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Rachel Wiles and John Austin

City of Sunderland College positive practice

City of Sunderland College (CoSC) has 4 main centres with approximately 4000 full time 16 -19 students. There is extensive and wide ranging support provision available to our young people both internally and in collaboration with our many partners in the locality and wider region.

The Every Child Matters framework has assisted forward thinking colleges to improve support provision per se. At CoSC, tutorial provision and cross college welfare services have been proactively looking at enhancing support to learners in order that we can better meet the challenge of improving ECM outcomes and in the context of Health particularly the 'being healthy' outcome.

Healthy Lifestyle Survey

During the Academic Year 2006-2007 over 1000 students from the City of Sunderland College, supported by Sunderland TPCT took part in the SHEU Healthy Lifestyle survey and completed individual questionnaires. The majority of the questionnaires were completed via a web based pilot that was extremely easy to implement, complete and monitor. The results received back from SHEU following the survey were comprehensive and enabled us to identify key areas to focus upon in relation to Health matters.

Results

A sample of the students' results from the survey follows:

- 54% of indicated they would like to lose weight
- 67% indicated they would like to eat

- more healthily
- 35% of students indicated that they currently smoke
- 46% indicated that they regularly drink alcohol
- 224 students had used cannabis before starting at College
- 66% indicated that they had used contraception the last time they had sex

Before the questionnaires were undertaken CoSC had been working closely with Sunderland TPCT and we had established beneficial links with various sub sections. The results of the survey merely helped us to strengthen those links and take positive steps to support our students. What follows are illustrations of positive practice we are engaged in.

SHOWT Card Condom Scheme

Twenty staff from CoSC trained by TPCT to register SHOWT Cards and issue free condoms to young people under 25 in possession of a card. Most young people in Sunderland are in possession of a SHOWT Card via school or youth clubs. Over 200 new condom card registrations in 2007 were made at CoSC. More condoms distributed from CoSC locations than the sum of the other city outlets. For more details of SHOWT please visit www.justshowt.com

Chlamydia Testing

During the Academic Year 2006-2007 the College was approached by the local Chlamydia Screen Testing Team to see if we could arrange a number of sessions across the College where the team could come and in promote the advantages of being tested.

A few sessions took place and in excess of 170 students undertook a 'Pee in the Pot' Test where they were given packs to send off a urine sample for a Chlamydia test.

In an effort to increase the numbers of tests for the coming academic year the Chlamydia Team undertook training with Student Support staff to enable the College to have these tests on hand for students on request and to talk through the basics of the process and paperwork to complete. These staff will work in partnership with the local Chlamydia Screening Team during the coming academic year where we have planned further 'Pee in the Pot' sessions at each of the College centres.

Healthy Eating

During the previous academic year the College had focussed carefully on the food available to students in an effort to promote healthy eating options. Students have a choice as to whether they eat healthily or not and perhaps the impact will not be measured until we attempt another healthy lifestyle survey with our students. In addition the Tutorial Teams within the College will be undertaking a lot of work with students in relation to issues of healthy eating and exercise.

Smoking

In light of the smoking ban which came into force in July 2007, the college has now become a no smoking premises. Hopefully this will provide an incentive / opportunity to encourage students to stop smoking and information is available to students who need support with this. However the real impact cannot be measured until the students come back from the summer break and the College can certainly envisage some minor discipline issues around students smoking in places they shouldn't be.

Anti-Bullying

The College has undertaken a lot of work in the area of anti-bullying. An anti-

bullying policy was devised in 2006-2007 and talks have been given to many groups of full time students. An in-house survey was also undertaken at one college centre to ascertain the perceptions of students in relation to bullying. It is anticipated that this survey will be rolled out across all college centres in order to get a comprehensive view of bullying for young people.

College Nurse

As a consequence to the findings of the survey and to provide parity with young people studying at schools there is ongoing discussions between CoSC, Sunderland Children's Services and Sunderland TPCT to secure funding for a FT College Nurse from the school nurse team. During the Academic Year 2007-2008 a post is likely to be filled which will enable students at each centres to have access to a medical professional to seek advice on a range of health issues. This nurse will also be utilised to deliver some general health education sessions to groups of students.

Tutorial Activities

Within the College each full time student has a Personal Tutor and the teams of tutors have a full schedule of activities for students linked to the Every Child Matters Framework. The tutors will be delivering sessions on issues from drugs and alcohol through to racism and its effects. In addition they will be getting students involved in activities to promote key health awareness dates on the calendar from coffee mornings during breast cancer awareness month through to activities in anti-bullying week.

Conclusion

The College is intent on addressing issues of health for our students and is continually looking at ways to improve support and information which students receive. We are to introduce Health Bytes in the next few weeks.