

# Gloucestershire Boys & Young Men Network Newsletter

No. 2

Welcome to the 2nd edition of the Gloucestershire Boys and Young Men Network Newsletter! The first issue we gave out at the Working with Young Men Workshop in March seems rather a long time ago, so an update on what's been going on is overdue. Hopefully this Newsletter will give a flavour of some of the work that has been going on and show that we haven't been standing still!

If you have been working with boys or young men on a project around any health or social issue, or have an article that you would like to see printed in the Newsletter then we would like to hear from you.

Bernie Cox and Paul Hopkins

## Boys and Young Men: Mental Health and Well-being Workshop

For those of you wondering what happened to the Mental Health and Well-being Workshop scheduled to run on July 1st, it has been decided to postpone it to coincide with Mental Health Week in October. The new date for this will be 11th October at City Works, Alfred Street, Gloucester. Application forms will be sent out shortly.

## Promoting Mental Well-being – Strategy launch

The Strategy for Promoting Mental Well-being in Gloucestershire 2002-2005 is finished! It was launched in early July and your comments about it, suggestions for improvement and support in taking it forward will be very welcome. It is a document and a programme of work that will evolve over time.

The strategy has two aims.

- To promote mental health for all, working with individuals and communities.
- To combat discrimination against individuals and groups who experience mental distress and to promote their social inclusion.

Many readers will have helped to write the strategy. The health and well-being of boys and young men is integrated into the 6 Action Plans in it. For example...

### 1. Communities and Neighbourhoods Action Plan

Boys and young men need to feel

respected and valued in local communities.

They need to feel that they belong and have a sense of purpose in their village, town, youth club, skate group, school, leisure centre or sports club.

### 2. The Workplace Action Plan

Boys and young men with learning disabilities have a right to participate in employment, training or careers advice which helps them achieve their personal aspirations for work, salary, social contact and meaningful activity.

### 3. The Health and Social Care Family Action Plan

It is exciting to read that two Primary Care Trusts have agreed to consider adopting the "Consulting Young people – Ethical Guidelines" (produced by YouthCAN). There is targeted commitment to parenting support for fathers.

### 4. The Media, Communication and

### Information Action Plan

A Mental Health Media and Information Network is being established to celebrate achievement, raise awareness and reduce the stigma and discrimination of social exclusion and mental distress. The Boys and Young Men Network will have a member on this group and help to promote positive images and stories about the great things which young men in Gloucestershire are doing.

### 5. The Prison and Criminal Justice System Action Plan

HMP Gloucester, Gloucestershire Constabulary, the Youth Offending Team and many voluntary sector organisations such as

Samaritans, Circles of

Support have

worked

together to

identify ways of

dealing with the

challenges facing

young men and

boys in the criminal

justice system. Actions

include learning about

assertiveness and anger

management, use of the

creative arts, cookery and

budgeting skills, involving

prisoners in setting up a

Prison Citizens' Advice Bureau

and parenting skills.

### 6. Young People and Schools Action Plan

Objectives promote mental well-being through pre-school provision, schools, colleges, the Youth and Community Service, ConneXions, local authorities and the University of Gloucestershire. The mental health promotion needs of young carers and young people with eating disorders and untreated psychosis will also be met.

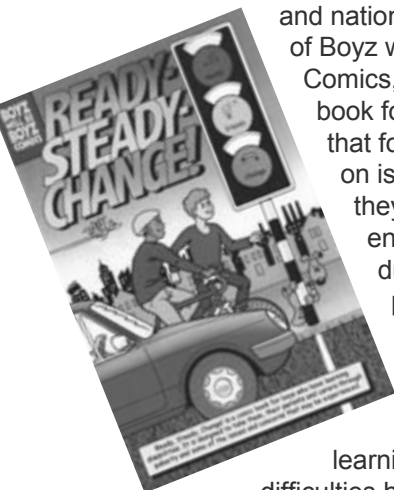
For a copy of the Strategy or to discuss it further, please contact Jeremy Voaden, Mental Health Promotion Coordinator Gloucestershire Partnership NHS Trust, Tel: 01452 548820 e-mail:

jeremy.voaden@glospart.nhs.uk



## Ready, Steady, Change!

Following the local and national success of *Boyz will be Boyz* Comics, the comic-book for boys that focuses on issues they may encounter during puberty, a new resource for boys with



learning difficulties has been

produced, with a similar focus on the issues that boys with learning difficulties, their parents and carers may encounter as they journey through puberty. *Ready, Steady, Change!* has been produced by the Sexual Health Promotion Team working with staff based at Bettridge School in Cheltenham. The comic-book is available for free locally from July from the Health Promotion Resources department and nationally, at cost, from September.

For further details on the content of *Ready, Steady, Change!* please contact Paul Hopkins.

## "Trust Me"

A theatre workshop for professionals and young people exploring relationships and contraception.

An exciting training event took place on two days in May. Loud Mouth Theatre Company were invited to work with social workers, reintegration tutors and young people exploring the issues of relationships, sexual activity, contraception and pregnancy. Although the numbers of participants were small the performance and workshop were enthusiastically received.

A 40 minute play followed two young people through forming a relationship, becoming sexually active and then having to respond to an unintended pregnancy. Adults and young people were invited to challenge the characters about their behaviour, attitudes and decision making process. The young people had strong opinions about the choices facing the young man and woman:

"Why did the boy have unprotected sex?"

## Geezers' Weekend - March 2002

What do young men know about sexual health services and how to access them? What is their perception of the available information on sex and relationships? To explore these issues youth workers in the Stroud area organised a residential weekend to consult with young men aged between 15 and 20 years. Fourteen young men were recruited to represent a broad range of views and experiences. The weekend was planned with an intensive programme of group work methods to enable open and honest discussion in a fun environment.

The group explored issues around sex education and activities identified areas of knowledge. Particular areas highlighted were age of first lesson, hours spent in lessons, gender issues, topics taught and what the young men felt they had learnt. The impact of this sex and relationships education was explored with activities that allowed the young men to discuss their own attitudes and behaviour.

The group also explored their knowledge of the provision of sexual health services and looked at their perception of a perfect service. Issues such as access and environment were raised as well as gender and manner of staff. Anonymity was another key aspect.

"Why didn't the couple talk to each other about contraception?"

"Does April really want the baby?"

"Will Dave just go off and leave her if she keeps the baby?"

The advantage of the approach is that young people are encouraged to explore options, question their own values and make appropriate decisions. It is fun, thought provoking and, at times, sad.

The adult day included developing approaches to work with young people who find mainstream education difficult. These included group activities, problem solving and the creation of a character that can illustrate many of the themes staff wish to cover. There is also the opportunity to try out ideas before working with young people and overcome the embarrassment that staff may feel.

Feedback from adults on the day:

"..New ideas and approaching issues from a different angle"

"..I'd definitely use the activities with young people, especially the

Information was also looked at, with leaflets and posters studied and evaluated and the most useful elements noted. The young men also explored their ideas for reducing teenage pregnancies with a range of solutions from the male contraceptive pill to free condoms through youth projects.

A report and presentation was produced. For any further information you can contact Mike Haddock, Vince Shearer or Simon Gillings via the Youth Service.

Simon Gillings, Tel: 01452 426393

### Fanzine

The magazine (see article opposite) will appeal to a wide spectrum of young people, but as many will no doubt be aware, not all young people are part of mainstream youth culture. To address this, an innovative 'fanzine-style' publication is being developed by Paul Hopkins, Rob Capewell and the young men who attend Whaddon Youth and Community Centre, Cheltenham. This will be piloted in the Whaddon area and if successful with young men, will be disseminated on a wider scale.

### Logo Competition

We still don't have a logo! However, the Youth and Community Service is running a competition that will provide a logo that represents boys and young men in Gloucestershire, which will appear on all future pieces of work by the Network.

citizenship ideas"

"A lot of new techniques/ways of presenting information..... very challenging and refreshing"

The young people said it was fun and they felt the characters were "real".

They could identify with the situations and emotions.

There is a video to accompany the teaching pack.

Loud Mouth provide a variety of workshops on puberty, relationships, contraception, teenage parenthood and prostitution.

Contact by email  
info@loudmouth.co.uk

For examples of some of the activities please feel free to ring me, Sue Ellis, Social Services – 01452 425377 or email sellis@gloscc.gov.uk (social services).

# Gloucestershire Young Peoples Magazine

A small group of Network members visited Sandwell in the Black Country, to discuss with them how they had developed their "Voice 21" young peoples magazine. The Network had discussed the possibility of taking the lead in developing a similar project in Gloucestershire and therefore needed the information about the process to assess the feasibility of producing a magazine by young people, for young people. (Both young women and young men).

The Sandwell initiative developed from a peer education project. The aim was to produce a magazine for the "most hard to reach" young people. All the articles are written by young people aged 16yrs+ aimed at young people aged 12 – 24. The starting point was a series of workshops which were run in the schools which gradually grew into a core group of volunteers who would work on

the project. Links were made with youth and community centres to widen the involvement of young people. The first issue took 12 months to put together and publish, producing a minimum of 4000 copies (max 6000) costing between £5,000 to £5,500. The project distributes the magazines themselves targeting youth organisations e.g. youth centres, schools, colleges, hostels, care providers etc. Some are distributed via shopping malls. The project publishes three magazines per year. The magazines are of a very high standard and feedback from young people is very positive which has been proved by the gradual increase in circulation. Future plans include incorporating the magazine into a New Deal project.

On our return from Sandwell, the Network explored ways of initiating a similar project in Gloucestershire and unanimously agreed that the

organisation and process e.g. bringing together a peer education group to develop skills etc., recruiting workers to support etc., etc. was too big a task for such a small group. We therefore approached Connexions with a view to supporting the project as it met the criteria of providing information and advice in a way that would (hopefully) reach those young people who are perceived to be the most difficult to reach.

The Network is now in the process of trying to bring together a county wide group of young people who will be innovators in developing a Gloucestershire young persons magazine, written by young people, for young people.

If anyone wants to get involved with this exciting initiative, and /or you know of young people who want to get involved, give us a ring – it will be worth it!!

**Bernie Cox**

## Guidelines for Best Practice

During the past year the South West Association for Education and Training have been working alongside the Youth and Community Services in the region to develop a "Working with Boys and Young Men Guidelines for Best Practice" Gloucestershire had a major input and after consultation with youth services in the region the document was endorsed by the Principal Youth Officers and is now a working document. A copy of the guidelines is printed below. It is envisaged that the Gloucestershire Boys and Young Men Network will adopt the guidelines as good practice. Please feel free to give comments on the guidelines, a debate would be very useful.

**Bernie Cox**

### Work with Boys and Young Men Guidelines for Best Practice

#### Introduction

Boys and Young Men require differentiated provision if they are to realise their full potential. Currently boys and young men are seen as a problem and often perceived as being a threat. This attitude ignores the fact that boys and young men have many qualities that go unrecognised and are often under developed.

Specialist youth work provision for boys and young men purposefully

seeks to assist boys and young men to recognise and develop their emotional intelligence and well being.

In order for this specialist provision to be effective it needs to be established within a framework that fosters and supports it. These guidelines offer a model framework.

#### Organisations should:

Develop inter agency approaches with all organisations who have a contribution to make to encouraging developmental Work with Boys and Young Men.

Actively promote and support single gender work and establish it as a part of the core curriculum of youth work.

Recognise that staff profiles will impact on the development of single gender work.

Require all youth workers to model best practice in single gender work at all times, based on an equal opportunities policy with guidelines for its implementation.

Recognise that the work with boys and young men is complementary to work with girls and young women and should not be in competition for resources.

Allow the work to develop from boy's and young men's realities and resist pressure to focus the work as a solution to boys and young men being perceived as a problem.

#### Managers should:

Create an environment in which youth workers undertaking specialist work with boys and young men can succeed by advocating on behalf of the work.

Create space in meetings and at conferences for youth workers engaged in specialist work with boys and young men to share current practice and to foster critical dialogue on the development of best practice.

Devote resources for the development of the work.

Devote resources to training managers and youth workers in work with boys and young men and ensure that it is part of the core of basic training.

Provide effective support and supervision.

#### Youth Workers should:

Undertake training in work with boys and young men to develop a flexible range of methodologies that supports, challenges and assists boys and young men to fulfil their potential.

Allow the work to develop from boys and young men's realities and resist pressure to focus the work as a solution to boys and young men being perceived as a problem.

Seek regular supervision.

Demonstrate non-judgemental attitudes and provide possible role models.

Plan and prepare sessions and monitor and evaluate its impact and outcomes.

Have high expectations of boys and

## 'Know your Kit?'

The pilot sessions of 'Know your Kit?' have now been completed. Sessions ran at Whaddon Youth and Community Centre, Cheltenham, Colwell Youth and Community Centre, Gloucester, with Podsmead Neighbourhood Project, Gloucester and at Indigo Youth and Community Centre, Cirencester. The information gleaned from these sessions is being used to develop an off-the-shelf, Gloucestershire-based resource that will be of use to Youth Workers, School Nurses and Teaching Staff delivering PSHE to boys and young men. For further information on this project please contact Paul Hopkins.



## Website

The Boys and Young Men Network is to have its own website courtesy of the GUIDE Service. Work starts on this in September. We hope to include a section for young men themselves to access information, with appropriate links, plus a section for those working with young men, including a version of the Newsletter. Work will begin on this in September and workers will be informed when this comes online.

## Meetings

The next meeting of the steering group of the Gloucestershire Boys and Young Men Network will be at Chequers Bridge Centre, Painswick Road, Gloucester on September 23rd at 13.00. Representatives from all organisations with an interest in work with boys and young men are welcome to attend. For further details contact Paul Hopkins, or Bernie Cox.

## Contacts

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young men, recognising different starter points.

Advocate on behalf of boys and young men.

Work cooperatively with other youth workers and workers from other agencies.

### **The outcomes of the work should be:**

Boys and young men have a heightened awareness and appreciation of themselves their

qualities and abilities and are motivated to develop these.

Boys and young men will have a heightened appreciation of others and will have the skills and understanding necessary to be sensitive of others and to be assertive in constructive and creative relationships.

Boys and young men have an appreciation of the diversity of masculinity and male roles.

Boys and young men's confidence and self-esteem are enhanced.

## Resources List

The resources listed are all primarily aimed at boys and young men.

The Health Promotion Resources department holds many more items that cover sex and relationships education.

**Let's hear it for the boys** – Resource designed to meet the health needs and emotional well-being of boys and young men. It offers guidelines and suggestions for choosing and developing sex education resources, also how sexual health and advice services can be made more accessible to young men. It provides training materials to raise awareness of boys' needs and to develop strategies for working more effectively with them.

**Strides** – A practical guide to sex and relationships education with young men. Designed for use by youth workers with groups of young men, it will also be useful in schools and colleges. The guide contains practical exercises and ideas, developed with young men, to help provide male-specific and/or male sensitive sex education.

**Moving goal posts** – FPA produced training manual that provides clear and practical guidance for planning and delivering training to people who want to develop their confidence and skills in providing effective sex and relationships education to boys and young men.

**Weird and Wonderful World of Billy Ball Greedy** – Contains a video and support manual useful to health and

social professionals, teachers and youth workers who are working with young men on sexual health. Focuses on puberty, contraception, STIs and individuality.

**A Man's World** – Game-pack designed to help young men talk about their feelings, increase their knowledge, share experiences and look at their attitudes to being male. Covers a variety of topics including sex, sexuality, race, employment, drugs, health, friendship, fatherhood, domestic issues and violence.

**Johnny Condom** – Video on condom use and the dispersion of myths.

**Condoms!** – A video providing instruction on the basics of condom use.

**Male Image Photo Pack** – 52 black & white photographs of men and boys expressing a range of emotions. A useful starting point for starting discussion.

**4BOYS** – FPA produced booklet on sexual health for boys and young men 14+.

**Boyz will be Boyz Comics** – Comic-book on the issues boys will encounter during puberty. 10 – 13 years.

**NEW! Ready, Steady, Change!** – Comic-book for boys with learning disabilities on the issues they will encounter during puberty.

**Checked your tackle?** – Testicular self-examination poster.

**Below the belt!** – Pocket-sized leaflet on testicular self-examination.