

## Evidence Based Public Health Practice

### Teenage Pregnancy

#### Warwickshire County Council

#### Respect Yourself Campaign

Workforce Development in Relations and Sex Education and Supporting Teenage Parents

### Introduction

Warwickshire's Respect Yourself Campaign Team developed a training programme to support professionals to talk confidently about relationships and sexual health with young people, to increase access to mainstream service provision and promote countywide key messages regarding positive sexual health.

This example was chosen because it demonstrates a tiered approach to training and workforce development, with basic level awareness training being mandatory for all staff and more specialist levels provided for staff who work with the most vulnerable young people.

### Background

The Respect Yourself Campaign Team, which leads on Warwickshire's Teenage Pregnancy Strategy, established a training programme to support professionals to talk confidently about relationships and sexual health with young people, increase access to mainstream service provision and promote countywide key messages regarding positive sexual health. The key messages are:

- It's ok to say NO if someone suggests you have sex.
- If you do decide to have sex, make sure you are ready and safe (emotionally and physically).
- Having sex without protection means that you may be at risk of pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
- If you do find yourself pregnant, you do have options and there is help and support available for you.
- Teenage pregnancy, contraception and sexual health are issues for young men too, not just young women.
- Comprehensive advice and support is available for young people in Warwickshire at [www.respectyourself.info](http://www.respectyourself.info)

Several consultation processes were carried out to inform the development of the programme. In 2002, we consulted with looked after young people regarding relationships and sexual health information, advice and support sources at an event called 'Re-Stuffed'. The young people involved said they would like to receive information and support from the professionals and foster carers who support them.

In 2003, the Respect Yourself Campaign (RYC) ran a consultation with young people via Connexions and the Youth and Community Service. Of the 1,000 young people that responded, the majority saw the role of Youth Support Workers (who they have an informal relationship with) as an important source of information regarding relationships and sexual health. They also highlighted that they would like to be able to receive condoms from these professionals.

This research, and further consultation with professionals, led to the development of Warwickshire's policy and workforce development programme on Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Supporting Young Parents.

The original training ran as follows:

**Level 1** completed by all frontline staff working with young people. The session lasts 2.5 hours and covers Warwickshire's policy, young people, sex and the law, professionals' attitudes and values. It also identifies local services that professionals might signpost to. This level is delivered by Respect Yourself Campaign (RYC) staff. We have also commissioned Warwickshire Children and Voluntary Youth service (WCVYS) to deliver to voluntary sector organisations.

**Level 1a** is a full day optional course which aims to enable professionals to support young people to make positive choices about if, when and who they have sex with. Professionals develop skills to build young people's self esteem and delay sex until they feel they are ready. This is delivered by RYC in partnership with WCVYS.

**Level 2** explores the practical aspects of delivering RSE. Participants learn about contraception, STIs and how to deliver effective sessions on these issues. This is delivered by Public Health (NHS Warwickshire) and takes a full day.

**Level 3** enables professionals to use Warwickshire's Condom Distribution Protocol and provides them with a "starter pack" for condom distribution. There is also a brief introduction to Chlamydia screening. This is delivered by Public Health colleagues (NHS Warwickshire) and takes half a day.

Alongside this, the RYC coordinates more training (both delivered in-house and commissioned) to further meet the needs of professionals working with young people and teenage parents:

- "More Than Welcome" is aimed at frontline workers in primary health care such as GP receptionists and Community Pharmacists to make health services more accessible to young people.
- "Working with teenage parents: A beginner's guide" aims to raise professionals' awareness of the issues that young parents might face in accessing services.

## Aims and Objectives

A three-tiered training programme, with additional complementary optional courses, was devised in partnership with Public Health colleagues with a clear aim:

- To increase the knowledge and understanding of the sexual health and well-being agenda and the support needs of teenage parents and their children, for professionals working with young people across Warwickshire.

This would then:

- Enable professionals to support young people more effectively to make positive choices about relationships and protect their own sexual health and well-being throughout their lives, as well as improving outcomes for teenage parents and their dependants.

## Appropriateness

Before revising the training programme we carried out a training needs assessment with professionals and young people. A short questionnaire asked professionals how well equipped they felt dealing with various issues relating to relationships and sex education. Young people were also asked how well they thought staff might deal with various situations.

We identified that staff need more support/ information on supporting lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) young people and working with young people with learning difficulties. Young people mainly seemed confident that staff would deal positively with a variety of RSE related issues.

We also contact managers when they nominate someone to attend to check what their expectations are and to ensure that they will support the person nominated to use the training and build on their learning.

## Accessibility and Acceptability

Since the introduction of the policy and training, organisations can respond confidently to young people with relationships and sexual health needs. Issues can often be resolved in-house and effective signposting means that young people can receive specialist advice and guidance where necessary.

Warwickshire now has a bank of professionals who can offer targeted support for young people and support the delivery of RSE training.

The training programme has also enabled better access to contraception and sexual health services through partnership working between health and non-health professionals who have accessed the RSE training. To increase access to the training, all training dates are set in advance. Daytime, evening and weekend training is offered to accommodate all requests from professionals.

All training has been cross-referenced with the Common Induction Standards and is seen as mandatory for all frontline delivery staff.

## Service User Feedback

"They {the staff} have helped me to be myself and not someone else when I am with my boyfriend. They have also helped me understand why it is important to have safe sex."

"I came to see you to get transport help and I've now got a push bike, some condoms and had a test for Chlamydia!!!"

"This training has helped me to understand the issues that young adults face and why they make the decisions that they do. I'm now better equipped to work with young adults"

"Knowing that the staff are trained may give people more confidence in going to the sessions with their problems. It also may help students feel more relaxed and less embarrassed when talking to the staff knowing they are trained."

"My boyfriend did not like to use condoms and he came to see.. {a member of staff}... and now he will"

## Staff Feedback

"I feel I am now more professional when working with young people and refer regularly to the RSE protocol"

"I have seen 2 young females this month. I gave advice on safe sex, how to use a condom, discussed guidelines and also gave a Chlamydia test which I issued to both and advised about STI's and symptoms of Chlamydia. I also issued condoms."

"The training was really useful. I want to get all my workers through the RSE training...."

## Partnership Working

We work closely with VOX (the county youth panel) who have identified RSE as a priority. We have supported them to carry out a survey of what secondary school students think of the RSE they receive. Three VOX members have attended the RSE training and influenced its revision.

We also work very closely with Public Health, Voluntary Sector, and Integrated Youth Support Services (IYSS).

## Funding

This programme is currently funded through Area Based Grant. It costs approximately £90 per head to put someone through Levels 1 to 3, including Level 1a (not including trainer wages). All trainers are salaried and give their time in kind. Total training costs for 09/10 were just under £10,000 including commissioned training on better support for teenage parents.

Funding has not been confirmed for 2011.

## Effectiveness, Efficiency and Equity

RSE training is now standardised across the county with an agreed set of quality standards, for all professionals working with young people, and a robust system for measuring impact is in place.

In the majority of organisations working with young people in Warwickshire, there is the expectation that frontline staff have received Level 1 of the training programme. Evaluation of the impact of the training is now a core part of our work.

### Measures to demonstrate impact:

- All training evaluated, not just at the end of training sessions but also now by phone 3-6 months post-training.
- Monitoring condom distribution via each service, increased hits to the local Respect Yourself website and uptake of services.
- Impact of the workforce development on the under-18 conception rates, not in employment education or training (NEET) figures and the Narrowing the Gap agenda.
- Monitor where and how often Chlamydia screening is carried out

As a result of the training programme, young people are now able to access high quality, impartial advice about relationships and sexual health in a variety of formal and informal settings. These include:

- Youth Justice Teams and Positive about Young People (preventing 10- 13 year olds from engaging in offending behaviour).
- Voluntary and Statutory Sector Youth Clubs and detached provision.
- Children in Need Staff and Foster Carers.

In 2006 a multi-agency group was formed in Nuneaton and Bedworth to tackle the high teenage pregnancy rates in the district. They identified the need to train all frontline staff on RSE, and this district has now had the most comprehensive roll out of the RSE training. Since 2006, there has been a sustained downward trend in teenage conception rates in the district.

Over 1,500 professionals have received training, with over 350 professionals having completed Level 3 of the programme and now distributing condoms under Warwickshire's Condom Distribution Protocol.

### 3 key Steps to Setting Up the Service

1. Have an identified lead for the training programme with good admin support.
2. Invest time to speak to managers, staff and young people to evaluate the impact that training is having.
3. Keep the dialogue open with partners and young people to ensure that the training continues to meet the needs of the population and the workforce.

### Contact Details

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