



Met Police presentation is an eye-opener for students

A shocking insight into child abuse and how to spot it was given to Havering Sixth Form College students during a visit from the Met Police.

The presentation at the College in Wingletye Lane, Hornchurch, was given to students studying the BTEC National Diploma and Certificate in Sport by DS Paul Goldsmith and DC Eugene O'Riordan from the Child Abuse Investigation Team, based at Chadwell Heath Police Station.

The students, who have all taken part in work experience in the community teaching or coaching children as part of the 'Working with Children' and 'Health and Safety of Sport' units of their course, found the talk was a real eye-opener.

Student Michael Morden-Crisp said: "It shocked us into realising how close something like child abuse is in our community. I always thought it was so rare, but now I realise I have to be aware when I am working with children.

"It was also helpful in telling us how to report a suspected child abuse case. It really opened our eyes."

Student William Boyton said: "The sessions helped me understand more about child abuse and what I should do in certain situations if I do become a teacher or coach."

And Hayley Piggott added: "It was interesting for us to hear how a child abuse case gets investigated."

Ian Budge, College Team Leader for Sport, Leisure and Tourism, said he was very impressed with the police presentation and with the mature way the students listened to some of the more upsetting real-life stories.

"We wanted to look into the roles and responsibilities of working with children in sport and thought some further education from the police's point of view would benefit the students," he said.

"If they are going to work with children as teachers or coaches when they finish college then this information, which included dos and don'ts, is essential for them."

The presentation included issues such as being aware of the indicators of abuse, protecting yourself, child protection legislation, roles and responsibilities of the teacher, what to do if a child tells you about an incident, policies and following the golden rules.

DS Paul Goldsmith, of the Child Abuse Investigation Team, said: "This is an excellent opportunity to help young people who are or will be working with children to have a greater insight into safeguarding.

"It also raises their awareness of child abuse and how to recognise and deal with concerns raised by children they have the care of. I am very grateful to the college which recognised the need for this training, but especially for the students and staff who were very receptive and enthusiastic, making our delivery so much easier and enjoyable."