

## **Notes of Joint Children and Young People and Health & Adult Social Care Task and Finish Group – A Focus on Reducing Teenage Conception Rates in the City**

11 November 2009

Attendees: Councillor Purnell (Chair)  
Councillor Aspinall (Vice-Chair)  
Councillors Delbridge, Mrs Stephens and Mrs Watkins

1. There were no declarations of interest.
2. Witness - Neil Minnion for the Young People's Sexual Health Team

Neil gave a background on his role to panel members. Up to a year ago we were the teenage pregnancy team. We changed the name of our team to incorporate more of what we are trying to achieve which is looking at young people's sexual health. We are a team of two which leads to capacity issues. To overcome the capacity issues we train workers who help young people on sexual health matters. We have recently given bespoke training to parent support advisers and will be undertaking training of social care staff in the New Year.

We train people who work face to face with young people and we ask them to think about their values and attitudes towards sex and keeping young people safe. We ask them to think about their stance which can be quite difficult. We also look at sexually transmitted infections and work closely with Harbour. We have a 2-day training programme with links between substance misuse and sexual health, in particular alcohol.

Panel members asked Neil about girls wearing bangles which denotes a sexual activity and how teachers are dealing with this issue. This is something Neil wasn't aware of but this is down to self esteem.

Neil spoke about the delay approach which is about building self esteem. Young people are having sex for negative reasons and they undertake a group work approach in building self esteem and awareness, and ask how do they feel after the sexual activity? There is a very high percentage of young men who regret having sex at a young age. Teachers tried to provide the training, but cannot take time off for two days training. This is not statutory until next September but we could be in a position to start nurturing schools in working towards this. There is training for school governors and they could put on training for parents.

Neil talked about speak easy training which is a national training focused on parents. Plymouth is 1 of 4 within the region to undertake this and will be targeting foster carers and then community centres.

Panel members asked how do you evaluate this training? Managers need to be involved from the outset and evidence how it has improved their practice.

Panel members asked if you had a wish list, what would you want? Neil responded that he would like to make a difference and have an established team of trained sexual health workers who are confident in dealing with sexual health matters.

Panel members also asked about the standard of sexual education young people receiving in schools today. Neil responded that he is not an expert in this area but the healthy schools team deliver the sex education because he doesn't have the capacity. When sex education becomes statutory it doesn't mean it will be delivered well. It's about getting this onto the school curriculum timetable. Panel members responded that the LEA has an overarching policy for every school; this is the arena to agree a level of minimum commitment.

Panel Members asked about SRE and that instead should be RSE. Neil responded that he emphasises that sex is part of being in a relationship – all the training we deliver on will focus on the relationship first, friendships are important.

Panel members raised that some children are vulnerable and these are the girls that are getting pregnant. What is being done to teach teachers to pick these vulnerable children out? SRE to be delivered over a period of weeks, within a pupil referral unit, there is nobody delivering sex education – not sure who is picking up this role but there are plans. The issue is whether teacher is able to follow this through. A CAF is not centred around sexual health but about vulnerability, the Trust needs to be challenged. No social service input then a CAF will be closed, not sure where this has come from and this should not be happening.

Neil reported that they introduced in November 2008 the C Card which is not just about distributing condoms to young people but also giving out advice. This has been built on a national scheme and 31 sexual health sites have signed up to this initiative. It is also about evaluating condom distribution. Safe is a scheme focused on young people, we are starting to work with GP's and pharmacies, the panel were pleased that this work is being undertaken.

Panel members asked, do parents feel it is the schools responsibility, is there a gap? Neil responded that it is about getting a consistent message across. The gap is between the parents and the school, the schools know what is being delivered. The vulnerable children come from that background where the parents do not care. We need to be more imaginative on how we deal with parents and we need to look at different ways to give out the information.

The panel thanked Neil for his time and contribution.

## 2. Summary and Review

The panel expressed concerns and disappointment of only being able to interview 1 witness out of the 11 requested.

Panel members asked about best practice and need to have sight of this information to help support the decision-making process for this joint task and finish group. PH reported that due to lack of capacity this request has not been fulfilled. Panel members wanted this issue to be raised with Barry Keel and at management board. We need to compare information that we are being asked to scrutinise this issue and due to the lack of resources unable to complete the work. This has been raised at management board and is not just about resources, it's about young people's young lives.

The Panel members than discussed the production of a questionnaire to be sent to the witnesses unable to attend the meeting today.

Resolved that –

- (1) teachers should be allowed to take the time to undertake training on sexual health matters;
- (2) a press release to be produced highlight the work of this joint task and finish group ;
- (3) best practice information is outstanding and will be required for the next meeting;
- (4) a letter to be sent to Barry Keel, copied to the Leader and Councillor James regarding the lack of capacity on providing information to the panel (further to today's meeting it has been decided by the Chair that this letter is no longer appropriate);
- (5) a questionnaire to be produced and sent to all witnesses unable to attend today's meeting.

The next meeting to be held at 10.00 am on Tuesday 24 November 2009.