

ANNUAL REPORT 2002

Teenage Magazine Arbitration Panel

November 2001 – November 2002

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Chairperson's foreword

It has been an honour to chair the Teenage Magazine Arbitration Panel (TMAP) from its inception in November 1996 through to its sixth anniversary this year. TMAP has developed greatly since its fiery birth amid media hysteria about sexual content in teenage magazines, becoming a respected source of industry standards, information and research.

The past year has been a productive one – we have adjudicated on two complaints, both regarding a feature in *Mizz* magazine, neither of which was upheld. No other complaints have been received, but we continue to receive a steady stream of enquiries from students and teachers about the role and work of TMAP. The annual forum has become a successful feature of the TMAP calendar, and this year we had the honour of welcoming Cathy Hamlyn, head of the Teenage Pregnancy Unit, as a speaker. Looking forward, we are now planning a research project to analyse the topics that are most often the subject of the sackloads of letters received by agony aunts each month. We plan to run a pilot study early in 2003, and launch the main research project later in the year. We hope the results will be of interest and use to everyone involved in working with young people, and might lead to further research.

That young people trust the editorial staff of the magazines in this sector is a source of professional pride for both journalists and their publishers. It remains a matter of huge personal regret that in the twenty-first century, all young people cannot take for granted access to unbiased, accurate and relevant sex education at appropriate stages of their school careers. This is a responsibility that research indicates many parents abrogate. The role of teenage girls' magazines as a valued and believable source of information for their readers (who include significant numbers of teenage boys) thus remains paramount.

Finally, I would like to thank Nick Mazur for his continued work in running the TMAP secretariat. The panel are sad to say goodbye to Safo Osborne, TMAP administrator for nearly six years, and wish her well in her future career.

DR. FLEUR FISHER

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. They are administered by a Panel of health professionals and publishers who meet to adjudicate on complaints and to decide whether there has been a breach of the guidelines. Magazines falling within the remit of TMAP are all those where 25 per cent or more of the readership are girls aged under 15 years.

The Panel

The Panel currently consists of representatives from the fields of child public health, teenage sexual health, law and publishing and is chaired by Dr. Fleur Fisher. The Panel welcomed Sharon Christal, editor of *Mizz*, and Sarra Manning, associate editor of *EMAP Elan*, to the Panel. Sharon replaces Sarah Fisher, who sadly resigned from the Panel after six years. The Panel thanks her for her contributions to TMAP over the years. Sarra Manning replaces Marina Gask, who is on maternity leave.

Dr Fleur Fisher

A former Head of the British Medical Association's Ethics, Science and Information Division, she is now director of the independent consultancy Healthcare-ethics and vice-chairman of the International HIV/AIDS Alliance.

Before joining the staff of the BMA in 1991, she spent fifteen years working in family planning clinics and developing both community services and educational training programmes for doctors and nurses, teachers, and social workers. She has worked on sex education programmes with teachers, youth and social workers and for Piccadilly Radio and Granada TV.

Dr Diana Ernaelsteen, CBE

Dr. Diana Ernaelsteen CBE is a paediatrician. From 1983 to 1995 she was senior medical officer to the Department of Health and senior medical adviser to the Department of Education and Her Majesty's Inspectorate (OFSTED). She has been consultant medical adviser to the Department for Education and Employment since 1995. She is honorary senior consultant paediatrician to the

Tavistock Clinic and was, until recently, chairman of the National Association for the Education of Sick Children.

Dr Roger Ingham

Dr Roger Ingham is Reader in Health and Community Psychology at the University of Southampton, and Director of the Centre for Sexual Health Research.

Dr Ingham has worked on sexual health issues for many years. During this 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 currently a member of the Government's Independent Advisory Group for the Teenage Pregnancy Unit and was a member of the Sexual Health and HIV National Strategy core group.

He was consultant for the Channel 4 series "Generation Sex", and a survey he directed was featured extensively in the first of the programmes (Sex from 8 to 18).

Monique Allan

Monique Allan is a practising commercial barrister specialising in a broad range of commercial advisory, litigation and arbitration work. She is also a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators. Before being called to the Bar in 1986, following postgraduate studies, she worked in the insurance and banking industries. She has a daughter of 24 and son of 22.

Sharon Christal

Sharon Christal has been editor of IPC Media's *Mizz* magazine since March 2001. She initially joined *Hair* as an editorial assistant and was promoted to deputy editor before moving to *Mizz*. Alongside her role as editor, Sharon heads both the 'Specials' strategy and the brand licensing programme for *Mizz* which includes watches, sunglasses and cosmetics.

Lysanne Currie

Lysanne Currie has been editorial director of *Sugar* magazine since January 1999, overseeing *Sugar* (UK), *Sugar* (Germany), *16* magazine and new magazine launches. Since 2002 she has also been editorial director of *ELLEgirl*. Lysanne joined *Sugar* in December 1996 as deputy editor, moving on to launch *16* magazine in Germany. She has freelanced on a wide range of titles from *Melody*

Maker to more! magazine, joining *19* magazine in 1992 as a junior sub-editor and moving up to become features editor.

Sarra Manning

Sarra Manning is associate editor of EMAP Elan, publisher of youth titles, *Bliss* and *J17*. She joined the Panel in December 2002 to cover EMAP publisher Marina Gask's maternity leave. At EMAP, Sarra is responsible for training, editorial strategy and new product development within the youth group. She also consults on EMAP titles, *The Face* and *New Woman*. Sarra was previously editor of *ELLEgirl* and prior to that worked on *ELLE*, *J17* and *SKY* magazines and has ten years experience within the youth market. She is also signed to Hodder Headline as an author and has her first teen novel published this year.

Complaints

"Teen Traumas – Your cringeworthy questions answered" feature (*Mizz* 2-15 October 2002)

In accordance with standard procedure, Sharon Christal from IPC Media was asked to withdraw from the proceedings during the adjudication.

The feature *"Teen Traumas – Your cringeworthy questions answered"* is not in breach of the guidelines.

The Panel limited their discussions to letters 4 and 11 of the 12-page special supplement published by *Mizz*. The complainant believed these letters contained information which was too sexually explicit for the *Mizz* readership of 10-14 year olds. The complainant questioned the need to inform this age group about oral sex (letter 4) and kissing (letter 11).

The Panel considered the complaint in the light of sections 3.5 and 3.6 of the TMAP Guidelines.

Section 3.5 states:

"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."

Section 3.6 states:

"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."

The Panel considered that the *Mizz* feature was not in breach of sections 3.5 and 3.6 of the TMAP Guidelines.

The editor's response and subsequent evidence had made clear that this feature was the result of a large volume of correspondence received on a regular basis by the magazine. All the correspondence published in the feature was based on genuine letters from the *Mizz* readership and reflected the typical concerns of the readership.

Although the Panel felt that in this particular case, the feature “Teen Traumas” had not breached the TMAP Guidelines, they made a formal recommendation to the editor of *Mizz*, emphasising the need for professional guidance when writing responses to letters used in problem pages.

Sector information

Blush magazine was launched August 2002 by H Bauer Publishing, aimed at 10-14 year old girls. The TMAP chairman has met with the editor to discuss the work of TMAP.

Research and publications

Dr Roger Ingham, Centre for Sexual Health Research, University of Southampton, and member of TMAP, writes:

This is a brief overview of some of the key research findings that have appeared during 2002. Clearly, much research into young people's sexual knowledge and activity is being conducted across the world, so this is restricted to important studies that have direct relevance to the UK in general, and to the interests of teenage magazines in particular.

Early in the year, the **OFSTED report on Sex and Relationships education (SRE)** was published ¹. This included some results from a large-scale survey of around 1000 schools, as well as numerous meetings with young people, teachers, inspectors, health professionals, and others. In general, the report found that SRE was covered fairly well in most schools, although HIV/AIDS was receiving less attention than in the past, and education about parenthood does not feature in many schools' coverage. Few schools engage young people in the design and evaluation of their programmes, and monitoring is generally weak.

Specialist SRE teachers were found to be more effective than generalists; nearly all the teaching rated as 'poor' was provided by form tutors. Despite the controversy surrounding its existence, the right of withdrawal by parents is currently exercised for only four out of 10000 pupils (0.04 percent).

Many parents are reluctant to discuss sexual matters with their children and it is reported ' .. *that teenage magazines are an increasingly important source of information and have a significant bearing on pupils' attitudes.*'

Generally, boys felt that most attention was directed towards girls, and concerns over confidentiality of services is still an issue for many young people.

The **evaluation of the Government's Teenage Pregnancy Strategy** is being co-ordinated by researchers at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. Their first Annual Synthesis Report was published in June 2002 ², to coincide with the Third Anniversary Conference of the Teenage Pregnancy Unit. A number of aspects of the operation of the Strategy are discussed, and models of good practice are provided. BMRB are conducting regular surveys amongst young people and parents in order to assess the impact of the Strategy at a number of levels. In this first report, it is stressed that the data provide good baseline figures against which the impact of the Strategy can be assessed in future years.

Of particular interest in this current context is that awareness of the national media campaign (in which advertising in teenage magazines is used extensively) has increased, and the patterns match fairly closely the extent of campaign activity. More than half of the young people surveyed recalled having seen or heard campaign material about young people, sex and relationships. Boys were more likely to report having heard messages on the radio, although were less likely than girls to recall messages generally. Magazine advertisements were more likely to be mentioned by the young people than those appearing on the radio, washrooms or on the internet.

A paper published in the USA journal *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health* ³ reported the results of a large survey carried out for the Channel Four television series *Generation Sex*. This reported that **those young people who were more likely to use contraception** at first intercourse were those who were able to talk to their partners in advance about the subject. In turn, those who were more able to talk to partners were more likely to report that they were able to discuss sexual issues with their parents. The paper was written by Nicole Stone and Roger Ingham.

The UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre published an important report **on teenage pregnancy rates in nearly 30 developed countries** ⁴. They carried out a large number of analyses of different aspects of the countries, and concluded that those with lower rates of teenage pregnancy showed common characteristics. The report concludes that *This commentary has stressed throughout that success in lowering teenage birth rates is a matter of both motivation and means:*
means - availability of contraception and education to enable informed and mutually respectful choices

motivation - ... a stake in the future, a sense of hope, and an expectation of inclusion in an economically advanced society.

Two important papers concerned with **school based sex education** appeared in the *British Medical Journal* in June. The first, by Danny Wight and colleagues, reported on the initial results from a large randomised-control trial (RCT) being carried out in Scotland (the SHARE project) ⁵. In this trial, a number of schools have been randomly allocated to receive a specially designed programme, their teachers have received specialist training and the curriculum has been developed based on research evidence showing what appears to work best. Other (control) schools in the trial continue to provide their own existing programme.

The results reported showed that, compared with the control schools, the impact of the programme was positive in terms of teacher enjoyment of delivering the sessions, that young people showed improved knowledge, and that regret after first intercourse was lower. However, the age at which young people had their first intercourse, and the levels of reported condom use, were not influenced by the programme.

The second paper in the same issue of the *BMJ*, by a group of Canadian authors ⁶, reviewed a number of published articles on school based sex education and reported that generally results of RCTs are unimpressive. Using very strict criteria for assessing the quality of research design, they report that there is little evidence of 'success' of school based programmes.

These results, taken together, do not appear to lend support for the TPU's and OFSTED's calls for improved sex education in schools. However, such a view would be naïve. The Government's policy is based on the need for a comprehensive approach to the issue of young people's sexual health, such that no one agency (for example, schools) should carry the burden, not be expected to lead to change on their own. Even if young people are receiving excellent sex education in schools, but this is not being supported in other contexts (such as in the home, on the media, at local health services, and so on) then it is perhaps not surprising that the measured improvement in sexual health may be lower than it could be. The results from these studies do not imply that efforts to improve school based education should not continue; rather, efforts in other contexts need to be increased.

Finally, the Department of Health and the TPU jointly commissioned seven new research projects on the subject of teenage pregnancy⁷. Most of these are two-year projects, so results will not be available for a while. Amongst the topics covered are the special needs of black and minority ethnic groups, those living in seaside resorts, the long term impact of early childbearing, and ways of improving educational and employment opportunities for teenage parents.

References (websites provided for downloading documents)

- 1 OFSTED (2002) *Sex and Relationships*, OFSTED, HMI 433, London (www.ofsted.gov.org/publications/docs/67.pdf)
- 2 TPSE (Teenage Pregnancy Strategy Evaluation) Annual Report Synthesis No. 1, Teenage Pregnancy Unit, London (www.teenagepregnancyunit.gov.uk)
- 3 Stone, N. and Ingham, R. (2002) Factors affecting British teenagers' contraceptive use at first intercourse; the importance of partner communication, *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health*, 34 (4), 191-197
- 4 UNICEF, *A League Table of Teenage Births in Rich Nations*, Innocenti Report Card No. 3, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, Florence (www.unicef.icdc.org)
- 5 Wight, D., Raab, G., Henderson, M., Abraham, C., Buston, K., Hart, G. and Scott, S. (2002) Limits of teacher delivered sex education; interim behavioral outcomes from a randomised trial, *British Medical Journal*, 324 (15 June)
- 6 DiCenso, A., Guyatt, G., Willan, A. and Griffith, L. (2002) interventions to reduce unintended pregnancies amongst adolescents; systematic review of randomised controlled trials, *British Medical Journal*, 324 (15 June)
- 7 Further details of the Teenage Pregnancy Unit's research programme and other activities can be obtained from their website (www.teenagepregnancyunit.gov.uk)

TMAP events

The head of sexual health and substance misuse at the Government's Teenage Pregnancy Unit, Cathy Hamlyn, praised the work of magazines at this year's Teenage Magazine Arbitration Panel (TMAP) Forum on 28 October.

Speaking to an audience of nearly 20 editors, editorial staff and health professionals, she revealed that the awareness of the last Government ad campaign (see below), which was run exclusively in magazines, had had a 75 per cent recognition rate among 13 to 17 year olds. The campaign sought to increase awareness of sexually transmitted diseases amongst teenagers in an unpatronising and informative manner. She said: "We are extremely pleased with the effectiveness of the campaign - especially since such high recognition rates are normally associated with TV, rather than magazine advertising."

Hamlyn also praised the work of surveys: "Surveys in teen magazines are a great help to the Government in getting a clearer idea of the overall picture of what teenagers think."

The Teenage Pregnancy Unit is now in charge of reducing the rate of substance misuse - such as alcohol and Class A drugs - in the UK. Cathy Hamlyn welcomed magazine input into how the Government can best formulate its strategy to educate young people about alcohol misuse.

Dr Roger Ingham of Southampton University, a TMAP panel member, spoke about recent research which has reinforced the theory that more sex education leads to fewer teenage pregnancies. He urged editors to be less cautious in their approach to sex and relationships

ANNEX 1

Contact

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ANNEX 2

Youth TGI Figures 2002

Figures are not yet available for *Blush*, *Sneak* or *ElleGirl* magazines.

Title	Average Age	% of readership under 15 years
Mizz	11.8	87.2
Bliss	14.5	52.8
Sugar	14.3	55.9
J-17	15	40.4
CosmoGIRL!	14.5	53.2
Shout	12.2	77.8
TV Hits	12.7	68.2

ANNEX 3

TMAP Guidelines

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 women aged under 15 comprise 25% 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 the 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. 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.

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.

ANNEX 4

How to make a complaint

HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT ABOUT THE COVERAGE OF SEX RELATED ISSUES IN TEENAGE MAGAZINES

Teenage magazines play a valuable role in educating teenagers about life. In particular they are used as a source of information about sexual and other emotional issues. To ensure that teenage magazines continue to take great care in providing accurate and informative advice on sexual matters, the industry including publishers, retailers and editors, have produced a set of Guidelines on how sex related material should be treated.

The Guidelines cover magazines where young women aged under 15 years make up 25 per cent or more of the total magazine readership.

If you are unhappy with an article in a teenage magazine, you can make a complaint in the following way:

- If you are unhappy with something in the magazine, you should firstly write to the editor of the magazine as it is important for them to know about your concerns.
- If you are not completely satisfied with the response from the editor, you can write to the Teenage Magazine Arbitration Panel (TMAP). This panel is made up of experts from the field of law, public health and child health care and development and also the magazine publishers themselves. It is administered by the Periodical Publishers Association (PPA), the industry organisation for magazines in the UK.
- All complaints will be carefully considered. If a complaint is clearly not in breach of the Guidelines your letter will be responded to immediately. All other complaints will be considered at TMAP meetings, held quarterly. They will write to let you know when the next meeting is to be held and that they will respond to your complaint at this time.
- If the magazine is considered to be in breach of the Guidelines, TMAP will write to the editor of the relevant magazine to inform them of the breach. A copy of this letter will be sent to you.
- If the magazine is considered to be in breach of the Guidelines, it will be highlighted in TMAP's annual report which will be made available to the Home Office, the publishing industry and other interested parties. You will also be able to obtain a copy.
- There is a separate code for advertising which is supervised and administered by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA). The ASA will make the final decisions on any complaints about advertising within teenage magazines.

Examples of teenage magazines regulated by the Guidelines include:
Bliss (Emap Elan), *Just Seventeen* (EMAP Elan), *Mizz* (IPC Media)

To contact the TMAP and for a copy of the Guidelines or Annual Report please write to:

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*TMAP is a self regulating body whose remit is to ensure that the Guidelines are adhered to.
Breaches are highlighted in a formal way ensuring that mistakes are unlikely to happen again.*