

Young People Friendly Case study

School nurse drop in, Sheldon School, Chippenham, Wiltshire.

The school nurse at Sheldon has a weekly 'drop in' session which is open for any student to access confidential advice, support, information and signposting. This covers a number of areas including: emotional health and wellbeing, sexual health and contraception, smoking, alcohol and drug use, bullying, problems with family and friends.

The young people self refer or are referred by staff. The successes of interventions by the nurse have included significant improvements in isolated students and their inclusion into peer group. Cases have included developing strategies for personal hygiene, coping with hormonal changes during puberty resulting in unacceptable behaviour. These hormonal changes can be especially difficult for students who are diagnosed with Asperger syndrome. Coping strategies and support have been provided by the school nurse. Support has also been given to Young People who are unsure about their sexuality.

The school nurse takes every opportunity to identify young people who may require support. Her trained eye often enables her to pick up on the body language of young people in need. This can be for example during immunisation session, identifying possible evidence of deliberate self harm or during a PSHE lesson. She often notices a child who is not engaged or seems distant and finds appropriate opportunities to check they are ok.

Challenges faced in completing Young People Friendly

The initial paperwork to complete for You're Welcome was very daunting and pressure of time, staff shortages and increased demands on the service did not encourage the initial completion. The school nurse must prioritise her core role of supporting the health and well being of students, where safeguarding is paramount.

Time was the biggest constraint and the introduction of the YPF paperwork seemed much more manageable and initial evidence was transferred to the new format.

Understanding that the process is on going and that all actions did not have to be completed before the toolkit was submitted helped. This is especially relevant in a school as programmes of study, school planners and rooms are planned for a full academic year.

The relationship with the school impacts on the school nurse, the drop in and the students accessing the service. Some schools have a full time school nurse often called Matron who fulfils a 'First Aider' role. Matron supports the School Nurse with organisation of the immunisation sessions and any required Individual Health Care Plans for young people with medical needs. Matron will also sign post young people

to the School Nurse Drop-in.

Resulting improvements to service and impact

The school nurse felt that completing YPF was a valuable reflective exercise which triggered actions for improvement. It helped to focus on the need to review and maintain an established service. The process helped to underpin the benefits of listening to the voice of the young people and tailor make improvements to reflect this. One of the identified actions is that the school nurse will liaise regularly with the School Council.

Advertising the service and checking wording and information in the student planner was a key action identified in the process.

The school has really appreciated and value the acknowledgement that YPF has given the school nurse drop in service and the schools attitude to the importance of student health to their learning and well-being. The process has raised the profile of the school nurse. The YPF certificate has been laminated, duplicated and displayed around the school.

The relationship between the school nurse and senior staff was already good and the tool kit has enable reflection on the contribution to the students and curriculum.

Next steps

As this is an on going process with actions that went beyond the period of completion the school nurse feels that the standards of her drop in can only get better. The service will be reviewed in 3 years and this will help to maintain the focus on reviewing, evaluation and improving the service.

There are significant changes happening with the young people support services in Wiltshire. In future student will be re- integrated back into main stream schools. The school nurse is reviewing the development of brief interventions to engage with and support these vulnerable students. This will focus on the brief solution focused approach, support to improve self worth building a relationship which will enable young people to access confidential support from the school nurse. The aim is to hopefully develop supporting young people in harm reduction and gain professional support with risk taking behaviour.

The initial process focused on the school nurse drop-in. The teacher who is responsible for safeguarding / child protection and teaches PSHE has embraced the process and is working with teaching and non teaching staff to complete YPF as a whole school approach. The school nurse is just one of a vast number of internal and external staff who put the health and well being of students as a priority.

The Verification Visit.

A GP registrar visited Sheldon School to verify the services as Young People Friendly and has provided the following statement.

I felt very privileged to have the opportunity to visit the school nurse drop in at Sheldon School as well as to sit in on a PSRE lesson lead by the school nurse. It was a fantastic insight into the importance of these services and the impact they have on both the mental and physical health of the young people at the school.

The school nurse runs the drop in clinic every week and the room she uses is conveniently situated away from the main action of the school along a private and secure corridor. This privacy allows the young people to visit her discretely and is likely to have a very positive impact on their attendance.

Once they get to the room the school nurse encourages them to bring a friend and lays out plenty of chairs for pupils to wait for their turn making them feel welcome and putting them at ease.

I was particularly impressed by the strength of the relationship that the school nurse seemed to have with the students. She has number of regular young people that she has been seeing regularly for years. For these young people the drop in service acts as a regular, familiar point of contact with someone they can turn to for counselling, support, and advice. When we visited the drop in service it was the school nurse's first week back to the school after a few weeks off and she was back to back with appointments all afternoon!

However I was equally impressed at her skills at working with the young people she had not met before. On their visit to the drop in clinic she will take plenty of time to get to know the young person and build up their trust by using a variety of tools including pictures and images to help the young person communicate their feelings effectively. Furthermore, her opportunistic approach at observing the young people in their day to day environment and specifically targeting young people who she observes to look vulnerable or disengaged and who would benefit from her support has also been shown to be extremely valuable.

This service is obviously extremely popular with the pupils and from a GP's perspective it is extremely encouraging to know that such good support is available to young people in their school community, where the primary care truly begins.