

*Corruption of the Young*  
*– A Matter of*  
*Public Concern*

A  
SUBMISSION

**To Mr. Tony Pedder, Chairman of NHS Sheffield  
and the Board Members of NHS Sheffield  
from the Maranatha Community**

Copies to The Rt. Hon Andy Burnham MP, Secretary of State for Health;  
The Rt. Hon. Ed Balls MP, Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families  
and also to Mr. Barry Sheerman MP, the Chairman of the House of Commons  
Select Committee on Children, Schools and Families

17<sup>th</sup> December 2009

# *‘Corruption of the Young – A Matter of Public Concern’*

## A SUBMISSION

This Submission is addressed to the Chairman Tony Pedder and the Board Members of **NHS Sheffield** - Jan Sobieraj, Robert Bailey, Rhiannon Billingsley, Mohammed Ismail, Malcolm Lindley, Mark Lovell & Malcolm Whitfield.

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It is from the **Maranatha Community** founded 28 years ago, a national movement of thousands of members, many of whom who have professional and voluntary experience in the care and welfare of children and young people. Its Leader is Dennis Wrigley.

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### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Submission is about the decision of NHS Sheffield to publish and distribute the highly controversial booklet entitled *‘Pleasure’*. This publication has been very carefully considered and has caused deep concern to many who are involved in the welfare and wellbeing of young people in Sheffield and also elsewhere in the country. It has also generated anger, alarm and even incredulity among some parents.
- 1.2 *‘Pleasure’* bears the imprint of NHS Sheffield and was written and produced by The Centre for HIV and Sexual Health in Sheffield which is part of the Sheffield Primary Care Trust. It is described as “*A Booklet For Workers On Why and How To Raise the Issue of Sexual Pleasure in Sexual Health Work with Young People*”.

## **2. The Issues**

- 2.1 This publication raises fundamental issues about the role and responsibility of the public body which has chosen to produce it.
- 2.2 It raises issues concerning the standard and nature of advice, teaching and guidance given to impressionable and immature young people on sexual matters within the framework of the Health Service and the Educational System.
- 2.3 It also raises legitimate and very serious questions about the NHS being used as a vehicle for this kind of message and the possible serious waste of public funds and human resources on this project.

## **3. The Basis of the Document**

- 3.1 The document is rooted and grounded in the doctrinaire ideas of secular humanism. It follows a thoroughly humanist agenda, clearly propagating what used to be called 'free love'. As such, it discounts the value of the marriage-based family and in fact takes a value-free approach to sexual activity outside marriage.
- 3.2 It implicitly and explicitly rejects those standards which are fundamental to our Judeao-Christian heritage, which many believe to be God-given. The dangerous message beamed to the young is that it is normal, acceptable and even enriching for children and young people to be actively engaged in sexual activity.
- 3.3 The message assumes that sooner or later most young people will engage in sex acts outside marriage and probably with a considerable number of different people. This is a dangerous message in the light of the damage which has already been inflicted on the young over the past 40 years, during which powerful commercial interests and well-organised humanist lobbying groups have together done so much to sexualise our society and inflict harm on the young and the vulnerable. The secular humanist experiment of the past 40 years is now being increasingly seen as an abysmal failure. It is universally recognised that broken families and dysfunctional relationships are at the root of many of the grave social problems facing our nation today.

## **4. Background**

- 4.1 Much of this publication appears to be based upon a conference entitled '*The Pleasure Principle*' hosted by The Centre for HIV and Sexual Health in Sheffield in 2007. Papers at this conference included

*'Young People, Sexual Pleasure and SRE'* by J. Hurst; and *'Putting Pleasure into Policy: Young People and Sexual Health'* by R. Ingham, *'Gay Men and Sexual Pleasure'* by J. Bensley and other speakers included Julia Gash described as a 'sex entrepreneur' who runs an erotica store in Sheffield. In the past Ms. Gash has been quoted as saying *'I do not believe that pornography itself is intrinsically degrading or sexist'*.

- 4.2 The publication refers enigmatically to the need for young people to be ***"more competent"*** in their sexual encounters (page 4). One of its authors is quoted as saying ***"we need to be active in supporting and promoting choices around pleasurable sexual activity..."*** (page 7). The publication urges workers to ***"ensure discussions take place with young people that cover experimentation in sexual relationships..."*** (page 7). It also points to the need ***"to negotiate the type of sex which is good and pleasurable..."*** (page 7).
- 4.3 Considerable criticism has been levelled against this publication as being in itself depraved and corrupting. Sheffield NHS Primary Care Trust has already admitted ***"the leaflet has provoked some controversy"*** although it defines it as ***"innovative and creative work"***. Their defence is that those responsible for it are academics and other specialists including members of government advisory committees. The individual views and intentions of most of the contributors are well known.

## 5. A Campaigning Document

- 5.1 *'Pleasure'* is fundamentally a propaganda statement in favour of a lifestyle which is approved and actively promoted by its authors. Although some of the authors may deny this, the truth is that it is enthusiastically committed to the encouragement of sexual activity and behaviour among the young.
- 5.2 The motives and crusading zeal of the group responsible for the publication are reflected in the introduction in which it is admitted ***"We cannot transform the country overnight!"*** (page 2). Significantly, one of the reasons for this is given as those things which ***"are deeply engraved in our culture"*** (page 2). These presumably need to be removed. The agenda is clear.
- 5.3 Hence, NHS Sheffield appears to be committed to working for fundamental cultural and social change. In all this there is strong emphasis on rights but little on responsibilities. Speaking for the young they assert ***"the right to pleasure"*** (page 3), ***"the right to fun"*** (page 3) and the ***"right to sexual autonomy"*** (page 13).

- 5.4 It is beyond dispute that this publication seeks to strongly influence children and young people, their attitudes and their standards of behaviour. Many parents question the value of this publication and are deeply worried about the damage it can inflict upon their sons and daughters. Members of the wider public have expressed dismay about the decision of NHS Sheffield to be a party to the message of this publication.

## 6. The Projected Message

### 6.1 Proclaiming Pleasure and Sensation

The underlying message of the publication is hedonism and the gratification of personal desire rather than the pursuit of healthy, loving and mature relationships.

Constant emphasis is put on ***“increased sensation and pleasure”*** (page 11) and the authors state that they seek to ***“encourage young people to think about what they want from relationships”*** (page 10). There is little reference to giving, to caring or to respecting others. There is little reference to love. There is no recognition of the fundamental dignity and value of individual young men and women. The main emphasis is upon selfishness.

Sadly, the sex act is seen as a recreational activity and of little significance. The possible creation of a child - with heavy life-long responsibility for the father and the mother, is deliberately hidden. The message is ***“Make sure that it is clear that sex is not just something a man and woman do to make babies”*** (page 8). In their anxiety to promote fun and pleasure, the authors carefully avoid any reference to the possibility and consequences of contraceptive failure. Many see this as an abdication of responsibility by NHS Sheffield. Their underlying argument is simple: The sex should be divorced from all responsibility and should be given no long term significance or value. This spurious claim debases human sexual relationships. It is questionable whether NHS Sheffield should publish this kind of material.

### 6.2 Promoting promiscuity and casual sex as ‘fun’

The publication triumphantly quotes a teacher as saying ***“when we teach about condoms in school we always bring in to show and pass around a range of different condoms, the ribbed, flavoured and other varieties, and to talk about these can make sex even more fun and exciting”*** (page 14 & 15). Thus adults are legitimising and encouraging sexual activity, including oral sex, among the young.

Whatever the claims made, the truth is that this inevitably leads to promiscuity which is at the roots of most sexual health problems. This approach is undoubtedly encouraged by profit-hungry condom manufacturers who are now a powerful driving force behind much of the sex education industry.

There is much evidence that parents are very uneasy about these influences on their children. They are concerned, that all too often, sex is presented as a game to be played. Clearly the authors do not wish to discourage casual sex and multi-partnering. Parents and many specialists alike question whether NHS Sheffield recognise their heavy responsibility to protect children and to discourage them from losing all sense of self-respect. Significantly, they state ***“Everybody...responds differently to different partners”*** (page 3). Many regard it as offensive for NHS Sheffield to be involved in this kind of teaching.

### 6.3 Teaching sexual practices

In what appears to be an unhealthy obsession with sex, the authors specifically urge ***“promote masturbation and its benefits to young women and young men”*** (page 10). They urge talks to young people ***“about the positive, physical and emotional effects of sex and masturbation”*** (page 10). They argue ***“masturbation should be openly and positively discussed”*** (page 6). Many have expressed outrage that NHS Sheffield should be a party to this kind of influence upon the young.

### 6.4 Encouraging teenage sexual activity

The publication reproduces a fictitious teenager’s diary which is clearly written by an adult. It is presented in graphical form and Wednesday’s booking is presented as ***“masturbation”***; Friday’s booking as ***“getting condoms”*** and Saturday’s booking as ***“sex! sex! sex! - tonight - bring condoms”*** (page 9). This enthusiastic encouragement by adults of sexual activity among the young as nothing more than an exciting adventure is grossly irresponsible. The sole purpose of the authors seems to be to normalise teenage sex and legitimise promiscuous behaviour. It is remarkable that NHS Sheffield should be associated with this active promotion of sex among the young.

### 6.5 Misleading the young

This publication extols the merit of sexual activity as being ***“good for the cardio-vascular system”***, ***“boosting the immune system and improving mental health”*** (page 9). The crude and strident message is proclaimed in their bold headline ***“an orgasm a day keeps the***

***doctor away***” (page 9). This message to the young is crude, explicit and misleading.

It is difficult to see how NHS Sheffield can validate this message.

#### 6.6 Devaluing parental influence

Parental responsibility, a crucial factor in teenage behaviour is ignored or trivialised and, unbelievably, a mother is quoted as saying ***“I bought my daughter a lipstick-shaped vibrator”*** (page 4 & 5). Her statement is presented as acceptable motherly advice on her daughter’s 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. It is, to say the least, highly questionable that this kind of item should be included in any NHS publication.

It is a matter of public concern that NHS Sheffield should be associated with this trivialising of sex for young girls.

#### 6.7 Treating women as playthings?

A woman minister is quoted, approvingly, as saying ***“We are made for pleasure”*** (page 11). Few would deny that this crass statement devalues womanhood. The publication even attributes to her the fatuous statement ***“We need to ask why did God give woman a clitoris?”*** (page 11). The manner of this passing reference to God and religion in this publication is indicative of the strong secular and humanistic stance of its authors.

It is inappropriate for NHS Sheffield to be associated with the foregoing claims.

#### 6.8 Projecting hidden messages

In their seeming desire to introduce the young to questionable practices, the teachers are urged to ***“talk about the prostate and its role in pleasure for men”*** (page 11). In this instance, following a familiar pattern, the young are kept in ignorance of the dangerous disease-prone practice of anal intercourse.

It is significant that in virtually all subjects touched on in this publication, no reference is made to the very serious consequences of some of the behaviour being approved and promoted.

It is surprising that NHS Sheffield should choose to encourage discussions about prostate among young people.

#### 6.9 Dismissing morality

There is only brief and passing reference to morality when the authors admit ***“there are ethical...considerations to take into account”*** (page 3). These however are not taken into account in this publication. Ethical questions are ignored, issues of what is right or wrong are conveniently bypassed, all in the cause of promoting hedonism. The

authors refer to the present “*confusion*” (page 1) of the young, whereas in fact they are themselves creating more, not less, confusion in the minds of the impressionable young.

It is disappointing that the NHS which should surely be committed to high moral standards should be promoting what many considered to be amorality or immorality.

## **7. The Implications**

### **7.1 The promotion of depravity**

The dogmatic promotion of a depraved sexual lifestyle to the young without any reference to the very real and highly dangerous physical, emotional and social consequences of the practice of multi-partnering is irresponsible. In trivialising sexual relationships and activity between men and women, boys and girls, the authors degrade the value, dignity and sense of commitment which is at the heart of healthy human relationships. They appear to be anxious to dismiss modesty and tenderness in favour instant gratification.

### **7.2 Children threatened**

In their anxiety to promote sexual activity among the young, the authors turn a blind eye to the enormous problems evident in society today. Unnaturally, children are having sexual intercourse. Unnaturally, children are contracting sexually-transmitted diseases. Unnaturally, children are giving birth to children. Unnaturally, children are aborting children. Unnaturally, children are being robbed of their childhood.

Much of this is as a direct consequence of the emergence of brutalising influences on the young over recent years. Still more and immense damage can be inflicted upon the young by those with their own agenda, who still fail to recognise the full significance of the appalling situation which has been created.

### **7.3 The devaluation of family and marriage**

At a time when the nation faces huge social problems and the serious breakdown of family life and marriage, it is significant that the authors choose to ignore this central issue. Also in their desire to promote sexual physical satisfaction, they wilfully set on one side crucial matters of deep human affection and committed love. In their preoccupation with ‘sensation’ and ‘fun’, they fail to acknowledge the importance of human fulfilment in rich, stable and loving relationships.

They appear to be obsessively concerned with short-lived 'pleasure' to the detriment of long-term happiness.

Beyond doubt the marriage-based family is the basic building block of a civilised society. This is borne out by an enormous range of reputable research projects. Yet, this publication makes no reference whatsoever to it.

#### **7.4 The exploitation of schools and clinics**

Our education system should surely encourage children to be kind, understanding and respectful in all relationships. The promotion of the fundamental virtues of human kindness, modesty and self-control, should be central to this. Clearly, the authors do not accept this responsibility. By contrast, the message they preach is one of raw hedonism with little or no regard for the long-term implications of this behaviour. The highest priority is given to mutual exploitation for reasons of selfish personal gratification. It is being increasingly recognised that we now face the real possibility of state-sponsored corruption of children within the Educational System and even the Health Service.

#### **7.5 The failure to prepare for adulthood, parenthood and family responsibility**

The fallacious suggestion that sexual intercourse has no relationship to potential parenthood is sustained throughout the publication. During their formative years our children deserve to be prepared for the responsibilities of adulthood and parenthood within the context of stable family life. They are robbed of this if those in authority insist on encouraging and normalising promiscuous behaviour.

#### **7.6 A pathway to regret and disillusionment**

This publication turns a blind eye to the immense emotional and spiritual significance of the young and immature engaging in sexual activity which they often later bitterly regret. The truth is that young people in the United Kingdom, often under the legal age, are engaging in sexual activity at an unnaturally early age with the approval and active encouragement of some of those who have been placed in positions of authority, but who have their own agenda.

This kind of literature published by NHS Sheffield, will undoubtedly encourage experimentation and may in some situations lead to young people being coerced into sexual encounters which can inflict serious harm on their lives in later years, which they will deeply regret. Its teaching will not benefit anyone and may harm many. Its writers are walking in the wrong direction.

There is emerging evidence of some young people being highly critical of influences which have been brought to bear upon them by those in authority, in schools and clinics. They have sensed that other peoples' sexual ideas and predispositions are being imposed upon them. In addition to this, they often feel they have been misled by information and images in the media, particularly teenage magazines. It is, therefore, unfortunate that the NHS Sheffield publication should seriously suggest that these teenage magazines, which have been under huge public criticism and are often dominated by distorted concepts of sexuality "***can be a really useful source of information and advice for young people, particularly the 'Agony Aunt' pages***" (page 16). Over many years parents have been expressing their alarm at the destructive influences of these magazines, which now appear to have the approval of NHS Sheffield.

## **8. Indoctrination and Social Engineering**

- 8.1 Those who have devised this publication are well aware of the very considerable opportunities that exist within the educational system and the health service to exercise a profound and formative influence on the behaviour of children and immature young people.
- 8.2 Undoubtedly the State has opened up access to the lives of children and young people to a variety of pressure groups and agencies, each often having their own agenda. Many of them seek to propagate their own ideas which question and displace ethical standards of behaviour which have been respected for generations. This is a form of indoctrination.
- 8.3 In particular, the influence of the State upon the family itself, has become increasingly intrusive and many would assert, destructive. Publicly funded propaganda such as the '*Pleasure*' publication do much to rob the young of their innocence and diminish parental rights, particularly in matters of sexual education. In recent years a number of parents have pointed to worrying similarities to what has happened in totalitarian regimes.

## **9. The Context of the Publication**

- 9.1 In recent years the emphasis of sex education has been almost inclusively on the reduction by any means of teenage pregnancy and also the reduction of sexually transmitted diseases amongst children and teenagers. Yet public policies in these areas have been singularly unsuccessful in spite of the establishment of a huge and expensive national network dedicated to so-called 'sexual health'.

9.2 This publication contributes little or nothing to the resolution of these problems. Furthermore, it does nothing to prepare young people for adulthood and family responsibility. This, together with its colourful but vulgar presentation and its condescending attitude to the young, makes it, potentially a very dangerous and damaging publication. Many are reluctantly concluding that the publication '*Pleasure*' could ultimately have a corrupting influence on the young. Some see it as potentially abusive of children and young people.

## 10. Conclusion

10.1 Directed at workers among the young, '*Pleasure*' is potentially harmful and dangerous -

- because it gives encouragement to leaders to exercise undue influence over vulnerable young people and children in the area of sexual activity. This could come dangerously close to the illegal activity of 'grooming'. It could place leaders and teachers in a very vulnerable position.
- because it encourages activities which are likely to lead to more unwanted pregnancies, as full sex is promoted as an activity to be engaged in as a norm, even by those who are immature, vulnerable or ignorant.
- because it encourages activities which if engaged in by those who are under age would be illegal.
- because it will increase pressure on all young people to be sexually active regardless of their personal maturity, understanding and emotional stability. It does this by implying that regular sexual activity is the norm, and to not be sexually active is unhealthy, and abnormal. This will give permission for those who wish to pressurise another to have sex to label them as 'abnormal' if they do not submit to the pressure.
- because it does not give due weight to loving relationships, respect and responsibilities, and it will make women and girls more vulnerable.
- because these consequences have not been given due weight, '*Pleasure*' reflects no credit upon NHS Sheffield which has its imprint on it. Its publication has called into question the integrity of NHS Sheffield and its standing as a public authority.

## 11. Recommendations

- 11.1 For the protection of children and the maintenance of the good name of NHS Sheffield it is recommended that the publication '*Pleasure*' should be withdrawn.
- 11.2 In view of the fact that '*Pleasure*' was written and produced by the Centre for HIV and Sexual Health NHS Sheffield, it is recommended that the policies and practices pursued by this Centre should, in the public interest, be thoroughly reviewed by the Board and closely monitored in the future.

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17<sup>th</sup> December 2009

**NOTE:** This Submission is being brought to the attention of a number of Members of Parliament and Members of the House of Lords, together with various health and education specialists, those involved in the care of children and young people and also community and church leaders.