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Christine Oker

Talk2YourTeen magazine: part of a campaign in response to findings of a sex and relationships survey

Talk2YourTeen magazine has been developed as part of a broader campaign in response to findings of a sex and relationships survey carried out in summer of 2006, in a sample of secondary schools in Hertfordshire. It also includes findings from consultations on Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) with pupils and teachers in secondary and special schools over the past couple of years. This resource will complement a range of ongoing work in partnership with schools, the community and a range of local agencies.

Hertfordshire's Teenage Pregnancy Strategy Steering Group commissioned the Schools Health Education Unit to carry out a sexual health and sexual behaviour literature review on 13 to 15 year olds, with a particular reference to boys and young men and a separate survey on sex and relationships in a sample of secondary schools.

The survey broadly focused on young people's knowledge and views, particularly in relation to the Sex and Relationship Education they receive, where they get their information from on sex and relationships issues, their sources of support, awareness and accessibility of local services, attitudes to risks and relationships, knowledge of sexual health, the law in relation to underage sex and their emotional health and wellbeing.

A sample of 3218 pupils in years 9, 10 and 11 took part in the survey across 10

secondary schools in the county. The result of the survey was positive overall, for example the young people who took part felt positive about the Sex and Relationship Education they receive in school but wanted to know more about managing relationships and emotions - their own and others. There were also some headline findings that could not be ignored and we have incorporated these in the broader Sex and Relationship Education and wider preventative work with young people. Producing the Talk2YourTeen magazine to support parents/carers is one element of our multi-faceted approach to respond to these findings as we implement our Teenage Pregnancy Strategy.

Survey findings

Key headline survey findings included:

~ Only a quarter of all pupils agreed that young people have a right to confidentiality

~ There is an element of ignorance and/or misunderstanding about sexual health among young people in Hertfordshire, and these misunderstandings extend to the law about sex and as it relates to young people. This is significant even for intending abstainers, since not all sexual activity is planned

~ The combination of susceptibility to peer pressure with other undesirable responses is

an obvious cause of concern and should be considered in current and future work with young people

~ The three most common sources of information about sex and relationships to young people are friends (top of list), followed by school and parents. Having friends as a main source of sex information is associated with more permissive attitudes to sexual activity under 16

What is

Talk2YourTeen Magazine?

Talk2YourTeen magazine is a locally developed resource as part of implementing our Teenage Pregnancy Strategy in Hertfordshire. Talk2YourTeen is aimed at parents and carers in Hertfordshire.

Talk2YourTeen contains local and national information, research findings on Sex and Relationship Education and sexual health, tips for parents and carers from Parentline Plus, information on local services, young people's views, a real life story and useful sources of information and support for both parents and carers and their children.

Talk2YourTeen magazine complements the national Teenage Pregnancy Strategy Time to Talk campaign - Everyday Conversations Every Day, aimed at parents, which was launched in summer 2008.

The rationale

We recognise that working in partnership with young people, parents and carers is essential, if we are to reduce teenage conception rates in the county, by ensuring that implementation of our strategy is informed by local need and leads to improved outcomes for young people in Hertfordshire.

Supporting parents and carers to have the confidence to talk with their children on sex and relationships issues is a key priority in our teenage pregnancy work and action plan.

This is further confirmed by national research which shows that most young people want to talk to their parents about sex and relationships.

Key objectives of Talk2YourTeen

~ To support parents and carers with an information resource that will enable them to gain the confidence to talk about sex and relationships and sexual health issues with their children

~ To help parents and carers have a better understanding of SRE that their children receive in our schools

~ To inform parents and carers of the range of support services available for them and their children to access in relation to sex and relationship matters

Expected Outcomes

~ Parents and carers will feel supported to support their children on sex and relationships and sexual health issues

~ Parents and carers will feel informed about the Sex and Relationship Education their children receive in school and to contribute to the school Sex and Relationship Education programme

Distribution of Talk2YourTeen

The campaign magazine is being distributed through secondary schools in the county and through a range of local services including GP practices, libraries, and Children's Centres.

Talk2YourTeen material

Schools and professionals can obtain additional copies of the magazine for distribution by calling 01992 556131 or e-mail: christine.kirby@hertscc.gov.uk Parents and carers can request a copy of Talk2YourTeen campaign magazine from Hertfordshire Customer Service Centre on

01438 737500. The magazine along with a range of links to local and national information and services, as well as information on wider teenage pregnancy work can be accessed online at www.hertsdirect.org/teenpregnancy

Hertfordshire teenage pregnancy strategy

This work has been undertaken as part of implementing our 10-year teenage pregnancy strategy to reduce under 18 teenage conception rate by 45% by 2010. It will not only contribute to our teenage pregnancy targets but to the broader Every Child Matters - five areas of improved outcomes for young people in Hertfordshire.

Hertfordshire is making steady progress towards achieving the target to reduce under 18 conception rate by 45% by 2010 and to improve outcomes for teenage parents and their children. The final 2006 (latest data available nationally) under-18 conception rate for Hertfordshire is 26.2 per 1000 girls aged 15-17 - this represents an overall decline of 18.1% since 1998, the baseline year for teenage pregnancy strategy. Hertfordshire's under 18 conception rate remains significantly below the national average of 40.6 and regional average of 33.3 per 1000 girls aged 15-17 for the same period.

Additional work

In addition to this campaign, we are also delivering the following pieces of work with parents in partnership with schools and local agencies and in the community with young people.

SRE support package:

Working in partnership with schools to support and strengthen delivery of SRE in schools, through delivery of a package of support, including consultancy support by PSHE Advisor, training for teachers and

governors, teaching resources for schools and delivery of theatre in education developed in line with Hertfordshire SRE Scheme of Work. 14 secondary schools were supported during the last academic year, with an additional 20 schools due to start in the Autumn/Spring term.

SRE guide for parents and carers:

Developed at the beginning of this year and has been distributed to parents through primary and secondary schools. The leaflet gives an overview of the Sex and Relationship Education programme in our schools. To date 31,500 copies have been distributed through schools, children's centres and Extended Schools Co-ordinators. This leaflet has been singled out as good practice nationally, in the recent national review of SRE by DCSF.

Time to Talk:

A national campaign resources developed by Parentline Plus. Copies of Time to Talk pre-teen and teen leaflets have been distributed through secondary schools and GP practices.

Preventative Outreach work:

In the community with targeted interventions in districts with high or increasing rates.

Numbers U Need:

Credit card pocket size directory of all services for young people in the county. Copies available through secondary schools, GP practices, One Stop Shops and a range of local services across the county.

Information

Copies of resources mentioned in this briefing including, the SRE survey findings and reports, teenage pregnancy action plan 2008-2011 and all information resources can be downloaded at:-

www.hertsdirect.org/teenpregnancy