



Sexually Transmitted
A schools-based, peer-led



Infections And Sexual Health:
intervention for 14-16 year

olds

Procedures for reporting sensitive disclosures / child protection issues during the STASH Trial

The following document outlines the procedures for reporting sensitive disclosures and/or potential child protection issues, of which participants in the STASH trial may become aware in the course of the school's participation in STASH. It defines the terms used and details procedures for documenting and reporting these. The document has been developed in line with West Lothian Schools Child Protection Procedures, and in collaboration with West Lothian Council Child Protection. This document is intended for schools participating in STASH. A separate document, 'STASH Procedures: Reporting of harms to NIHR Trial Steering Committee', details procedures the researchers should follow for reporting any harms associated with the trial, in line with National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) guidance. The document STASH Schools brochure v5 outlines the STASH project for schools and accompanies this document.

In the course of STASH Year 1 (2016) preparatory work, we sought to identify and articulate potential untoward incidents via a number of avenues. These included: consultation sessions with young people; a young peoples' advisory group; friendship pair and group interviews with participants from the pilot school; interviews with key school staff (including the STASH contact teacher school and designated member of staff (DMS) for Child Protection); and preparatory discussions with West Lothian Education and Child Protection Officers, and a range of experts in schools-based interventions and child protection.

Acronyms and terminology

'Designated member of staff for Child Protection (DMS)': Member(s) of school staff with specific responsibility for Child Protection.

'ICT': information and communications technology

'NIHR': National Institute for Health Research (study funder)

'Peer Supporters': S4 students who have completed two-day training in STASH and have agreed to take on a role of passing on positive sexual health messages to S4 peers (see STASH Protocol)

‘STASH contact teacher’: teacher agreed as contact point between school and STASH Research Team, and as contact for Peer Supporters for the duration of STASH trial

‘STASH Research Team’: Professor Laurence Moore and Dr Kirstin Mitchell (Principal Investigators), Dr Carrie Purcell (Researcher), Mr Ross Forsyth (Project Manager)

‘Trial participants’: Any members of S4 in the trial school

1. Safety reporting definitions

1.1 Sensitive disclosures and potential child protection issues

Relevant child protection issues which may be disclosed in the course of the STASH trial include: non-consensual sexual activity; child sexual exploitation; suicidal ideation; self-harm/injury; neglect or abuse.

1.2 Potential negative events during the STASH trial period

Potential negative incidents may occur during the project period, including: social exclusion/isolation of participants by peers; inappropriate/inaccurate online posts by Peer Supporters; disrespectful behaviour towards others; breaches of private/personal information by peers; online bullying or sending of sexual/compromising images without consent or for the purposes of humiliation. Such incidents may cause emotional and psychological upset.

2. Expectations within the STASH trial

2.1 Relating to sensitive disclosures and potential child protection issues

There is some likelihood that sensitive disclosures may be made to Peer Supporters in the course of the trial, and procedures regarding these are outlined below.

2.2 Relating to other potential negative events

Negative incidents (see 1.2) occur in day-to-day school life, and may occur during the project period irrespective of the STASH trial. It is important to note that some flippancy is to be expected in young people’s interactions, because of the nature of the topic. The STASH trial promotes values of respect and responsibility in relationships, however given the topic, and the use of social media as a communication channel, the STASH research team is alert to the possibility of negative events as described above.

3. Procedures in place to minimise potential for negative events

The STASH Research Team will employ strategies to minimise as far as possible the likelihood of negative incidents during the STASH trial. Peer Supporters will be required at training to sign up to a

Code of Conduct (STASH Charter). Procedures for dealing with disrespectful/aggressive o behaviour will follow the ICT code of conduct and discipline code of participating schools. Social media use will be confined to private ('secret' ie. non-visible, invite-only) Facebook groups, of which STASH Trainers will be a member. Trainers will conduct monitoring online 'spot checks', and Peer Supporters will also be encouraged to report any negative or concerning incidents to the Trainer and/or STASH Contact Teacher. Students will also have the option to privately message the Trainer as required. The Trainer would then pass on any concerns to the Contact Teacher without delay.

All members of the Research Team and trainers working in schools have PVG clearance/Enhanced Disclosure Scotland certification, which allows them to work with young people under 16.

4. Procedures for reporting and documenting issues

The following sets out reporting procedures at each point of interaction in the STASH trial. These relate to the involvement of the Research Team, STASH Trainers, STASH Contact Teacher, DMS for Child Protection, Peer Supporters, and the whole S4 year group.

4.1 Reporting of sensitive disclosures to Peer Supporters in the course of the STASH trial

Appropriate responses to sensitive disclosures and procedures for reporting potential child protection issues are explained – and their importance emphasised – during the two-day Peer Supporter training. In particular, Peer Supporters will be advised on how to respond to sensitive information shared by peers (including respecting privacy), and when to share these with the STASH Contact Teacher/DMS.

Peer Supporters are given guidance on how to identify sensitive disclosures and potential CP issues, and when and how to report these incidents to the Trainer or Contact Teacher/DMS. The expectation is made clear to young people acting as Peer Supporters that any disclosures about which they feel worried or uncomfortable should be reported without delay to the Contact Teacher/DMS. The STASH Contact Teacher, or a representative, should be present at the Peer Supporter training. Schools have in place procedures for handling disclosures relating to child protection (see Appendix 1 for example), which should then be followed as per usual practice. Peer Supporters are advised that they may also contact the STASH trainer via Facebook, if they wish (see below, 4.2).

It is possible that students might make other disclosures to Peer Supporters in the trial period which do not constitute a child protection issue, but which are nonetheless experienced as concerning by either party. During training, Peer Supporters are advised to act only within their comfort level, and are not to provide support beyond what they would normally offer to a friend. We recognise that the capacity of minors to make appropriate decisions around their own safety is a contested issue. STASH Peer Supporters will be strongly encouraged to refer other students to appropriate sources of adult help, and are provided with detailed guidance on when to refer and to whom. These will be established at the initial Peer Supporter training and maintained throughout the trial, via the regular follow-up sessions led by STASH Trainers.

4.2 Negative events

Participating schools have policies in place to deal with behaviours that lead to negative events. The STASH research team and trainers will inform the school if any such behaviour occurs as a direct result of participation in STASH (e.g. during the training) and expects that the School will respond as per their policy.

The contact teacher should immediately report any serious negative events (those resulting in emotional and/or psychological harm to one or more individuals) arising in the course of STASH to the STASH Research Team, (with identifying details removed). The form in Appendix 3 should be used to make this report. The STASH team will then report these to their trial steering committee and funder (NIHR). This report will include an assessment of the extent to which the serious negative event was caused by, or coincided with, STASH.

4.3 Disclosures of potential child protection issues to Research Team and/or STASH Trainers

The role of the Research Team and STASH Trainers includes: having awareness of relevant child protection procedures; recognising indicators of abuse; recording and passing on relevant information without delay; consultation with an appropriate person. Procedures for referral follow school procedures (see Appendix 1 for example) and relevant national guidance.

The Research Team and STASH Trainers will only break confidentiality where a disclosure during Peer Supporter training or evaluation fieldwork (friendship group discussions, paired interviews) suggests that a young person might be at risk or pose a risk to others (see Appendix 1). We will work closely with the school (via the STASH Contact Teacher) to ensure that all relevant information is shared promptly with the Contact Teacher/DMS. School procedures for handling disclosures relating to child protection (see Appendix 1) should then be followed as normal.

In the course of the trial evaluation, S4 participants will also be asked whether they perceived any negative incidents resulting from the trial.

4.4 Referral for sexual health advice

The Research Team and Trainers will work with local young people's sexual health services, school nurses/sexual health drop-in services, and youth organisations to ensure appropriate referral for young people requesting help with personal issues related to their sexual health. Every member of the Research Team will be provided with relevant contact details for local services, which they can provide to students as appropriate. Local sexual health services will be invited to attend Peer Supporter training and/or follow-up sessions, in order to consolidate pathways to support.

Appendix 1.

***NAME OF SCHOOL* CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES**

All members of staff have the responsibility to follow Edinburgh and Lothians Inter-Agency Child Protection Procedures. Copies of the procedures are held in the school office.

The designated members of staff for Child Protection are:

LIST OF TEACHERS WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHILD PROTECTION

Action procedures for managing a disclosure are in the Child Protection Policy and E&L Inter-Agency Procedures.

Remember:

When faced with a disclosure or concern –

Do not guarantee confidentiality

Be receptive and reassuring

A signed, hand-written record of concerns noting the date and time when the matter was passed to DMS

Share your concern with the DMS on the same day

Where DMS is unavailable, you must not delay, but make a referral immediately to one of the Core Agencies:

List core agencies and contact details

Appendix 2.

The two most relevant documents relating to schools-based policy on the above issues are:

1. GIRFEC <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright/wellbeing> (sets out roles and responsibilities, information sharing, risk assessment and responding to child protection concerns) and
2. NATIONAL GUIDANCE: Under-age Sexual Activity: Meeting the Needs of Children and Young People and Identifying Child Protection Concerns (2010) <http://www.gov.scot/resource/doc/333495/0108880.pdf> (to be read alongside GIRFEC)

While specific protocols are developed locally, the latter document outlines examples of potential indicators of harm / circumstances in which information should be shared amongst agencies with responsibility for child protection (see below). All adults involved in STASH will operate with these guidelines in mind.

The following section has been reproduced from the national guidance on under-age sexual activity (<https://www2.gov.scot/resource/doc/333495/0108880.pdf>), with permission from The Scottish Government.

'Automatic sharing of concerns

There are certain circumstances in which practitioners should automatically share child protection concerns:

- if the young person is currently 13 or over but sexual activity took place when they were 12 or under;
- if there is evidence or indication that the young person is involved in pornography or prostitution;
- if the 'other person' is in a position of trust in relation to the young person;
- if the young person is perceived to be at immediate risk.

In these circumstances, the practitioner should:

- where appropriate, speak with the child and young person prior to passing on the child protection concern – every reasonable effort should be made to seek their agreement;
- share the child protection concern in line with their local child protection procedures, detailing those who are involved, the nature of the concerns etc; and
- if agreement is not reached, the professional should share the child protection concern and inform the child and young person that this will be the course of action.

If the young person is not at risk of harm:

If the practitioner has assessed that the sexual behaviour is consensual teenage sexual activity where there are no concerns of abuse or exploitation, the practitioner should:

- uphold the confidentiality rights of the young person; and

- provide practical assistance and advice as required. Practitioners not qualified to provide this should signpost young people to the appropriate local services (e.g. sexual health services).

If the practitioner has assessed that the sexual behaviour is not abusive or exploitative, but that there remain concerns about the young person's behaviour e.g. their ability to assess risk, their use of drugs/alcohol, the environment in which they seek sexual contacts etc, then the practitioner should:

- uphold the confidentiality rights of the young person; and
- provide practical assistance and advice as required within their own agency or, with their permission, refer them to the appropriate clinical or support services, including forensic or sexual health services.

In both these scenarios, a single-agency decision-making process is normally appropriate.

If there are concerns that the young person might be at risk of harm:

If the practitioner is concerned that the young person's behaviour, or the nature of the sexual behaviour and/or relationship, could indicate that the young person is at risk of harm, the practitioner should:

- seek guidance from a line-manager in accordance with their agency's guidelines and decide if further action is required;
- inform the young person about the need speak to other practitioners, where required, and seek their consent if possible;
- share appropriate information with other practitioners about the young person;
- if required, seek advice from other services and agencies to assist in this decision-making; and
- share information with the police if there are concerns about the young person's sexual partner.'

Appendix 3

STASH TRIAL

REPORT TO RESEARCH TEAM OF SERIOUS NEGATIVE EVENTS RESULTING IN EMOTIONAL AND/OR PSYCHOLOGICAL HARM TO ONE OR MORE INDIVIDUALS

STASH Contact Teachers and Trainers are asked to contact the Research Team within five working days if they become aware of any sensitive disclosure and/or potential child protection issue occurs, as a direct result of the STASH study. Young people acting as peer supporters are asked to pass on any sensitive disclosure and/or potential child protection issue to DMS or Trainers for reporting as soon as possible.

1. Details of person making report

Name:	
Role relating to STASH:	
Telephone:	
Email:	

2. Circumstances of event

Date on which untoward incident/ harm occurred:	
Location:	
Type of incident (eg. cyberbullying, unlawful activity):	
Please describe the circumstances of the event and actions taken to date:	

3. Declaration

Signature of reporting person:	
Print name:	
Date of submission to Research Team:	

FOR STASH Research Team Use Only

4. Acknowledgement of receipt by main Research Team

The Research Team acknowledges receipt of the above report.

Signed:	
Print name:	
Position on Research Team:	
Date:	
Causality judgment: Unrelated; unlikely; possible; probable; definite; not assessable	
To be forwarded to TSC? (Yes/No) If YES, date forwarded.	

If causality is deemed possible between serious negative event and STASH trial, the TSC chair should be informed within 15 days. The threshold for informing the TSC is set at 'low'. The chair will circulate with rest of TSC if necessary. If the chair is away, the PI should inform the designated representative on the TSC.

Signed original to be retained by STASH Research Team.

5. Acknowledgement of receipt by STASH Trial Steering Committee

The TSC acknowledges receipt of the above report

Signed:	
Print name:	
Position on Research Team:	
Date:	