"

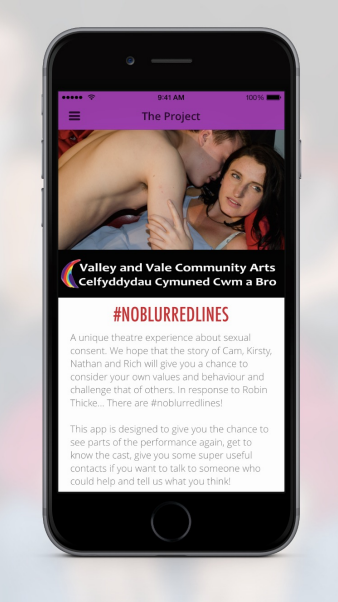
-Participant

"A brilliant representation of what happens.."

-Participant

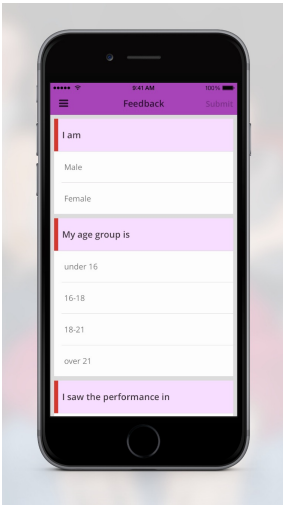
#noblurredlines App for iPhone and Social Networking

#noblurredlines saw the first ever Valley and Vale mobile phone app being developed, specifically for the project.

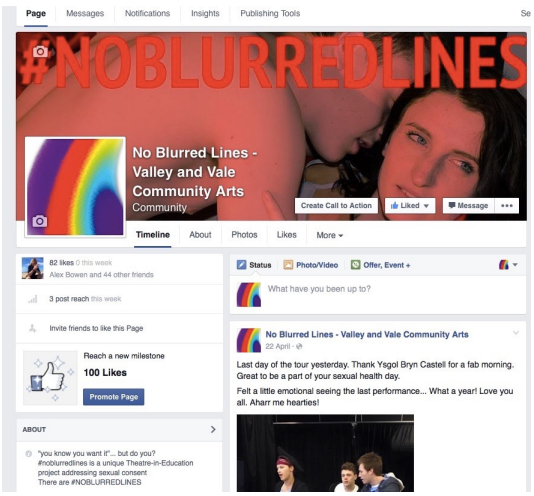


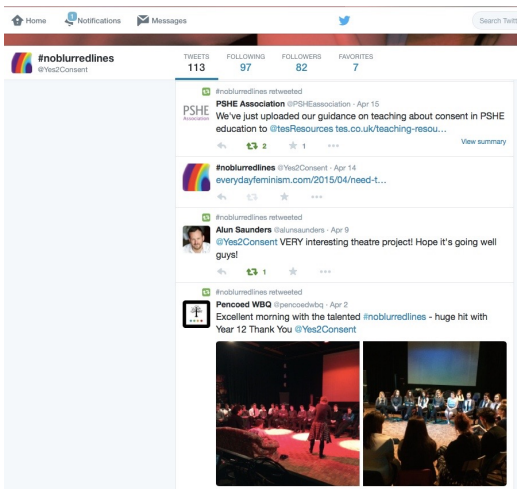
The aims of this app were:

- Engagement - relating to young people on a platform that was culturally relevant
- Signposting - giving them direct access to organisations and agencies for support regarding the issues straight from their devices
- Evaluation - the opportunity to submit feedback through a form in the app, as opposed to filling in paper forms at the end of the workshop.



Due to funding constraints the app was only able to be developed on iOS for this particular tour, but for those with iOS devices it was downloaded. Over 95% of those who downloaded the app completed the feedback section, which sent the results to a server for evaluation. The app also contained a section for the audience to engage with us on social media. This included a Facebook page set up specifically for the project, a Twitter feed and a Youtube channel. Facebook and Twitter were used to put up useful information that may relate to questions asked by our audiences and show clips of rehearsals and backstage photos etc. The YouTube Channel was, again to give some insight into the process behind the tour with footage of rehearsals and preview for the play.

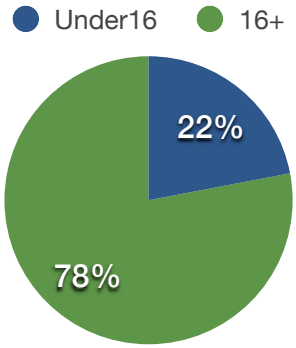


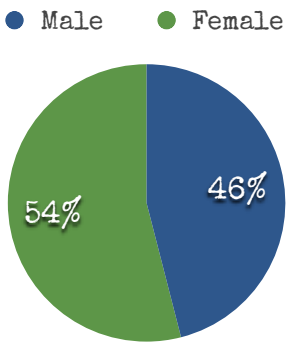


Outcomes

Evaluation Data

Performance	Audience and workshop participants
Bryntirion Comprehensive	100
Bridgend Youth Service (inc. Maesteg and Yy Dderwen pupils)	60
Porthcawl Comprehensive	150
Pupil Referral Unit & A4L (KPC Youth)	17
Cynffig Comprehensive	90
Pencoed Comprehensive	76
Llanwern High School	48
Ysgol Byn Castell	35
TOTAL	576





	Found the performance realistic	Found the performance relevant	Related to one or more of the characters	Witnessed/ experienced this personally	Believed the girl to be responsible for her rape	Opinions changed as a result of project
All participants	96%	86%	75%	84%	25%	85%
Comms 1st Participants	96%	82%	72%	86%	22%	82%

Data, feedback and observations from the workshops:

The data obtained from the evaluations gave us an overall understanding of the efficacy of *#noblurredlines*. We were pleased that 96% of our audiences felt that the performance was realistic and 86% thought it was relevant. It was highly important to us that we had been culturally accurate and resonant with our casting, script writing and directing. We took risks in terms of language and dialogue that we felt were necessary to gain the interest and attention of our audiences, and also essential in coming from their frame of reference in order not to present anything that could be considered patronising.

After the performance and the workshop we still had a quarter of our audiences believing that our female character, Kirsty, was still in some way responsible for what happened to her at the end of the play. This was no surprise after facilitating the workshops, where we started with a much higher percentage believing that she was responsible, and through the course of the time we had seen that percentage drop dramatically as we worked through the issues and the Law. However, these statistics reinforce what we felt during the tour- that we certainly needed a longer time with the participants to work through the issues presented, (workshops were an hour long), as some of the information that we were presenting was very difficult for our young people to grasp, given spending their adolescent years growing up in a culture of entitlement, pornification and drastically mixed messages through the media as to what healthy relationships look like.

More qualitative observations during the workshops were also interesting. We observed that in the schools where children came from higher socio-economic backgrounds the girls were much more informed and educated on their rights and the laws surrounding consent, whereas their was a higher level of aggression from the boys regarding the girls role in non-consensual situations. Believing the law to be "unfair" and the play to be "overly feminist". Interesting however, when in direct dialogue with some of these boys following the workshops they were more understanding and less "aggressive" regarding their entitlement.

> "Excellent and thought provoking... think it will really start a dialogue about something people are scared to really talk about with young people"
>
> *- Staff member, BYS*

Our audiences where the participants came from less privileged backgrounds we noticed that their was a less evident "culture of entitlement" from the male audience, however the girls were less clear on their rights within sexual consent. For example, a common thread was that if they had kissed a boy or flirted with him it was expected of them to have sex and if they did not then they were to blame. Again, we felt that these workshops needed more time and the young people could have benefitted from a longer term intervention.

85% of our audience said they had changed their opinions as a result of the project. However, many who said their opinions had not changed added a note in the evaluation to say that they had understood the issues before attending the workshop and were of that opinion anyway.

A highly relevant and unique play:

From the outset we knew we wanted to create something different. Something that engaged our audiences from the get go, that was relevant, culturally appropriate and recognisable. Though our devising, research and scripting and re-scripting process this is what we achieved. Each workshop was adapted depending on the participants in the sense that we had a number of activities planned but needed to be flexible depending on the needs that arose specific to particular groups. We were highly reflective after each session which enabled us to adapt and adjust the workshops as the tour progressed.
#noblurredlines now exists as a one of a number of Participatory Theatre pieces at Valley and Vale and could be toured over future years.

Relationships with new schools

A fantastic outcome from *#noblurredlines* is that we have built new relationships with schools that we had not previously worked with much. I believe that this has been a result of offering the schools something that is visibly high quality and relevant. But also largely as a result of marketing our product in a particular way that positions us as experts and our product not only unique but also filling a much needed gap in the curriculum. This, in itself, has shown that our approach to marketing ourselves to potential partners needs to follow this approach in future projects. Although a "sales" approach may seem a little harsh in this sector, our potential clients and customers need to know that we are address a real need and that we are the best placed to fill that need. One of these schools has since been keen for myself to attend a drama class in the school as a guest artist to work with A'level students. This would not have happened before *#noblurredlines*.



Positive feedback from participants

The feedback we had from participants and staff during the tour was exceptional both in terms of the form and content of *#noblurredlines*. Not only was this evident through evaluation received through the phone app and evaluation forms but also through our social media channels of Facebook and Twitter. Again, this will inform future projects at Valley and Vale in

terms of engaging our audiences through a variety of means relevant to particular audiences and potential participants.

"After today I know not to blame it on myself. Really put words into my head that it was not my fault, thank you"

- Participant

Learning Points for the Future



Funding in place

The biggest learning curve of the project was pursuing it without sufficient funding in place. From the outset Valley and Vale agreed that the project would go ahead regardless and money from the reserve account was allocated, however the constant search for funding whilst going through the devising, scripting, rehearsing and touring process put a strain on the artists and staff involved. The process would have been much easier should this have been in place early on as it would have allowed us to focus wholly on the artistic process and the production of the tour. We hope to tour *#noblurredlines* again in 2016, but we will ensure funding is in place before the process commences.

Ideas resulting from this:

School Subscription Service: Offering local schools the opportunity to opt into a subscription service where they make a yearly payment that allows them two participatory theatre projects within the school year. We currently have 3 projects ready to cast and tour: *#noblurredlines,* (sexual consent), Up for it, (drug awareness), and What's Happening Frankie? (CSE in partnership with Barnardos Cymru), and we are looking to develop 2 more performances over the next two years. Schools could then choose what they needed and book us in early on in the year to ensure it fitted in with their curriculum and planning. This would give us the earned income to cast and pay our young actors and tour the shows.

High Profile Crowdfunding Campaign: We attempted a Kickstarter Campaign for *#noblurredlines* but learnt that this this in itself, if it is to make profit, needs a lot of time and dedication to raise sufficient funds. I do believe that it is, however, a potential income source to enable a tour to go ahead.

Sponsorship: During our search for funding we approached the WRU, WFA and a number of corporate businesses. There was a good deal of interest expressed, although the process of generating these funds needed more time and resources than we had available to us at that time. They would certainly we worth pursuing for future tours.

Staff training

Our initial brief included an important element of staff training, that unfortunately, due to funds we were unable to undertake. However, it became apparent during the tour and especially through the workshops that this, was indeed, an untapped need around this particular subject matter. IN some of the workshops we felt we were working with staff as much as the young people.

Male Facilitator

We had decided to split the workshops on the basis of gender as we believe the issues arising from the subject matter differed greatly depending on gender. Although one of actors, who had worked with Valley and Vale before in facilitating group work took a more active role than the others in the facilitation, I believe that there was a strong need for an older male role model to facilitate the drama in the boy's workshops. Should *#noblurredlines* tour again, this would be a prerequisite.

App on Android and iOS

As previously stated we piloted the *#noblurredlines* app on iOS only due to financial constraints, however it proved to be a fantastic way to engage our audience and retain engagement after the event itself. However, it felt unfair that we only offered this service to those with iOS devices. Also in terms of gathering feedback and evaluation information it would have been more efficient had it all been through our online server.



#noblurredlines: What happens next?

Valley and Vale Community Arts believe that the success of *#noblurredlines* was exceptional and hope to raise funds to ensure further tours in the future. Bearing in mind our learning points from this first tour we believe we are in position to go on making this a hugely needed and successful resource for South Wales and beyond. It was hugely evident upon delivery how vital a resource like *#noblurredlines* was/is in schools as our young people were ignorant of the laws around consent and referring to a wealth of unhealthy relationships that seemed to be the norm.

Due to funding constraints so far we have been unable to start developing *#noblurredines* into a DVD resource for use in the classroom. However, Dr. Tamse Preece is currently working as an independent producer to raise capital for a broadcast quality film to be made, based on the stage play, and to develop a teacher resource for the classroom to accompany it. Tamse is currently in talks with relevant Charities and the Welsh Government.

"#noblurredlines demonstrates how creativity can be very effective in other parts of the curriculum, that arts can open minds, bring new ideas forward, provide a stimulating forum for discussion and give resources for further learning."

-Advisor for the Arts Council of Wales - Annual Review 2014/15 for Valley and Vale Community Arts

communities first cymunedau yn gyntaf

Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr Bridgend County Borough Council

Esmée Fairbairn Foundation

Ariennir gan Lywodraeth Cymru Funded by Welsh Government

Cyngor Celfyddydau Cymru Arts Council of Wales

Anarchic Knight

Valley and Vale Community Arts
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Appendix

Budget

Ali Franks' salary for this time is not included but funded by the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation

	Out	In
Fees - including actors, scriptwriting, research consultant, designers	£11,903	
Marketing	£115	
Evaluation - including iPhone app.	£2500	
Travel	£202	
Materials	£375	
Rehearsal Space	£240	
Communitires First		£5000
BCBC		£738
Porthcawl Comp		£240
YBC		£350
Llanwern High		£540
TOTAL	£15,335	£6868
	-£8467	
Valley and Vale Contribution		£8467