

Young Liverpool film makers focus on the trauma of teenage bullying and suicide



(Left to right): Florence Watson (18), Sophie Williams (18), Community Development Co-ordinator, Diane Maddock, Director 'Illy' and Kieron Bimpson (16), at the '45 Seconds and Counting' film launch.

Local housing association Cosmopolitan has teamed up with Liverpool based film company Copperwood Media, to launch a film by young people about bullying and suicide.

The film was launched to journalists and professionals concerned with young people's welfare and education last Wednesday (11/5) at Liverpool John Moores' lecture theatre on Marybone in Liverpool.

The hard-hitting film called '45 Seconds and Counting' was written and produced by a group of young people from Liverpool aged between 14 and 21 about the issues surrounding bullying and suicide, which is the largest cause of death for 15 – 24 year olds in the UK.

It was produced as part of a larger project called 'Focus on You' which is funded by The Big Lottery. The next screening of the film will be at Marybone Youth and Community Centre and Copperwood Media are hoping to establish connections with schools and other agencies who work with young people, such as Merseyside Police and the NHS in order to enable the film to be shown more widely.

A live theatre performance followed the film's world premiere and the evening ended with Q&A session, with counsellors from The Samaritans and CALM on hand to offer professional advice.

Many of the young people taking part in the project have had a personal connection with bullying and suicide and chose the subject matter themselves. The experience saw them learning production skills, acting, filming and editing, which many of them are now continuing to develop with local theatre groups and music studios as a result.

Copperwood Media is now seeking to obtain funding which will enable them to continue running the workshops for young people in schools, colleges, community centres and young offenders institutions across Merseyside.

Speaking at the event, Sophie Williams (18) said: "Depression and suicide is something that kids don't talk about and by showing the issue from the perspective of young people the message should start to be made clear. I hope that this project will help to make kids speak out about it."

'Illy', Director at Copperwood Media, said: "It was a really amazing night and we were blown away by the response; the 'Question and Answer' session with the kids lasted an hour and could have carried on longer. We are already in discussions about taking the project further with other organisations including Merseyside police and Marybone Council."

Diane Maddock, Community Development Co-ordinator with Cosmopolitan said: "Tonight has been a big deal for everyone involved in making this film and for the young people it's the unveiling of a very personal piece of work and a subject that is close to their hearts. Cosmopolitan are thrilled to have been a part of this project and given the opportunity to work with Marybone Community Forum and Copperwood Media and hope that this film and the work of all involved, continues to open people's eyes to these very serious issues."