

All the **Juicy Bits!**

Sex and relationships are important issues for all young people. Being able to get hold of informative and accessible information leads to informed decision making. Having realised that information on sex and relationships is not available in accessible formats for young people with a learning disability Cardiff People first set about writing their own information booklet. Zoe Brock and Davida Hewlett tell us more.

Cardiff People First is led by people with a learning disability. We fight for equality, understanding, respect and acceptance. We stand up for our rights and campaign to change attitudes, get better services and enjoy more opportunities.

Young People

In 2004 Cardiff People First set up a self-advocacy group for under 25 year olds with learning disabilities in their schools and colleges. The young people decided the issue they were most interested in, and affected by, was sex and relationships. They put on a Sex, Sexuality and Relationships Conference in June 2005 and made sure their views were included in the Equal Opportunities Commission report "Why are disabled young people always left till last?" Since then, the group has continued to raise this issue and to highlight how difficult it is to get organisations in the South Wales region to give sexual health information directly to young people with a learning disability.

Getting a better understanding

The group wanted to train sexual health nurses that work in clinics about making information accessible to people with a learning disability, but before they could do this they needed to have a better understanding of the subject themselves and to be comfortable speaking about sex.

In 2006 Cheryl Joscelyne, a Senior Health Promotion Specialist, introduced the group to Simon Evans and Caroline Ryan from the C-card scheme (condom card which gives access to free condoms). Simon and Caroline, youth workers from Cardiff YMCA, came to deliver sexual health information to the group. Although most of the group had had some classes at

school they couldn't really remember anything! Simon and Caroline worked very hard to make the relationships and sexual health training accessible for the group members. Cardiff Young People First told Simon and Caroline how best to make information accessible for them.

A lack of accessible information

Following the success of the two training courses that Cardiff YMCA ran with Cardiff Young People First in the summers of 2007 and 2008 on relationships and sexual health, three of the members took part in peer mentoring training with Cardiff YMCA in 2010. While looking at literature that was available on sex



Llais



and relationships they realised that although many leaflets were funky and appealed to young people, there was nothing that was easy and clear to read for people with learning disabilities or other reading or sight problems.

They therefore decided to create an accessible information booklet called "All the Juicy Bits!". The group chose the language, fonts, colour, pictures, everything! We were very pleased with the finished booklet and it is a great resource for sexual health workers to use.

In Feb 2010 the group eventually delivered (by themselves) their training on how to make sexual health information accessible for people with learning disabilities to nurses at the GUM clinic, Cardiff Royal Infirmary. They will be delivering it again later in the year to C-card assessors and other professionals in this field.

We have had some excellent feedback:

"The games got everyone involved."

"The presentation was very good, congratulations Becky and Simon. I will take away with me a better understanding and awareness of different needs."

"It made me think about how the views of individuals who feel vulnerable are often ignored."

"It made me think about allowing time within busy services to communicate accurately using different methods – written, spoken and pictures."

"Really impressed"

"Well done – challenge the services to get what you want!"

"Brilliant!"

"I really want to work more with this group of people."

"I feel... Enlightened!"
"It was lovely to see the confidence of the young people"

"It really made me think about whether we do enough to encourage people with learning disabilities to access our service."

On the 31st March 2010 we had a celebratory event in the Future Inn in Cardiff in recognition of all the hard work the young people have put into this project. Lorraine Barrett attended and offered her full support for the future.