

**Report from**  
**WALSALL MBC**  
**SOCIAL CARE & SUPPORTED HOUSING**  
**TEENAGE PREGNANCY WORKSHOP**

**Bescot Stadium**  
**10<sup>TH</sup> February 2005**

**Jan Norton**  
**Director**  
**JCJ Solutions Ltd**

## CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
Aims and objectives	3
Feedback from working groups:	
Boys and young men	4
Needs of Black and ethnic minority young people	6
SRE in school	9
Support for pregnant young women in school	12
SRE out of school	14
Services to young people which prevent pregnancy / STIs	16
Childcare	18
Housing	20
Support for teenage parents:	
A) Continuing with education	22
B) Support for teenage parents and their families	23
C) Self esteem and aspirations	25
D) Young people's involvement	26
Facilitator's comments - general	

## **Aim and objectives**

### **Aim:**

To consider the local teenage pregnancy strategy, review progress and agree a strategic direction for 2005 - 2010

### **Objectives:**

- create a safe space and “clean sheet of paper” approach
- obtain feedback from local young people and reflect on national research with young people
- recognise the breadth and depth of the strategy, current progress (compared with West Midlands and England), structures and processes
- recognise geographical hotspots and vulnerable client groups requiring a targeted approach
- recognise activities and opportunities that are universal
- recognise strategic drivers locally and nationally
- recognise models of good practice regionally and nationally
- consider the potential involvement of the voluntary sector
- consider the opportunities and threats in relation to mainstreaming work currently funded by the Teenage Pregnancy Local Improvement Grant
- obtain feedback from workgroups
- produce a report from the event which underpins the annual reporting process

## **Feedback from working groups**

### **WORKING GROUP: BOYS AND YOUNG MEN**

#### **What's currently happening**

- There is very little known of what is currently in place to meet the needs of boys and young men
- Information currently comes through friends
- Professionals often focus on the woman and the support is focused on her
- Where supported accommodation exists, it is often for the woman / child only.
- There are localised young dads' projects

### **WORKING GROUP: BOYS AND YOUNG MEN**

#### **Problems, challenges, barriers, gaps**

- Funding
- Attitudes
- Lack of male workers in the field
- Non-realistic sex education
- Links with other people with similar problems

## **WORKING GROUP: BOYS AND YOUNG MEN**

### **The way forward**

- Anger management programmes with specific target groups to allow families to stay together
- More realistic approach to sex education in schools, mentors, etc
- Self help groups
- Influence senior management to consider needs of boys / young men and explore all possible funding routes for work with boys / young men
- Identify if there is any work going on with boys and young men improve links with Youth Offending Team; NACRO; sports / social clubs for boys / young men

## **WORKING GROUP: BOYS AND YOUNG MEN**

### **Facilitator's comments**

Specific guidance is available from the Teenage Pregnancy Unit about the provision of services for boys and young men.

Work is being undertaken nationally to ascertain the benefits of youth development programmes in this country. This approach has proved promising in the States.

Training is available for staff to consider stereotyping and to encourage them to include young fathers

Anger management has been recognised in other areas of the West Midlands as a key issue in potential / actual child protection cases

In another area of the Black Country the potential of PAYP funding is being explored to support esteem building work with young parents – this approach could include young men.

## WORKING GROUP: NEEDS OF BLACK AND ETHNIC MINORITY YOUNG PEOPLE

### What's currently happening

- Teenage unit referral
- Recognition of the different needs of minority ethnic young people and specific issues that are related to different communities
- Stigma related to teenage pregnancy and ensuring there is access to advice that is discreet and confidential
- No confidence in GPs – potential use of Family Matters video?
- Response from community is not positive to this issue
- Take issue of safe sex and teenage pregnancy to the community
- School is safest place to discuss issues of safe sex and teenage pregnancy
- Acceptable to have children young – no stigma in the black community, opposite thing in Asian community
- How image of manhood is portrayed – social economic factors are causes in some parts of the black community
- Few role models exist with positive messages; need to focus on difficulties of parenthood as opposed to positive aspects
- Link with opportunities in education to reduce teenage pregnancy as pregnancy and social exclusion are closely linked
- Prosecution of incidences of under age sex is rare; would this act as a deterrent?
- YASH project (Family Matters video and training and facilitation pack) to be piloted in 2 schools and in community venues with parents
- Recognition of needs of young women in extended families
- Further consultation needed
- Core group is evident - identified in some schools and provide concentrated support – have to ensure this support doesn't isolate the young people concerned. Work on self esteem and confidence building to reduce risk factors

## **Problems, challenges, barriers, gaps**

- Young Asian women with a pregnancy out of marriage would not turn to their own community – they go out of the Borough to seek advice because of concerns re confidentiality
- Black teenagers – may get more support from family and friends
- Asian families want to get rid of the problem - but with the potential of psychological trauma – need for counselling for post pregnancy/abortion
- Core data required to see how big the problem is
- Confidential service needs where teachers are not involved.- a separate unit is required on school premises
- Raising awareness to governors about teenage pregnancy and need to incorporate issues into school
- Housing issues and support – housing issues when returning to work. Lack of services prevent exit from cycle of poverty
- Gap in statistics regarding access
- Look at European initiatives which enable reduced national teenage pregnancy rates
- Cycle repeated with young black men, i.e. single parent poverty. Consultation with young black men as to their views and ideas around safe sex and teenage pregnancy
- Develop deterrents
- Schools to provide condoms, i.e. more accessible
- Approach for children who don't go to school
- Community response is very poor – identify sympathetic groups / listeners – looking at different aspects, i.e. raising self esteem to take the issues forward
- Equip young people with skills to improve their status quo
- Look at preventing teenage pregnancy and STIs
- Different barriers affecting individual ethnic communities, therefore, solutions have to be found to address these

- Educating young people about menstrual cycle
- Childcare places for pre school and after school choices
- Flexible training and education to fit in with school times. Family friendly policy in training
- Coursework to be completed to assist with qualification
- Recognition of issues surrounding forced, arranged and failed marriages in Asian communities
- Raise awareness of safe sex – community needs to face facts
- Workers needed in the community to raise awareness
- Working with young men to raise awareness
- Consultation with young Black / Asian people to determine services they require

### **The way forward**

- Confidential services –models need to be developed to provide accessible services / units of support
- Walk in centres
- Addressing stereotypes about black young men
- Research is required into Black and Asian barriers and into how European countries have reduced teenage pregnancy rates

### **Facilitator's comments**

Guidance is available from the Teenage Pregnancy Unit regarding services for Black and ethnic minority young people and for young people in general.

Clear guidance is available from the Teenage Pregnancy Unit regarding the roles of professionals in relation to under 16s

Better ethnic monitoring across all services is needed so that access to and uptake of services can be tracked

Models have been successfully developed, in and near schools, which provide young people of school age with advice, support and information



Discussions with the PCT Asian / African Caribbean working group indicate that communities may be becoming more open to a dialogue on this issue

## **WORKING GROUP: SEX AND RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION IN SCHOOL**

### **What's currently happening**

- Y9 increase at present
- Contraceptive education
- Accessing services
- STI work
- Main stream and difficult to reach
- Walk Ways
- Schools sex education policy
- Citizenship
- Mentors
- "Patchy"
- Electronic babies
- Law
- Boys & young men – incorporated in lessons
- Young fathers' project
- School Health Advisors
- Youth Workers
- Talks with Catholic schools
- Training peer mentors – young mums
- All children given uniform information, leaflets, condoms, files, etc.

## **WORKING GROUP: SEX AND RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION IN SCHOOL**

### **Problems, challenges, barriers, gaps**

- Lack of staff
- Time restraints/cannot be done in a couple of lessons
- Lack of appropriate training for teachers, EWOs, Youth Workers, etc.
- Constraints of the National Curriculum
- Provisions are “patchy”, more in some areas than others – hotspots
- Schools do not have a “named” school health advisor, but a team of people – difficult to build up a relationship
- Culture/religion

## **WORKING GROUP: SEX AND RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION IN SCHOOL**

### **The way forward**

- Sharing existing consultation that has taken place with young people themselves and any actions that have resulted
- Health/Education professional based in each school
- Presentation/involvement of school governors
- Ensure that “Baby think it over” is available to boys
- Education opportunities through school PTAs
- Vulnerable children’s day in every school and parents information evening
- Standardised course for teachers and other professional for anyone delivering training
- Appropriately included in Corporate Parenting Strategy
- Information available where boys congregate

- S.A.S. (School Advise Service)
- Use of young mums as peer mentors

### **Facilitator's comments**

The BRMB tracking survey (2003) consistently shows that young people aged 13-21 report their main sources of information about sex and relationships as being:

- lessons at school (77%)
- friends (53%)
- mothers (52%)
- magazines, books, posters and newspapers (45%)
- TV and videos (45%)

This survey also showed that nearly half of young people (46%) reported that they received “nothing” or “not a lot” of information on sex and relationships from their parents. More than half said they found it quite or very easy to talk to their mother about sex and relationships but only a quarter said the same about for their father. Mothers were more likely than fathers to say they would find it easy to talk to their child about sex and relationships.

Parents feel strongly that there would be fewer pregnancies if more parents talked to their children about sex, relationships and contraception.

Research demonstrates that there is general support for sex and relationships education by young people and parents and that most young people and parents do not think that sex education encourages young people to have sex too early.

It is essential that, in delivering SRE, links are made with local services.

Dudley has carried out an audit of SRE policy in schools to enable less advanced schools to be targeted

## **WORKING GROUP: SUPPORT FOR PREGNANT YOUNG WOMEN IN SCHOOL**

### **What's currently happening**

- Designated teachers
- Policies
- PHSE curriculum
- Role of ASW/EWO
- Care to Learn
- Shepwell Centre
- Sure Start Plus

## **WORKING GROUP: SUPPORT FOR PREGNANT YOUNG WOMEN IN SCHOOL**

### **Problems, challenges, barriers, gaps**

- Knowing the law in our role, making it available to all professionals, i.e. asking girls for pregnancy tests
- Re-engaging young people back into education and lack of alternative provision and funding
- Lack of continuity across all schools in delivering programmes of PSHE
  - contents
  - age of delivery

## **WORKING GROUP: SUPPORT FOR PREGNANT YOUNG WOMEN IN SCHOOL**

### **The way forward**

- More alternative provision and funding
- Schools have on site services
- PSHE in primary schools
  - risk of unprotected sex
  - relationships
  - vulnerable children

- pregnancy as security

- Sharing of good practice
- Greater representation on the Teenage Pregnancy Working Party
- Information for parents of pregnant teenage girls of services available and where to go
- Focus on teenage boys
- Equal services across the borough and equal access
- Services/Schools Nurses in youth clubs on a rolling programme
- Mentors within schools
- Adapt the progress file within schools, incorporate action plans, work experience to use after leaving school
- Any free community courses

## **WORKING GROUP: SUPPORT FOR PREGNANT YOUNG WOMEN IN SCHOOL**

### **Facilitator's comments**

Other areas in the West Midlands may have or be developing standard policies for schools to adopt, which give guidance on the provision of support for pregnant young women.

Different models of support exist in different areas. There is a networking group for Sure Start Plus / Support workers to consider benefits of different models.

## **WORKING GROUP: SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION OUT OF SCHOOLS**

### **What's currently happening**

- SRE – via Street teams, Outreach
- Youth Service – curriculum based education – peer support
- LAC initiatives
- NACRO – YMTB – SRE
- WPH – Glass
- Media
- Connexions

## **WORKING GROUP: SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION OUT OF SCHOOLS**

### **Problems, challenges, barriers, gaps**

- Lack of partnership working
- Funding issues
- Mainstreaming
- Time commitment – who will pull all this together – who will look at SRE in all these outside areas?
- Who's post / remit??

## **WORKING GROUP: SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION OUT OF SCHOOLS**

### **The way forward**

- School based services (SAS Pilot) – after school, Extended Schools
- SRE polices for all agencies working with young people
- Continue to develop Youth Services provision of SRE
- Need supportive work in schools to lay the foundations
- Greater availability
- Young Fathers' project – SRE included, mainstreaming?
- Increase availability of Speakeasy to parents in need

## **WORKING GROUP: SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION OUT OF SCHOOLS**

### **Facilitator's comments**

Some areas provide specialist input to residential homes and most provide training to residential social workers and foster carers.

With strategic support, Specialist Youth Worker and Young People's Outreach roles are being developed in Dudley, to work on prevention and support for teenage parents out of school settings, in conjunction with other roles / organisations

SRE should be highlighted as a key component of the development of both sexual health services (through tPCT LDP) and of children's services (through Children's and Young People's Partnerships)

## **WORKING GROUP: SERVICES TO YOUNG PEOPLE WHICH PREVENT PREGNANCY AND STIs**

### **What's currently happening**

- Condom distribution / training
- Pregnancy testing
- Emergency hormonal contraception – chemists / NHS Walk – in
- Young person drop-in at Hatherton (Genito-urinary medicine)
- New GUM clinic within one year
- Glass project
- Contraception and Sexually Transmitted Infection
- NHS Walk-in: condoms / pregnancy testing / emergency hormonal contraception
- Walsall Pregnancy Help: drop in daily free pregnancy testing; condoms; refer to appropriate agencies
- Specific young people's clinics: Genito-urinary medicine; Hatherton Centre
- Baby café
- FPA training: provided TAP co-ordinator
- Walsall street teams: sex, love and lies
- Arts into education: Loud Mouth
- Young People's directory
- Sure Start plus
- School Advice Service in 4 schools (in pipeline – Sue Love and Dru Parkes)
- Pregnancy counselling – Walsall Pregnancy Help – 24 hour helpline
- Connexions PAs in school / Electric Palace: sexual health advice and pregnancy testing



## **WORKING GROUP: SERVICES TO YOUNG PEOPLE WHICH PREVENT PREGNANCY AND STIs**

### **Problems, challenges, barriers, gaps**

- Money – cost of running clinics
- Funding stops 2006
- Doctors – family planning
- Other professions not aware of what's available
- Informing young people re Sexually Transmitted Infections
- Looked after children / care leavers
- 16 – 24 funding stops April 06
- Non-distribuion of SRE / LAC policy
- Children not attending school
- School Advice Service

## **WORKING GROUP: SERVICES TO YOUNG PEOPLE WHICH PREVENT PREGNANCY AND STIs**

### **The way forward**

- Better communication between partners and organisations involved e.g. attending governor meetings / offer information
- Better liaison with parents
- Better services for young men – target with funky ideas re sexual health and contraception
- Local services for local people
- Media groups
- Male involved in sexual health / contraceptive services

- Joint post: council / health services to co-ordinate services
- Promotion of multi-agency services from one base
- Leadership from PCT
- School-based services in co-operation with health / education / governors / parents
- Reassurance / positive action re uncertainty relating to future funding – keep developing services / maintain and consolidate current local services

### **Facilitator's comments**

National guidance is being developed on “young people welcome” standards, to be used locally as a template for agreeing non-clinical standards across service providers

Other areas have models in place which provide governor training on SRE

Young people need optional routes through which to access services and these services need to be “young people welcome”

Stoke's Clinic in a Box model provides good, flexible access to a variety of health information and advice, at low cost compared to other “satellite” models

## **WORKING GROUP: CHILDCARE**

### **What's currently happening**

- Care to Learn for the funding
- Family Support child minding / child minder receives Working with Teenage Parents training
- Sure Start Plus arrange for care
- Nursery placement, Sure Start programmes
- Assisted places

## **WORKING GROUP: CHILDCARE**

### **Problems, challenges, barriers, gaps**

- Care to Learn – limited funding (shortfalls arising)
- Family Support child minding – only certain child minders can be used
- Sure Start programmes – not accessible to some parent due to cost, only to areas of deprivation and under 4's
- Assisted places – limited places
- NACRO – Girls have to leave training at 29 weeks due to funding crossing over with benefits. No funding accessible for childcare after their birth for ongoing training. Needs to be more flexible with age cut off for funding

## **WORKING GROUP: CHILDCARE**

### **The way forward**

- Children's Centres – accessible to wider area and age range
- More funding for young parents to access free childcare places whilst attending courses, etc.
- More flexibility
- Care to Learn – tailored to individual needs
- Talk to and listen to the young parents
- Uniformity of services
- More childcare in young parents' home

## **WORKING GROUP: CHILDCARE**

### **Facilitator's comments**

Changes to Care to Learn are being pursued nationally, to increase the sum available and raise the upper age by one year

Other areas may be piloting more flexible models of using Care to Learn funding, eg to support a young woman's home based education and develop play and parenting skills

The difficulties that arise regarding clash in policy re continuing training and receiving benefits / maternity grant have been raised nationally but will be pursued again

## **WORKING GROUP: HOUSING**

### **What's currently happening**

- Supported Housing
- Housing Association
- Outreach Support – Walsall Foyer
- Floating Support
- WMBC – Homeless Unit
- Transitional Leaving Care Team
- Sign-posted to housing from Sure Start & Hayde Sanders
- Hostel Working Group
- Midwives – Bromford Corinthian – Caldmore Housing/floating support
- Like Project in Westbourne Street
- NACRO – Young Mums To Be programme, referred from Connexions
- Hayde Sanders – build up confidence of young people to enable to seek own independent accommodation
- Sure Start Plus
- Partnership WMBC
- Accord – Caldmore Housing
- Walsall Regeneration Housing Agency
- Connexions

## **WORKING GROUP: HOUSING**

## **Problems, challenges, barriers, gaps**

- Accessing the relevant agencies – being passed on from one to another
- The success at finding suitable accommodation is dependent on the person that you contact and their knowledge of securing properties
- Limited availability of accommodation which is suitable; i.e. low rise flats with no lifts & pushchairs!
- Supported housing schemes – difficulty in assisting young people to move on so are denying other young people access to the scheme who are in more need
- Stereotyping of teenage pregnancies is a problem – why are supported housing schemes in less desirable areas
- Lack of communication between agencies
- Private landlords – problem with deposits, rent guarantee scheme for initial deposit, some do not take DSS claimants

## **WORKING GROUP: HOUSING**

### **The way forward**

- More agencies communicating with young people
- Finance to housing providers to bring back long term empty properties into occupation
- Extra priority for young people to move into their own tenancies from supported housing schemes – we need to link our services
- More money for supported housing schemes
- Direct access to supported housing schemes
- More funding for floating support
- Everyone was unanimous in saying we need more decent housing

## **WORKING GROUP: HOUSING**

## **Facilitator's comments**

A Regional Project has been delivered in the East Midlands to develop greater cohesion between housing agencies and inform TPU of current issues. An event to feedback to relevant agencies is likely to be delivered in June 2005.

Training is available for staff to consider stereotyping issues.

## **WORKSHOP: SUPPORT FOR TEENAGE PARENTS**

### **A) Continuing/ re-engaging with education**

**All young parents 16 and over are supported to continue or re-engage with their education and training to meet their full potential.**

### **What's happening**

- Connexions Advisers
- Sure Start Plus
- Leaving Care Advisers
- Care to Learn (funding childcare)
- Training providers: NACRO, Rathbone, Vine Project, Steps to Work, Walsall College

## **WORKSHOP: SUPPORT FOR TEENAGE PARENTS**

### **A) Continuing/ re-engaging with education**

### **Gaps/ Barriers/ Challenges**

- Limited opportunities
- Rigid timetables
- Financial implications
- Childcare places/ funding shortfall

- Inappropriate funding stream E 2 E
- Negative attitude to specific courses for teenage parents not seen as valuable.

## **WORKSHOP: SUPPORT FOR TEENAGE PARENTS**

### **A) Continuing/ re-engaging with education**

#### **The way forward**

- More choice/ flexibility in courses
- All training to come through education maintenance allowance so that benefits are not affected. This will promote more teen parents returning to education.
- Specific courses for teen parents that promote good parenting of children but also incorporate literacy, numeracy, life skills.
- Can't people see this will promote better outcomes for the children of young parents?

#### **Facilitator's comments**

A dialogue is developing with the Learning and Skills Council at Regional / Government Office and local levels to try and find an appropriate funding route for work with teenage parents.

Examples of "taster" sessions have been developed in other areas

It is expected that the Care to Learn funding ceiling and age ceiling may be increased

## **WORKSHOP: SUPPORT FOR TEENAGE PARENTS**

### **B) Support for teenage parents and their families**

**All teenage parents are offered a co-ordinated package of support**

#### **What's currently happening**

- Sure start Plus/ Connexions PA's offer
- Young people who access the service offered support package specific to them
- Excellent referral systems in place with partners for supporting complex issues, domestic violence, asylum, child protection, drugs misuse
- Excellent partnership
- Named careers
- PA for teen parents/parents to be
- Named EWO's for schoolgirls

## **WORKSHOP: SUPPORT FOR TEENAGE PARENTS**

### **B) Support for teenage parents and their families**

#### **Problems/ Challenges/ Barriers**

- Lack of resources e.g. supported housing places, location of supported housing (in under-privileged areas where no-one wants to go)
- Some organisations lack of understanding of issues faced by young parents.
- Manpower issues due to growth of service, Sure Start plus offer (extra staff)
- Future funding mainstreaming
- General negative attitudes to teen parents

## **WORKSHOP: SUPPORT FOR TEENAGE PARENTS**

### **B) Support for teenage parents and their families**



## **The way forward**

- Quality supported housing to meet need
- People at strategic level to talk to young people and workers on the ground so that resources are in place
- Funding to continue mainstreaming

## **Facilitator's comments**

East Midlands Regional housing project and stereotype training as previously mentioned

## **WORKSHOP: SUPPORT FOR TEENAGE PARENTS**

### **C) Self-esteem and aspirations**

**All young people have opportunities to build self-esteem and aspirations to fulfil their potential and minimise risk-taking behaviour.**

## **What's currently happening**

- One to one mentoring
- Learning mentor in schools (group work)
- Walkways – counselling services
- Connexions service Personal Advisers
- Education welfare officers promote good school attendance, encourage academic achievement
- Sure Start Plus provide support package
- Life skills programmes for care leavers (accredited)
- The Vine Project, alternative education programmes
- NACRO schools programmes, education programme
- Walsall Street Teams, one to one support, specific client group, workshops

## **WORKSHOP: SUPPORT FOR TEENAGE PARENTS**

### **C) Self-esteem and aspirations**

#### **Problems/ Barriers/ Gaps**

- Need to address self esteem issues at a younger age
- People don't recognise/ soft target which impacts on accessing funding
- Very patchy, some have access, some don't
- Educate schools to be more involved

## **WORKSHOP: SUPPORT FOR TEENAGE PARENTS**

### **C) Self-esteem and aspirations**

#### **The way forward overall approach**

- Learning mentors at grass roots
- Standard policy for schools

#### **Facilitator's comments**

Standard policy for schools under development

## **WORKSHOP: SUPPORT FOR TEENAGE PARENTS**

### **D) Young peoples involvement**

**Young people representative of the local community are involved in the needs assessment, planning, delivery and monitoring of work to prevent teenage pregnancy, improve sexual health, and support teenage parents**

#### **What's happening**

- Young people involved in producing a newsletter specific to them giving them a voice (Sure Start Plus)
- Peer mentors going into schools/youth settings
- "Tell us what you think" young persons feedback questionnaire given by Sure Start Plus advisers fed back to Black Country Connexions.
- Commissioning of Loud Mouth Theatre interviews with young people to get their views on sexual health services in Walsall.
- Young persons on Teenage Pregnancy steering Group meeting.

## **WORKSHOP: SUPPORT FOR TEENAGE PARENTS**

### **D) Young peoples involvement**

#### **Problems/ Challenges/ Barriers/ Gaps**

- Peer mentors seen by some professional as promoting teenage pregnancy.
- Funding implications when producing newsletter, childcare and transport so that young parents can attend meetings.

## **WORKSHOP: SUPPORT FOR TEENAGE PARENTS**

### **D) Young peoples involvement**

#### **The way forward**

- Multi agency approach
- Challenge attitudes to teen pregnancy.

## Facilitator's comments – general

The summaries provided in this report represent what was known by working group members about what is currently happening, what the problem areas are, and provides some ideas about the way forward.

Walsall Teenage Pregnancy Partnership Board brings together key senior people from a variety of agencies, to plan for and monitor delivery of actions to achieve its targets, in reducing under 18 conceptions and achieving return to education and employment for teenage parents. It is essential that in its drive forward, the local authority work in conjunction with the Partnership Board, and it

It is an appropriate time to consider a new strategic direction and plan for the next 3-5 years in broad terms, whilst also doing some detailed planning for the next year or two. This is also required by the Teenage Pregnancy Unit, and a condition on which funding is made available (through the Teenage Pregnancy Implementation Grant).

However, in refocusing and agreeing a new direction, it is essential that the learning that has been done nationally is recognised. Full details about research is available on the TPU website:

[www.teenagepregnancyunit.gov.uk](http://www.teenagepregnancyunit.gov.uk)

However, I will take this opportunity to remind all those considering the way forward to take specific account of the following findings from research:

a) The Alan Guttmacher Institute report concludes that “the best strategy for continuing the declines in teenage pregnancy levels is a multifaceted approach” ... “that means providing adequate education and information about sexual behaviour and its consequences, as well as confidential, affordable and accessible sources of contraceptive services and supplies”.

b) As Kirby's review suggests, “professionals working with youth should not adopt simplistic solutions with little chance of making a dent on the complex problem of teenage pregnancy”.

*there is no one easy answer*

c) A further report concluded that “comprehensive and balanced information about sexuality is one of the hallmarks of countries with lower levels of adolescent pregnancy.”

*we are working with local cultural norms*

d) A UNICEF report concludes that “improving access to contraception, provision of quality sex education and building incentives to avoid early parenthood are the main characteristics of countries with lower rates”.

e) Research on 20 areas achieving the greatest decline in rates identified the following key areas:

- establishing inter-agency groups concerned specifically with sex and relationships education / teenage pregnancy
- appointment of new staff to offer specialist advice on sex education
- introduction of additional training for teachers involved in personal, social and health education
- consultation with, and / or targeting, young people regarding sexual health
- establishing new young people's sexual health services

*these are key areas worth priority consideration*

(full references can be provided on request)