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Clinic-in-a-box: sexual health information and contraceptive supplies to young people

Clinic-in-a-Box is a mobile nurse-led service set up in response to the SEU Teenage Pregnancy Report and was launched in North Staffordshire in October 2000. It offers sexual health information and contraceptive supplies to young people aged 11-18 years, the clinics now also include general health information.

It was originally funded by Health Action Zone and various other stakeholders but is now part of the mainstream contraception and sexual health service in the local area.

The service is delivered in a range of venues already used by young people, for example, youth clubs, schools and colleges. The service is particularly successful at reaching young men that historically have not accessed mainstream contraception provision.

Aims

- To reduce unwanted teenage conceptions in line with the targets of the National Teenage Pregnancy Unit.
- To reduce teenage pregnancy.
- To reduce the rate of sexually transmitted infections.
- To target young men to access contraceptive services.
- To offer a youth-friendly service.

Concept

The concept of the clinic is to encourage young people to delay having sexual intercourse and to increase self-esteem and confidence to achieve this. However, if delay is not an option for the young person, then safe sex needs to be encouraged. Clinic-in-a-Box will encourage and support young people to change sexual behaviour

and practice safe sex.

Services Offered

It is a nurse-led service and provides advice and information on a wide range of issues including contraception, smoking, diet, relationships, and puberty and cancer awareness.

Condoms, emergency contraception, pregnancy testing and Chlamydia screening are all available.

Each session is run by a fully qualified Contraception and Sexual Health nurse who is trained to offer guidance and support to young people in all aspects of health and well-being. Sessions are monitored for both quantity and quality of the service being delivered. Young people are encouraged to have their say about how the service should be run and the client audit gives them an opportunity to evaluate the service and this informs any changes that need to be made, such as times or frequency of the sessions.

Research carried out in 2002* found that the service was well-received by users:

'Clinic-in-a-Box is good because the staff don't make you feel awkward. You can ask them anything and they tell you the truth and you know what you say will not go any further.'

'I don't just come to get condoms and that - we talk about other health stuff that's really important.'

www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk/PDF/linkingchools.pdf (page 20)

The service is very well attended and almost half the users are male - traditionally a difficult group to engage in contraception services. There has also been a small reduction in the teenage pregnancy rate locally. There are plans to increase the service in the near future by offering contraceptive pills and injections.