

## **Appendix 18: Girls and Young Women's Strategy and Action Plan**

### **BRIGHTON & HOVE**

### **YOUTH SUPPORT SERVICE**

### **GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMENS STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN**

#### **Introduction**

Within the mission statement of the Brighton & Hove Youth Support Service we commit ourselves to equality of opportunity "Youth workers are expected to challenge oppression and inequality. Within the principles of the Service state that our goal is to provide "An adequate and accessible Service that is universally available to all young people aged 11to 25."

It is an accepted fact that Brighton & Hove Youth Support Service is currently not addressing the needs of Girls and Young Women in the city. This strategy is an attempt to try and redress the balance and to enable the service to begin to meet needs not currently being met by looking at ways in which we can provide environments where "safe, constructive and rewarding experiences" can be developed.

Although it is called an anti sexist strategy, the emphasis of this paper is on work with girls and young women, not anti sexist work with young men.

#### **Recruitment**

The Service currently reflects a male dominated hierarchy in society, with a predominately male management structure. The majority of part time staff and a majority of female part-time staff.

- Job share policies adopted and advertised
- Term time only posts offered to all workers and cover to be provided
- Staff development offered that takes into account carer's availability to encourage career development
- Equal opportunities applied to the whole recruitment process
- Child care offered for interviews/staff development, funded by Youth Service, provided by E.Y.D.C.P
- Sports Training i.e. coaching, to be accessed for women workers and members.
- Recruitment monitoring information collated by Council personnel department.

## **Training**

Staff development and training are key elements to the recruitment and retention of part time and full time youth and community workers. It is also important that workers working with young people receive training which is specific to the work that they are undertaking. This can be achieved through:

- A commitment from all youth workers to undertake anti sexist youth work.
- All workers full time, part time, paid, unpaid, administration, caretakers etc. to undertake training around issues of sexism and how that impacts on their work.
- Training which looks at how all structures within the Service reinforce sexism and look at ways in which these can be challenged.
- Anti sexism should underpin all training from induction to post qualification.
- A more flexible and appropriate training beyond induction and consideration of appropriate venues and timings of training events in order to encourage wider take up of training opportunities.
- The outcome should be a commitment to address sexist actions and comments.
- Training designed for female workers, which takes account of a female perspective. In order to address the needs of workers and young people.
- Female trainers leading on the delivery of training to ensure that the female perspective is maintained.
- The development of a career development package.
- Continuous revisiting/update on equal opportunities training for all staff, not optional, not just part of foundation.
- Single sex training available when warranted
- Practise further training monitored through personal reviews. Not just a tick box that can be completed and not revisited.
- Equal opportunities to be a fundamental underlying all aspects of foundation training.
- Commitment to women worker's meetings, so that policy/practice may be furthered and as an opportunity for non-managerial support.
- Specific training on outreach/detached/club/project youth work

## **Buildings**

Youth clubs and centres and other community buildings are vehicles for informal education with young people. They can send positive and negative messages to young women, staff and the community. We need to ensure females young and old feel welcomed when using the Service buildings, our buildings currently are still male dominated, and do not reflect our equal opportunities policy.

- We need our environments/buildings (ours and others which we utilise) to have positive female images

- Health/Safety issues being addressed to encourage access by females i.e. transport to Extravaganza's etc.
- Information i.e. leaflets/posters to reflect issues that affect demands including raising in equalities in society.
- Not buy into gender expectations i.e. male members/workers asked to lift heavy objects etc, but to use D. I.Y. etc. as an opportunity to question stereotypes.
- Providing an environment which show positive images of individuals and groups of females.
- Displaying ground rules of the building, which include statements of anti discriminatory practice e.g. sexist language not tolerated.
- Racist graffiti to be removed from buildings promptly.
- Health and safety issues being addressed to ensure that all young people feel safe when coming into and leaving the building.
- These factors will also need to be taken into account when using other buildings not owned by the Youth Support Service.
- Work towards our buildings being more female friendly.

### **Code of Practice**

In order to maintain consistency there is a need for workers to jointly agree a code of conduct when interacting with young people. This would consist of

- Not making assumptions about young women.
- Challenging all comments made based on sexist stereotyping.
- Equal opportunities, challenging sexism need to be incorporated into the procedures manual and other policies through out the council.
- Be aware of the power dynamics that we work within, language is important especially within the hierarchy, managers need to take responsibility for this, i.e. derogatory terms pet, love etc.
- Workers to be aware of boundaries, and not exploit/encourage crushes etc.
- Dealing with all sexist incidents promptly.

### **Community Development**

It is important to recognise that as youth workers and a Service we work with a wide range of adults to further youth work and as advocates for young people. Work with girls and young women can be a political challenge to communities, who may need the particular needs of young women highlighted. This will be achieved through.

- Encouraging communities to get involved.
- Using community development methodology to provide support to communities in developing their own provisions, and that resources are available to provide this taking into account the needs of the young women.

- To promote our equal opportunities and anti-sexist policies to the communities we work with.
- A mapping and profiling exercise being undertaken by the youth worker who has responsibility for work with girls and young women. This should include research into what youth groups already exist within the areas.
- Providing support to existing groups through the youth worker responsible for work with girls and young women.
- Promoting events that are targeted at young women.

## **Programmes**

For this strategy to be effective a programme of action needs to be planned, whereby.

- All programmes promote equality of opportunity
- All youth work to consistently challenge sexism.
- Membership is monitored and outreach takes into account the particular needs of young women and is designed to particularly target them.
- Specific targeting is used.
- Membership is reviewed.
- Offer opportunities for young women to become more confident/assertive and to challenge roles and encourage aspirations.
- A commitment to female only events e.g. Extravaganzas, residentials. Resources are available to support this.
- All personal social and health education looks at issues in a holistic way i.e. sexual health and relationships. To reduce and support teenage pregnancy.
- Annual event celebrating International Women's Day.
- Consultation with young females with regards to the programmes they would like in generic and female only spaces.
- All youth work programmes should look at ways in which sexism operates within society, how we change the way that sexism operates within society, and how young females are oppressed through lack of power.
- All staff to support female only programmes by supporting workers and young people to access them.
- Resources available to support this.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The strategy will be monitored and evaluated in order to develop, Youth workers with responsibility for work with girls/young women will have the responsibility to monitor this. All staff will need time to put this strategy into practice.

Monitoring will assess the following criteria.

- Is their Service accessible to Girls and Young Women? If so, how? If not why not?

- What action to increase use of Youth Support Service by young women is being encouraged?
- What evaluation takes place?
- What further action needs to be taken to increase the use of Service by young women?
- What has been the result of action taken?
- What further action needs to be taken?

The youth worker responsible for work will complete an evaluation report, with girls and young women, in March 2003.

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