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## Liz Dobson

### Wigan and Leigh College Nurse Service

Ashton, Wigan and Leigh PCT recognised the need for a sexual health nurse on a permanent basis at the local college. I had been waiting for years to see this job advertised and, in May 2007, I applied and was successful.

The role is a joint venture between Wigan and Leigh College and Ashton, Wigan and Leigh PCT. There are over 4,200 students based in 5 buildings on 2 campuses within the Wigan and Leigh area.

I started, in September 2007, setting up the service, promoting it and running sessions with the aid of Bob Hughes, the Student Services Manager. I offered tutorials on sexual health delivered to tutor groups, which allowed me to discuss sexual health issues, safer sex, the local C-card scheme, Chlamydia testing and advertise clinic sessions. In the first 7 months of the service 440 students attended, more attended Chlamydia screening events. Over one lunchtime 100 students were tested! Since October 2007 total Chlamydia screenings are 514 with positives being below the national college average.

The college and PCT have produced some innovative work including the development of a sexual health play "RU Ready". This offered the students alternative ways to learn about sexual health issues by showing how a lack of alcohol and sex education can lead to unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections and damage relationships. It was followed by a student centred workshop to discuss the issues raised.

Every Child Matters theme 1: 'Being Healthy' and theme 5 'Achieving economic well-being' are promoted by discussing the

cost effectiveness of screening. Theme 3 'Enjoying and Achieving' is met by retaining students who then achieve their desired qualification. I contribute actively to the College's Healthy College status through Healthy Eating, Smoking Cessation, Drugs and Alcohol programmes and the work we do with the Local Authority to prepare the College for National Standards. The College Vice-Principal has given the service added impetus with national 'theme weeks'.

Students like events such as the "Condom Olympics" in which they have to put the condom on a demonstrator as quickly, safely and correctly as possible (expiry dates are rarely checked!) The "Drunken Condom Olympics" promoted the issues of sex and alcohol - the students love the beer goggles used within this activity!

In February 2008, at a Sex Education Forum in Manchester, The Principal, Student Services Manager and I delivered a seminar on our service and its effectiveness. The service levels and student interaction we have achieved put us at the front of this type of college practice.

Rapid service expansion has occurred to support other local colleges, increasing our provision by 15 hours a week for CPD cover, clinics and tutorial talks. The service is shaped by the students to make it more accessible to them. Examples include: producing the service name 'SEX MATTERS'; to help with recognition at clinics I wear a nursing uniform; and the growth of the 8:30 am. clinic sessions before the 9 am. lessons start.

The support of the PCT, the college and the students makes the job exciting and rewarding.