

Mendi-Vend Briefing Sheet

The Youth Service are proposing to put a Mendi-Vend machine into Peasedown Youth Hub.

Peasedown is a large village situated 7 miles outside Bath it is rurally isolated although served by public transport. Although we currently provide sexual health work via the staff based at Peasedown this service would provide a quicker access for young people providing them with an opportunity to access sexual health advice and where appropriate free contraception links to the C-Card scheme which provides the platform in which to do this work.

NHS B&NES implemented the C-Card scheme in 2005 and became SAFE branded in 2009. The C-Card scheme forms part of the NHS B&NES and B&NES Council partnership strategy for the reduction of teenage pregnancy and improving access to contraception.

The aim of the C-Card scheme is to provide good quality access to sexual health advice and services and already operates across BANES in all youth centres providing young people aged 13-24 with access to free condoms and sexual health information from a variety of different locations in Bath and North East Somerset. The C-Card scheme forms part of a range of services which aims to decrease sexually transmitted disease and teenage pregnancy as detailed in the Sexual Health for Young People in B&NES strategy (2010).

Currently there is 67 C-Card venues in B&NES, with 46 of these venues providing registration access and ongoing supplies. These include community pharmacies, GP surgeries and within the Youth Service in all locations where we operate.

The introduction of the Medi-Vend in 2010 is seen as a natural extension of the scheme allowing young people to access condoms and advice in an accessible and confidential manner.

Young people can also register for a C-Card online at www.ccardfreecondoms.com which has had a staggering 191% increase in usage over the previous year.

Current sexual health service provision (including C-Card) in the area of Peasedown is limited.

There is only one registering site Peasedown and one ongoing supply site at the local Chemist. Current service provision of both sites is limited suggesting a need to widen access to sexual health advice and services. Peasedown Youth Hub has been registered to deliver the C-Card scheme and staff are trained to delivery the service, this will compliment and support the Medi-Vend scheme.

The scheme is already operating locally to young people attending City of Bath College and Norton Radstock College who have registered with C-Card can access condoms and sexual health information and signposting at Medi-Vend condom vending machines located at the colleges. These have proved successful with Norton Radstock requesting an extra machine.

So what does the Medi-Vend machine do?

The Medi-Vend vends condoms and Chlamydia testing kits, it provides sexual health advice and signposting information, inline with the content of the local young people's website (www.ccardfreecondoms.co.uk) and other national sexual health sites. There is also an information and sign posting package called "drugs angel".

Operational issues

- The Mendi-Vend machine is being supplied and funded by NHS B&NES.
- Requires standard internet access (wired) and therefore needs to be connected to the buildings network. Allows the C-Card database to be updated automatically and the ability to access 'live' monitoring information.
- Provides young people access to condoms by inputting their c –card number. Access is, restricted to four supplies of condoms (a total of 24 condoms and four sachets of lubrication) a month.
- Provides sexual health information
- Provides drug angel accessed by anyone; however there are no graphic pictures and it is all written text (suitable for young people).
- This machine is low cost to run and when the screen isn't in use it reverts to an energy saving screensaver.
- If you agree to this request we hope to position it in a place that can be observed by staff whilst also being in an accessible area. It is hoped this will encourage use but also limit any potential vandalism.
- It will be filled by staff on the site – after further training from the sexual health improvement specialist
- NHS B&NES will fund the ongoing maintenance costs of the machine with Children's Services Youth Service meeting the ongoing cost of internet access and the electricity. This cost will be absorbed into the general running costs of the building.

Evaluation

In short this Mendi-Vend machine will increase the quality of delivery and enhance the service provided by Youth Workers, in an area of greatest need. It will help to protect young people from sexuality transmitted diseases, reduce teenage pregnancy as well as providing information about drugs. Evidence tells us that when young people use drugs, including alcohol, risky behaviour increases greatly.

All young people who enter into the C-Card scheme are supported, briefed and trained by staff who are qualified to reduce the risk of young people gaining access to condoms within the proper support. This scheme would be a pilot within the Youth Service and if successful could be put into other Hubs