

Scrutiny Review: Pre-scoping Report

Selected topic: Supporting Young People's Healthy Lifestyles in Secondary Schools

1. Background to the selection of this topic

This topic was agreed at the Committee's away day, held on the 3rd July, attended by Members of the Health Scrutiny Committee along with representatives of Stockport Primary Care Trust, Stockport Foundation Trust and the Council's Executive.

The focus of the review discussed was around young person's smoking, drinking, physical activity, diet and sexual health.

This topic was considered for review earlier in the year but it was decided that it would be most timely in the second half of the year given that the second Young People's Healthy Lifestyle Survey results were expected to be known in January. It was felt that this presented an opportunity to identify areas where progress (since the first Lifestyle Survey 5 years ago) was not so good and that would, therefore, benefit from review or identify gaps in information where a scrutiny review could 'dig deeper' and provide complementary evidence. Using the survey results to identify a potential focus for the review will not now be possible as results will not be collated in time, however, some analysis of results to date may be possible to support the review focus.

National statistics demonstrate that young people's lifestyle choices are putting them at risk:

- The UK has the highest rate of teenage pregnancies in Europe and sexually transmitted infections are more prevalent than ever before;
- In 2006, 21 per cent of pupils in England aged 11-15 reported drinking alcohol in the previous week;
- In 2006, 17 per cent of pupils in England aged 11-15 reported that they had taken drugs in the last year.¹

In addition to this, there is evidence that in-school support and education makes a difference but is not always meeting the needs of young people:

- In the 16-24 age band where in-school support is lost, transitions to excessive alcohol consumption and consumption of Class A drugs tend to occur most;
- In 2006-7, 40% of young people between the ages of 11 and 18 thought that their Sex and Relationship Education was either poor or very poor.²

¹ Smoking, Drinking and Drug Use among Young People in England in 2006, survey carried out for the Information Centre for health and social care, August 2007

² 'Sex and Relationship Education: Are You Getting It' report of the UK Youth Parliament, June 2007

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2. What would be the scope of a Scrutiny Review of this topic?

The suggested title of this Scrutiny Review is 'Supporting Young People's Healthy Lifestyles in Secondary Schools'.

The review would primarily focus on interventions in secondary schools and on sexual health, drugs and alcohol. **Its emphasis would be on** tackling risk factors through prevention approaches in schools.

This focus is suggested for the following reasons:

- The review is timely given recent national publications, work and publicity around alcohol and sex and relationships education in schools. For example, NICE have recently published guidance for schools on 'Interventions in schools to prevent and reduce alcohol use among children and young people' and the United Kingdom Youth Parliament published a report and made recommendations earlier this year on the issue of sex and relationship education in schools.
- Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) lessons provide an opportunity for secondary schools to talk to young people about sexual health, drugs and alcohol. However, there is some evidence to suggest that pupils feel that aspects of these lessons could be improved.
- Recognising the link between sexual health and drugs/ alcohol it is felt that in terms of interventions in schools there is a need for these issues to be considered together.

Research and activities carried out during the course of the review might include:

- Information on the prevalence of drinking, drug use/ misuse and teenage pregnancies amongst young people in Stockport;
- Information on what schools are already doing to encourage pupils to make healthy lifestyle choices in relation to sexual health, drugs and alcohol;
- Information on what services are already doing to get public health messages in relation to sexual health, drugs and alcohol to young people;
- Relevant sections of the Young People's Healthy Lifestyle Survey data;
- Case studies looking at schools with very different needs and interventions and/or illustrating existing practice in terms of preventative approaches and interventions used in secondary schools in relation to sexual health, drugs and alcohol (to enable good practice to be highlighted);
- Focus groups/ interviews drawing on teachers/ pupils from schools with good PSHE (to highlight what is good/ why it is good/ PSHE making a difference)

The review would be aiming to ensure that children and young people are

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given the tools to make informed lifestyle choices and helped to access the right support.

The review would be focused on young people aged 11-16 as this is the age range of secondary school pupils, not including those in further education. In order to keep the scope of the review tightly focused and, therefore, assist positive outcomes it is felt that the age range should be limited to 11-16 years rather than extended to 11-18.

3. What are the benefits of doing this Scrutiny Review?

- The review would identify any barriers to schools delivering interventions that work;
- The review would identify the local barriers getting in the way of public health messages;
- The review would raise the profile of PSHE and its potential to make a difference whilst identifying good practice that can be shared more widely across schools;
- Opportunity for Councillors to listen to the views of young people and use these to influence future developments in in-school support and education in relation to sexual health, drugs and alcohol;
- In line with Council Plan priorities, the aims of the Local Area Agreement and public health priorities, the review would consider inequalities aspects in relation to needs in different schools and interventions to match.

4. Are there reasons for not doing this Scrutiny Review at this time?

This review would not duplicate past, existing or planned work.

5. Timescales

It is suggested that the review would complete within the second half of the municipal year, starting in January and ending in April.

At this stage it is suggested that the Panel would meet regularly within that time period.