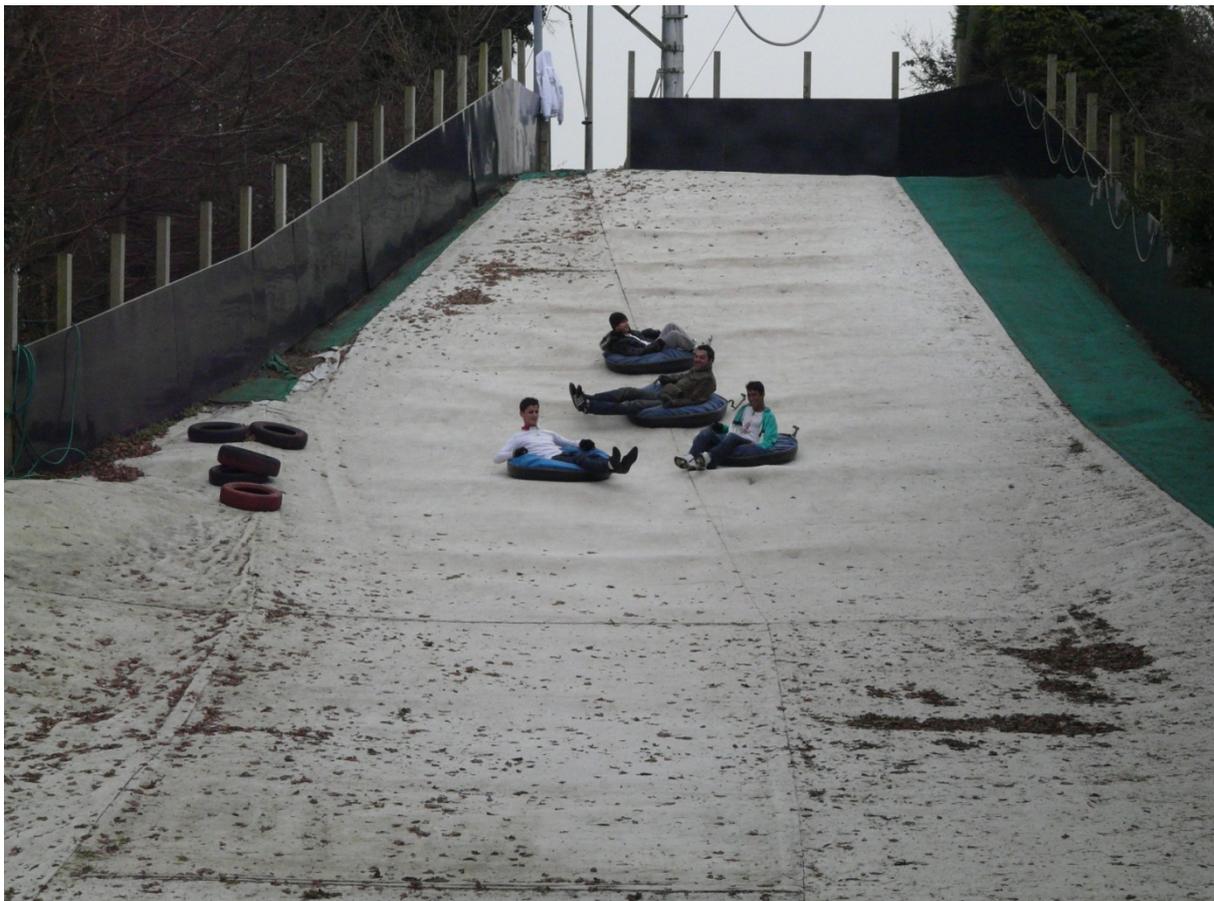


## Tobogganing, emergency housing & new staff: the Kent team update us on a challenging beginning to the year

Phew - 2011 has been a very busy year for our care team in Kent. As well as building new relationships with local services such as the Police and NHS, we have taken our young people tobogganing, made pancakes and welcomed a new outreach worker to the team, Maria Runciman.

In January we provided emergency accommodation to nine young people following the incident in Folkestone in which a young person was murdered in a street brawl (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-kent-12314050>). The properties they were living in have since been closed down and asphaleia care are accommodating them until further accommodation is found.

As part of the Kent care service, we take young people on social activities and experiences, to develop their social and team building skills, improve their overall wellbeing by providing them with opportunities to have fun with their peers and to encourage new friendships amongst them. The team also made the most of the big winter chill and took some of the young people on a tobogganing trip – the team enjoyed it as much as the young people! The young people were also treated to an evening of pancake making fun on Shrove Tuesday. For many of them, it was their first taste of a pancake. It was such a great evening and the young people enjoyed sharing an English tradition with each other.



*Young people photographed are (L-R) Shahyad Hussein, Imran Kochi, Juan (Outreach Worker) and Zarhoor Khan*

"We have also spent time building new relationships with local public services to increase the awareness of our work in Kent, and the unique needs of the young people who we support," explains team leader, Jodie. "For some services, their focus is on the young people and educating them about services on offer; for others, their focus is to educate the team so we know who to contact in certain situations.

"It is so good to developing such strong links within our community – it will serve to improve our impact on the young people and offer them a much wider support network in their local area."

Recently, the young people have had visits from Sexual Health outreach nurses who came and gave a talk to the young people about sexual health and Kent Police, who gave a talk to the young people about English law, racism and attitudes to asylum seekers in the UK, carrying weapons and keeping themselves safe.

Staff have also held meetings with staff from a local project to discuss the young people's attendance and how they are getting on in education as well as attending training led by a Primary Mental Health worker, to discuss mental health issues in young people and how we can manage certain situations i.e. if a young person is threatening suicide.

"It has been a great start to the year, with many challenges, successes and paperwork!" concludes Jodie. "One of the best moments was hearing one of our young people had an interview with a local hairdresser – what a brilliant opportunity for him."

Keep checking <http://www.asphaleia.co.uk/ventures/care.html> and future e-bulletins for more Kent updates and information.