

# Preventing teenage pregnancy



# Teenage pregnancy rates

1. Statistics are always from 2 years ago
2. From 1998 – 2002 there was a national drop in rates from 47.0 to 42.6 per 1000 young women aged 15 – 17
3. This represents a drop of 9.4% nationally
4. The target is to reduce rates by 50% by the year 2010
5. These rates are the highest in Western Europe
6. Rates are slowly falling, they reached a peak in 1971

# Risk Factors

- Low expectations and educational attainment
- Ignorance
- Mixed messages

# High risk groups

- Those from unskilled manual backgrounds (social class V)
- Those without qualifications
- Those whose mother had no qualifications
- Those who did not live with both parents to the age of 16
- Those who left school before 16
- Those in the looked after system
- Young offenders
- Those who reported that school was NOT their main source of information about sex
- Those from backgrounds where teen pregnancy is the cultural norm

# Sex Education

- Young people say its too little, too late and too biological
- Young people say they want their parents to do it
- Parents say they want the School to do it
- The government say schools have to do it
- Schools say they don't have the time to do it

# Prevention - what works

- An open, honest acceptance of teenage sexuality at home, at school and in society
- Ambition
- Cross curricular SRE from key stage 1 linked to services
- Accessible, free, confidential, sensitive sexual health services designed to meet young people's needs

# Media and peer pressure

## What about the girls

- Socialised to take the blame
- Fulfilling their biological role
- Girl power

## What about the boys

- Half of the problem and therefore half of the solution
- To prove you're a real man and not gay

# The Law

- The legal age of consent for sexual intercourse is 16
- Young people today are becoming sexually active at a younger age
- Risk factors for under age sex include:
  - Low socio-economic groups
  - Early menarche
- Lots more young people are sexually active today and teen pregnancy rates are falling
- Early sex is less likely to be autonomous and consensual and less likely to be protected



Teenage pregnancy is a complex issue and there is no one single quick fix answer. There needs to be a multi-agency approach.

In the long term we need to build a society where all young people can enjoy their sexuality without harm and are able to make informed choices about their relationships and becoming parents

In the short term we need to ensure that:

- Every child receives age appropriate, sensitive, effective SRE and information
- A range of accessible, young people friendly sexual health services are provided
- Limited resources are targeted to those in greatest need



## Young people's sexual health services

- Contraception including EHC
- Condom distribution
- Pregnancy testing
- Support for teen moms
- Free accessible, sensitive, confidential abortion services, particularly early medical termination

# How can we ensure that these services are in place?

- Challenge the gate keepers
- Remove the barriers
- Evidence of good practice
- Examine local statistics and ensure that limited resources are targeted at greatest need
- Continually evaluate services to inform future development

# Good practice

- Confidentiality
- Young people friendly – don't forget the boys
- Right place and right time
- Walk in no appointment necessary
- Here to listen not to tell
- Patience and jargon free
- Right staff, warm, friendly, respectful, non-judgemental and well informed
- Well known integrated services
- Professional champions

