

Educational input for young people on violence against women and girls (VAWG)

An educational input delivered to sixth form students around violence against women and girls (VAWG) crime types such as sexual offences and domestic abuse.

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Key details

Stage of practice	Evaluated locally
Purpose	Prevention
Topic	Violence & Crime Against the Person Community engagement
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Region	Eastern
Partners	Police Education Voluntary/not for profit organisation
Stage of implementation	The practice is implemented.
Start date	January 2025

Key details

Scale of initiative	Local
Target group	Children and young people Offenders Victims Women

Aim

The aim of the educational input is to engage and educate young people on violence against women and girls (VAWG).

Intended outcome

The intended outcomes of the educational input are to:

- improve young peoples' confidence in the police to address VAWG offences
- improve young peoples' knowledge of VAWG such as behaviours, legislation and support

Description

Following a significant domestic homicide within the locality, there was a reduction in the public's confidence, in policing, especially around dealing with VAWG incidents. The force's response to the incident had been focused on community reassurance and providing a high visibility policing presence. Hertfordshire Constabulary identified that despite the police response there could be more done to improving public trust and confidence when dealing with VAWG incidents. In response the force developed input to educate and engage with young people.

Planning

Hertfordshire Constabulary a gap analysis which identified that the force did minimal engagement activities with young people on the topic of VAWG. A literature and evidence review revealed that education can be an effective form of intervention when intervening with VAWG. The research

emphasised that education could have short term impacts such as increased awareness and being less likely to accept 'traditional myths' around VAWG.

The force designed a presentation which included Department for Education's (DfE) relationship and sexual education (RSE) guidance. The presentation also highlighted local trends and crime issues, such as spiking and online offences. Several charities and services such as Hollie Guard provided their guidance and to advertise the available support. Hertfordshire Constabulary would be responsible for delivering the presentations within the schools. This was to demonstrate that the police are responsible for trust and confidence as well as detecting and preventing crime.

Staffing

One officer is required to deliver the educational input to schools. Before the county wide roll out, the input was trialled at sixth forms across Bushey, with a single standalone one and half hour input. It takes approximately two to three hours to prepare the input and resources. This is done during normal duties and does not have a wider impact on resourcing. The officer is required to have experience of working with young people and delivering the presentations.

Equipment

There is no specific equipment required from the police, it is expected that schools provide the overhead projectors. For some educational input there is some printing, however this is within the normal budgetary concerns.

Educational input

The educational input are delivered to sixth form aged students, as they are part of the at-risk group. It is also an age where many young people are entering relationships, and the age range where people are most likely to be both perpetrators and victims. The content of the educational input include:

- a definition of VAWG
- understanding what is coercive and controlling behaviour
- understanding the impact of spiking
- 'Ask for Angela' or 'Ask for Clive'
- overview of Clare's Law

- overview of the Hollie Guard app
- overview of the force's response to domestic abuse and sexual offences incidents

There has been no funding or senior management approval was required to deliver the educational input.

Evaluation

An [evaluation](#) was conducted between January and May 2024 by Hertfordshire Constabulary.

The evaluation focused on assessing the impact of the educational input by measuring whether there was an increase in knowledge, trust and confidence. Due to the make-up of groups, it was possible to divide the result by gender.

The impact was measured using two questionnaire designed on Microsoft Forms. The questionnaires were accessed using a QR code on the presentation slides. The students were encouraged to complete the questionnaire at the start and end of the input, this included:

Questions before the input

- do you know what VAWG stands for?
- do you know what coercive and controlling behaviour is?
- do you know what spiking is?
- have you heard of 'Ask for Angela' or 'Ask for Clive'?
- do you know what Clare's Law is?
- have you heard of 'Hollie Guard' app?
- how well do you think the police do at tackling domestic abuse?
- why do you think that?
- how well do you think the police do at tackling sexual offences?
- why do you think that?

Questions after the input

- do you know what VAWG stands for?
- do you know what coercive and controlling behaviour is?
- do you know what spiking is?
- have you heard of 'Ask for Angela' or 'Ask for Clive'?

- do you know what Clare's Law is?
- have you heard of 'Hollie Guard' app?
- how well do you think the police do at tackling domestic abuse?
- why do you think that?
- how well do you think the police do at tackling sexual offences?
- why do you think that?
- how useful was this input?
- is there anything you wish to ask, or wish was covered in this input?

Overall impact

Findings

The questionnaire data identified that young people had a lack of knowledge prior to the input around preventive measures and resources. This was demonstrated around the lack of knowledge about 'Clare's Law.' Prior to the input 97.6% of the sample (n=125) were unaware of Clare's Law and the Hollie Guard app. The results were consistent when comparing both the male and female samples results. For the 'Ask for Angela' and 'Ask for Clive', 56% of the sample (n=125) had prior knowledge of the schemes. There was variation in the knowledge levels between males and females prior to the delivery of the input. Females had a greater awareness around VAWG and some of the issues this covers across all measures. For example, 75% of females (n=76) compared to 61% of males (n=49) felt confident enough to define coercive and controlling behaviour. Similarly with spiking 91% of females could define it whereas, it was 84% for males.

There was an increase in the self-reported confidence in policing after the input than there was prior. However, this was not a statistically significant increase. Whilst it does indicate that there may have been an increase in confidence, it could also be due to the variation in the sample size. This can be disputed, as in both the female and male samples there was an increase in how well they think police are dealing with sexual abuse and domestic abuse incidents after the input. Females reported a smaller increase in confidence when compared to males. For males' confidence there was a 13% increase in police dealing with domestic abuse incidents compared to 8% for females. Similarly, confidence in police tackling sexual assault increased by 10.2% for males and 7.8% for females.

Feedback

At the end of the intervention input the sample groups were asked to rate how useful they had found the input. The male sample (n=30) rated the input as 4.03 out of 5, whereas the females (n=63) rating 4.15 out of 5. These ratings indicate that the young people valued the input and that they felt that it was of benefit for them. The female feedback about the input was largely positive, stating that they felt the input was informative. The feedback from the males was that they felt that the input focused on males being the problem and that there is a lack of recognition of abuse that can occur to males. Some of the male sample reported concerns around false allegations of rape and sexual assault. Additionally, one response raised the question of response violence in different ethnic minorities, perhaps alluding to honour based abuse.

Learning

What went well

There is clear evidence that the intervention has achieved its original aims from the data collected. Statistically there has been a significant increase in the knowledge of young people in relation to VAWG. The greatest increase in knowledge was around the interventions and actions that people could take to keep themselves safe. There has also been an increase in confidence regarding police tackling both domestic abuse and sexual assaults.

Challenges

The most significant challenges involved working with education partners who had limited time and resources. It is essential to involve schools that want to engage and work with officers, as they are responsible for organising the space, groupings and logistics.

Weaknesses

If the input were to be scaled up, there could be a variance in the quality of the delivery. There would not be a guarantee that there would not be bias or respectful delivery of the input.

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