

**Are you working with young people in
West Northumberland?**

Are you interested in Social Media?

**NET
ASSETS**
social media
for change >

Net Assets is a new project being run by the Regional Youth Work Unit - North East. In the near future we will be delivering seminars for young person professionals, and establishing online communication groups with young people.

There will be more information coming soon so if you are interested please contact the unit and join the Net Assets group. Contact Leon Mexter on 01914404410 or leon@rywu.org.uk

Net Assets – using social media to raise the voice of young people in the North East

The Regional Youth Work Unit – North East has been exploring a variety of ways in which social media and emerging digital technology can support the development of youth work and the empowerment of the young people of our region.

In recent months, we have seen the impact of Twitter and Facebook in supporting regime change and the call to social action in the Middle East. The recent News of The World phone hacking scandal would always have been front page news, but the ability of the public to voice their outrage and to co-ordinate e-campaigns and online petitions brought an added dimension to the conscience of our elected officials: the call to act became too big to ignore.

We are also mindful of the negative role social media is said to have played in the recent riots in London, Birmingham and Manchester. Is it the tool that is evil or is it more about the individual using it? We want to support professionals and young people to use social media responsibly and positively.

We believe that there is a huge potential for the use of social media for good. It can connect young people in a quite unique way; it can empower young people; it can provide a focus for positive change at a local level; it can hold people to account; it can grow and evolve, from a single creative spark of an idea, into wonderful opportunities!

The Regional Youth Work Unit – North East, through our Net Assets Project

are keen to work with you in West Northumberland to explore this world; to share our knowledge; to learn from each other; to share that learning across the sector; to help each other to improve how we use new technology, personally and professionally; to support young people to access opportunities to use social media in a positive way.

We want to work with young people to develop a campaign using social media. By campaign we don't mean supporting regime change or something with a negative focus: it may be an issue with local transport, it could be around how they are portrayed in the media. Whatever it is we want young people to determine the focus themselves and then support them to develop the work.

The Net Assets Project has secured funding to run a number of structured participative social media sessions. We would like the first session to be with frontline practitioners and then open up the project with young people. The first session would be developed in conjunction with local partners, but we anticipate including:

- An introduction to social media
- E-safety and issues to be aware of
- The benefits of social media for practitioners and young people in West Northumberland
- Developing the rest of the Net Assets Project with young people.

We are excited, if not a little bit inspired, about this project and are really keen to get your thoughts, ideas and input throughout the Net Assets Project.