



**2010/2011 Report  
Relationships & Sex**

**CHOICES Aberdeen**

# Introduction

Choices Aberdeen is deeply concerned about the wellbeing of young people and the feelings of hopelessness, lack of confidence and low aspirations that engulf so many. The breakdown of positive relationships is very often the beginning of these negative feelings which in turn lead to vulnerability and often alcohol/drug misuse, physical/sexual abuse, unplanned pregnancy, mental ill health or dependence on other false support systems. The facts are:

- Those with lower aspirations are more likely to become sexually active at a young age<sup>1</sup>
- Teenage pregnancy is amongst the highest in Europe<sup>2</sup>
- Young people living in areas of deprivation are sexually active at a younger age, ie. a teenage girl from Tillydrone is almost 13 times more likely to become pregnant than a teenage girl from Cults<sup>3</sup>
- Chlamydia detection rates in the under 25 age group is markedly higher in Grampian than the rest of Scotland<sup>4</sup>
- One in ten young people in Britain think life is not worthy living<sup>5</sup>

Over the past two years Choices have become convinced that there is a vital role to play in supporting young people in developing and maintaining healthy relationships. Often due to life experience, disappointment and loss our views of relationships can become distorted. Despite this there remains within each of us a desire for relationship, positive relationships are in fact essential to our individual health and that of our society. It is therefore not surprising that when asked, young people in the UK site the influence of relationships and relationships education to be one of the most important factors in their wellbeing and that sex education should have a greater focus on relationships and self esteem issues<sup>6</sup>. Boys especially would appreciate content covering relationships, communication and negotiation, body image and consent<sup>5</sup>.

The Choices team see the incredible value and potential of the young people of the city but also work with many who have few positive role models and have rarely experienced healthy relationships. Our aim, therefore, is to play a part in their development into confident, healthy adults.

Over the past academic year we have been able to deliver workshops to over 350 young people. This report provides more information on the details of our services and our development strategy for 2011/12.

<sup>1</sup>Respect & Responsibility, Strategy & Action Plan for Improving Sexual Health, Scottish Executive

<sup>2</sup>Reducing Teenage Pregnancy, Guidance & Self Assessment Tool, NHS Scotland (2011)

<sup>3</sup>Aberdeen City Council, Neighbourhood Profiles (2010)

<sup>4</sup>Health Needs Assessment of Teenagers in Grampian Encompassing Sexual Health & Associated Risk Taking Behaviours (2011)

<sup>5</sup>Princes Trust Research (2010)

<sup>6</sup>Enhancing sexual wellbeing in Scotland: A Sexual Health and Relationships Strategy (2003). Consultation Response from Children and Young People

<sup>7</sup>You Gov Sex Education Survey

**‘Teenage pregnancy rate is amongst the highest in Europe<sup>2</sup>’**



**‘A third of teenagers say they learn about sex by watching porn<sup>7</sup>’**



**One in 10 young people in Britain, think life is not worth living<sup>5</sup>’**

# Objectives

The objectives for 2010/11 were set out in the previous years report and have been met as follows:

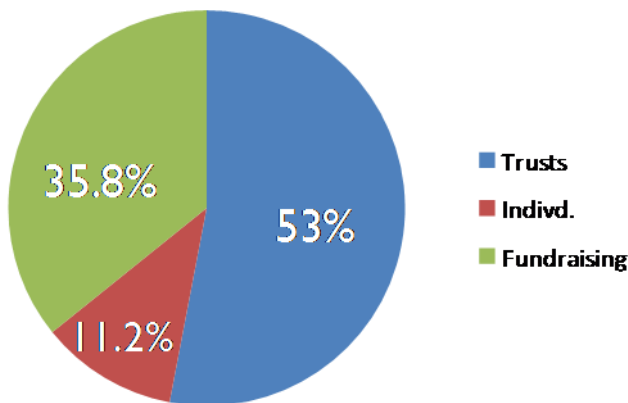
- An overview of the Relationship & Sex Lesson Plan was carried out and amended as appropriate. Core elements and activities were highlighted as essential elements of workshops
- Funds were raised for resources and for a part-time youth worker
- Four resource carts were prepared
- A thorough review was carried out of all relevant research in the areas of relationships and sex education and an e-library created which will assist the development of all future lesson plans
- The training of new and existing volunteers
- A review of tools to support and equip parents to have a positive influence on young people was conducted

The development of a workshop suitable for delivery to a large audience of young people was one of the objectives set. However following further liaising with host organisations our preference of working with smaller groups of young people was supported and this objective was considered no longer relevant.



Linsey Revell delivering a workshop at Aberdeen Foyer

# Resources



Breakdown of Income for 2010/2011

Choices would like to thank all our generous sponsors for their valuable contributions and to our team of staff and volunteers who together have made this project a success.

# Choices Team

The Choices Education Team was co-ordinated by Centre Manager, Joy Gillespie who provided strategic leadership. A paid part-time youth worker developed resources and delivered the workshops with the support of five volunteers. All volunteers and staff were experienced in youth work having excellent communication skills and an approachable non-threatening manner.

Choices provided in-house training, in addition some members of the team attended SHARE and Sexplanations training provided by NHS Grampian and additional training provided by Caledonia Youth in Edinburgh.

The Centre Manager and youth worker were also able to attend the World Congress for Sexual Health.



Zara McClintock  
Youth Worker

# Service Delivery

There continues to be a strong link between social disadvantage and poor sexual health and therefore Choices have chosen to deliver their services in areas where the majority of their participants live within the worst 0-15% in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2006, or are deemed 'at risk' areas of the city, or who have a client group from the same.

**St Machar Academy** is a multi-racial, inner city, non-denominational secondary school with just under 1000 pupils. Within the school's catchments area are areas of private housing, university accommodation and local authority housing including four areas of social deprivation.

The School of Ambition funding was granted in 2006 and the objectives of its Transformational Plan places significant importance on pupil health, including mental health, self confidence and wellbeing.

The school is also committed to working in partnership with other organisations.

**Aberdeen Foyer** is a successful local charitable organisation working to prevent and alleviate youth homelessness and unemployment. They provide supported accommodation, access to a range of education, training, employment opportunities and community health services for young people and their community. They address all the issues facing vulnerable young people, aged 16 - 25, enabling them to take the next steps toward independent living, learning and work.

The team also delivered workshops in partnership with a number of other organisations including Ellon Youth Project and Ellon Academy.

These workshops were designed to provide quality information, facts and an open forum for participants to discuss each area of sexual health and relationships through a variety of interactive learning experiences. They have also been developed to reflect the four capacities set out in the Curriculum for Excellence.

The following age appropriate workshops were delivered to 13-25 year olds . Each workshop was tailored to the individual needs of the group:

## **Stripping Off**

A fresh look at our identity and challenging prejudice and gender stereotypes

## **Sex, Love and Rock & Roll**

An intimate take on relationships and sex

## **Pressure Point**

Identifying and combating factors contributing to pressure (peer pressure and alcohol and drug misuse)

## **Going Gaga**

Investigating the influence of the media and increasing media literacy

## **Workshop Aims**

- Promote healthy self esteem and positive assertiveness
- Promote personal responsibility for physical, mental and emotional wellbeing
- Promote confident, informed decision making
- Promote respect for others
- Challenge prejudice and explore beliefs and values

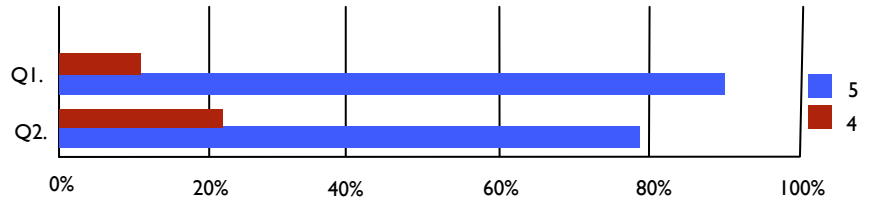


# Evaluation & Feedback

Evaluation was carried out following each workshop with host organisations and participants given the opportunity to feedback, they made recommendations as follows:

## Host Organisation Feedback

- Q1. How would you rate the suitability of the workshop content?  
 Q2. How well do you feel the information was communicated?  
 (5 = excellent, 1 = unsuitable)



'It was ace'

'It was cool to learn it'

'It makes you think about how you like yourself as a person'

*participants*



'Keep up this great talk because it makes people more aware'

'Really fun and interesting'

'Awesome'

*participants*

'The Prince's Trust Team programme is a 12 week programme working with young people aged 16 to 25 to improve self esteem, motivation and confidence.

The Prince's Trust has been involved with Choices Aberdeen for some time now, delivering sexual health and relationship workshops, a key element of the Prince's Trust programme. These sessions allow the young people we work with to understand the importance of healthy relationships at a key transitional stage in their life. Choice's Aberdeen is excellent, extremely flexible, approachable and adaptable. The variety of exercises and sessions fit well with the young people being interactive and informal. The non judgmental approach and knowledgeable approach allows young people to express how they feel and freely give their opinions and experiences.'

**Karen Graham**  
**Prince's Trust Team Leader**  
**Aberdeen Foyer, Marywell Street, Aberdeen**

'The Choices workshops took place during PSE time, a subject which is taught by Guidance staff. All teachers agreed that the workshops were a great success largely because of the relevant content and presentation style. The material used was very current and immediately got the attention and 'respect' of pupils. Each presentation was pitched at an appropriate level for each year group. The message delivered was hard-hitting and we all liked the way the second video took the same material (drinking, staying out all night etc) but showed it in reality as opposed to glamourising it. Our pupils are constantly exposed to the glamourisation of drinking, sex, drugs etc through the media and this was a very good way to get them to consider the influences they are exposed to and to start to evaluate them and make their own decisions.

Pupils responded really well to the methodology -- the lessons were interactive (there was nowhere to hide for the quiet ones!) and all pupils had to show their opinions by moving around the room. The manner of the presenters was calm, friendly and relaxed and the pupils responded well to this.

Overall, pupils and staff alike thought the workshops offered by Choices were fun, interesting, relevant and valuable and we all look forward to repeating the above workshops in session 2011-2012, also adding in a presentation for S6 pupils.

It would be a great pity and loss to the young people of Aberdeen should funding not be found to run such workshops.'

**Katrina Dobson**  
**Principal Teacher of Guidance**  
**St Machar Academy, Aberdeen**

'Very well presented!'

'Material was really good—relevant and good fun'

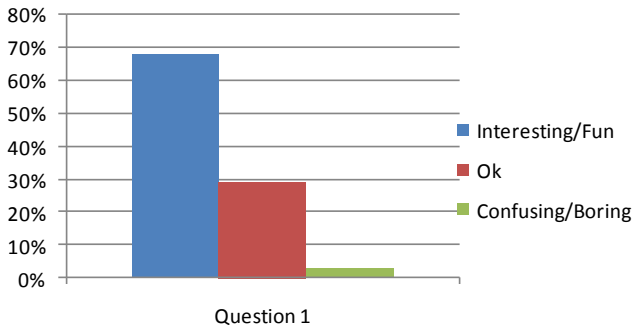
'Please come again!!'

*hosts*

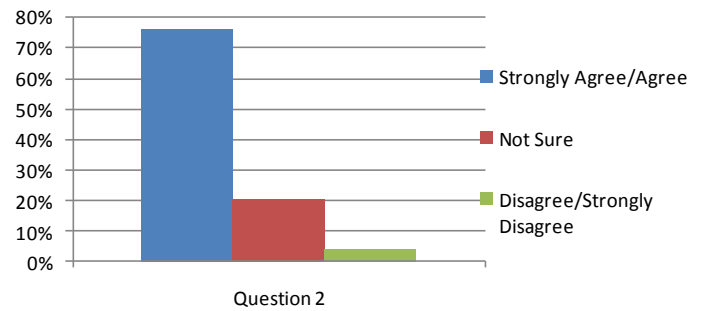
# Evaluation & Feedback

## Participants Feedback

Q1. Overall I found the workshops:



Q2. The Content: I am more aware of the facts about these topics:



'Good class enjoyed it and learnt a lot'

'Was kool'

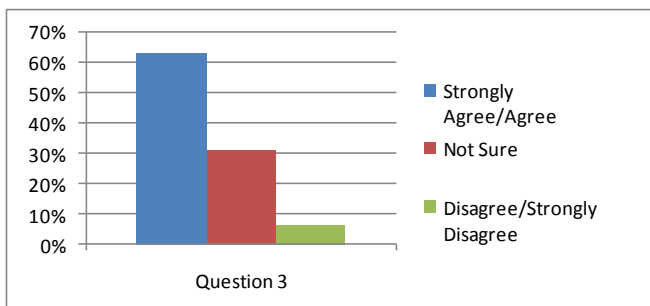
*participants*

'It was a great workshop'

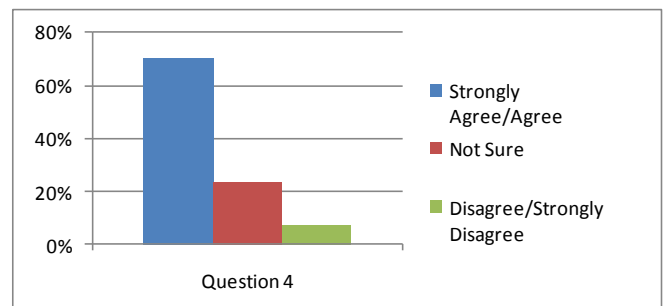
'Thank you for explaining relationships in another way'

*participants*

Q3. Will it Make a Difference? The lessons helped me to consider the choices I need to make regarding these topics:



Q4. Will it Make a Difference? I feel more confident in making decisions for myself about these topics:



# Objectives

As a result of the teams experience, the research gathered and feedback received Choices have concluded that there remains a role for them in working in partnership with other agencies to provide quality, engaging and relevant relationships and sex education for young people in the city.

We have therefore set out objectives for 2011/12 as follows:

## 2011/2012 Objectives

- The development of workshops/lesson plans including:
  - Gender Stereotypes
  - Violence
  - Body Image
- Review all existing lesson plans updating media images, video clips and statistics
- Maintain the research elibrary
- Deliver workshops to 500 participants
- Recruit and train additional volunteers and staff
- Improve financial sustainability
- Develop and pilot a youth intervention programme

In order to meet these strategic aims Choices will continue to work in partnership with other organisations across the city. In addition, we will provide other relevant counselling and support services in the area of crisis pregnancy and pregnancy loss.

# Development

Youth development programmes have shown effectiveness in improving sexual health outcomes, as well as enhancing bonding, building skills and strengthening relationships<sup>1</sup>. The Choices team also believe that significant learning takes place in significant relationships and therefore in addition to our current education programme we are developing an additional out of school intervention project which will invest in young people.

This project will involve twelve young people participating in a fourteen week course where they will have the opportunity to reflect and explore their identity, aspirations, hopes, fears and relationships. As in our other courses these youths will be equipped with essential life skills in decision making, assessing risk, positive assertiveness and media literacy.

A number of agencies have already registered interest in referring their client groups to this programme. We will establish a working group to assist us develop this programme which will include a group of teenagers and plan to run two pilot projects before July 2012.

<sup>1</sup>Teenage pregnancy and social disadvantage: systematic review integrating controlled trials and qualitative studies. Harden et al (2009)



# CHOICES Aberdeen

**Stimulating,  
challenging and  
informative  
workshops  
delivered using a  
variety of  
engaging  
learning styles**