

Targeted youth support

Integrated support for vulnerable young people – emerging practice



Targeting Teenage Pregnancy (TP) through school based health centres

Area: Greenwich, London Borough, South East London, population approximately 222,000

“We don’t aim to cater for all young people’s health needs; an important part of the work is signposting to mainstream services. However, being based in a school enables us to identify student concerns and intervene earlier on and to help some people in an easily accessible setting. It also enables us to find out about and address others issues affecting young people such as low self esteem and concerns regarding gangs” – **Juliet Campbell, School’s Health Centre Co-ordinator, November 2007**

Challenges

- Historically high TP rates in Greenwich schools
- Early intervention plus various other public health issues
- Bringing together multi-agency teams
- Rolling out a successful programme

Key Actions

- Got Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) funding to combat high TP rates
- Teentalk was the first school based health centre based in Kidbrooke school in 2004 – a huge success
- Conducted feasibility study re model roll out - 2006
- Schools approached - if hit set criteria got SRB funding covering start up costs e.g. computers/work to premises
- Employed borough wide co-ordinator (neighbourhood renewal funding) to manage roll out - March 07
- Six more school based health centres opened between April and November 07 – each with a school nurse and two youth workers dealing with obesity, sexual health, smoking, substance/alcohol misuse and mental health
- Focus on early intervention/prevention/harm reduction
- Substantial consultation with schools and young people about what they wanted and how they wanted it
- Pupils designed initiative logo, named centres- centres heavily publicised around the school before opening
- Specialist external services will be brought in for preventative work re issues such as drug use/gangs etc
- Next step to involve families - a more holistic service

Key Implementation Tips

- Different services work differently with the same people – the key is to getting people to tilt and meet in the middle
- Try to be consistent between the services in the messages you give out to young people
- Don’t rush partnership working - it never works – take time to understand what each partner wants to do and how they want to do it
- Set out clear roles/responsibilities and accountability from the outset
- Take a flexible approach - vary the model to meet local circumstances in schools
- Engage people as early on as possible so they don’t feel this is something being done to them
- Leave enough flexibility in the service so it can address different needs as they arise

Impact

Since Teentalk was launched in 2004, there have been no reported pregnancies in Kidbrooke school, whereas previously it had one of the highest TP rates in the borough. Attendance rates have improved and previous stigma around having to access these services in specialist settings has been reduced.

With the roll out of school based health centres, pupils are now able to address some of their health needs in a convenient/easily accessible setting. Schools are ideally placed to teach young people how to take responsibility for their own health needs, giving them access to/knowledge of services to help improve their long term health.

Many borough schools, despite concerns over things like contraceptive provision, have welcomed the idea of their own school based health centre. Early days, but services are already in demand and appreciated by pupils.

The services are being well used for various reasons, some anticipated such as sexual health and smoking cessation, but also some that were not anticipated such as how to avoid being involved in gangs and leaving gangs. Specialist services will be brought in to address these and other key issues. The roll out of the CAF is also having a positive roll to play giving everyone a uniformed base to work from.

To find out more, contact

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