

West Dunbartonshire CHCP Committee
20th October 2010
Report By: Head of Planning and Health Improvement
TITLE: Happy 2 Chat Book Collection

1 Recommendation

The Committee is recommended to note for their interest the launch of the Happy 2 Chat Book Collection.

2 Background

The important role parents have in educating their children about sex and relationships was highlighted within the McCabe Report (2000) which also set sex and relationship education in a context of respectful stable relationships and healthy lifestyles.

That Report recommended that sex education commenced with parents and carers in the early years, supporting the development of strong links between home and school which should be maintained through to adulthood.

The subsequent national sexual health strategy Respect and Responsibility (2005) supported the recommendations from the McCabe Report stating: "Parents can play their part in the sex and relationship education of their children both directly and through stable family and home life and by their involvement in their children's general education and school, voluntary organisations and faith-based groups that have contact with their children".

Critically, the Respect and Responsibility Strategy reinforced the importance of consulting with parents and carers on sexual health and relationship education (SHRE) and providing associated support for parents within the community.

This was further supported by the Scottish School (Parental involvement) Act 2006, which acknowledged the crucial role parents and other carers play in children's learning and development. The Act clearly states that parents should receive information and support to help develop their child's learning at home and in the community.

The publication and actions within the Scottish Government's Strategy Better Health, Better Care (2007) reaffirmed the implementation of the Respect and Responsibility Sexual Health Strategy and underscored the importance of the availability of independent sexual health information.

The West Dunbartonshire Sexual Health Strategy Group has prioritised supporting parents and carers around sexual health and relationship education within its local action plan. This has been affirmed by the findings of consultations with parent groups (both local and from other areas within Greater Glasgow and Clyde).

The Strategy Group acknowledged that such an approach should not be confined to school/educational settings and should include the provision of support for parents and carers within the community.

Consequently this work was taken forward by a short-life working group led by the CHP's Specialist Health Improvement Team and made up of staff from the CHP, the NHSGGC-wide Sexual Health Team, West Dunbartonshire Council's Educational Services (including Library Services) and Young Families Support Team.

One product of their work is the now launched Happy 2 Chat Book Collection.

3 Happy 2 Chat

The Happy 2 Chat Book Collection was developed following consideration of evidence based approaches, consultation with parent groups and a review of available local material. It has been jointly funded by West Dunbartonshire CHP, NHSGGC Sexual Health Team and the West Dunbartonshire Council's Library Services.

Critically, it has been designed as one mechanism for providing local support to parents and carers as part of a multi-faceted programme. It is also important to note that it should not be seen as a substitute for the important role of staff and professions in providing appropriate evidence-based information on sexual health to parents, carers and (indeed) children and young people.

The Happy 2 Chat Book Collection is made up of 10 books that are available in each of the 10 local libraries and one mobile library operated by West Dunbartonshire Educational Services.

The books are not intended nor promoted at children to read on their own, but rather are for parents and carers to use alongside their children. The books are positioned in the adult section of the libraries to reinforce this, as does the accompanying promotional material (e.g. bookmarks).

The books have four colour coded dots, to assist parents and carers when selecting material to suit the development stage of their child (although it is important to note that this system is only a guide and not prescriptive): red for young children; blue for those aged eight years to adult; green for those aged 10 years plus; and yellow for all age groups.

The Happy 2 Chat Book Collection was successfully launched on the 28th September 2010 at Dalmuir Library; and the utilisation of the collection will be monitored closely over the coming year.

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