

Jerry O'Keeffe is the Health and Well Being Development Officer for Wrexham County Borough Council.
For correspondence please email: jerry.okeeffe@wrexham.gov.uk

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INFO Outreach

Schools are an important setting for health promotion enabling young people to access support and advice on a range of health issues.

The evidence suggests that young people are not confident in engaging with primary care services in traditional settings.

Young people, like adults, are entitled to receive services which have been designed to meet their requirements, at convenient times and locations and with professionals with whom they are comfortable.

INFO shop

In 2001 the Youth Service of Wrexham County Borough Council, in partnership with Wrexham Local Health Board and the North East Wales NHS Trust, established the INFO Shop. Located in Wrexham town centre, the INFO Shop provides a comprehensive information service to young people supported by a sexual health service staffed by health professionals. This has become a highly successful element of the project and the data collected indicated strong support for a similar scheme on school premises.

School setting

There is an abundance of data supporting the school as an appropriate environment to promote the health and well-being of children and young people.

Darland High School in Wrexham, North Wales, is the focus of a unique and highly successful project. Supported by the Board of Governors, it responds to the immediate health and emotional needs of the pupils and addresses those issues which are

perceived as barriers to effective learning including lack of confidence, low self esteem, bullying, family issues, relationships, body image etc.

INFO Outreach

Entitled INFO Outreach, the scheme was launched in January 2007 and involves a drop-in arrangement staffed by a Youth Worker, School Nurse, Health Visitor and an adolescent smoking cessation specialist. The project expands the role of the above professionals as autonomous practitioners and as part of a unique team. The project itself is managed by a steering group with representation from the school and partner organisations

The sexual health element includes the provision of condoms, emergency hormonal contraception, pregnancy testing and education around a range of related matters. The scheme also enables young people to benefit from smoking cessation services supported by the availability of nicotine replacement therapies and where appropriate, referrals are made to professionals from a network of agencies supporting the project including NSPCC, exercise professionals and dieticians.

In preparation for the introduction of the scheme, considerable care was taken to engage and consult with young people and service providers to ensure that the scheme would meet expectations and services would be delivered in accordance with the

highest standards of governance.

Comments

An exit survey of pupils using the service is extremely encouraging. A comment from a young person was found on the local BBC website in which she talks about what the service is and when it takes place in the school:

“You can go and speak to them about all sorts of things, sex, drugs smoking, homelessness.”

She goes on to say that, “a youth worker should be available in the school to talk about such things and 'do' sex ed.”

Developments

The first steps are currently being taken to roll-out the 'service' on a sustainable basis to all the other secondary schools in the County Borough. The project responds to the health improvement priorities of the National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services and the person-focused principles driving the implementation of Health, Social Care and Well-being strategies in Wales. The project challenges the way in which health and other service providers currently tailor their services for young people and a review of such services has been commissioned with the expectation that they will eventually be more sympathetic and responsive to the

needs of young people.

Further Reading

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