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SPECIAL EDITION

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Angela Balding

Supporting young people's health

The Students Health Education Unit (SHEU) is an independent Unit that continues to support the health developments taking place in colleges.

In the late 1990s, SHEU successfully piloted a FE student survey instrument with colleges and student groups. The purpose of the survey was to promote debate and change in the colleges who received reports about the health-related behaviour of their students. The data also informed and to some extent provided feedback on local health campaigns.

By 2001 the survey was available online. By 2006 a unique databank of student healthy lifestyle data was developing, SHEU sponsored an online college questionnaire and the first Healthy Student News monthly email had appeared.

Healthy Student News

Healthy Student News (HSN) is a free monthly email that first appeared in January 2006. It provides links to information about young people aged 16+ and their health and behaviour chosen from our databanks and the Internet.

Around 30 new links are added each month and past links archived. As interest grew, the task to maintain and update HSN became more time consuming and users were asked to support the venture. The following comments show how HSN has become an important resource,

"Please let me know if it is true that the resource is going to close, as I've found it an invaluable resource for collating specific info re. FE, with an international perspective, as well as more local research and practice. I hope it is not going to happen."

Sexual Health Development Officer

"Please don't close this resource. I may not be able to access articles at the time they come through, but I often either refer specific items to team members, or revisit links to follow up particular research/actions. Thank you for you work on this."

Student Services Manager

Baseline data

SHEU is well placed to provide baseline data. Our unique history of questionnaire development in the FE sector made it possible for us to support colleges that were working towards the Kirklees Healthy College scheme. We received many favourable comments from FE staff including,

"The online survey is beneficial to be able to benchmark with other organisations and the potential to share good practice." Student Services Manager

"The online survey went very well. We originally planned to undertake 700 questionnaires online, but I had to increase the number due to the volume of willing participants." Welfare Services Principal

"All the students found the online survey easy to navigate, very clear and easy. As a tutor incredibly easy to administer." Student Services Manager

A new national initiative

The development of a new national healthy FE framework is an exciting initiative. SHEU aims to continue to support colleges in their work.

"...the starting point for every aspect (National Healthy College Standard) will be to have a baseline by which to measure outcomes...I can't think of a better way of getting a baseline than through your survey." Specialist Health Promotion Advisor

We thank the contributors to this second special issue. The articles describe national developments and local actions to improve the health and wellbeing of college students and staff.

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Sam Mellor

The Healthy FE Framework - Update

On 3 July 2008 FE Minister Bill Rammell announced a new national initiative - the Healthy FE Framework - to help improve the health and wellbeing of students and staff in FE. It implements a commitment made in the Choosing Health White Paper (2004).

The Healthy FE Framework is an initiative funded by DH with support from DIUS and DCSF. Sam Mellor joined as the Project Manager in September to support Peter Chell, the Healthy FE Advisor.

In order to move the Framework forward, two key principles will steer the way:

- ❖ It must be sector led; colleges should identify what is wanted and what can be delivered by them (in partnership with local health services) as part of their mainstream business.
- ❖ It should not seek to create new infrastructure and processes but make use of and develop existing arrangements wherever possible.

A Stakeholder Steering Group - the shape of which is still to be decided - will help oversee the initiative and help ensure these principles are adhered to. The Group will be chaired by a college Principal and will have a membership mostly drawn from the FE Sector, but also from college partners such as PCTs and LAs and from interested parties in the voluntary sector and across central and regional government.

Now, the Framework is being developed through two closely related but independent strands of work.

Strand One will put in place the infrastructure to enable colleges to be part of this national initiative, and will support them in a stronger focus on the health and

well-being of their students and staff. **Strand Two** will examine the options and demand for establishing a "national standard" against which colleges can self-assess.

Whether the two-strand approach is persisted with and exactly what the two strands will actually put in place must depend on what the Steering Group recommends. Options on the table for Strand One include: an on-line self-assessment process to benchmark current activity against; a web portal providing tools, guidance, links information and a good practice repository; and, a national/regional network for ensuring effective two-way communication with the sector to inform programme developments

Strand Two will run in parallel with the establishment of the basic Framework, but its products and procedures will not become clear until later in the process, and these products will only be delivered if there is a demand for them. Discussions are already taking place with the Kirklees Healthy College scheme to agree on the relationship between their existing standard and the new national arrangements. A joint statement on this will be issued shortly.

The piloting of the "Healthy Schools Plus" development in the South West will also involve colleges and will provide a good testing ground for the Framework. An evaluation process will be put in place, taking account, amongst other things, of the DCSF/Ofsted development of pupil wellbeing indicators.

The timetable for delivery will be confirmed once the Steering Group has given its view on the proposals that are put to it. It is hoped that the Group will meet by early December.

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Stuart Darke

Investing in the health and welfare of college staff and students

When Bill Rammell, Minister for Further Education, announced the National Healthy FE initiative at this year's National Learners Panel annual event, was this a move by the government to progress the healthy learner agenda, or simply an attempt to catch up on the good work that has already been established in colleges across the country?

There is no doubt that the Healthy Schools initiative has been successful. Since the publication of 'Choosing Health' (2004) by the Department of Health, around 97% of schools have become involved with the National Healthy Schools programme and 60% have achieved Healthy School Status. This initiative also stated the government's long term intention to 'extend the principles of the NHSP to institutions providing education to an older age group' by fostering closer ties between health and education within the FE sector.

It is not surprising that in time attention would be focused on the FE sector, as 62% of 16 to 18 year olds in education are in FE and 64% of those in receipt of an EMA are studying in FE or sixth form colleges. Colleges have not, however, been sleeping giants but have been proactive in developing services that foster health and well being. The Kirlees Healthy College Standard epitomises this commitment and has been embraced by many colleges since its inception in 2003.

The college sector understands the importance of investing in the health and welfare of its staff and students, which in turn will help maximise achievements as well as recognising the importance of the

physical and social environment to learning.

Colleges have developed sexual health clinics and drop in centres; drug and alcohol support services; learner information theme weeks; help for the homeless and estranged; counselling, medical and mental health support; childcare facilities; advice centres; anti bullying, mentoring and peer support programmes; environmental and volunteer groups - the list is endless.

In addition the National School Sport strategy has more recently extended into the world of colleges, with the roll out of FE sports co-ordinators (FESCo's) from September 2008. This has been achieved by additional funding from the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and is aimed a further promotion of the healthy learner agenda by providing the resources to link into the network of School Sport Partnerships.

Perhaps this is the key to understanding the way in which the National Healthy FE initiative will be viewed by colleges. In summer 2007 a consultation exercise was undertaken amongst colleges and Sam Mellor, Head of the NHSP said "The consultation report showed very strong support amongst colleges and FE bodies for a national healthy colleges scheme" - which undoubtedly there is. However, this needs to be more than a national quality assurance standard for FE. It must focus on supporting the vast amount of work that is already taking place throughout the country, to develop more positive learner environments that promote the health and well being of local communities now and into the future.

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Graham Russell

Social Anxiety and its affect on students

Social anxiety is ranked as the third most common mental health problem in adults and young people. However, it often goes undetected by teachers, parents and GPs, where it may be mistaken for shyness, which is generally regarded as a benign personality trait. A recent prevalence survey carried out on 865 students at the University of Plymouth and its Partnership (FE) colleges found that approximately 10% of students registered marked to severe levels of social anxiety and similar results were found in a Swedish University and it is likely to be present in secondary schools.

An intranet survey was designed to gather information about the impact of social anxiety on students in higher education. Students with social anxiety were asked how they felt during seminars and lectures, etc. The data showed that the most challenging activity was taking part in presentations with over 80% of students reporting anxiety, inhibition and embarrassment. Most of the distress was directly linked to fear of public speaking, and many students reported avoiding distress by making themselves inconspicuous and sitting wherever they thought it unlikely they would be asked questions. Others coped with presentations by rehearsing extensively to avoid looking foolish. This did not always work and, for some students, anxiety on the day led to poor performance and anger as some students believed that style rather than substance was being assessed.

Some students believed their marks had suffered through an inability to concentrate or due to stammering or stuttering during public speaking. However, a number of students said that, although doing

presentations was really hard, they were pleased they had persevered. Hence, we cannot assume that students with social anxiety will necessarily do less well than their peers as the rehearsing strategy may have led to some students doing very well.

Research shows that people with social anxiety are often reluctant to seek help, because it conflicts with their need to present a favourable public image and avoid ridicule. Indeed, rates of help seeking were found to be correspondingly low with the personal tutor being the most common source of help (18%).

The students were asked what sorts of support the University might put in place and several discrete themes emerged. These included: enhancing opportunities for making friends and social networks; raising awareness about social anxiety and developing support services. Students were split between wanting the right to opt out of presentations and acknowledging that confidence in public speaking was an important skill to master (with appropriate support to facilitate confidence).

Recommendations

Information about recognising social anxiety is available via the Anxiety UK website: www.anxietyuk.org.uk

Students with generalised social anxiety are most likely to benefit from one-one support from a counsellor or psychologist. However many specific social interaction difficulties (e.g. being assertive or engaging in public speaking) may benefit from self-help approaches, for example websites such as 'Shy no Longer':

www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/resources/infopax.cfm?Info_ID=40
and 'Mood Gym': <http://moodgym.anu.edu.au>

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Peter Barnard

Addressing mental health issues at the Grimsby Institute of Further and Higher Education

The Institute has won national acclaim for its innovative and extensive work on employee health and wellbeing. This article describes briefly its work over the past 3 years.

In 2004/05 the Institute lost 4,385 working days to sickness amounting to 3.6 working days per employee (or an absence level of 1.62%). Of these days lost, 696 were due to mental health issues, representing 15.87% of the total working days lost and 0.25% of all available working days. In 2005/06 there was an increase to 894 (or 19.8% of all lost days) in the days lost to mental health issues.

Going off sick with stress

A particular problem during 2005/06 centred on individuals going off sick with stress when subject to disciplinary proceedings. Despite extensive efforts, these problems were beyond the reach of the Institute's existing procedures and systems. The HR team resolved on a course of action including:

- Training for all directors and managers on managing stress at work
- Changing the staff procedures to bar staff from receiving Institute sick pay if they went off sick when subject to formal staffing procedures
- Introducing a telephone-based employee assistance programme (EAP) to supplement the existing face-to-face counselling service for staff

The HR Director revised staffing procedures that involved extensive staff consultation and resulted in staff approval. The revised procedures were communicated to staff so that they knew the consequences of

going off sick in such circumstances. In the following 12 months this new provision was enacted only once.

The Institute's directors and managers were all trained by the HR Director and Health and Safety Manager on managing stress at work. Additionally, the HR team adapted a 'red flag' system whereby any absences for mental health issues prompted rapid intervention by the Personnel Manager. She worked with the line manager and offsite counsellor to support individuals to help them stay at work if they were struggling. This could involve reduced working hours or duties or even a month's free use of the on-site gym.

As a result of these interventions, the number of absences due to mental health issues dropped in the following year by 1/3 to 590 days (or 13.83% of all working days lost or 0.2% available working days).

During 2008 we have delivered mental health awareness training for staff in conjunction with experts from the local Care Trust and have given all staff information on positive steps for taking personal control over their mental health. Mental health features in the Health and Wellbeing roadshows being taken out to staff on-site as well as in staff presentations and newsletters.

The net saving from the reduction in sickness absence due to mental health during 2006/07 was c£22K (after deductions of training costs and introducing the EAP).

The level of sickness absence due to mental health issues in 2007/08 is currently lower after 9 months than the reduced level of the previous year.

Marc Tomlinson and Diane Hepworth are Counsellors at Greenhead College 6th Form College, Huddersfield. This article has been adapted from, 'College Counselling - More to it than meets the eye', Education and Health 2008, 26:3, 55-56.

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Marc Tomlinson and Diane Hepworth

College Counselling at Greenhead College

A general assumption is that a college counselling service mainly deals with exam pressures or study-related issues. For some, this is true, however, for many young people life can be complex due to the general stresses of growing up, working out who they are, the transition from school and the demands of college life. A confidential counselling service for students is invaluable. Without it, they may never have an opportunity to talk about such issues, which are having significant effects in their lives. The safety of the familiar college environment can help reduce stigma about counselling and therefore make it easier to just drop in, which for young people in particular is one less barrier to getting help.

Greenhead College in Huddersfield has had a counselling service for over ten years. The aim is to provide confidential support for students on a short or long-term basis and to be able to respond to their needs. Being easily accessible means that they can drop in anytime and therefore don't miss classes (this is an especially important consideration for students who claim EMA who would lose payments or compromise their right to confidentiality).

Other counselling options for students would be via their G.P. or private arrangements. These may involve travel, waiting time, finding a counsellor who specialises in young people, time-limited sessions, or incur a financial commitment (currently £30 - £50 per hour).

Learning to understand yourself and make your own decisions are life skills that

empower students.

Transition and retention

The impact of the having a counselling service within the college is vast. Many students find the transition from school to college or from college to university difficult. In our experience it helps with student retention; often they feel there's no choice but to leave college, until they come to speak to us and we look at options. Referrals from tutors and staff are vital to the service. Identifying students' needs ensures they get the correct support and reduces pressure on staff. As counsellors, we are also able to offer our support to staff if they need to offload or have concerns about a student. Providing INSET for tutors and enrichment training programmes for students on basic listening skills we have become a part of the whole college structure.

The value of talking to someone in confidence and being 'heard' can be underestimated - for the student it can be liberating and a way of managing a challenging situation. When a student gives such feedback as: 'they take time to listen', 'it enabled me to put things in perspective', 'I feel so much happier and confident', 'I was believed' and 'I have learned to trust in myself', it highlights how important and successful counselling has been for them.

When a client tells you the counselling that they received, 'literally saved my life', the importance of being able to access it easily with as few barriers as possible cannot be ignored.

The College and University Support Network is free and confidential and provided by qualified professionals. Their free phone number is 08000 329 952 and the website is: <http://www.cusn.info/>

College and University Support Network

Work-life balance: supporting college lecturers

A survey conducted in April 2008, by the College and University Support Network (CUSN) and the University and College Union (UCU) found that class sizes are rising, but more time is being spent on administration duties than on students or research.

The survey revealed:

~ More than half of lecturers (53.9%) say they spend most of their working week dealing with administration

~ Over half of lecturers (53.6%) spend at least 15 hours a week on administration with a quarter (27.4%) devoting more than 25 hours of their working week to the task

~ More than a quarter (28.7%) said they deal with over 250 emails a week and those with 250 or more emails a week said they did just 0-5 hours of research a week, 5-15 hours of teaching, but 25 hours or more of administration

~ Over two thirds (71%) reported increases in class sizes at their institution in the last 10 years, but only a quarter (23.4%) said they now spend more time with students than they did a decade ago

~ Of the 71% who reported growing class sizes, nearly half (44%) said they were spending less time with students

CUSN works to help all staff members in adult, further and higher education and improve their health and wellbeing. Complementing the work of UCU, it provides free support services by offering information, advice, telephone counselling, online coaching and financial assistance. It is part of the Teacher Support Network, which has helped teachers for over 130 years.

Thousands of college and university staff members use CUSN's services to tackle personal and professional issues every year. The charity also uses the knowledge gained from interacting with its users to raise awareness of issues affecting them to improve education policies and practices which have an impact on the wellbeing of staff and, by extension, the educational experience of learners.

College and University Support Network Chief Executive, Patrick Nash, said: "An excessive workload is an increasingly troubling phenomenon for staff members in adult, further and higher education, particularly because of ever-greater bureaucratic tasks. In the last 12 months, 11 per cent of calls have been from those worried about their work-life balance; many struggling to cope professionally and emotionally with an unreasonable workload. "We can offer advice and coaching where it will help but we need a shift in culture that ensures staff members have the time to perform their core responsibilities: teaching, research and bettering standards of education."

The full survey results can be found at http://www.ucu.org.uk/stresssurvey08_rawHEresults

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Jenny Kirk

Healthy College at 'QE' - Much more than a Standard!

Wyggeston & Queen Elizabeth I College (QE) in Leicester has always enjoyed an excellent reputation. A commitment to student welfare prompted the College to become one of the first sixth form colleges to achieve National Healthy Schools status in 2003. The decision to pursue the Kirklees National Healthy Colleges Standard was met with enthusiasm and commitment - but alas virtually no funding. However, exciting times present themselves and QE is already pleased to be reporting positive changes. Working towards Healthy College status involves fact finding; evidencing the good practice that already exists, and working towards implementing strategic changes.

The ECM agenda provides a framework to build on, and an 'Outstanding' in four out of five major areas of QE's recent Ofsted inspection has suggested the College is doing most things right, but also allowed us to focus on those things it can improve upon; complacency is definitely not a feature of a Healthy College.

One of the most important aspects to this journey is to create an environment packed with opportunities, resources and information to allow the College community to become 'healthier' people and far beyond meeting the criteria of any 'Standard'.

What we already do

Aids Awareness day - Including condom distribution and Chlamydia screening.

Wellbeing day - A day filled with opportunities and resources to educate and raise awareness of different aspects of wellbeing, particularly focusing on mental health. Led by a member of teaching staff

but largely organised by students as an enrichment activity.

Staff Conference - Annual CPD opportunities including recreational activities. These included kite flying, badminton, a 'jamming' session, alternative therapy sessions and salsa dancing for beginners.

What's new

Perhaps the most important recent development has been the Choices Sexual Health Service, where a nurse offers a weekly drop-in service. In response to positive feedback from these sessions the time available for the nurse has been extended. In addition, there are a number of staff already trained to deliver a condom distribution service. Following Pregnancy Testing training QE will be offering a regular, confidential service run by staff. The Leicester City PCT has been an excellent source of advice and information, and the recent launch of the STOP! Smoking Tool Kit will allow QE to offer informed support to both staff and students. This is particularly relevant given the recent SHEU survey results that suggest 70% of 16+ students would like to give up smoking.

Support, advice and the sharing of good practice is plentiful. Forming links with the local PCT and independent agencies has already opened doors and the network meetings are an opportunity to exchange contacts and ideas. Colleges up and down the country are keen to pursue a Healthy College ethos and local and national networks are vital to the success of a new National Healthy College Standard.

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Beverley Ashmore and Pat Fay

Health awareness at Norton College

Norton College main site and Peaks Centre held Health Awareness weeks during 2008 which were so successful they have more planned for October after the new intake of students.

Various events, activities and guests featured during the week culminating in a visit by the 'Blood Bus' at the main site. The National Blood Transfusion Service mobile facility now visits Norton every term with many regular donors as well as new ones joining this valuable service.

An important feature of the week was the promotion of healthy eating. The refectory service took part by producing a healthy menu for the week including a chip-free day. In addition, students were given free porridge before 9:00 am to encourage a healthy start to the day. Free fruit was given with every healthy meal purchased. The cost of the fruit and porridge was borne by the Norton Student Forum. 155 free portions of porridge were served and it was decided to extend this facility until the Easter vacation.

Other events included talks and displays about substance abuse, stopping smoking and personal safety by the Police. A health promotion company carried out blood sugar and cholesterol checks whilst Sport Science students gave staff and students a "fitness MOT" advising on healthy lifestyles, fitness regimes and diet.

Sexual Health Clinic

Norton and Peaks have held a weekly Sexual Health Clinic for several years now, where students can get confidential advice, free condoms and pregnancy tests. During Health Awareness week this was extended to include two days of Chlamydia testing.

In a bid to tackle the high rates of Sexually Transmitted Infection (STIs), especially Chlamydia, across the city, the Sheffield Teenage Pregnancy Partnership, Sheffield PCT and Norton College set up a number of sexual health drop-ins to encourage young people to come along for Chlamydia screening. The aim was to encourage young people to think about their sexual health and provide them with the facts and information they need to know about Chlamydia. During the sessions, young people were able to visit a number of information stands, take part in sexual health quizzes and visit health advisers to get one-to-one advice about any concerns they may have about their sexual health.

Screening Programme

Kerry Parkin, Outreach Service Manager, said: "It is very important that young people, who are sexually active, are tested regularly for any infections. The Chlamydia Screening Programme in Norton College gave the young people an opportunity to visit the health professionals and discuss issues or concerns about their sexual health in a safe and familiar environment. We were extremely pleased at the response. Over 150 samples were submitted for testing during the Health Awareness week at Norton main site and a further 20 at Peaks Centre."

Norton is now looking forward to their regular health services being extended by the provision of a nurse for an additional drop-in session every week. This will complement the existing clinic as the nurse will be able to dispense the contraceptive pill, fit implants and prescribe the morning after pill.

Extract from an article in Education and Health 2008, 26:1:16

Lisa Hartley

The Healthy College Journey Conference

Accrington and Rossendale College hosted an event early in 2008 to build links between local key agencies providing health services and education provision. The college has been committed to partnership working with the local PCT and this has had the effect of driving up the quality of the health of young people in the area. As a result of this, and with the current national discussion around the future of the Healthy College agenda, it was felt that the college was best placed to provide a conference for local FE providers, PCTs and key agencies who work with young people.

Key note speeches

There were seven key note speeches, ranging from the student experience through to Peter Chell, FE Advisor - National Healthy Schools, discussing the national picture.

SHEU were invited to the conference as the college recognises the crucial role of data in health activity and service provision. Health needs assessment data, collected by the college, include student profile data, additional learning support data and college student surveys.

The college was able to provide evidence of how these data, tailored to national and local health priorities, have led to amendments in the tutorial, enrichment, PSHE and health service provision within the college. Delegates were also given a presentation on the national CPD accreditation programme for PSHE. Following the conference a peer support /development group has been established across Lancashire and will meet termly.

Extract from an article in Education and Health 2008, 26:2:31

Paulette Booth

Clinic-in-a-box: mobile service

Clinic-in-a-Box is a mobile nurse-led service set up in response to the SEU Teenage Pregnancy Report and was launched in North Staffordshire in October 2000. It offers sexual health information and contraceptive supplies to young people aged 11-18 years, the clinics now also include general health information.

The service is delivered in a range of venues already used by young people, for example, youth clubs, schools and colleges. The service is particularly successful at reaching young men that traditionally have not accessed mainstream contraception provision.

Concept

The concept of the clinic is to encourage young people to delay having sexual intercourse and to increase self-esteem and confidence to achieve this. However, if delay is not an option for the young person, then safe sex needs to be encouraged. Clinic-in-a-Box will encourage and support young people to change sexual behaviour and practice safe sex.

Each session is run by a fully qualified Contraception and Sexual Health nurse who is trained to offer guidance and support to young people in all aspects of health and well-being.

The service is very well attended and almost half the users are male - traditionally a difficult group to engage in contraception services. There has also been a small reduction in the teenage pregnancy rate locally. There are plans to increase the service in the near future by offering contraceptive pills and injections.

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Stuart Ormson

Blackpool Sixth Form College uses peer-peer support to promote health

The most recently available official statistics show that under 18 teenage conception rates in Blackpool are well above the national average and are the highest in the North West. Eighty percent of conceptions to under 18s are to 16-17 year olds. As a high proportion of these young people attend FE colleges, it is particularly important that local contraception and sexual health services have a high profile with college students.

The Peer Educators

Over recent years the College has collaborated with Blackpool's Teenage Pregnancy Partnership, Blackpool Youth Service and the Connect service to provide information, advice and guidance to students about sexual health. The focus has been on prevention as well as help and advice on forming strong and healthy relationships. A group of students, The Peer Educators, was formed with the aim of offering support on matters relating to sexual health and relationships to fellow college students and pupils at our partner high schools.

Once recruited, the Peer Educators complete an extensive training programme to make sure that they feel confident in their role and have a sound depth of knowledge on issues surrounding sexual health and relationships. The training culminates in a two day residential where the Peer Educators lead awareness raising activities with pupils from local high schools and youth groups.

At College the Peer Educators liaise with many outside agencies to organise an annual Health Awareness Week that

includes information, interactive games and special events to raise awareness of a range of health issues including healthy eating, physical fitness, mental health, alcohol abuse, substance misuse and sexual health. The Peer Educators visit Personal Tutor groups in the lead up to Health Awareness Week to promote the events.

"Want respect? Use a condom"

During 2008-9 the Peer Educators are planning to take the lead in the "Want Respect? Use a condom" peer-to-peer campaign. The activity is a highly targeted campaign aimed at sexually active 16-18 year olds who are most at risk of unplanned pregnancy and STIs. Communicating the campaign and services through the Peer Educators should ensure the credibility of the message.

A further development in the peer-peer health support available at College has been a strong link with the Butterfly Project, who offer counselling, group meetings and workshops for young people who partake in self-harming behaviour. A group of students have volunteered to take part in training with the aim of providing a 'Drop In' facility in college. A student-led information, help and advice service on self-harm issues is to be launched in College later this year.

The peer-peer support at the College has obvious benefits in terms of raising awareness of young people about health issues, but it also provides the opportunity for the learners involved to increase their self-confidence and develop essential leadership, communication and enterprise skills.

Clare Chick is the press and marketing officer at Stafford College.
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Clare Chick

Stafford College finds the right prescription for a healthy college

"Everything we've done here is really making a difference. All the ways in which we have focussed on keeping our students healthy and safe have created a culture of care. We're seeing success in holistic terms, looking at the wellbeing of our students, not simply their performance in exams."

That ringing endorsement of the healthy college drive at Stafford College comes from Angela Ray, co-ordinator for the Every Child Matters and Tutorial strands at the College.

Stafford College has paid more than lip service to achieving a healthy college. The programme has its own vibrant logo designed by a former student and extends into almost every facet of college life for students and staff.



"This year we held our first Bike to College Day and involved everyone from the toddlers in our campus nursery, through students, staff and even the local MP," reports Angela Ray, adding reassuringly that the nursery tots were not expected to pedal their way along the busy roads leading to the town centre campus: *"We closed the car park to four-wheel vehicles for the day and laid out a special cycle track there for the nursery occupants to use. We offered lots of healthy incentives for students and staff who cycled in to college and looked after their bikes, too, with plenty of extra bike racks plus security marking a 'bike doctor' on the*

campus".

Proving that the Healthy College drive is more than a logo, Stafford College also stages annual exhibitions focussing on health and supported by the local PCT. One of their roles at these events is to promote smoking cessation, something that is of year-round concern on the campus.

"We offer support and guidance to those who need help to quit smoking as well as providing regular, free Chlamydia screening sessions with information on sexual health. We also run seasonal campaigns, tying-in with national programmes where possible. So in October we put the emphasis on issues around HIV and for the first time this year we will be linking with the Suzy Lamplugh Trust to help students consider their personal safety", says Angela Ray.

The health, safety and wellbeing of students are embedded into the successful tutorial system too, with sessions on sexual health, dealing with stress and combating bullying as well as exploring responsible driving with young motorists.

"A lot of people remark on the very special atmosphere at this college," says Mike Shaw, Head of the Faculty of General Education. *"It is a very friendly, accepting environment in which there is a readily apparent respect for others. That is something that is noticed by visitors to the College as well as by new students and members of staff. The culture of Stafford College is something that has been enhanced and amplified by everything that we have done to ensure that our students are healthy, happy young people who are encouraged to fulfil their potential in every area of their lives."*

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Jayne Molyneux

Further Education Sport Co-ordinators

The introduction of a network of around 377 Further Education Sport Co-ordinators (FESCOs) since September 2008 has been an exciting addition to the network of 450 School Sports Partnerships across England.

The FE Sport Co-ordinators form part of the new Physical Education and Sport Strategy for Young People (PESSYP) which forms part of a Public Service Agreement:-

'To deliver a successful Olympic Games and Paralympic Games with a sustainable legacy and get more children and young people taking part in high quality PE and Sport.'

The PESSYP is the joint overall responsibility of the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), working with the Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS). During the next three years a total of £755 million will be invested into this Strategy.

The main aim of the FESCOs will be to increase opportunities for young people aged between 16 and 19 within their College to participate, perform and lead and volunteer in sport within their FE College.

Since April 2008, the Youth Sport Trust (YST) has been working with 31 Colleges selected to be part of a pilot and already in a short space of time have started to see some fantastic progress. YST commissioned Prospects4Sport (www.prospects4sport.co.uk) to undertake a study to evaluate the lessons learnt from the pilot FESCOs, make recommendations for the national roll-out in September and give examples of good practice. Excellent work was being

developed by the pilot FESCOs in participation, leadership and volunteering and competition.

Participation

A FESCO organised a taster day in self defence and organised a football competition for those that had not taken part in football at College before: *"the football tournament was the first time the chefs had come out of the kitchen - and they won!"*

Leadership & Volunteering

One FE College is already linking well with the local School Sports Programme Development Manager (PDM) on volunteering. The PDM uses College students at Primary schools festivals and other events, and students also volunteer in local clubs.

Competition

A FESCO will be providing an intra-College competition programme for all students from all faculty areas to come together. Each faculty within the College will provide a team and the competition will be run at lunchtime.

Another example is from City College, Norwich, and Adam Williams the college FESCO. Faced with 7000 full time students and virtually no indoor facilities Adam developed a programme of alternative activities including mountain biking, climbing and archery, with over 300 students now attending regular sessions.

For more information on the role and the development of the FESCOs please visit the Youth Sport Trust website www.youthsporttrust.org

Chris Roberts is the Regional Director of the Learning and Skills Council North East.
More information can be found at www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19

Chris Roberts

Raising the participation age: staying in education and training

The world of learning is ever evolving. Recent Government plans detailed in the document 'Raising Expectations: Staying in education and training post-16', outline proposals that will see all young people participating in education or training until their 18th birthday. This means significant changes for young people over the coming years.

'Participation' may be at school, in college, on an Apprenticeship, or in accredited training provided by an employer. The proposals deem that participation should be full-time for young people not in employment for a significant part of the week, and part-time for those working more than 20 hours per week.

Whilst real progress in participation levels is being made, there are still too many 16-18 year olds who are not engaged in any form of learning or training. This group is often the most vulnerable young people, who have most to gain from participating, but who need support to do so.

The proposals will see a phased introduction with the participation age raised to 17 in 2013 and 18 by 2015.

The economic benefit to the United Kingdom of young people staying on in learning is estimated to be around £2.4 billion for each cohort of young people who remain in education or training to age 18¹. Other, wider benefits which may accrue include improved health benefits or reduced likelihood of crime. This contributes to the twin goals of raising economic prosperity and improving social justice.

To support all young people to participate in learning we must continue to

consider the holistic needs and development of each young person. Importantly, the September guarantee, critical to reducing the number of young people who leave 'compulsory education' without a positive destination, will need to be built on, ensuring that there is a suitable offer of a place in learning for all 16 and 17 year olds, but also that providers are flexible to the needs of learners.

All young people and their families need high quality impartial information advice and guidance from a range of sources to inform their decisions. Many will also continue to need financial support which has been successful in improving participation and attainment levels.

This is an age of opportunity and it should be so for all our young people. We need to raise the expectations and aspirations that we have for them so that young people can all benefit from learning for longer and achieve more. We are legislating now to build expectations early on with those who will be the first to benefit; to ensure that the provision and support is in place; and to galvanise the system to deliver. It will take hard work to deliver this challenging agenda. I pay tribute to the dedication and commitment of all those in the world of education and training and look forward to working with you to turn this vision into reality.

1. Department for Children, Schools and Families, *Raising the participation age: An assessment of the economic benefits*. November 2007.
<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploads/files/DCSF-RBW026.pdf>

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Liz Dobson

Wigan and Leigh College Nurse Service

Ashton, Wigan and Leigh PCT recognised the need for a sexual health nurse on a permanent basis at the local college. I had been waiting for years to see this job advertised and, in May 2007, I applied and was successful.

The role is a joint venture between Wigan and Leigh College and Ashton, Wigan and Leigh PCT. There are over 4,200 students based in 5 buildings on 2 campuses within the Wigan and Leigh area.

I started, in September 2007, setting up the service, promoting it and running sessions with the aid of Bob Hughes, the Student Services Manager. I offered tutorials on sexual health delivered to tutor groups, which allowed me to discuss sexual health issues, safer sex, the local C-card scheme, Chlamydia testing and advertise clinic sessions. In the first 7 months of the service 440 students attended, more attended Chlamydia screening events. Over one lunchtime 100 students were tested! Since October 2007 total Chlamydia screenings are 514 with positives being below the national college average.

The college and PCT have produced some innovative work including the development of a sexual health play "RU Ready". This offered the students alternative ways to learn about sexual health issues by showing how a lack of alcohol and sex education can lead to unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections and damage relationships. It was followed by a student centred workshop to discuss the issues raised.

Every Child Matters theme 1: 'Being Healthy' and theme 5 'Achieving economic well-being' are promoted by discussing the

cost effectiveness of screening. Theme 3 'Enjoying and Achieving' is met by retaining students who then achieve their desired qualification. I contribute actively to the College's Healthy College status through Healthy Eating, Smoking Cessation, Drugs and Alcohol programmes and the work we do with the Local Authority to prepare the College for National Standards. The College Vice-Principal has given the service added impetus with national 'theme weeks'.

Students like events such as the "Condom Olympics" in which they have to put the condom on a demonstrator as quickly, safely and correctly as possible (expiry dates are rarely checked!) The "Drunken Condom Olympics" promoted the issues of sex and alcohol - the students love the beer goggles used within this activity!

In February 2008, at a Sex Education Forum in Manchester, The Principal, Student Services Manager and I delivered a seminar on our service and its effectiveness. The service levels and student interaction we have achieved put us at the front of this type of college practice.

Rapid service expansion has occurred to support other local colleges, increasing our provision by 15 hours a week for CPD cover, clinics and tutorial talks. The service is shaped by the students to make it more accessible to them. Examples include: producing the service name 'SEX MATTERS'; to help with recognition at clinics I wear a nursing uniform; and the growth of the 8:30 am. clinic sessions before the 9 am. lessons start.

The support of the PCT, the college and the students makes the job exciting and rewarding.

Sandra Whyte is currently the LSC's Partnership Director for Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre, following a long career in teaching and management in FE colleges in both Scotland and England. For communication please email: Sandra.Whyte@lsc.gov.uk.

Sandra Whyte

Priorities for Healthy Colleges

A long career in further education has made me very aware of all the elements that together affect the ability of our students to achieve, and many of these elements relate to student health.

Many who come to our colleges have specific health issues that affect their studies and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has worked closely with the sector to ensure that the entitlement to appropriate learning opportunities extends to all. Funding is available to ensure physical access and suitable equipment; Additional Learning Support; specialist provision in residential colleges where that best meets a learner's needs; and work to ensure that the curriculum and quality of provision meets the needs of each learner.

Promoting health

As well as responding to specific identified needs we are aware of the range of positive action and activities colleges undertake to promote health in their student bodies. Ensuring a healthy environment through new buildings is one important aspect. A range of support services, for example those relating to sexual health, have developed well in recent years and colleges often work closely and in partnership with many public and third sector organisations to create a caring environment. In addition college activities like sport, services like counselling and facilities such as salad bars, help to create a healthy student body.

Participation has been a key priority for the LSC since its inception, and this has led to increasing numbers of young people staying in learning post 16. As providers

increasingly achieve this through recruiting from the NEET group, (Not in Education Employment or Training) young people with different needs and issues have come into our colleges.

Reducing worklessness

A more recent LSC priority, that is bringing non-traditional learners into colleges, is our determination to reduce worklessness. Together with a number of partners, including Jobcentre Plus and local authorities, we have been working on a programme called Integrating Employment and Skills to support people who have been out of the workforce. Partnership is key to this in creating a progression pathway for people from initial engagement to the achievement of qualifications and employment, and bringing together appropriate opportunities from a range of providers and a number of funding strands is essential for success. Many colleges have excellent records of working with and in their communities and with workless people so the sector has a valuable contribution to make. The positive relationship between prosperity and health is well established and fits well with the healthy college agenda.

Many workless people do have significant health problems, as well as low self esteem, financial difficulties etc.. The priority placed on a positive and proactive approach, creating a healthy environment and providing support with specific health issues will be key to the success of this initiative. Creating healthy colleges is in the interest of the learners and welcomed by the LSC.

Extract from an article in Education and Health 2008, 26:1:6-7

Zena Jones

Doncaster College 'Hub': evaluation

The sexual health 'drop-in' clinic, based in Doncaster College 'Hub', opened its doors in January 2006 with the intention of providing access to sexual health services for 3000 young people. The purpose was to provide a conveniently located service which will enable students, who are registered at the college, to access a comprehensive youth friendly service.

A professionally trained sexual health nurse, is available to discuss sensitive issues confidentially with individuals and help young people to develop a positive and responsible attitude to sex and relationships.

Monitoring progress

In order to monitor progress I evaluated the service in its early stages using responses to a survey style questionnaire, analysis of numbers of students who have used the service and the nature of the service requested and provided. Motivating the students to participate in consultation, which required formal structure, or written response remained the main problem.

Results show that most students sought advice about sex and relationships and supply of condom and contraception pills. TV screens were the most popular method of promoting the service and a number of different methods e.g. posters, open day and via Lecturers were also useful. Further marketing is paramount to promote the service to new and existing students. Responses have also revealed that few barriers exist to prevent use of the clinic.

An excellent opportunity now exists to build upon initial, limited but encouraging success.

Extract from an article in Education and Health 2008, 26:1:14-15

Barbra Plunkett

Lincoln College: Chlamydia screening

Lincoln College staged a special Pee-in-a-Pot Day in November 2007 as part of its programme of sexual health services. The College Health Adviser was joined by 3 other nurses as the campaign was launched across the Lincoln campus to offer free, confidential Chlamydia testing to staff and students.

Men in the majority

A total of nearly 80 people, staff and students, took part in the 2 hours the pots were made available. The majority of people who were involved were male. Chlamydia rates in Lincoln are high so the campaign had circulated sexual health messages to students for several weeks, raising their awareness before the Pee-in-a-Pot Day. 9,000 (one in eight) 16 to 25 years olds in Lincolnshire are believed to have Chlamydia and there is still a long way to go to cure and prevent the spread of the infection affecting the fertility of both men and women.

The results were communicated to participants by text, phone or email. Those testing positive were treated in college with a one-off dose of antibiotics.

The local Primary Care Trust carried out a follow-up survey with those that had taken part and those that hadn't. This helped see what demand there was and how often we need to repeat the screening day.

Students commented on how easy it was to take part in the screening which is offered all year by the Health Adviser as part of her clinics, although this was the first time the college had run a campus-wide screening campaign.

For more information please email: Krysia.canvin@dphpc.ox.ac.uk or Ulla.Raisanen@dphpc.ox.ac.uk or telephone 01865 289328

YouthHealthTalk.org - a voice for young people

The website www.YouthHealthTalk.org is a unique, award-winner that is designed to give young people an opportunity to talk openly and honestly about what it's like to live with a health condition, sexual health, drugs, alcohol and other issues. Each condition or issue-specific section is based on a stand alone qualitative research project by researchers based at DIPEX, University of Oxford.

Unlike other health information sites, YouthHealthTalk.org is not just about medical facts, it features video and audio clips from interviews in which young people describe their real life experiences of health, illness and lifestyles. On the site, young people can talk about the things that matter to them, what has been difficult as well as what has helped and what they would like to see improved. Each section also has reliable information about different health conditions and links to other websites, support groups, books and videos. The website offers emotional and practical support for young people facing similar situations, helping them to realise that they are not alone.

"I wanted to be involved so that I could share my experiences and suggestions with others, and could give people the valuable support that I was searching for." Gemma, YHT Youth Panel

The website also helps parents, carers, family and friends to understand the issues involved from young people's perspectives and therefore how best to help.

Similarly, it supports the implementation of the National Service Framework for Children and Young People by providing a valuable educational resource for teachers, health care professionals and others

working with children and young people and by helping professionals promote positive outcomes by enhancing their understanding of young people and their real life problems.

"YouthHealthTalk can make a massive difference, give young people recognition, a reference point and, most importantly, a voice to be heard and related to." David, YHT Youth Panel

Young people are involved at every stage of each project via the Youth Panel which helps us to choose, plan and manage projects and guides the overall direction of YHT.

"I got involved with the young people's panel which helps to come up with ideas of how to take the website forward and reach out to as many young people as possible." Clair, YHT Youth Panel

Volunteers wanted

At present, the site features young people with epilepsy, young people with long-term health conditions, sexual health of young people, teenage cancer, and diabetes type 1 in young people. Two further sites are currently in development and we are actively seeking volunteers* to tell their story.

1. Young people, weight & health. We would like to hear from young people aged 16-20 who are struggling with their weight, or have been told they're overweight, or were overweight but have lost weight, including young people who have gained weight as a result of a medical condition or medication or who have developed a health condition as a result of their weight.

2. Young people, depression & low mood. We are looking for young people aged 16-25 to share their experiences of depression or persistent low mood.

*Participants can share their experiences in an interview (face-to-face, or via the telephone or internet), and can remain totally anonymous if they wish. The projects have full ethics approval and the researchers have CRB clearance. For more information please contact Krysia (weight & health) email: Krysia.canvin@dphpc.ox.ac.uk or Ulla (depression & low mood) email: Ulla.Raisanen@dphpc.ox.ac.uk

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Colleges tell us how they use their results:

- *Help to move our Healthy College project forward -*
- Help to formulate our action plan and help develop and implement our Every Child Matters strategy -
- *For further evidence for the ECM section of the SAIR and to further support our contribution to the JAIR -*
- To take into account the students as key stakeholders in the college's ECM framework and action plan -
- *Beneficial to be able to benchmark with other organisations and the potential to share good practice -*

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WOULD YOU LIKE MORE DETAILS?

Please contact Angela Balding

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