

A vote was taken, with three votes for Councillor Katherine King and five votes for Councillor John Whitehouse, and it was resolved that Councillor John Whitehouse be appointed Vice-Chair of the Committee.

3. General

(1) Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor John Burton, Rev Terry Hum, Max Hyde, Councillor Katherine King, Lynda Le Long, Councillor Mike Perry, Chris Smart and Mark Gore.

(2) Members Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

Members declared personal interests as set out below:

- (1) by virtue of them serving as District/Borough Councillors as follows:-
 - Councillor Mike Perry – Stratford on Avon District Council
 - Councillor John Ross – Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council
 - Councillor Dave Shilton – Warwick District Council
 - Councillor Heather Timms – Rugby Borough Council

The Chair referred to the additional meeting dates that had been circulated. He confirmed the meeting on 21 June to carry out an evaluation of the work undertaken by the Committee in the last year and to consider the work programme for the next year. As there were a number of Members who could not attend the meeting on 29 May to finalise the Alcohol and Young People Review, it was agreed that Ann Mawdsley would send out an e-mail giving Members the choice of the 29 May and 18 June, with the majority date to be confirmed by Wednesday morning. Councillor John Whitehouse reminded the Committee that this would be the end of the input process for the Review and Councillors would need to feed any input they had received from discussions with police locally, to that meeting.

The Chair noted that the Annual Report of the Committee had been reported to the 15 May Council meeting. This would be discussed at the next Chair/Spokes briefing.

4. Presentation – Evidence Gathering for Young People and Alcohol

The Chair introduced Derek Ferguson, Project Manager for the Mentor UK Alcohol Misuse Prevention Awards.

Derek Ferguson, Project Manager for the Mentor UK Alcohol Misuse Prevention Awards

Derek Ferguson gave a presentation on the work carried out by Mentor UK in identifying, promoting and sharing best practice regarding the prevention of drug misuse and the promotion of health and wellbeing for children and young people in a culturally adapted environment. He added the following points:

- i. The bi-annual Awards were launched in 2006 and funded by Diageo GB and considered nominated projects and activities influencing attitudes, skills and behaviour of children and young people and identifying best prevention initiatives against alcohol misuse. Members of the public, professionals and young people had the opportunity to nominate a project.
- ii. Evidence showed that the proportion of pupils who had never drunk alcohol had risen since 2001, but the consumption of those who had, had on average doubled. Children also generally had misconceptions regarding how many of their peers were drinking.
- iii. There was need to make a connection between projects working in isolation with children and young people facing similar problems and for projects to be able to carry out effective evaluations.
- iv. The 10 best projects were selected by an Advisory Group made up of health, education and drug prevention professionals, and the winning three projects selected by a Judging Panel, which included a number of primary children.
- v. Winning projects, judged to be innovative and creative as well as age, stage and culturally relevant received £10,000 to spend on their project and a further £10,000 of consultancy and practical support.
- vi. Derek Ferguson had put together a Guide to Alcohol Education for Children to be published at the end of June, setting out a framework for projects working with primary school children on alcohol misuse, setting out 14 principles of effective practice which all projects should address. A leaflet would be distributed to schools and youth clubs, publicising the free handbook.

During the ensuing discussion the following points were raised:

1. A broad range of information would be listed in the handbook, including risk factors, including children in care.
2. Mentor UK had a consultant working with projects on evaluations, which were crucial for understanding the worth and effectiveness of a project and provided a steer for future funding bids. Some evaluations were long-term, allowing follow up work to be done with the same children from primary into secondary school, and in some cases becoming mentors for younger children.
3. As well as the Alcohol Misuse Prevention Awards, Mentor UK worked with government departments and other agencies to

influence and effect prevention policy. An example of this is the Grandparents Projects, where, following extensive consultation, a resource called Mind the Gap has been developed for grandparents who are bringing up grandchildren and professionals who work with these grandparents.

4. As one of the biggest influences on the behaviour of primary aged children was their parents, the Foundation worked towards informing parents and carers and engaging them in the process of delivering or initiating projects themselves.
5. Projects were delivered through preventative activities such as sport and hobbies, where protective factors were developed within a safe environment for children.

The Chair thanked Derek Ferguson for his presentation and introduced Sam Beetham, Project Manager of Lancashire County Council's Young Person's Alcohol Project.

Sam Beetham, Project Manager of Lancashire County Council's Young Person's Alcohol Project

Sam Beetham gave a presentation on the Young Person's Alcohol Project, noting that it was a unique project set up in 2004 and funded by Lancashire Children's Fund and Lancashire County Council's Crime and Disorder budget in order to facilitate a countywide co-ordinated approach to tackling local community alcohol-related issues. She noted that the Project was multi agency and linked into key strategies, aiming to raise young people's awareness, develop best practice protocols and improve co-ordination and promote the development of service provision. Initiatives undertaken by the Project included the following:

- a. 'Age Check' Resource – an interactive CD ROM produced as a guide for retailers, distributed free of charge to retailers selling age restricted products. This resource has been recognised by the Trading Standards Institute and promoted as an example of good practice throughout the country.
- b. 'Carrying the Can' Resource – teaching package for secondary schools (Key Stage 4) to address the problems associated with binge drinking in terms of personal and social implications as well as choices and consequences. An evaluation of the resource was underway, including feedback from teachers and pupils. The resource was available for purchase by other Local Authorities.
- c. 'Look Out Alcohol' – a website aimed at children under 10, before ideas and attitudes to alcohol use were developed and also including information for parents, carers and teachers.
- d. Radio Campaigns at key times, eg. 'Get the right results', school holidays and GCSE results tackling issues such as teenage pregnancy and aimed at an older age group.

- e. 'The Clear Guide' (Children Learning by Example and Adult Responsibility) leaflet produced to support parents to talk to their children about alcohol.
- f. 'Alcohol, the Law and Young People' leaflet and poster campaign distributed to youth involvement officers, youth community workers, teachers and retailers.
- g. Two pilot schemes where retailers caught selling alcohol to underage young people were given the option to attend a training course rather than pay a fine.

Sam Beetham noted that Ofsted had highlighted the need for more skills based activity around alcohol issues in primary schools and the Project had received further funding to develop skills based homework activity sheets for young people to complete with parents/carers and risk taking scenarios as group activities for teachers and young people in class. There were also plans to develop the following initiatives:

- I. A Proxy Purchase Campaign with Education and Trading Standards to complement the messages already being delivered.
- II. A second Pupil Conference to address the risk taking behaviour associated with alcohol misuse.
- III. An awareness campaign aimed at young females looking at risks, safety and sexual health.

During the ensuing discussion the following points were made:

- 1. In response to a question on which three initiatives had had the greatest impact, Sam Beetham listed the Parents Campaign, the Retail Campaign and the Primary Resource.
- 2. Sam Beetham agreed to revert to Members with Lancashire's policy regarding test purchasing.
- 3. The Project worked on initiatives agreed by or identified by the Steering Group, where funding (internal and external) was available. Project workers identified gaps, and then proposed campaigns / activities for the steering group to approve. They need to bid for external funding for all campaigns / initiatives as the project does not have a dedicated budget.

The Chair thanked Sam Beetham for her excellent presentation.

Hamish Cameron and Lizzie Bush – Young People's Review of Bullying

The Chair welcomed Hamish Cameron, Youth Worker and Lizzie Bush, member of the County Youth Panel to the meeting, to report to Members on the work being carried out by the Youth Area Forums and County Youth Panels on bullying. They noted that bullying was one of the key issues affecting the lives of young people and a lot of work had been done to identify issues such as what bullying was, whether schools had bullying policies and how effective these were, best practice in other authorities and consulting with young people. A

questionnaire had been developed and the Youth Groups had selected two primary and two secondary schools in each area to consult, but to date only one school had agreed to participate, which was disappointing.

Michelle McHugh reported that a news release would be going into local newspapers and Members were urged to promote this work with their local schools.

Hamish Cameron noted that the review would not be finished in June as anticipated and that the new County Youth Panel would continue with the review with the assistance of some of the current members.

Councillor John Ross offered to assist the young people in light of the work he was doing with schools on bullying and Michelle McHugh agreed to look into the Young Journalist Competition entries for 2006 to consider whether these could be used as input for the review.

The Chair thanked the speakers for the work being done on behalf of the Committee and looked forward to receiving the outcomes of the review.

Michelle McHugh – Alcohol and Young People Consultation

Michelle McHugh reported back to the Committee on the discussion groups held with School Nurses and with two groups of Young People. She noted the following points:

School Nurses:

- A&E referrals and girls asking for advice on contraception and for pregnancy tests were the main points of contact in respect of alcohol misuse.
- Issues highlighted by School Nurses were common across the County although the education delivered varied from school to school.
- Misuse was prevalent from Year 9 upwards, with girls starting at a younger age and being more problematic.
- There was a need for more advice to be given to both pupils and parents.
- There was no formal training given in terms of educating young people or identifying misuse, other than one course, which had a long waiting list.
- All School Nurses had been involved in setting up displays about alcohol and drugs at venues such as shopping centres and parents evenings.
- There was general agreement that young people learnt valuable lessons from talks given by young recovering alcoholics.
- Alcohol was always considered together with drugs and never as a single issue.

There was common agreement that the following would be helpful:

- □ mentoring/talks from recovering young alcoholics
- □ more activities, although it was acknowledged that sport was expensive
- □ a ban on TV adverts including alcohol
- □ more practical and factual education.

Young People – Group 1 (seven girls, one boy aged 13-17):

- All the young people in the group had drunk alcohol.
- One third drank alcohol on school nights.
- The preferred drink was vodka.
- Most drinking took place in the park or on the streets.
- Alcohol was obtained by either buying the alcohol themselves or parents or friends buying / giving the alcohol to the young people.

Young People – Group 2 (four girls aged 12 –13):

- All the young people in the group had drunk alcohol.
- All drank on weekends, but not during the week.
- The preferred drink was vodka, which was spoken about in terms of £5 or £10 bottles.
- Most drinking took place in the park.
- Alcohol was obtained from older boys.
- There was a mixed feeling about parental awareness.
- All had parents who drank or had previously drunk alcohol and two lived with single parents.

Common to both groups:

- All participants were aware of the health effects of alcohol misuse but were not able to relate these to themselves.
- All acknowledge negative effects on education and life chances.
- All felt they had not been given significant advice or education until it was too late and they were already disengaged.
- All participants related misuse to a wide range of risky behaviour.
- All believed they would stop drinking when they chose to do so.

The young people agreed the following points:

1. Education/advice should be given outside schools, but with no alternatives suggested.
2. Young people needed to learn from their own experiences.
3. The opportunity to talk to someone young who had misused alcohol would be useful.
4. More factual education was needed, with more than just statistics.
5. There was a need to learn at a younger age in order to delay the process, but not to stop it.
6. There were not enough other activities to take part in.

7. Young People needed somewhere to go, particularly at weekends.
8. The age limit for drinking should be lowered.
9. Fines should be given to people who bought alcohol for young people.

The Chair thanked Michelle McHugh for the valuable data, to be included with the other evidence when finalising the review.

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Chair

The Committee rose at 16:30 p.m.