



Chair's Report

Eric Carlin

The annual report from the Chair of the Drug Education Forum.

2009

A YEAR OF SUCCESS

2008 / 2009 has been extremely productive year for the Forum, one in which we have proved our continuing relevance and seen many of our campaigning themes embraced by government.

I am confident going into this year that we will build on this success and I remain excited about the work that we will do to ensure that drug education in England goes from strength to strength.

Eric Carlin
March 2009



Eric Carlin, Chair of the Drug Education Forum

FORUM MEETINGS

The Forum held three well attended meetings during the year.

- In March we focused on the new drug strategy;
- In July we had feedback from the independent advisory group on drug and alcohol education; and
- In October our main topic was how the drug strategy hoped to include parents in the attempts to ensure that young people don't have problems with illegal drugs.

DRUG EDUCATION; AN ENTITLEMENT FOR ALL

The Forum played a central role in last year's independent review of drug and alcohol education.

We were delighted to provide the secretariat to the review group, which included members of the Forum, and to be asked to write the foreword to the final report.

At its launch I said:

The problems that drugs and alcohol cause are too important for drug education to be an optional subject for parents or schools.

The Drug Education Forum has been championing the importance of supporting parents for many years. This can be done by ensuring that parents have the right information and that every child and young person receives high quality drug and alcohol education from trained professionals.

The review and the government's response offer a significant opportunity to reduce the harm to children, young people and their families from drug and alcohol problems.

These views were reinforced by the major survey of the field that we carried out to support the review.

We gathered the views of over 350 people commissioning, delivering and receiving drug education. Our

respondents said that the three most important things that needed to change were:

- To improve the status drug education in the framework of PSHE, giving it statutory status and increased time over the course of the school year;
- Increased access and commitment to training, both at initial stages and as part of a continuing professional development; and
- The development of a clear curriculum and the resources to deliver it.

As we know the government responded accepted all of the recommendations made by the independent review group.

The government also committed to fund the Drug Education Forum (and the Drug Education Practitioners Forum) until at least 2011.

INFORMATION

The Forum has continued to provide an excellent information

service to members and the wider field.

receiving either daily or weekly updates.

and to Jesse and Simon for their time and help in making the film.

We produced three briefing papers:

- [Tell Us 2008](#) - a paper looking at the findings from the Ofsted survey of school, comparing the findings with those from the Information Centre's survey and examining the findings for the group of authorities that have signed up for NI 115.
- [Drug Use 2007](#) - a paper looking at the findings from the annual survey of school pupils in England. Plus [a single page](#) of facts and figures.
- [The Reclassification of Cannabis](#) - a short briefing on the advice given to the government on cannabis by their statutory advisers, the ACMD, and the government's decision to reclassify the drug to Class B.

Many more people find the Forum's website through searching or via links from other sites. Andrew tells me that we



have had 42,000 views on the blog in the last year, while the website had over 73,000 visits. According to the statistics package we use, documents hosted on the Forum's website have been downloaded on 23,000 occasions this year.

FUTURE PLANS

I'm very pleased to be able to continue as Chair of the Drug Education Forum in a period which I hope will be as lively as we have experienced as a Forum.

This year we will be contributing to the development of new guidance for schools, helping shape the statutory nature of PSHE provision in England, and will engage with the QCA about changes to the primary curriculum.

As a Forum we will focus on helping to define what quality drug education looks like.

VIDEO

This year the Forum produced a short video, *Valuing Drug Education*, which was shown to delegates to the NICE annual conference in December 2008.

The content of the video is now ours to re-edit and to use on our website and elsewhere.

We will hold a number of seminars in addition to our regular meetings which will look at the issues which will be important for the field in the coming period.

We will very shortly refresh our web presence, enhancing visitor's experiences and providing an even clearer sense of our vision and how drug education can help protect children and young people.

The Forum's blog continues to provide timely information about media stories, new research, and conferences in our area.

Andrew currently has over 250 individuals on the mailing list

I would like to take the opportunity to thank the pupils and teachers of Hove Park School

3

The Drug Education Forum
74 Great Eastern Street, London, EC2A 3JG

w: www.drugeducationforum.com
b: drugeducationforum.wordpress.com

Members:

Adfam, Alcohol Concern, Association of Chief Police Officers, Association of School and College Leaders, Association of Teachers and Lecturers, Care for the Family, Children in Crisis, The Children's Society, Clubs for Young People, Children's Safety Education Foundation, the DrinkAware Trust, DARE UK, Drug Education Practitioners Forum, Drugsline, DrugScope, Hope UK, Life Education Centres, Local Government Association, Mentor UK, NASUWT, National Association of Youth and Community Education Officers, National Children's Bureau, National Health Education Group, NSCoPSE- the National PSE Association, NSPCC, National Union of Teachers, National Youth Agency, PSHE Subject Association, Re-Solv, the RCN school nurses forum, Tacade, and Voice - the union for education professionals.