

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Director of Community Health and Care Partnership

Community Health and Care Partnership Committee: 21st September 2011

Subject: West Dunbartonshire Council - Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood Education (RSHPE) Policy

1. Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to outline the purpose of the attached policy, and to ask the CHCP Committee to endorse its content and implementation.

2. Background

- 2.1** Across Scotland the number of people who experience sexual ill-health and poor relationships is increasing. Over a number of years, the Scottish Government have developed policy and guidance with the purpose of challenging this trend. The McCabe Report (2000) was a key document in that it set sex and relationship education in the context of 'respectful stable relationships' and 'healthy lifestyles'. The subsequent sexual health strategy Respect and Responsibility (2005) built on the principles of the McCabe Report, aiming to further support everyone in Scotland to acquire and maintain the knowledge, skills and values necessary for good sexual health and wellbeing.
- 2.2** The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007, states that health and wellbeing should have a central and continuing focus within education. This was reinforced with the introduction of Curriculum for Excellence, where health and wellbeing experiences and outcomes feature across the curriculum as part of a holistic approach to education in Scotland.
- 2.3** In relation then to the promotion of positive and properly informed sexual health, both of the all of the above encourage the development and implementation of a correspondingly evidence-based 'whole school approach' to RSHPE. Specifically, working with schools (and parents/guardians) to provide children and young people appropriate opportunities to develop skills and knowledge that in turn can enable healthy decisions to be made on all issues in relation to sexual health.
- 2.4** The West Dunbartonshire Sexual Health Strategy Group is responsible for leading and overseeing the local implementation of the national Respect and Responsibility agenda. This Strategy Group is jointly-chaired by the CHCP and West Dunbartonshire Council's Educational Services Department, with reporting to the Scottish Government through NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde's Sexual Health Planning and Implementation Group.

2.5 The Council's existing Sexual Health Policy was published in early 2005, and required to be updated in order to reflect national policy developments and recent legislation. A key workstream taken forward by the Sexual Health Strategy Group over the past 12 months has been to devise and consult upon a local RSPHE policy (attached here). The completion of this policy is an action within the approved CHCP Strategic Plan 2011/12, and it is being presented to the CHCP Committee for endorsement as previously indicated within the approved CHCP Forward Plan following an extensive period and process of stakeholder consultation (including with parents). The policy is also being presented in parallel to the WDC Education and Life-Long Learning Committee for approval due to the fact that education staff are a key target audience for the policy.

3. Main Issues

3.1 The new policy provides a best practice framework for the delivery of high quality programmes for Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood Education (RSHPE) within West Dunbartonshire. It also provides clear guidance on responsibilities for and the potential contribution towards positive RSHPE for a range of stakeholders (including teachers and parents).

3.2 The policy outlines the key principles for effective learning and teaching in this area in order to support all children and young people in the acquisition of appropriate knowledge, skills and values necessary for sexual wellbeing. It aims to improve communication on relationships and sexual health between schools, young people and parents/carers.

3.3 In tandem with the development of the policy, a RSHPE training programme for staff was devised and delivered to staff across local primary and secondary schools by NHSGGC staff in conjunction with WDC Educational Services.

4. People Implications

4.1 There are no people implications related to this report over and above awareness raising and training/professional development for staff.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 There are no specific financial implications associated with this report.

6. Risk Analysis

6.1 It is recognised that the field of sexual health can generate strong opinions and beliefs, particularly in relation to children and young people. However there are clear risks in not developing sound and sensible policy in this area, especially given the poor sexual health outcomes alluded to earlier and in light of the Scottish Government's expectations and obligations on both local authorities and NHS Boards (as per 2.1 and 2.2).

7. Equalities, Health & Human Rights Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 7.1** An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) undertaken on the policy indicated no significant negative issues; and given the focus and evidence-based nature of its content, was suggestive of the policy having a positive impact in these regards.

8. Strategic Assessment

- 8.1** This Policy is in line with and supports the following West Dunbartonshire Council strategic priority:

- Fit for Purpose Services

9. Conclusions and Recommendations

- 9.1** This best practice policy demonstrates the CHCP's commitment to improving the sexual health and wellbeing of children and young people within West Dunbartonshire in a manner that recognises and respects the key role of their parents/guardians in particular.
- 9.2** The policy has now been endorsed by the local Sexual Health Strategy Group who will monitor its implementation and further development.
- 9.3** The CHCP Committee is therefore asked to endorse the attached local policy; and to commend the work of the CHCP staff involved in its development.

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Date: 31 August 2011

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Appendices: West Dunbartonshire Council – Relationships, Sexual
Health and Parenthood Education Policy

Background Papers: Scottish Government (2000) McCabe – Report of the
Working Group on Sex Education in Scottish Schools.
www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/158180/0042808.pdf

Scottish Executive (2005) Respect and Responsibility:
Strategy and Action Plan for Improving Sexual Health
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/publications>
Scottish Government (2009) Curriculum for Excellence
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/publications>

Wards Affected:

All