OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Oxfordshire Youth Parliament Report Summary
Risky Behaviours and e-safety - 18 September 2013
(Delivered by the Engagement Team)

Thirty-four children and young people (CYP) aged 11 – 18 met to discuss risky behaviours and e-safety. The CYP were from 19 schools across Oxfordshire, members of Oxfordshire Youth Parliament and the Children in Care Council with 25% from black ethnic minority groups.

What the CYP said about risky behaviours and educational attainment

Taking risks can be appealing and part of growing up but we need to know where to go for help if we are worried

Peer pressure encourages you to take risks you don't want to take - don't want to be left out or labelled a "nerd" … you get hypnotised to follow the stream

➤ People always tell us about the dangers of taking risks, but there isn't enough support or information on what to do when you have taken a risk and are concerned about the consequences.

➤ We would listen to people who had experienced the negative impact of risky behaviours (e.g. ex-drug addicts) more than we listen to teachers and professionals telling us what we should be doing.

➢ We are not confident that if we tell a teacher or social worker that they will keep it confidential (e.g. if we are being bullied).

Questionnaire about risky behaviours

• 28% had "sometimes" or "a few times" truanted from school - the main reasons were - "being bored at school" or having "something more interesting to do"	• 57% had been offered drugs. 26% had taken drugs with 14% feeling comfortable accepting. 26% had refused drugs and felt confident doing so.
• 71% said that they had taken risks that they regretted.	• 63% said they had never smoked.
• 35% said they had behaved in a relationship in a way that they regretted.	• 46% had their first drink by age 14. 34% said they had never drunk alcohol.
• Over 50% said that they "often or always" cycled without a helmet.	• 62% said they "often or always" used their phone to text or play games while walking along the street or cycling.

Nb. These percentages are based on small numbers (34 young people).

What the CYP said about social media and e-safety

Arguments and bullying escalate on Facebook. People make fake accounts in order to insult people anonymously.

Once it is posted publically, you can't take it down and it might be there for ever.

➢ We know that Facebook (etc.) don't act on issues raised through the "report abuse" button. We want to feel that action is taken.

➢ We have no idea what to do if we have posted something we regret. There seems to be nowhere to go to get help.

> There are good and bad things about the internet:

✔ Good = teaching lessons, whistle-blowers, keeping in contact, speed, games, shopping, confidentiality/anonymity, internet browsing.

✘ Bad = lots of rubbish, spreading of pornography, ads/pop-ups, screenshots (can't take it back), bullying, sexting, can't be fully safe.

Questionnaire on social media and e-safety

• 50% said that they had posted something online that they regretted later or had upset people.	• 22% said they had sent or uploaded an inappropriate message or picture and later regretted it.
• 70% said that they had seen a post by Facebook (or similar) that had upset or bullied them or someone else.	• Only 18% said that all their Facebook friends were "proper" friends.

NB. These percentages are based on small numbers (34 young people).

Where to get help and support

> Places people will most likely go for advice/support:
>   o Friends my own age (28%).
>   o Parents (22%).
>   o 28% said they would try to sort it out by themselves rather than seek support.
>   o Only 3% would contact a teacher or other staff member and none said they would go to OCC or a helpline.

> Top answers to the question: "what would most help you to keep safe?":
>   o More young people helping each other to be careful (36%)
>   o Changing my own behaviour (32%).
>   o School assemblies were not identified as being helpful.

Recommendations and agreed actions:

- To consult young people about the content of the e-safety Action Plan as part of the Anti-Bullying Ambassador training and network events that are due to run during Anti-Bullying Week (18 – 22 November).

- To involve young people in developing training for teachers and other adults as part of the Anti-Bullying Ambassador programme.

- To continue to promote good practice in response to disclosures of Cyber bullying/e-safety problems as part of the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board e-safety training and Oxfordshire County Council's Anti-Bullying guidance.

- Explore whether improvements can be made to the negative perception about teachers and other adults as people to confide in.

- Explore how to maximise the value and use of peer support.

- Ensure that information from CYP is incorporated into meetings with professionals and head teachers.

- Explore how risky behaviours education is delivered in schools, with a view to incorporating suggestions from YP e.g.:

  - Deliver a more "rounded" training on risky behaviours avoiding over-emphasis on negatives.

  - Provide more advice and information on how to get support after a risk has been taken.

  - Explore whether risky behaviours training could be delivered by people whose lives had been negatively impacted by the experience.

A big thank you to all the young people who attended the Oxfordshire Youth Parliament and Oxford City Council Youth Ambition meeting for their insightful and extremely valuable contributions.

Also thank you to the councillors and staff who attended and supported this event and their commitment to listening and learning from Oxfordshire's children and young people.

Rachel Taylor, Senior Engagement Officer, Oxfordshire County Council, 07775007932/01865 323610 rachel.taylor@oxfordshire.gov.uk