

DRUG EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

Report By: Head Of Children's And Students' Services

Wards Affected

Countywide

Purpose

1. To update the Committee on the current situation with regard to drug education in Schools.

Financial Implications

2. None – ongoing work will be met through the existing budget arrangements.

Report

Introduction

3. The whole approach to drugs education in schools has changed significantly over the past 15 years. It has evolved from a 'Just Say No' message to being more mindful of what works and what students need. The abstinence message, 'Just Say No' was not successful. It appeared to encourage students towards more risky behaviour with drugs rather than steering them away from it.
4. A different approach and ethos has been developed over recent years. The new approach aims to provide students with the information, understanding, skills and attitudes, in a credible way for them to be able to make informed decisions about drug use. The same values underpin the new approach as strongly as under the 'Just Say No' policy. The approach is based on talking about the main features of drugs, preparing young people for real-life situations that they will find themselves in, and allowing them to form their own attitudes and opinions - in a credible, teacher led way.
5. There is now less emphasis on having a Police Officer, Customs Officer, Prison Guard or reformed addict in to talk about the harms of 'drug abuse'. Current lessons are teacher led and focus on making decisions about personal risk and whether or not the student understands all the consequences of taking/not taking a particular substance. Of course, any teacher delivering a scheme of work can incorporate outside speakers into the lesson to reinforce messages to the students. However, each agency is asked to deal with its own area of knowledge or expertise, and not to stray beyond it.
6. Herefordshire has demonstrated its commitment to this important area of work in local schools by appointing a specialist Drugs Education Development Officer, who offers advice, guidance and support to schools, works with various agencies and has been the key officer for developing local resources for schools. This officer is part of the Healthy Schools team.

The National Curriculum

7. **Statutory and Non-Statutory**

Drugs education is not, in itself, a National Curriculum subject. Some of it is covered in Science, which is a National Curriculum subject, and is statutory. Below is a table of where drugs education comes into Science - SC2 Life processes and living things:

Key Stage 1	Humans and other animals	The role of drugs as medicines
Key Stage 2	Humans and other animals	The effects on the human body of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs, and how these relate to their personal health
Key Stage 3	Humans as organisms	That the abuse of alcohol, solvents, and other drugs affects health
Key Stage 4	Humans as organisms	The effects of solvents, alcohol, tobacco and other drugs on body functions

8. The Science component covers the 'how and where' of drug education. However, Science as a subject might never get into the personal and social reasons behind substance use. The most appropriate curriculum area to address such essential issues would be Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE). PSHE is not a National Curriculum subject. As the PSHE curriculum is a programme of guidance for schools, they are not obliged to provide it. Consequently, timetabling pressures mean that schools are not always able to cover the issues as thoroughly as they would wish.

9. In Herefordshire, the Children's Services Directorate and its partners have developed a range of resource packs for schools to deliver all the science orders in a PSHE setting. Drugs education and other important subjects, including sex education and relationships, and anti-bullying, also fit into PSHE. There are elements of Citizenship (statutory at Key Stages 3 and 4), English (statutory) and many other National Curriculum subjects in all of these packs, but they are most appropriately delivered through PSHE. However, schools can adapt the resource packs for use in other curriculum areas. The packs are accompanied by training, to help the school understand where the work is best delivered.

Key Stage 1 **Just One Spoonful** A big book approach to whole class teaching and learning, this pack concentrates on the issue – **all medicines are drugs, but not all drugs are medicines**. This pack deals with literacy and health education in one go. Seen as a gentle introduction, it is not very explicit due to the age of the students - talking mostly about medicines. This pack will be reviewed in the spring term 2005.

Key Stage 2 **Taking Drugs Literally** A big book/interactive whiteboard approach to whole class teaching and learning, **Taking Drugs Literally**, satisfies the Literacy Strategy, whilst delivering key health education messages. The pack is versatile and enables teachers to develop themes flexibly – ranging from brushing on the topics, yet satisfying the national curriculum, or going more deeply into

the issues surrounding substance use. Again - age specific - this pack concentrates mostly on legal drugs, alcohol, and tobacco, but also mentions cannabis.

Key Stage 3	Eastcorrie Neighbours	A harm reduction, drama approach to teaching and learning, this pack will be launched in November/December. Harm reduction has abstinence at its core, but is pragmatic about the whole drug/drug use situation. This pack concentrates on alcohol, but brings in smoking, teenage pregnancy, legal issues and touches on domestic violence and family issues.
Key Stage 4	Balance	A video-based approach to teaching and learning, this is the ' Rachel's Story ' pack. Breaking the video down into 3 lessons, Balance looks at stereotyping, managing risk and support networks. It has been in schools for nearly 2 years and is continually well received.
Pupil Referral Units	STONED	Straight Talking On Nearly Every Drug is a harm reduction/ personal game approach to teaching and learning, focussing on those students most at risk from drugs, notably those in Pupil Referral Units. It is a one to one approach and encourages young people to take a good look at their own drug use through a third party.

10. In addition to these packs of work, support is given to students, teachers and parents through a locally developed website: www.drugsfaqs.org - which is available on the Internet. It has 2 sections - facts and faqs (frequently asked questions). The facts are all you need to know about substances, what they do, what they look like, the legal situation, and there is a glossary of terms. The faqs section contains the ability to ask new questions and read the answers to previously asked ones. It is anonymous and well used. The site is maintained and updated regularly.

11. There is also some free training available to schools through MerciaNet South, a training organisation set up in conjunction with Herefordshire Community Safety and Drugs Partnership and Worcestershire Substance Misuse Action Team. This training is available to any professional in Herefordshire or Worcestershire who may come into contact with substances and their use. (Contact details at the end of this document).

Drugs: Guidance for Schools

12. DfES Guidelines for schools were published earlier this year about drug education and drug incidents procedures. Broken down into several chapters, this document supersedes all previous guidance, and has updated and amalgamated it. The most frequently used chapters are:

The context for drug education – which sets the scene, discusses the aim of drug education, its evidence base, what pupils want, and a whole school approach to the key drugs:

- Alcohol
- Tobacco
- Cannabis

- Volatile Substances (aerosols, glue, lighter fuel)
- Class A drugs (heroin, cocaine, crack, ecstasy, etc.)

Planning and teaching of drug education – issues to consider when planning and teaching:

- Trends
- Existing knowledge
- Vulnerable pupils
- Curriculum organisation

It goes on to discuss teaching and learning, real-life impact, peer education, external contributors, assessment, training, OFSTED and many others.

Good management of drugs within the school community – issues such as:

Management responsibilities, confidentiality, role of the Police, drugs in schools, disposal and detection – including a section on sniffer dogs, encouraging schools *not* to use them.

Responding to drug incidents – this is the biggest section and the one schools need the most help with. This section includes discussion around:

Defining drug incidents, medical emergencies, a range of responses, parents/carers, staff conduct and drugs and recording an incident.

The school drug policy – sets the context, gives a purpose, deals with policy development involving the whole school, recording and disseminating incidents, reviewing and updating the policy and working with the media.

13. A conference was held on 20th May 2004 to disseminate these new guidelines to schools and about a third of the County's maintained schools were represented. Several more have responded to a letter offering documents prepared on their behalf.
14. These guidelines are non-statutory and schools are not obliged to follow them. However, many schools have, and it is encouraging working with so many, to make sure that they get the drug message right and that drug incidents are dealt with in a coherent and consistent way.

Recommendations

THAT the Committee note the contents of this report and support the ongoing drug education work in schools.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None identified.