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## Karen Storey

# New College Swindon: Development of the Confide Clinic

New College Swindon is a Higher Education establishment and provides a wide range of quality courses to students across the spectrum, ranging from children to older people.

I started work at New College in 2005 as Lecturer in Health and Social Care. I had previously worked as a Health Visitor and a Sexual Health Outreach Worker. As a Sexual Health Nurse I worked at clinics and satellite sites where Confide clinics were held. Other previous experience involved delivering and teaching Primary School children Sex Relationship Education with Teachers and School Nurses.

### Project, Planning and Purpose

Large numbers of 16 - 19 year olds attended New College on a daily basis from all over Swindon and its outlying areas. It was apparent that attention was given to aspects of the young person's health but not to their sexual health. The increase of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and teenage pregnancies meant that this large group of young people needed easily accessible information and resources to help reduce these problems.

Figures had been collated by New College's Sexual Health Services that showed the number of students who attended the clinic over a period of 25 weeks.

~ Young people just attending for condoms - 45

~ Young people who attended for consultation - 68

~ Young people who attended for Emergency contraception - 12

~ Young people who attended for pregnancy testing - 11

It was also apparent that SRE teaching stops when students leave Secondary School, at a time when they would like to be able to easily access information and advice.

In response, Sexual Health Advice lessons were planned and delivered to a range of students from Pre-16 to Level 3 students. The lessons were linked to the Confide Clinic and sexual health outreach nurses were accessed to enable us to work on a joint initiative. We have also been involved in delivering 'in house' training sessions to tutors, giving them the skills to address sexual health and education with their tutees.

### Aims and Objectives

Our aims included:

- To reduce teenage pregnancies in a Swindon 'Hot spot'
- To reduce the prevalence of STIs in the Swindon area
- To make students more aware of STIs and contraception
- To make services readily accessible to 16-19 year olds
- To identify all support networks available to vulnerable young people

We took guidance from 'Improving Access to Sexual Health Services for Young People in Further Education Settings' published by the Department for Education and Skills, (DoH, 2007).

Research, both nationally and locally shows that teenage pregnancies and the prevalence of STIs are on the increase in 16-

19 year olds. Local research showed us that the College served one of the 'Hot Spots' within Swindon. The aim therefore was to make younger people more aware and to provide a service that minimised teenage pregnancies and STIs. The clinic was developed to empower and support students with their sexual health. We aim to provide a selection of services that would enable students to have immediate protection and advice around STIs and pregnancy.

Meetings were arranged initially to discuss the viability of such a project with Student services, the Health and Social Care section, the Sexual Health Services, and the Youth Services in Swindon. The target audience was to be all 16 - 19 year olds who were enrolled at College. It was decided that the Clinic would be set up within the Health and Social Care section and would have the use of a large room for meeting and greeting and a smaller more confidential room for seeing clients.

## **College Confide Clinic**

After much discussion and preparation the Clinic started the term of September 2006. Our stock is directly ordered from the Teenage Pregnancy Unit and from Swindon PCT. Every day at lunchtime the Clinic is manned by a variety of agencies including sexual health workers, a youth worker, two workers from the Swindon Pregnancy Crisis Team and the Youth team, and a community health worker. A Peer Mentor has been appointed for each day of the week and covers the 'Drop in' on a Voluntary basis.

## **Peer Mentors**

The decision to use Peer Mentors was an idea in collaboration with the Youth Services, the Colleges own Student Services and the need for the students following GCE Applied Health and Social Care to become aware of working within multidisciplinary teams in a Care setting.

The use of Peer Mentors has been

successful. Initially they were 'recruited' to 'meet and greet' service users and to help make them feel comfortable in an environment that could easily be uncomfortable. However, during the last two terms they have had training in the importance of confidentiality and have also had Peer mentoring training covering subjects involving sexual health and STIs. They have been involved in teaching and advertising the Confide 'Drop in' in and around College. They are classed as Volunteers so are presented with a Certificate to show appreciation for the hours they dedicate to the 'Drop in' and the peer mentoring is accredited.

Whilst the Clinic is managed in the main by Health Professionals and a Youth Worker, it has become evident that the Peer Mentors are vital in the management of the lunch hour - as they are a constant- whereas Health Professionals have on occasion been called away and the Youth Worker has had periods of time when she has been unable to attend. The Peer Mentors turn up everyday and have had the responsibility of 'holding the fort' on occasion. They do not however give out condoms, EHC or do pregnancy testing and do not give subjective advice. However, they all know where to go for help if it is not readily available at College and will signpost students if required.

Service users have been found to respond positively to Peer Mentors educating them about sexual health, therefore it has been vital that Peer Mentors are given the right information and updated regularly. The Youth Service has been instrumental in providing further training in Health and Well being and all Peer Mentors have accessed this training.

## **Monitoring and Procedure**

All meetings are logged and minuted to enable us to monitor the effectiveness of the lessons and the 'Drop in', and meetings are held once a term with all the members of the partnership. This has helped us to remain

effective in our delivery and to assist in the good use of resources. For example, the term from May to July is very quiet at College - students have exam leave and exams and attendance at College is minimal....so in light of this the partners decided to scale down the service to two days a week for this term and have spent the extra time available focussing on advertising and launching the service in September 2007, when new students start at College.

Meetings are termly and involve the Sexual Health Services, Student services, Youth service, Health and Social Care team and the professionals that deliver the service on a daily basis.

In accordance with the protocol for the Sexual Health Services, confidential notes are kept on each client and are securely locked away and an audit sheet is completed at the end of each clinic, which is then sent to the Sexual Health Services so that the clinics effectiveness is duly monitored.

At a recent meeting it was suggested we try and obtain feedback from students with regards the 'Drop in' and it was decided that we will be asking students to fill questionnaires in next term, focusing on the service provided and whether the environment is suitable and conducive. This should help in the assessment of the clinic and help us to move forward in the right way.

The Every Child Matters (ECM) outcomes framework applies to children and young people up to the age of 19 and colleges are now being inspected against it (Ofsted, 2006).

The ECM outcomes have been interwoven to ensure that the outcomes are achieved by the 'Drop in';

Being Healthy - Physically, Mentally and Emotionally, and Sexually healthy

Staying safe - Safe from violence and neglect and sexual exploitation - Safe from bullying and discrimination

Enjoying and achieving - Achieve personal and social development and enjoy recreation

Making a positive contribution - Develop self-confidence and successfully deal with significant life changes and challenges

Achieving economic Well-being - Engage in Further Education, training or employment on leaving school

## Outcome and benefits

The Confide Clinic for young people has developed significantly over the last two years. Confide clinics are held at satellite sites around Swindon, run by Sexual Health nurses.

They provide advice, condoms, emergency contraception, and pregnancy testing, and clients can be directly referred to Swindon Sexual Health Services for appointments and attendance at Youth Clinics. The Confide clinics are linked to the Sexual Health Services who are governed by the Primary Care Trust and the Teenage Pregnancy Unit.

The clinic was started in response to the increasing need for available resources and information with regards STIs and sexual health to young people in environments conducive to their needs and wants. Starting with initial enquiries by myself, it has resulted in the amalgamation of three separate services. We were aiming to develop a service that modelled good practice in Health and Community provision.

The Youth Service has been instrumental in that we have adapted the room so that it is more conducive to young people. The Youth Worker, with the help of the Peer Mentors, applied to the Youth Service for a grant, and was successful. The room now has beanbags, a graffiti wall and facilities to make 'smoothies'.

Peer Mentors have completed a peer mentoring course that is accredited and gives them the skill to understand the importance of confidentiality. They have

also been involved with teaching and have been entitled to Sexual Health Training with the Youth Service.

Of the 68 students that have attended this service, all of them have agreed that it has been nicer to see a Health Professional in a familiar setting. One student commented that 'it's nice not having to go and sit in a waiting room with people who are older than you and look at you as if you have done something wrong!'

Other students have said that it is easily accessible and, 'you don't have to worry about how or when you are going to get to the other clinics in town'. Many students have agreed it's a good service to have in College - 'because when you are already worried about exams and course work and then have to worry about seeking advice at a clinic, where you don't know anyone or where it is - it just adds to the stress - knowing I can just come to College takes a lot of that stress away'.

### **Dissemination for the future**

We made the young people aware of the clinic and the service through advertising in the student college diary and poster advertising throughout college. We also had awareness raising events in the 'common area' within the college. Parents are made aware of this facility by letter before the students attend College. The Peer Mentors have been instrumental in 'spreading the word' around the College and have requested that information be put on the College Intranet via the Student Portal.

Further development of the service involves forging stronger links with our partner services; the manager of the Sexual Health Service and the Teenage Pregnancy Unit. Also continuing to keep updating peer mentor training, including the selection of new Peer Mentors as students leave College.

It is also important to continue to plan lessons for new students who will access college in the new term and to also ensure tutors are involved in sexual health updates which has involved the development of a generic lesson plan that all tutors can access. We also need to be aware that we need a big advertising campaign to highlight the facility to the new students in September 2007.

We are also facilitating Chlamydia Screening in September, in line with current Government initiatives. This is going to run with the input of the Sexual Health Services and the local PCT.

We have also started to investigate the possibility of providing 'Stop Smoking' sessions for students and giving advice generally on a healthy lifestyle.

I believe this initiative would benefit many Higher Education establishments as they all have a target audience, and young people will be experimenting and developing sexually. We need to stop making talking about sex a taboo subject; if it was made as normal as most other aspects of health then perhaps young people would start to stop taking risks and appreciate that sex itself does not have to be a scary subject that some of them and many adults find difficult to talk about.

Links with other Higher Education establishments are being forged - albeit slowly - as the service ideally needs to be universal, so that all young people are receiving the same care throughout. I perceive that the next year will see a greater number of students accessing the service we provide and hopefully links with other Higher Education establishments in and around Swindon will show an interest in our service and we will be able to offer them advice and guidance to set up similar projects in their establishments.