

Introducing the FPA YAC

The Youth Advisory Committee is a newly formed group of young people from all over the UK who have been united through an interest in sexual health and relationships. The group first met at the beginning of 2011 and since then have been busy getting involved in FPA campaigns and projects.

This year, members attended the FPA/Brook drinks reception at the House of Lords, as well as familiarising themselves with the work on domestic violence. This newsletter will keep everyone in the organisation informed of the YAC members' activities, as well as gradually introducing them one by one.

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Profile: Sarah (follow on twitter @Sarah_H1)

Sarah is an original member of the YAC, having joined in January 2011. She originally volunteered with FPA for four months in 2010, working in the Fundraising department and wanted to continue her involvement with the charity.

Sarah believes that it is vital to inform and consult young people about sexual health and reproductive rights. By working with FPA, she feels that she is taking some control of her own rights; both as a woman and as a young person. She believes that sexual health and reproductive rights are very much tied in with the intrinsic rights of women.

Sarah is a Research Assistant at the Centre for Labour Market Studies at the University of Leicester, working mainly on projects around Youth Transitions to Work. She studied at the University of Leicester, graduating in 2010 with a BA (Hons.) in International Relations. While at university Sarah realised how little her fellow housemates (all girls) knew about local sexual health services, this realisation sparked an interest in sexual health which continued to grow following her experience volunteering with Paul Fleming at FPA.

Sarah heard about YAC via FPA and would really like other young people to get involved. She is very keen to recruit members under 20 years old, especially those with different backgrounds.

If given one wish regarding Sexual Health and/or Reproductive Rights in the UK, Sarah said: "There isn't just one! As the recent Dorries led amendment in parliament failed, I would like all young people to be given a sound and impartial sexual health and relationship education, I would also like all pharmacists and doctors to give neutral and factual advice, free from their own personal values".



"Women aren't stupid and know their own minds and this should be reflected in the law."

*Keep an eye out for the
YAC page on the FPA
website*

www.fpa.org.uk/yac

What to expect.....

The final YAC meeting of 2011 takes place on 5 December; we will be discussing putting the finishing touches to the YAC page on the FPA website, as well as setting up a @twitter page for members to post from. This is exciting move for members, allowing us to keep followers updated on what we're doing in between meetings!

The group would like to say goodbye to two of our members:

Reni has been part of the YAC since we all came together in January 2011. She has had to leave the committee due to time pressures connected with her role as President of UCLan Student's Union. Reni's contributions to YAC have been fabulous and we will all miss her very much.

Reni - thank you, good luck and keep in touch!

Malika also joined YAC in January 2011. She is currently studying abroad as part of her undergraduate degree and so will rejoin the group in late 2012.

Recent work: Dave

Dave Lawrence has just returned from three months in Uganda where he was conducting research about sex education in Ugandan secondary schools for his Masters in Medical Anthropology.

The study was mainly concerned with young people's knowledge around sexual and reproductive health, looking at what they would like to learn at school. The majority of young people he spoke to were sexually active and many of these had unprotected sex and/or multiple partners: behaviours putting them at risk of unwanted pregnancy, STIs and HIV. The young people wanted to learn more about protecting themselves but government policy restricted students from being taught about how to use condoms, focusing more on abstinence-only education which most young people did not feel was comprehensive enough.

Dave's findings highlight the importance of comprehensive Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) and the potential dangers that could arise from an abstinence-only curriculum which demonises sex and doesn't provide those who claim their right to be sexually active with the information they require and deserve to protect themselves.

Up and coming

We are hopeful that some of our members will be able to attend the YSAFE conference early next year; look out for an update on this in the next newsletter.

The YAC next meets on 5 December 2011 so expect the next update on our antics in February/March 2012!