

## RU2: Sex and Relationship Education with young people

**Area:** Liverpool

**Lead:** So To Speak Team

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**Brief Overview:** The underlying rationale of the service is to promote a greater understanding of the broader issues that impact upon a young person's sexual health such as self-esteem and relationships. The service is delivered using a developmental group work approach, to small groups either single or mixed gender depending upon circumstances and the requirements of the young people.

The sessions are needs led, with the young people setting the agenda wherever possible. A variety of resources and fun activities are used to compliment delivery in order to make the sessions as interesting and interactive as possible. A group agreement is negotiated to ensure a safe learning environment is created and confidentiality is understood and maintained. During all programmes of work young people are given facts and honest answers to all questions, informed choice is promoted and signposting to appropriate free and confidential local services takes place.

Sexual health training is delivered to professionals who work with young people to try and increase their confidence and knowledge on the subject of sexual health so they can support the young people they deal with.

Rated **5/5**  
*"focused on healthy relationships as well as STIs & contraception"*

*Dr Penny Cook,  
University of Salford*

**Target Group:** Young People aged 13-19

### Outcomes

- To ensure that young people in Liverpool have the information and skills necessary to make informed, positive decisions about their sexual health and relationships.
- To ensure that young people in Liverpool are aware of the sexual health and contraceptive services available to them in the local area.
- To help reduce unplanned pregnancies and STIs
- To improve young people's self-esteem and confidence
- To empower young people to make positive choices around relationships

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**Evaluation:** Young people complete an evaluation after their final group sexual health session that measures their increased level of knowledge and confidence on the subject. These evaluations are used by the team to ensure future practice meets the young people's needs

**Sustainability:** Training of staff from partner agencies could offer some sustainability, however generic staff often lack confidence in the area of relationship and Sex Education. When this area of work is the main focus of a worker's role and they are delivering this work on a regular basis they are able to reflect on their professional practice, develop effective resources and remain confident in their knowledge and skills.

To ensure future funding, it is vital to raise awareness of commissioners/ funders of the importance of education and prevention and how this can have a positive effect on sexual health in the long term

#### **What made it work?**

- The resources that So To Speak develop help address sensitive issues in a fun way. The resources are designed to be flexible to suit different needs and environments.
- The high quality professional work we deliver has been recognised with the different agencies we work at so they include us in all their planning and contact us each time they engage with new groups of young people.
- Being a free service for the agencies across Liverpool. They depend on this service especially at times of recession.
- The informal approach to our deliveries and the fact that we cover all aspects of sexual health
- The skills and experience of the staff enable them to access individual needs and learning styles in a group environment

#### **What could make it work better?**

- If agencies we work in partnership with had a greater understanding of developmental group work, voluntary relationships with young people and a needs led approach, the process would be easier to put in place and would be more effective.
- Enough staff to cover the work requested by agencies
- A guarantee of long term funding to ensure continuity of the service delivery and maintaining staffing levels

**Further information:** In 2005, So To Speak was used in a case study to highlight 'What is Working' regarding the reduction of Teenage Pregnancy.

In 2006, the Teenage Pregnancy Units'Accelerating the Strategy' document provides continuing evidence of the way So To Speak work improves young people's sexual health.

In the 'Top Tips for Sexual Health Promotion'ChaMPS report – So To Speak work was sited as an example of good practice when working with children and adolescents

In 2011, JMU's 'Rapid Evaluation' of local teenage pregnancy services highlighted the positive impact of the work done by So To Speak