

The Teen Magazine Arbitration Panel



Annual Report 2007

Table of Contents

Chairman's Foreword	Page 3
About TMAP	Page 5
The Panel	Page 5
Magazine Sector Information	Page 6
Adjudications	Page 7
Research Summary	Page 9
TMAP Annual Forum 2007	Page 12
Educating and Informing: A Year in Review	Page 15
TMAP Guidelines	Page 18

Chairman's Foreword

Introduction to TMAP Annual Report 2007

"The true measure of a nation's standing is how well it attends to its children – their health and safety, their material security, their education and socialization, and their sense of being loved, valued, and included in the families and societies into which they are born."

This preface to the UNICEF report "An Overview of Child Wellbeing in Rich Countries" encapsulates the concerns of the Teenage Magazine Arbitration Panel (TMAP) during our work during 2007. The UNICEF report burst upon the public consciousness in the New Year, when United Kingdom newspapers reported the researchers' startling conclusion that our children and adolescents have the lowest score for well-being out of the world's richest countries. The six dimensions investigated were material wellbeing, health and safety, educational well-being, family and peer relationships, behaviours and risks, and subjective well-being.

The UK scored bottom of the 18 richest countries for every dimension except health and safety. It is perhaps no surprise that the Netherlands tops the table, ranking in the top 10 for all dimensions covered in the report. Our UK teenage pregnancy rates, risky sexual behaviour, smoking, drinking and experience of drug-taking all ensured we were bottom in the dimension of 'behaviours and risks'. Fascinatingly there is no obvious link between GDP and child well being.

Again this year the TMAP Annual Forum (Pg. 12) involved students from Thomas Tallis School, one of whom reflecting on media stories about young people said memorably: "We are the new media folk devils". A telling reflection on how young people perceive that they are valued by UK society, where national media regularly demonise young people.

I report with real sadness the demise of two teen magazine titles: BBC's "It's Hot"; and "CosmoGIRL!", whose sterling work involving readers in political lobbying for adequate sex and relationship education, had culminated in the editor and a reader delivering a petition to No. 10 Downing Street in 2006. These losses reflect lower magazine sales and increasing website use by young people. They also reflect real losses to the strength of the teen magazine scene. It has been suggested that teenage girls are tending to buy more weekly celebrity magazines, which of course have no features geared to teenagers' needs for information and advice.

Ironically, at this time of financial pressure, teen magazines received public recognition of their significant role as sources of accessible information and advice for young people on sexual health and relationships by OFSTED¹ (and, in previous years, the FPA); specifically, magazines unique strength in talking with rather than at their readers.

¹ Time for Change? Personal, Social and Health Education. OFSTED April 2007
http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/assets/Internet_Content/Shared_Content/Files/2007/apr/timechangePSHE.pdf

Kerry Neilson's admirably succinct report on Pg. 15 records the political and social milieu in 2007 that impacted on teenagers' lives, and thus on the work of TMAP.

Roger Ingham's helpful update (Pg. 9) on the Government's teenage pregnancy strategy reveals the true figures behind occasionally misleading headlines relating to this important government policy, which through its implementation recognises the complex factors affecting the incidence of teen pregnancies.

With one formal complaint during 2007 (see Pg. 7) it can again be seen that it is often headlines, crafted to attract teenagers, that offend older eyes. Again it has been a privilege to work with TMAP. I wish to thank particularly Roger Ingham, for keeping us abreast of Government policy and recent research and Cathy Fallon who has facilitated the TMAP Forum really talking with, not about, young people. To the students of Thomas Tallis School I give my warmest thanks for their survey and for memorably sharing their perceptions and experiences with the Forum.

Enabling young people to appreciate how Government policies can affect them intimately was an important outcome of Terri Dowty's presentation at the Forum on child databases, current and planned, which proved disturbing to many of the audience. My most grateful thanks are due to Kerry Neilson whose energy and flair ensured that TMAP operated effectively in 2007, and organised an interactive Forum that really included young people in both presentation and debate.

James Evans has ably supported both Kerry and TMAP, and I particularly valued the continuing support of Nick Mazur, Deputy CEO of PPA.

As Chair of TMAP I hope that our work and influence may impact positively on the wellbeing of the UK's young people who do not deserve to be "the new media folk devils" but recognised and respected as the nation's human capital.

Dr Fleur Fisher
Chair of Teenage Magazine Arbitration Panel

About TMAP

The Teenage Magazine Arbitration Panel (TMAP) monitors the sexual content of teenage magazines, ensuring that all sexual information in such magazines remains accurate and appropriate for the target readership, and in accordance with the TMAP Guidelines.

The Guidelines are the publishing industry's own standards, produced in co-operation with magazine publishers, editors and retailers, and approved by the Home Office. The Guidelines are administered by a panel of publishers and non-publishing experts including health professionals, who meet to adjudicate on complaints, and to decide whether there has been a breach of those Guidelines.

Magazines falling within the remit of TMAP are those where 25 per cent or more of the readership are girls and boys under 16 years of age. The TMAP panel also monitors the online output of magazines within its remit.

The Panel

TMAP consists of representatives from the fields of child public health, teenage sexual health, sex education, research, law and publishing. The TMAP secretariat is run by Kerry Neilson, Director of Legal and Public Affairs at PPA.

TMAP continues to be chaired by Dr Fleur Fisher and in 2007 the publisher seats were occupied by the editors of: CosmoGIRL! (until August), Bliss, Mizz, Sugar, It's Hot (until May) and Top of the Pops.

Details of the non-publisher industry experts are as follows:

Dr Fleur Fisher

A former head of the British Medical Association's Ethics, Science and Information Division, Fleur is now director of the independent consultancy Healthcare-ethics and Trustee of The Medical Foundation for AIDS and Sexual Health (MedFASH), the Foundation for Information Policy Research and a member of the University of Westminster's Ethics Committee.

Before joining the staff of the BMA in 1991, Fleur spent 25 years working in family planning clinics and developing community services. She has developed sex education programmes with young people, teachers, youth and social workers and has worked for Piccadilly Radio and Granada TV.

Professor Roger Ingham

Roger Ingham is Professor of Health and Community Psychology at the University of Southampton and director of the Centre for Sexual Health Research.

Roger has worked on sexual health issues for many years, during which time he has published widely on relevant topics and worked closely with policy makers in this

country and abroad. He has been a consultant for the World Health Organisation's AIDS programme and is a member of the Government's Independent Advisory Group for the Teenage Pregnancy Unit. He was also a member of the Sexual Health and HIV National Strategy core group.

Monique Allan

Monique is a practising commercial barrister specialising in a broad range of commercial advisory, litigation and arbitration work. She is also an accredited mediator and qualified as FCIArb, sitting on the Lloyds and NASD panels of arbitrators. Before being called to the Bar in 1986, following postgraduate studies, Monique worked in the insurance and banking industries. She has a daughter of 27 and son of 25.

Cathy Fallon

Cathy - Assistant Head Teacher at Thomas Tallis School, Greenwich - has been a secondary school teacher for the past 20 years and is currently a DFES appointed Advanced Skills Teacher in Citizenship and PSHE. She is an FPA Accredited teacher of Sex and Relationships and works alongside many outside agencies in the development of PSHE programmes and the Healthy Schools Standard, including SRE, Drugs Education, Healthy Eating and Personal and Economic Wellbeing. Cathy has a 7 year old son and a 12 year old daughter.

Anna Martinez

Anna is the Coordinator of the Sex Education Forum, the national authority on sex and relationships education (SRE). Established in 1987, it is a unique collaboration of 49 organisations including religious, children's, parents, governors, health and education. It aims to ensure that all children and young people receive their entitlement to good quality SRE, in a variety of settings. Prior to working at the Forum, Anna was the SRE lead of the Enfield and Haringey Teenage Pregnancy Team where she managed a team of SRE educators and provided training for professionals. She also has experience of working for UNAIDS in Namibia. Anna has a BSc in Psychology, an MSc in Health Promotion and is an accredited sexual health trainer.

Magazine Sector Information

The magazines covered by the TMAP Guidelines in 2007 were: Bliss, CosmoGIRL!, It's Hot, Mizz, Sugar and Top of the Pops.

As mentioned in the introduction, unfortunately some of the publications within the TMAP remit closed in 2007. We were sorry to see the closure of CosmoGIRL! and It's Hot magazines.

Adjudications

TMAP received only one complaint in 2007.

Adjudication of TMAP on an article appearing in "Sugar" magazine: 'Sugar Pulling Guide – 6 Secrets of Sexiness'.

TMAP received a letter about the article 'Sugar Pulling Guide – 6 Secrets of Sexiness'.

In its adjudication TMAP went through each relevant section of the TMAP Guidelines in turn to check whether the article in question was compliant with them. TMAP's adjudication is as follows:

Scope

Article 2.1 of the Guidelines states that the Guidelines apply to magazines published more than once per year, where readers under-16 years of age comprise more than 25% of the readership.

- TMAP found that 'Sugar' fell into this category and that it had competence to adjudicate the complaint.

General Principles and Procedures

Article 3.1 of the Guidelines states that readers will always be encouraged to take a responsible attitude to sex and contraception and, where relevant, to seek advice from GPs and other professionals.

- TMAP found 4 separate examples of the magazine's S.A.F.E* campaign throughout the 2-page article (Sure of the facts, Age 16 or over, Free from pressure, Emotionally sorted). Furthermore, the tone of the first page stressed that 'sexiness' did not necessarily involve having sex or dressing provocatively. The second page further emphasised the S.A.F.E* campaign and the information in the text box explained terms girls are likely to have heard. It also recommended the proper use of contraception to prevent sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and pregnancy. TMAP considered that in this case, recommendations to visit a GP or other health professional were unnecessary. TMAP therefore held that the article complied with Article 3.1.

Article 3.2 of the Guidelines states that if sex is being discussed, safer sex will be highlighted.

- As mentioned in the commentary on Article 3.1, the Sugar S.A.F.E* campaign was mentioned four times in the text of the article. Advice about contraception was given where appropriate. TMAP held that the article complied with Article 3.2.

Article 3.3 states that where under-age sex or sexual abuse is discussed it will be clearly stated as illegal in the UK. Underage sex will be discouraged and the age of consent clearly stated.

- The article does not discuss specific examples of under-age sex or abuse. It gives a series of definitions for 'slang' terms. TMAP held that the inclusion of the S.A.F.E* logo giving the message 'Age 16 or over' was sufficient to ensure compliance of the article with the Guidelines in this case.

Article 3.4 states that editorial advice will be given in good faith with relevant professional organisations contacted for Guidelines and named within the editorial where relevant.

- Sugar reported to TMAP that the terms covered in the glossary were included in response to a series of letters received by the editorial team asking what they meant. The text box was included to address these questions and give sensible answers. TMAP agreed that this approach complied with the Article 3.4 provisions. Since the terms discussed are very general in nature, the inclusion of names of specific organisations in the article was not considered necessary by TMAP. TMAP held that the article complied with Article 3.4.

Article 3.5 states that readers will be encouraged to seek support from parents, guardians or other responsible adults where relevant and that the emotional consequences of sexual activity will be highlighted where relevant.

- TMAP held that the general nature of the terms explained in the article meant there was no requirement for a statement encouraging readers to seek advice from a parent or guardian. TMAP held that the emotional consequences of sexual activity were adequately highlighted in point 6 on page 1 of the article. It therefore complied with 3.5.

Article 3.6 states that the editorial content of teen magazines will reflect the typical concerns of the readership, with relevant and responsible advice given as answers to their concerns.

- As mentioned previously, the article was written in response to a number of letters asking questions about the terminology. TMAP held that the tone of the article laid out the facts in a way which was responsible and appropriate to the readership and that it complied with Article 3.6.

Overall Adjudication

In addition to the clause by clause examination of the article, TMAP also felt that taken as a whole it was responsible in its nature and addressed a series of questions from readers in an accessible manner.

TMAP therefore held that the article 'Sugar Pulling Guide – 6 Secrets of Sexiness' did not breach the TMAP Guidelines.

Research Summary

Update on progress of the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy

February 2008

Professor Roger Ingham, Director, Centre for Sexual Health Research, University of Southampton, member of Teenage Pregnancy Unit Independent Advisory panel, and member of TMAP.

In 1999, the Government introduced a new strategy aimed to reduce the rates of conceptions amongst 15 to 17 year olds by half by the year 2010. The introduction of the strategy was intended to reduce the degree of social exclusion experienced by many teenage parents and their children, and to offer improved support for those young parents who decide to continue with their pregnancies.

The latest figures for under-18 conceptions in England and Wales were published on 2 February 2008. Due to the delay in collating all the various figures from around the country, these rates refer to 2006, so they are somewhat dated before they are available. However, they do provide an indication of progress towards the target as the end point gets ever closer.

The baseline year for the rate was 1998, when it was 47.1 per thousand women aged between 15 and 17 years. The 2006 rate was 40.7 per thousand. This is a reduction of 13.7 percent, which is rather lower than would be needed to meet the target to halve the rates by 2010. This news was greeted with mixed reactions – on the one hand, the rates are still decreasing steadily, whilst, on the other, they are clearly not decreasing as fast as might have been hoped.

The overall national figures disguise large regional variations, however. Since the baseline year, for example, some areas have achieved reductions of over 30 percent (including Bournemouth, Gloucestershire, North Somerset, Wokingham, Slough, Bracknell Forest, Hammersmith and Fulham, North Yorkshire, Oldham, South Tyneside) whilst others have shown increased rates (including Stockton-on Tees, York, Norfolk, Barking and Dagenham, Enfield, Torbay, Redbridge and Richmond).

Explaining such variations is not straightforward. However, a couple of years ago, a team of researchers from the Government and advisors visited a number of areas which showed contrasting levels of success. They interviewed a large range of key people to try to see what the differences were in terms of local policies and programmes implementation. Some clear conclusions were drawn.

The areas that were more successful in reducing rates were more likely to have a good youth service, local senior 'champions' who kept the issue on the political agenda, good schools-based sex and relationships education (SRE), good systems of multi-agency working (that is, education, health, social services, and others working together with common aims), and good local service provision for young people to get support and advice.

These findings were incorporated into new Government guidance that was issued during 2006. The first of these – Teenage Pregnancy: Accelerating the Strategy – provided a brief summary of current knowledge on how well we can predict who are more likely to become teenage parents, and then gave a number of pointers to actions that are needed in areas with rates that are not moving in the right direction. These include improving SRE in schools and sexual health services, as well as raising aspirations of the more vulnerable young people. A section on supporting young parents is also included.

The second book – Teenage Pregnancy, Next Steps - contains rather fuller details of risk factors and actions that local authorities and primary care trusts should be developing.

Alongside these publications, a number of other activities are in place. First, the Minister for Children, School and Families (Beverley Hughes) meets regularly with senior officers from those areas that are not doing well in meeting the target. Second, the National Support Team from the Department of Health visits poorly-performing areas to offer support and advice on what they could be doing more effectively. These highly experienced staff spend a few days in each area and discuss issues with a wide range of key people before producing a report with suggested actions. Support is then offered for some months after the visit.

Alongside all this activity, the Minister for Education – Jim Knight – has recently launched a review of sex and relationships education in schools. This is the first (hopefully) comprehensive review for some years and has high level support. It was established in response to increasing pressure from a wide range of directions that SRE should be a compulsory part of the schools' personal and social health education, such that schools would have to cover the area in sufficient depth to be useful and relevant and also that parents would not have the right to withdraw their children from the lessons. Amongst the triggers for the review was a 20,000 head petition presented last year by the UK Youth Parliament, which followed an earlier petition (Just Say Know) organised by CosmoGIRL!. The UKYP report produced to support their campaign is entitled Are You Getting It?

So, there is a sense of optimism that, although the rates are not reducing quite as fast as some might hope, there is much greater high level concern that some radical changes need to be made.

Finally, there is an interesting trend in the conception statistics with which I started this short report. Of the conceptions that do occur amongst the under 18 year olds, a higher proportion are now terminated than was the case at the start of the strategy. What this means in practice, is that, although the conception rate has decreased by 13.7 percent, the actual birth rate has decreased by over 20 percent. Since the initial strategy was introduced to try to avoid the high levels of social exclusion experienced by young parents and their children, this trend is clearly to be welcomed.

Despite the increasing benefits on offer now to help support young parents (better housing in some areas, higher income support to help meet the costs of childcare and

return to education), fewer are opting to carry on with their pregnancies. This is a most encouraging trend and one that may, to some extent, help to silence the critics of the Government's approach that most young women have babies to get better benefits.

There is still much to do to ensure that young people make informed decisions regarding their sexual and reproductive choices, and the education and support offered by the magazine sector remains fundamental to this process.

Sources:

The Teenage Pregnancy Unit publications can be accessed through <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/health/teenagepregnancy/about/>

The UK Youth Parliament report and other activities can be found at <http://www.ukyouthparliament.org.uk>

TMAP Annual Forum 2007

For the 2007 Forum TMAP focused on the audience for teen magazines and what their thoughts and feelings were. It gave the audience a chance to question the editors of TMAP member magazines and investigated the issues around privacy and the use of young people's data.

The Students' Session

In a session entitled 'Stop Talking and Listen to Us' students from South London's Thomas Tallis School told the TMAP Annual Forum exactly what they and their peers thought of a number of subjects, relating to teenage magazines.

The teens conducted an informal survey of fellow students on a range of issues from music and magazine preferences to body image and how they're portrayed in the press.

They told an audience made up of teen magazine editors, healthcare professionals and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that their favourite magazines were those focusing on fashion and celebrity gossip for girls and hobbies such as music and gaming for boys.

The students felt their generation was much-maligned in the media and that while they appreciated that bad news sold better than good news, they seldom saw stories which celebrated their achievements instead of reporting the latest teen shooting. They felt they were being portrayed as the 'new media folk devils' and were concerned that this was leading to a breakdown of communication between the generations where the young would automatically be considered to be 'up to no good' even if they were just spending time with their friends. Interestingly the students felt like local newspapers gave them a more positive coverage – for example reporting good exam and sports results.

When questioned on whether fashion magazines could affect the way young women perceived themselves, the students told the audience that they were perfectly well-aware of the fact that models could be airbrushed in images but that they didn't all feel the need to be size zero, although they couldn't agree on what an ideal body size would be. They told the audience that soaps for young people such as Hollyoaks were capable of provoking a lot of debate especially when they ran storylines on issues such as eating disorders.

When asked what sort of use they made of the internet, the majority answered that they used online chatrooms such as Bebo. The websites of mobile phone operators where bar codes giving discounts on talk and text time could be downloaded were very popular, as was online gaming and accessing music and video content. Peter Hart of "Top of the Pops" magazine commented that downloading music had led to young people having much more eclectic tastes in music and affected the way the magazine was put together.

One student with a hearing disability commented that for him, the possibility to go online and chat with friends opened up a whole new range of social situations. He really valued the possibility of video links to his friends as this made it easier from them to sign to one another.

Online safety was discussed in detail. Teens reported that online age-rating would not really work, as their parents did not understand the internet and certainly would not know what to do with filtering software. They added that it was not difficult to sign up to websites with an age limit. It was simply a matter of lying about their age.

Students were concerned that their privacy should not be undermined in order to protect them and that the number of opportunities they had to use the internet for everything from study to socializing should not be limited by concerns over safety. They commented that having to use the computer in the same room as their parents who might look over their shoulder while they were talking to their friends was akin to 'having them read your diary'.

When asked to comment on who their role models were, the students were quick to point out that, contrary to popular opinion, they did not see Paris Hilton as a role model. They preferred role models who had achieved greatness through a particular talent they had. Names such as Keira Knightley and Wayne Rooney were mentioned. When asked what they would like to be in the future, students gave a wide range of career choices such as doctor, hairdresser, lawyer, musician, journalist and psychologist. They saw qualities such as hard work and ambition as desirable.

A student from Year 7 wrote the following comment which she asked to be included in the debate: "Dear forum, I am 12 years old and I have many interests. Most of my life is focused on school, but when I am not at school I am rather shopping for new clothes, shoes, and bags or just watching the Disney channel at home. I dress casually and have to be in with the fashion which I get from my favourite magazine, Sugar. I also nearly most of the time have earphones in my ears listening to R+B or Hip Hop beats. I am not the kind of girl that is on the street 24/7 with guns and knives. I do not listen to the music where people just jump around the TV saying that noone can mess with them and they are the best, I am not very fond of them things."

The Editors' Session

Teen magazine editors told the audience that they took their cue from the letters and emails they received from readers. Any articles carried by them were as a response to genuine questions. They also took the opportunity to stress that they regularly used readers as models and carried articles designed to improve the self-esteem of their readers, including issues such as body image and confidence. Editors pointed out that it was very important for them to use language which young people felt comfortable with – something which sometimes resulted in inaccurate reporting in the media of the articles they were carrying.

The Thomas Tallis students commented that they didn't want to be 'preached' at and teen magazines spoke in a language which was appropriate to them. They added that although their first port of call would probably be friends or family if they had a problem,

the pages of teen magazines often made them aware that they were not the only ones who were struggling with a particular issue.

The Privacy Session

In the final presentation of the morning, Terri Dowty of Action on Children's Rights (ARCH) highlighted the issues around sharing of young people's data across Government departments. She questioned the security of the data, which would include asking for advice on contraception before age 16, contact with social services and whether a young person had come to the attention of the police, and the necessity of sharing it with so many different agencies.

Her intervention was prophetic as it pre-dated the announcement of the loss of millions of people's data by a Government Department in late 2007. When asked, the students from Thomas Tallis School expressed concern at their data being used in this way. Ms Dowty warned them that even the act of applying for a free bus pass could potentially result in their data being shared with other agencies. She told the forum that a coalition of like-minded organisations were campaigning to ensure that young people's privacy was not unnecessarily undermined by data sharing and urged the students present at the Forum to get involved.

Drawing together conclusions from the morning, TMAP chair Fleur Fisher told the audience that the message it should take away from the morning was that young people were individuals with rights to privacy and information and that parents, as well as the industry, had the responsibility to ensure that they did not have access to content which could be inappropriate.

Kerry Neilson

Educating and Informing A Year in Review

2007 has been a year of plaudits and brick bats in equal measure for teen magazines. One thing that can always be guaranteed is that there will be a huge amount of debate about the role teen magazines should play in society. This year has certainly thrown up some interesting arguments.

In March, Channel 4 showed the programme 'Let's Talk Sex'² which discussed the merits of compulsory sex education in schools and showcased the Dutch system which makes sex education obligatory but allows schools to decide how it will be taught. The teen pregnancy rate has fallen significantly in The Netherlands. Debate in the UK in the aftermath of Channel 4's screening was fairly polarised.

In an interview with the Guardian³, Norman Wells of NGO Family and Youth Concern, which believes sex education should be taught within a moral framework, said "...we are also bothered about the claim in the programme they are showing tonight, that they turn to the Netherlands and say we need sex education of this kind in the UK - that it is the golden bullet that will solve our problems with teenage pregnancies." A spokesperson for Brook in the same article argued that sex education should be part of the national curriculum in the UK, commenting that, "All that is compulsory [as part of the national curriculum] is reproductive health and general sexual health. In some schools that means they deliver it as part of biology lessons, but we think it should be much broader than that and that sex and relationship education be part of the national curriculum."

The debate continued throughout the year with the UK's Youth Parliament launching a campaign calling for compulsory sex education in schools. It took the results of a survey it conducted of over 20,000 school students of the standard of SRE in schools. According to the responses received, 40% said it was poor or very poor, 33% said it was average. 55% of 12-to 15-year-olds had not been taught how to use a condom. The rate rose to 57% of girls aged 16-17. More than half had never been told where to find their local sexual health clinic. Of those that knew, many reported it was not open at hours they could use.⁴

The Independent Advisory Group (IAG) on Sexual Health and HIV released a report 'Sex drugs alcohol and young people'⁵ – A review of the impact drugs and alcohol have on young people's behaviour, stating that increased drug and alcohol use had resulted in increased incidence of STIs amongst young people. The report called for better sex education in schools and the relaxation of restrictions on advertising of condoms on

² Let's Talk Sex, Channel 4

³ Debbie Andalo, Education Guardian Friday March 23, 2007

⁴ Are You Getting It? Report by the UK Youth Parliament.

<http://www.ukyouthparliament.org.uk/campaigns/sre/AreYouGettingIt.pdf>

⁵ Sex drugs alcohol and young people – A review of the impact drugs and alcohol have on young people's behaviour, Independent Advisory Group on Sexual Health and HIV, June 2007

television. Anne Weyman, a Vice-Chair of the group said "We need to look at it from young people's point of view. They see around them this culture of celebrities, in the newspapers, around sex and drugs, alcohol, all being brought together, and they're not being given alongside that the information and the education they need to handle issues like drugs and alcohol and sex as they're growing up." While the report laid some of the blame for the culture young people are growing up in on media reporting of celebrity, Weyman also defended teen magazines in an interview on the BBC's Today Programme, commenting that the information they gave to teens was appropriate and did not encourage them to have sex.

Tom Bryant MP called for a national scheme to provide free condoms to youngsters, and the extension of pilot programmes where chemists could provide emergency contraception for free in order to reduce teen pregnancy. He also highlighted that over half of under-18 year old pregnancies were in socially disadvantaged areas of the UK.

MPs continued to show a strong interest in the issue of teen pregnancy and sex education throughout 2007. In an 'Epolitix'⁶ blog Nadine Dorries MP commented that "With sex being thrown at kids from every angle there is no longer a 'fear factor' - anything goes.

We need to re-introduce moral values into our education system. We need to be able to empower young girls with the ability, and the confidence, to say no; and we need to educate about the consequences of unprotected sex, abortion and disease.

Education should lean heavily on an emphasis that under-age sex is not a good idea. It's not cool and too many young people have their lives turned upside down by the consequences."

Responses to her blog entry ranged from agreement in some cases to strong disagreement from some fellow MPs and medical practitioners. The debate is bound to continue in 2007.

Teen magazines were in turn praised and criticised for their influence on young people in 2007.

In April OFSTED released a report, 'Time for change? Personal, social and health education,'⁷ which reported on all aspects of health education, not just sex education. The report commented that there was no evidence to suggest that programmes promoting abstinence had any significant effect and that furthermore there was no evidence to suggest that educating young people about the availability of contraception increased levels of teen pregnancy. The report highlighted the role of teen magazines in encouraging teens to talk about sex with parents and teachers and praised problem pages as a positive source of advice. It did add that despite this fact, if advice given clashed with parental and cultural norms, this could be a problem. Magazines for young

⁶ Epolitix, Dods

⁷ Time for Change? Personal, Social and Health Education. OFSTED April 2007

http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/assets/Internet_Content/Shared_Content/Files/2007/apr/timechngePSHE.pdf

men were praised for encouraging debate, although concerns were voiced about what OFSTED considered to be the reinforcement of sexist attitudes by some.

The press response to this report and the IAG report mentioned earlier in this review was to question the role of teen magazines and re-open the perennial debate about the influence – negative or positive – they are supposed to have on their readers.

TMAP members took part in a number of television and radio interviews on the issue. The support for publications which provide sensible advice pitched at the right level on sex and relationship issues was strong but there remains a considerable group which refuses to accept that information provided by teen magazines on relationship matters is appropriate.

The organisation Women in Journalism held a conference in September entitled 'Am I Bovered? What are Teenage Girls Really Thinking?'⁸ which was widely reported on in the media. The general thrust of the conference, chaired by Cherie Booth QC, was to investigate what young people thought of their portrayal in the media and how media reporting of celebrity affected them.

The quality of relationship advice in teen magazines was praised but their websites came in for some criticism, with sections which allowed readers to airbrush themselves and 'hot or not' style rating sections for boys and girls coming in for particular comment. It is unfortunate that the debate focused on these sections of online magazines but did not focus on the numerous articles relating to self-esteem, positive body image and genuine achievement of young women that could be found on the same websites. TMAP has responsibility for monitoring the quality of relationship advice on teen magazine websites as well as their print offerings and will continue this activity in 2008.

The early sexualisation of young people was very much a theme of media coverage in 2007. Reports from the Conservative Party working group into this issue and the DCSF are expected in 2008.

2007 was a busy year for TMAP, with a lot of coverage, both positive and negative. We look forward to continuing the debate on this important issue in 2008.

Kerry Neilson

⁸ How is the media shaping the ambitions and aspirations of the next generation of young women? - A report by Fiona Bawdon

TMAP Guidelines

The TMAP Guidelines for coverage of sexual subject matter in teenage magazines

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Guidelines are the outcome of discussions between publishers of teenage magazines (represented through the Periodical Publishers Association [PPA]), retailers of teenage magazines (represented by, among others, the British Retail Consortium [BRC], National Federation of Retail Newsagents [NFRN], the Multiple Newsagents Association [MNA]) and magazine editors (represented by the British Society of Magazine Editors [BSME]).
- 1.2 The Guidelines cover the editorial content of teenage magazines. The final arbiter of the meaning and interpretation of the Guidelines is the Teenage Magazine Arbitration Panel (TMAP), to whom any complaints relating to alleged infractions of the Guidelines should be addressed.
- 1.3 There is a separate code of practice relating to advertisements, which is produced by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA), which is the final arbiter in the meaning of the code of practice. The ASA deals with complaints about advertisement content.

SCOPE

- 2.1 The Guidelines apply to magazines published more than once a year when it is apparent that young people aged under 16 comprise 25 per cent or more of the total readership.
- 2.2 A list of such titles will be drawn up on the basis of the latest available figures over a 12-month period, using the reports of the Youth Target Group Index survey (Youth TGI) or other figures or bases accepted by TMAP.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES

- 3.1 Readers will always be encouraged to take a responsible attitude to sex and contraception, and where relevant to seek advice from General Practitioners and other professionals.
- 3.2 If sex is being discussed, then safer sex will be highlighted and encouraged wherever relevant.
- 3.3 Where under-age sex or sexual abuse is discussed it will be clearly stated as illegal in the UK. Under-age sex will be discouraged and the age of consent clearly stated.
- 3.4 Editorial advice will be given in good faith, with relevant professional organisations contacted for guidelines and named within the editorial if appropriate.

- 3.5 Readers will be encouraged to seek support from parents, guardians or other responsible adults wherever relevant. The emotional consequences of sexual activity will be highlighted where relevant.
- 3.6 The editorial content of the magazines will reflect the typical concerns of the magazine's readership, with advice given to provide readers with relevant and responsible answers to their concerns.
- 3.7 It is recognised that magazines have an important role to play in the field of sex education for, and emotional development of, teenagers.
- 3.8 The principles set out in paragraphs 3.1 to 3.7 will apply regardless of the country of origin of any story or material or reference within articles falling within the scope of these Guidelines.

IMPLEMENTATION AND ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 Publishers of teenage magazines containing subject matter on sexual issues are responsible for ensuring that editorial policies for their magazines fall within the Guidelines.
- 4.2 Editorial policies with regard to the publication of subject matter on sexual issues will be formally recorded by the publishers. All editorial staff employed to work on such subject matter will be instructed on the magazine's editorial policy and informed of any changes to that policy if relevant.
- 4.3 Editorial instruction will incorporate clear examples of appropriate and inappropriate editorial treatment of subject matter on sexual issues.
- 4.4 Each magazine will appoint an independent consultant of good standing to advise the editor on an ongoing basis with regard to sexual, emotional and moral issues.
- 4.5 An annual audit will be conducted by the Teenage Magazines Arbitration Panel to ensure published material (those titles listed as a result of 2.2 plus any other titles apparently aimed at the defined readership) falls within the Guidelines.
- 4.6 All teenage magazines containing problem pages will ensure that published letters are based on genuine letters received by those magazines.
- 4.7 All published responses to letters on problem pages will be provided by relevant, professionally qualified advisors. Relevant qualifications will be approved by the Teenage Magazines Arbitration Panel.

RETAIL DISPLAY

- 5.1 Publishers will advise distributors and retailers of the appropriate display category of their magazines.
 - 5.2 Distributors and retailers should ensure that displays of magazines reflect the perceived age of purchasers, as communicated by publishers.
-

First published 1996
This edition June 2006
Published by the
Teenage Magazine Arbitration Panel
c/o The Periodical Publishers Association
Queens House, 28 Kingsway
LONDON WC2B 6JR

www.tmap.org.uk

Tel: 020 7405 0819

Fax: 020 7404 4167

email: tmap@ppa.co.uk

© Periodical Publishers Association Ltd