

Specially trained dogs

to sniff out illegal substances



Background

Oaklands College in Hertfordshire is a three-site further education college with provision for some 10,000 students, from 16 year olds to mature students.

Drug use and dealing is something high on the agenda of the management to prevent and involves a team from several departments: facilities management, security, and safeguarding, the latter a part of student services. Herbal cannabis is what was normally found, either joints or in vapes, and many of the students had no idea about its legal status. Drug paraphernalia such as needles and other equipment and residue of noxious substances can be dangerous and required careful, expert handling.

College staff were extremely pro-active on the subject, with visible security on duty, and continuous staff training to deal with issues before they become a major problem.

Solution

Clearway provided a specially trained dog and handler to visit all three Oaklands sites where the dog was allowed to access all areas; lockers, classrooms, libraries, food outlets, social areas and even the students themselves together with their belongings.

Regardless of whether it's a building or site being used for illicit drug dealing, or it's become an unofficial venue for anti-social behaviour and drug taking, the dog will soon sniff it out and enable the site manager to take appropriate action. The sniffer dog was able to identify individual scents amongst dozens of other scents in the same area, and being highly trained animals would soon raise an alert if anything was detected.

Key Services



Trained dogs & handlers



Even if the students hadn't brought any substances on to campus, cannabis residue, being very 'sticky' remained on clothes, from the previous night for example, which the dog was easily able to detect.

Outcome

Instances of drugs and associated paraphernalia being discovered were dramatically reduced following the intervention of the trained sniffer dog and handler.

Gayle Brown, Student Services Manager at Oaklands said:

"This is the first year we have used this security option to deal with any potential drug problem at Oaklands and it has proved a great success... not only in being a highly visible deterrent, which is so important, but in finding users or distributors which then enables us to offer counselling and proactive measures to help those involved".

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