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Young People – Alcohol & Sexual Risk Taking Project in the North East

Quality Standards

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Quality Standards (North East)

Young People – Alcohol & Sexual Risk Taking

Background

This piece of work was commissioned by Government Office North East in November 2009 with the aim of producing a regional toolkit addressing issues surrounding young people involved in risky behaviours (specifically alcohol misuse and sexual risk taking). The key focus of the work was on *universal and targeted* services.

Methods utilised for the project involved interviews with key stakeholders, focus groups with front-line staff, focus groups with young people in various settings (particularly those deemed to be vulnerable/at risk) and a full literature review of the academic evidence base alongside examples of evaluated and promising practice.

A regional toolkit has been developed, which is based on the academic literature review coupled with the regional qualitative work. The 'Quality Standards' and associated partnership self-assessment tool are two elements of this regional toolkit.

Using the Quality Standards

The set of thirteen quality standards are intended for use in the broadest possible sense. **They do not replace the need for local strategies/plans but simply encourage partnerships to consider the most pressing issues that have arisen as part of this work in the North East region.**

The quality standards are broken down into four broad themes:-

- 1.) Strategic
- 2.) Operational/service delivery
- 3.) Workforce
- 4.) Think Family

Each quality standard is based on the evidence and information gathered throughout the regional work.

The final column of the quality standards gives an indication of possible practical solutions. These are merely examples and partnerships may well have different/additional arrangements which equally meet the quality criteria.

QUALITY STANDARDS (North East Region)

Alcohol & Sexual Risk Taking

Strategic

| | Area | Quality Standard | Practical Measures (Examples) |
|---|-----------------------------|--|--|
| 1 | Partnership Structures | Local partnership structures should be aligned in such a way that they are able to strategically address issues of 'risk and resilience' amongst young people as a whole, rather than addressing separate risk areas in isolation (e.g. substance misuse, teenage pregnancy) | Children's Plans/Strategies combining 'risk' work streams into one combined programme of work Risk & Resilience Strategic Boards as part of Children's Trust arrangements |
| 2 | Collaborative Commissioning | Commissioners of services for young people who are engaged in risk taking behaviour should work collaboratively to co-ordinate needs assessments, commissioning strategies, service level agreements and performance management of commissioned services | Joint needs assessments Cross-cutting issues included in service level agreements (e.g. including the requirement for sexual health screening within alcohol services) Joint performance monitoring meetings of commissioned services (e.g. involving both the substance misuse commissioner and teenage pregnancy commissioner) |

Operational Service Delivery

| | Area | Quality Standard | Practical Measures (Examples) |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| 3 | Sex & Relationships Education (SRE) | Sex & Relationships Education should be delivered as part of a wider comprehensive programme of PSHE in all primary, secondary, special schools and relevant out of school settings (e.g. pupil referral units, youth centres) | PSHE programmes include both alcohol/drugs and SRE as key focus areas, with seamless linkages across, rather than these elements taught in isolation Pupils consulted on the appropriateness of the PSHE programme and given opportunities to be involved in design/delivery |

| | Area | Quality Standard | Practical Measures (Examples) |
|---|--|--|--|
| 4 | Evidence-based prevention/early intervention | Partnerships should ensure that prevention and targeted interventions for young people are <i>evidence-based</i> (see full Literature Review) | <p>Opportunities for young people to participate in positive activities</p> <p>Volunteering and mentoring opportunities for young people in the community</p> <p>Harm minimisation approaches to alcohol awareness/education</p> <p>Holistic support services for young people (e.g. one-stop shops)</p> <p>Compliance with 'You're Welcome' criteria</p> <p>Development of personalised advice and support to young people (on whole range of issues such as sexual health and substance misuse)</p> |
| 5 | Early Identification & Screening | A screening process should exist in each partnership area which addresses risk taking behaviour in a holistic way | <p>CAF Process, tightly linked with sexual health and substance misuse</p> <p>Development of a dedicated screening tool (e.g. Stoke on Trent, attached as Appendix A)</p> <p>Combining current screening tools for substance misuse and teenage pregnancy</p> <p>Screening for risk taking behaviour as part of generic provision</p> <p>Encouragement of young people to 'self screen' using resources such as the 'Teen Life Check' http://www.teenlifecheck.co.uk/Question.aspx</p> |
| 6 | Timely Interventions | Partnerships should consider, as part of their commissioning strategies, the key 'teachable moments' for young people (Cairns, 2010) and what local responses could be in place to fully utilise these opportunities | <p>Brief interventions in pharmacy (emergency contraception) services</p> <p>Clear care pathways between A&E and specialist services</p> <p>Targeted (small group based) work with school pupils in transition to secondary schools</p> |

| | Area | Quality Standard | Practical Measures (Examples) |
|---|-----------------------------|---|--|
| | | | <p>Targeted work with pupils/students on transition from secondary schools to colleges/university</p> <p>Targeted interventions with young people leaving the care system</p> <p>Informal group interventions (e.g. youth work) with young people within social settings</p> <p>'Quick response arrangements' to provide targeted work with young people (individually or in groups) following a relevant local incident (e.g. overdose of friend)</p> |
| 7 | Referral Pathways | Clear referral/care pathways should exist in all partnerships between universal/targeted and specialist services, sexual health and alcohol services | 'Team Around the Secondary School' model assists in getting wide range of professionals to discuss individual young people who may be at risk and brokering in the support they may need from more specialist services (e.g. Hartlepool) |
| 8 | Involvement of Young People | Partnerships should actively engage young people (particularly those most likely to be involved in 'risky' behaviour) in the development/delivery of services | <p>Peer mentoring programmes</p> <p>Young Advisors Schemes</p> |
| 9 | Social Marketing & Media | Partnerships should consider a means to promote positive messages to address the current imbalance of perceptions amongst young people and families | <p>Social norms marketing campaigns</p> <p>Local work promoting positive messages (e.g. Drinkaware 'Have Fun-Be Careful' campaign targeting young people at 'peak risk' times)</p> <p>Universal staff using every opportunity to challenge young people's perceptions of current social norms</p> |

Workforce Development

| | Area | Quality Standard | Practical Measures (Examples) |
|----|------------------|--|--|
| 10 | Recruitment | Recruitment of staff working in universal and targeted settings for young people should ensure staff have the right competencies and <i>attitudes</i> to work with young people on a range of sensitive issues | Job adverts/descriptions to identify 'risk taking behaviour' |
| 11 | Staff Management | Staff management should encompass the three key of:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Role Legitimacy</i> (i.e. ensuring frontline staff understand the important and wider context of their role) - <i>Role Adequacy</i> (ensuring staff are competent to perform their role – see 11) - <i>Role Support</i> (i.e. effective supervision for staff who are dealing with a range of risk taking behaviour) | Organisational understanding of the three key principles and commitment to managing staff within this framework |
| 12 | Training | All staff in universal and targeted services should be trained to a level, appropriate to their role, which allows them to identify risk taking behaviours and take appropriate action | <p>Training for workers in adult/generic services (e.g. general practice) on methods of working with children and young people</p> <p>Sexual health core competencies training for youth workers, youth support workers and targeted youth support professionals</p> <p>Alcohol awareness training (including brief interventions) for sexual health staff</p> <p>Multi-agency training on consent and confidentiality when working with young people (in particular adolescents)</p> <p>IAG (Information Advice & Guidance) training for staff in universal and targeted settings</p> |

'Think Family'

| | Area | Quality Standard | Practical Measures (Examples) |
|----|------------------------------|--|--|
| 13 | Targeting Parents & Families | Local partnerships should ensure that their local Parenting Strategies and 'Think Family' developments specifically target parents and families. This should include information, support and training for parents/carers on preventing, recognising and responding to risk taking behaviour among young people that leads to poor outcomes. | <p>Running short courses for parents and carers to build up knowledge and confidence to talk to their children about sex and relationships and prevent alcohol misuse, for example the FPA 'Speakeasy' course and the Strengthening Families Programme (10-14)</p> <p>Involving Parent Support Advisors; for example they might be trained to facilitate a 'Speakeasy' course</p> <p>Linking with local parenting strategies, for example building sessions on SRE into parenting courses offered by Sure Start and Children's Centres and making links with Family SEAL</p> |