## Supplementary Material 6: ALPHA Meeting Summaries

****

**ALPHA meeting: 31 July 2017**

**Positive Choices: Honor Young & Ruth Ponsford**

Positive Choices is a social marketing intervention that aims to promote sexual health, prevent unintended teenage pregnancies, and reduce the current health inequalities between different groups of young people. It is also for families with the aim of supporting young people and their parents to talk about sexual health.

The project is still being developed and will be trialled in a single school of approximately 1,000 pupils this year. It includes several different elements including a series of informal lessons on emotions and relationships, school based sexual health clinics offering support and guidance, and campaigns that will be developed and led by the pupils. They will also complete surveys as part of the project to help assess the impact of the project.

Honor Young from DECIPHer and Ruth Ponsford from LSHTM (The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine) visited ALPHA about two parts of the project. We initially looked at the survey with ALPHA commenting on whether the questions were suitable for the pupils in terms of language and content. We then considered an event that will launch the project in the trial school with the group informing what the event could look like.

**Members present**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Age** | **Male** | **Female** |
| **14** | **2** | **0** |
| **15** | **1** | **1** |
| **16** | **0** | **1** |
| **17** | **1** | **0** |
| **18** | **1** | **2** |

**Task 1: Questionnaire review**

The first task focused on questionnaires that will be used in the project. Members of ALPHA were given copies of the questionnaire and were encouraged to make notes on the questionnaire individually, before we talked about particular parts as a group.

The following section summarises both the written comments ALPHA members wrote on the questionnaires, as well as content as part of the group discussion.

*General comments about the overall questionnaire*

ALPHA members were split over the delivery format for the questionnaire with some agreeing with using a hall like with exams. They felt that pupils would take it more seriously while they might mess around and not be honest in a classroom. Others preferred a classroom setting that would be less pressured and more informal.

Paper comments

* I know quite a lot about pills, protection and things but I wouldn’t have known what it was in Yr 8
* Some students might not take this questionnaire seriously but some might and actually try and stay out of sexual intercourse

*Comments about individual questionnaire sections*

*Introduction*

Paper comments

* We want to find out more about young people's views on sex and relationships 🡪 We would like...

*Part 1: About You*

In Q6 of the About You section, pupils are asked about their sexuality with the option including for example 'Straight or heterosexual (a girl who is attracted to boys or a boy who is attracted to girls)’. The group thought that the gender and sexuality questions should be separate.

Paper comments

* Q4 We ask this in addition to the question above because some people are 'transgender'... 🡪 Remove as not needed
* Q4 Which of these options best describe how you think of yourself now?🡪Liked the variety of options (e.g. non-binary (neither male or female), questioning etc)
* Q5 Which of the following best describes your ethnic group or background🡪 Add Prefer not to say
* Q6 Which of the following do you consider yourself to be?🡪 Give examples for Other e.g. Pansexual, asexual
* Q6 Which of the following do you consider yourself to be?🡪 Add romantic type as an options
* Q7. Jewish 🡪 Judaism
* Q9. Are any of the adults you live with in paid work, either part-time or full-time 🡪Add Don’t Know
* Q10. What kind of house or flat do you normally live in? 🡪 Unsure if they will know. Also unsure what you are trying to find out? Is it wealth or attitudes? And how is this relevant?
* Q15. How much do you agree with the following statements? 🡪 Add Not Sure column
* Q15. By the time I'm 20 years old 🡪They may not have considered this if they are 12-14
* Q15. Be a mum or dad 🡪 Be a parent

*Part 2: About Your School*

It was suggested in the group discussions that all questions in this section should include a Not Sure option.

Paper comments

* Q16. The teachers at this school are fair in dealing with students 🡪 could be more specific - what does this mean?
* Q17 How much do you agree with the following statements? 🡪 All parts of this question except 'I feel very different from most other students here' seem very similar
* Q16 - Q19. 🡪 Add Not Sure column

*Part 4: Learning about relationships*

We talked about Q22 and Q23 which include 'How to stay safe online'. It was felt that this refers to sites where people can send messages and that it should be changed to social media. Alternatively it could remain as online with an extra question added for social media.

'What kinds of sex are safest' in Q22 and Q23 was seen as confusing. The group felt that more detail was needed on whether this refers to actual sex, any sexual behaviour, or protection while having sex.

Q22 and Q23 should not be about 'What a normal healthy body looks like' but how to have a positive body image.

Also in Q22 and Q23, ALPHA did not see the value of 'How to know if you're in love' as they felt this would be different for every person.

Q22 should include an option column for 'Haven't covered it yet'

Paper comments

* Q22. The signs that a relationship is not safe or is abusive and what you can do 🡪 Stay like this
* Q22. What the law says about consent and sexual abuse 🡪 Stay like this
* Q22. What is means to be gay, lesbian, bisexual of transgender 🡪 should transgender be a separate question?
* Q22. What is female genital mutilation/cuttings (FGM/FGC) 🡪 Stay like this
* Q23. Please tick the top 3 🡪 Like this style of question
* Q25. Other internet sites or apps (for example Facebook or Snapchat) 🡪 Include YouTube, Tumblr, Instagram)

*Part 6: Seeking help and support*

Paper comments

* Q27. Do you know where you could get medical advice from a trained health practitioner about contraception? 🡪Add not sure
* Q30. Sexual harassment is unwanted and unwelcome sexual touching or sexual talk... 🡪 Move to Q29

*Part 7 Negotiating sex and relationships*

It was suggested that the section title should be ‘Navigating sex and relationships’ and not negotiating which could be seen as negative. Similarly it was felt that 'Persuade a partner to use condoms for sex' is also negative, when it's about having the confidence to use them. ALPHA wanted to find alternative words for ‘persuade,’ they suggested saying 'ask', 'get' or ‘convince’ instead.

Q31 includes pupils being asked whether they feel it would be easy or difficult for them to 'Tell your partner that a certain sexual activity hurts you', but the group were not certain where pupils under 14 would know that some sexual activity may hurt.

It was also felt that 'Be the one to start off having sex' in Q31 was awkward phrasing. ALPHA suggested ‘start off’ or ‘initiate’ instead.

They suggested adding a Not Sure column to this question as people may respond differently on a piece of paper to if they are in that situation.

Paper comments

* Q31. In a sexual relationship now or in the future, how easy or difficult do you think it would be for you to 🡪 Add female controlled methods of contraception
* Q32. The following sentences ask about your friends and what they think and do. Even if you're not sure, mark the answer that you think might be right🡪 Add not sure column

*Part 8 About your friends*

ALPHA were unsure about this section as they felt that the only way to really know some of the answers would be if young people talked to their friends.

* They felt that girls sometimes talk to each other but boys rarely to talk to anyone about sex, especially those in Year 8. It is also likely to vary a lot with different groups of friends.
* In particular they felt that pupils would be unlikely to know how many of their friends use condoms (Q34)
* If they do not know they may guess some of the answers or base them on rumours.

They also queried the meaning of 'Most of my friends believe that people can enjoy each other's bodies without having sex'. They were unsure whether this could include looking at someone, or whether it meant physical contact, and suggested that examples be included.

**Task 2: School launch**

*Initial discussion*

Initial ideas were discussed as a single group were to start the launch with a presentation before having an activity.

With the overall project for pupils, staff and parents we thought who the actual launch should be for. Most of ALPHA felt that you would not hold a joint event on sexual health for young people and their parents.

* Instead it was suggested that an event be held for pupils and staff together, with separate information developed just for parents.
* Different sessions will be needed for specific ages with similar content and methods but different language. ALPHA agreed on sessions for Year 7 alone, 8 and 9 together, and 10 and 11 together. Schools with 6th forms would need an extra session for this group.

It was suggested that most parents would not attend a separate event due to them being too busy. Parents of Year 7 pupils were seen as those most likely to take part in an event, while many parents across the school would at least read the information. It was felt that a few parents would not want to be involved at all.

* Honor and Ruth mentioned that one of the key parts of the work is to look at how to involve parents, and wanted ideas on what might work.
* It was felt that letters might be the best option, or possibly activities for them to do with their children at home.

ALPHA members suggested that a 60-90 minute activity should follow the presentation.

* While the presentation should be compulsory pupils should be able to stay for the activity for as long as they want, with incentives needed to encourage involvement.
* Suggestions of incentives included those who take part being entered in a prize draw (with multiple small prizes), and the alternative to taking part in the activity being to return to lessons.

With the group confirming the need for a mix of information and engagement we split into 2 groups.

*Informing pupils, staff and parents*

The group were keen to bring an external person into the school to present on the topic rather than a teacher. They felt that pupils are more likely to attend the launch and get involved with an external person and gave examples of informal police officers and nurses who are known around their schools and respected.

The success of school assemblies varied between ALPHA members but many felt that pupils do not attend, especially those in older year groups. Many miss the assembly and then turn up for lessons.

* Instead it was suggested that the launch be held in lesson time, with examples given of successful half-day or full day activities replacing regular lessons. Schools sessions like Personal and Social Education (PSE) could be a good time for the launch events to happen.
* Again the group believed that teachers should not run these activities due to many being seen as too old. Instead they suggested adults that they have a good relationship with.

We also discussed how parents could be informed about the project if they did not have an event. A range of options were suggested:

* Some schools are increasingly using social media with one member’s school having multiple Twitter accounts for each year group and subject. This has been successful with both pupils and parents following the accounts for regular information, but other members gave examples of social media not working in their school.
* Emails were suggested with some schools using Parent mail as a reliable way to ensure that letters reach parents. Some also use emails successfully to contact pupils.
* Websites could also be a good way to keep pupils and parents updated.
* An additional benefit of regular contact through letters, email, social media and posters would be to keep reminding pupils and parents which will be important to the project.

Parents will need different information to pupils and it was felt that this should include details of the project structure and the different components. They will also need to know details of the school sessions and the topics that pupils will be learning about.

* The project aims to support pupils and parents to discuss sexual health and it was felt that parents also need information on topics like sexuality and gender identity, as well as social media.
* Parents should also get tips, advice and potentially support sessions on discussing sexual health with their children, and the importance of acceptance of sexuality. This will help families that find communication harder than others.

The project will have assumed consent that pupils can take part, and it was also felt that this should be mentioned, with parents then able to withdraw their child if they wish.

*Launch activities*

We thought first about what the aim of the activities should be with the group keen that it acts as a hook to get pupils and staff interested in the project.

* Focusing on the campaigning element of the project was seen as key for this, as some pupils will be interested in a campaign as a way to make a difference.
* Another idea was to use the activity to find out what people want to get out of the project, and what they want to learn.

Whatever the activity looks like it was seen as key that it starts a discussion. This will mean asking an open question or questions rather than a simple yes/no question.

A graffiti wall was suggested as a way to gather ideas. This would create interest as it would take up a lot of space and be noticeable.

* This is also versatile with people able to write or draw. These walls also vary from being paper based to electronic with people writing messages on computers which then appear on the wall.
* It was felt that each year group would need their own wall, plus a wall for staff.

A similar idea was to take a giant picture (for example an outline of a person) into a similar public space. Pupils answer questions by writing answers on relevant parts of the picture.

* Again each year would need their own picture, and this was seen as a good activity for striking up a conversation between different people.

There was a concern with both these activities of what to do if someone makes an inappropriate comment on the wall or picture. It was suggested that teachers be in the area although not at the wall to discourage this.

A third idea was to run a scenario based activity where people are given a situation to consider, with suggestions for situations including teenage pregnancy, STIs, consent and support services.

* This was a popular idea and ALPHA suggested that the scenario should be from a young man's perspective rather than young woman’s.

This idea was advanced further with the suggestion of multiple decisions to be made. Each decision leads to a different story. The strength of this was that the decisions and resulting story would help pupils to consider consequences.

* It was felt that this would need to be run with individual classes rather than years.

**ALPHA meeting: 21st April 2018**

**Positive Choices**

Positive Choices is a school based intervention with the aims of promoting sexual health and preventing unintended teenage pregnancies. The project will have several elements including a students needs survey for Year 8 pupils, a council of staff and pupils who will together plan and deliver the project, relationship and sex education, and engagement with parents through newsletters and homework assignment. The project will also include a student led marketing campaign promoting key messages in sexual health.

Having introduced the project, the ALPHA session focused on 2 parts of the project. Firstly members commented on an information sheet for parents on the new project, and then discussed how we can make long-term parent engagement work well for the project. This was followed by discussing the idea of pupils leading on social marketing campaign for students, including how this could be done and any possible challenges.

**Members present**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Age** | **Male** | **Female** |
| **14** | 0 | 1 |
| **15** | 2 | 1 |
| **16** | 1 | 0 |
| **17** | 0 | 0 |
| **18** | 0 | 1 |
| **19** | 0 | 1 |

**Information sheet**

ALPHA looked at a draft information sheet for parents and made comments on the format and design, pictures, content and language.

In terms of the design they felt that is important to have a colour scheme that works. While individual choice of colour is a personal preference ALPHA felt that there were too many colours used in the text and box background which did not work together well.

* Members of the group were also unsure about the use of flowers as pictures, and felt that there could be more suitable pictures.

ALPHA noted that if the information sheet is on paper. Parents will not type in a long website address.

* It was suggested that a QR code could be developed and added so that parents can scan the code to get to this page or other project information

We talked about the need for contact information with the suggestion that an email address would be best, rather than a phone number

In terms of the text, ALPHA did not feel that the information was specifically aimed at parents but pupils as well, with some of the content seen as potentially patronising to parents

* The reference to Romeo and Juliet should be removed as it is too specific, but the rest of the question could be rephrased to still work
* The percentage stat could be replaced with something more visual like a chart

In addition to comments on the individual sheets a couple of ALPHA members sketched a possible leaflet design. These will be included in the report to inform the information sheets

**Parental engagement in the project?**

We had general discussions about how best to engage with parents, with ALPHA members then able to note down any thoughts that were particularly important to them. Below is a summary of the different questions and key messages that came out of the activity.

*What would parents want to know about Positive Choices?*

Everyone agreed that they would want to know about what the project is and its basic aims.

*What might their concerns be?*

It is important that the programme is tailored for different years as parents will not be happy with younger pupils being educated on some topics. ALPHA gave the example of Year 7 pupils learning about STIs (Sexually Transmitted Infections).

*What method of communication do you think will work best to reach parents?*

The group were clear that paper letters don't always reach parents though they could be given out at parent evenings.

Emails sent directly to parents were seen as a better option with most schools have ‘Parent Mail’ or a similar system. Potentially this could be a flyer or newsletter attached to an email.

The written suggestions by ALPHA members also included an alternative idea of an interactive website.

*What are the things that you wish your parent could talk to you about more? And what are the barriers to this happening?*

We didn’t discuss this much as a group as this is quite personal, but ALPHA were wary that discussing sexual health with parents could affect their relationships, and in particular they would be worried about being judged, especially because of them being in different generations. Some of the older members of ALPHA also said that they were pleased not to have had their parents talking to them about sexual health for the same reason. Instead they would be more likely to talk to their peers as it would be less awkward.

However they recognised that this could work well in some families. Maybe the focus could be on parents being able to talk to their children if they raise the topic or ask questions.

*What information do parents need to know or have access to talk to their children about this at home?*

Parents might not know how much their children know already, so raising awareness of this would be useful. Information would also be useful for parents on how to raise the topic of sexual health, and training in communicating with children would be useful. There was also a suggestion that the child should ‘be in command’ meaning that they would be in charge of where the conversation goes.

*Should the communication be designed by pupils or someone else at the school?*

ALPHA felt that the council of staff and student planning the project should develop the template for the materials to include a standard layout and colour scheme. This will then mean that pupils can add the information in.

**Student led Social Marketing Campaigns.**

We held a general discussion on how to run social marketing and the purpose of the Positive Choices student led social marketing campaign. We asked ALPHA to provide guidance and opinions on the most suitable approach for running these campaigns. Below is a summary of the different questions and key messages that came out of the activity.

*What do you think of the idea of delivering student led social marketing campaigns in schools?*

The ALPHA members thought that it would be best if students run the campaigns as their peers will more likely listen to them rather than the teachers. Running campaigns via the students will eliminate and reduce the possibility of awkwardness, it will also help the campaigns seem more honest and relatable. One of the ALPHA members suggested that if the teachers ran the campaigns then they wouldn’t do it justice as they would have the schools image in their best interest, rather than educating the students.

These processes, where students educated and teach their peers, already exist in schools, therefore Positive Choices would not have any difficulty running campaigns in schools.

*What might the challenges be and how can we address these?*

ALPHA felt that these campaigns needed to be delivered by the older students, or at least the students who are a year older than the targeted campaign groups. Some of the challenges also included the involvement levels from teachers. Too much and the campaign loses its significance, the campaigns should stress the importance of the students role and the teachers should have faith in the students. ALPHA members suggested that the senior leadership teams in schools should not have any input in this, their focus is on school image and not necessarily on the student’s wellbeing.

*We need the campaigns to include messages that are consistent with the programme how can we do this? How can we make sure these messages stay on track?*

To keep the messages consistent with the programme ALPHA suggested that the student led social marketing group should presents the topics they would like to run a campaign on to the School Health Promotion Council. The council will then decide if it is suitable to run and will provide the relevant information to the group. To reduce access to inappropriate content ALPHA felt that the group should be given the content information from the council. The campaigns will work similar to project management, where the marketing group provides updates to the council at regular time points. Whilst the council has the overall say the group are the ones with creative input and direction to run the campaigns.

ALPHA also suggested that the meetings should happen during lessons as more people will sign up to becoming a part of the student led social marketing group.

*How would you ensure that marketing campaigns reached/appealed to all students within the school?*

Run interactive activities and incorporate a system where pupils go to find the information. For example the schools can have a number of different same topic posters up throughout the school and students are required to collect information from each poster, similar to a conference stand stamp system.

*Would you consider targeting particular groups or more general campaign? Why?*

ALPHA felt that campaigns should not be targeted at particular groups as this can cause offence and may result in the target groups feeling isolated. Therefore these campaigns should be general and targeted at a whole school/year approach.

*What kind of media activities would work best to reach pupils across the school? Please list.*

ALPHA suggested the following methods to reach the majority of students:

* Assemblies
* SRE lessons
* External people to present and educate
* Video
* Posters

However it was agreed that understanding the approaches suit the school and which ones does not would need to be considered before embarking on student led social marketing campaigns. If the school is not heavily involved in twitter and other forms of social media then running campaign via this platform would not work. The approaches need to be specific and tailored to each school.

****

**ALPHA meeting: 26th January 2019**

**Positive Choices**

Positive Choices is a school based intervention with the aims of promoting sexual health and preventing unintended teenage pregnancies. The project will have several elements including a students needs survey for Year 8 pupils, a council of staff and pupils who will together plan and deliver the project, relationship and sex education, and engagement with parents through newsletters and homework assignment. The project will also include a student led marketing campaign promoting key messages in sexual health.

Having introduced the work and an update since the previous ALPHA meeting, the group focused on two aspects of the study, the content of section 10 of the questionnaire and the information sheet for both parents and young people. We wanted ALPHA to comment on these documents to make sure they are suitable and user friendly for young people.

**Members present- 12**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Age** | **Male** | **Female** |
| **14** | 0 | 2 |
| **15** | 0 | 1 |
| **16** | 2 | 1 |
| **17** | 2 | 2 |
| **18** | 0 | 1 |
| **19** | 1 | 0 |

**Part 10: You and you relationships**

ALPHA looked at a draft of section 10 of the follow up student questionnaire that would be given to students. The aim of this task was to review the document and add comments on the content and language and whether or not this questionnaire is suitable to young people aged 13-14.

We split ALPHA into two groups and asked them to think about the following questions:

1. How will young people of this age feel about completing the questions on sexual behaviour?
2. Are the questions suitable and understandable for kids of this age?
3. How might we improve them?
4. Do the skip patterns work?

Below is a summary of the discussions:

In terms of the content of the questionnaire ALPHA thought that it very clear and appropriate for year 9 students.

ALPHA suggested that some young people may not understand every question due to the language used. An example of this is in question 35 where it discusses various contraception. Student may not know what ‘withdrew’ means but may know it as something else such as a ‘slang term’. ALPHA suggested including a glossary of words with words they may be known as. ALPHA noted that there were too many references to ‘vaginal sex’, they preferred sexual intercourse to be used.

When completing the questionnaire, ALPHA noticed that students may be able to identify other students who have engaged in sexual activity depending on how long it takes to complete the questionnaire. ALPHA recommended completing the questionnaires in small groups, on tablets or at home rather than one whole class.

The overall length of the questionnaire was 45 minutes ALPHA thought was too long and that student may get bored and selecting random questions. ALPHA thought that the questionnaire could be completed in sections throughout the week. For instance part 1-5 PSE lesson Monday and the remaining Part 6-11 the following Monday.

When answering the questions, ALPHA liked the option of giving a Yes, No or Prefer Not to Say option and felt that this set of answers should be an option for question 53. ALPHA also thought it would help students if there were a ‘Prefer Not to Say’ option on all questions.

Some of ALPHA’s concerns were around other students seeing their answers, ALPHA thought if students did not understand or it was not highlighted that is confidential they may give false answers. Confidentiality should be emphasised before completing the questionnaire.

Question 51, 52 and 53 was also highlighted as ALPHA thought this might be uncomfortable to answer. ALPHA reworded the question, as ‘Are you aware you’ve ever made anyone feel uncomfortable during sex?’

**The Design of Section 10**

With the design ALPHA suggested removing the pointing hands, as the red numbers were enough. Where you can skip questions in the questionnaire, ALPHA suggested that completing the questionnaire online would be much easier as it would skip to the next set of questions.

One of the answers on question was slightly confusing, as it stated ‘can’t chose/more than one main factor’. ALPHA thought these should be separate.

ALPHA suggested that this questionnaire could be administered electronically, therefore the skip patterns will be automatic.

The aim of the second task was to review the parent/carer and young person information documents. We wanted to make sure that these documents were clear and easy to understand. Again we split ALPHA into two groups, one for parent information and one for young people, we asked each group to consider the following:

1. Are the consent materials clear?
2. What would you change to make them more understandable?
3. How do you think students will respond to us wanting to collect follow up data on births and terminations?
4. How can we address any concerns?
5. How will parents respond to their children taking part?
6. What might their concerns be and how can we address these?

**Information for Parents/Carers**

Are the consent materials clear?

ALPHA thought the material was very clear and easy to understand but could also depend on each parent/carer due to different backgrounds and religions etc. ALPHA suggested providing a introduction page which gave a light touch on the aims of the study and if parents wanted to know more information, then the parents can access it via the information booklet.

ALPHA liked the list of information/helplines as they had a description and contact details for them all.

What would you change to make them more understandable for kids/parents?

The letter should be sent via email or if sent home, parents/carers should be notified by via text/email to inform them that their child is bringing a letter home.

What concerns they might have?

Parent may be concerned that their child is being exposed to sexual education too early, they might have concerns of the age appropriateness of this study.

How will parents respond to their children taking part in this research?

With the paragraph ‘we also want to collect official Government…completed our questionnaire’, ALPHA felt this was not clear and should change it to ‘Pre existing data’. ALPHA said this sounds very official and may put parents off participating.

**Information for Young Person**

Are the consent materials clear?

ALPHA thought the material contained too much information and that it should be broken down into bullet points so it easier to read. As with the parent information document ALPHA thought that students would benefit from having a light touch information document to showcase the aims of the study and if students wanted to know more information, then they can access if via this information document.

ALPHA thought it should include ‘what should I do’ next section, this way students who have questions or want more information know what to do.

Again in this section, ALPHA thought the Government data section wasn’t too friendly and should be changed. ALPHA suggested rewording this to include ‘routine collected data’ as well as providing more information to what data linage is and how it would work in this study.