

Teenage Pregnancy

Summary

- ***Teenage pregnancy is the single most important cause of NEET.***
- ***The majority of pregnancies are unplanned but there is variation linked to socio-economic reasons in the levels of termination.***
- ***There is limited engagement of schools in the Western Area with the county SRE Partnership.***
- ***There are programmes and strategies which can be developed but their effectiveness depends on collaborative working between schools and other Children's Trust partners.***

8.1 Evidence has been presented earlier showing that pregnancy and teenage parenthood is the single most significant reason for young people being NEET. In April 2008, of the 329 young people who are NEET in West Norfolk, 64 (19.5%) are NEET as a result of pregnancy/parenthood. When schools were asked why they think young people are NEET, no school advanced this as the reason.

8.2 One of the issues over pregnancy is to what extent is pregnancy a lifestyle choice and to what extent is it accidental. Data from the Office of National Statistics shows a termination rate for teenage pregnancy in Norfolk of 44%. This rate rises to 60% in the more affluent areas of the county but falls to 30-35% in deprived areas. There has been no robust research into teenage pregnancy in the county but there is national evidence that alcohol is a significant factor. The evidence seems to suggest that the overwhelming majority of pregnancies are unplanned and accidental. However, given the data by area above on termination rates, there is a lifestyle choice over the decision whether or not to terminate.

8.3 The County has developed a clearly defined SRE partnership model. This model

- describes the elements of effective SRE practice.
- offers training and resources to improve the quality of the delivery of SRE.

- identifies which agencies have capacity to support those elements.
- facilitates and coordinates support for schools.
- provides a quality assurance role to ensure that activity is evidence-based, appropriate, effective, and is in line with current LA guidance.

However, the Partnership is concerned about the level of engagement with, and take up of, the Partnership's services. Full details of the support the partnership can provide appears as **Appendix 3**.

8.4 There are clearly areas of West Norfolk where the number of teenage pregnancies is high. The Teenage Pregnancy Strategy Unit offers support in developing targeted work with vulnerable groups. The Team is able to:

- give support to identify vulnerable and at risk groups and individuals.
- provide information of effective practice and interventions.
- identify appropriate agencies to support delivery of targeted programmes.
- highlight relevant training re: addressing the needs of vulnerable groups.

There is a strong need for schools within the areas of highest pregnancy to develop with the Partnership a strategy that covers both the time when young people are in statutory education as well as the 16-19 period. The support for the development of SRE within schools includes:

- provide training for staff in the school environment.
- provide training for staff outside the school environment.
- provide training for governors.
- provide training for agencies who deliver SRE in schools.
- networking between schools to share good practice.
- PSHE CPD Programme.
- provide access to Norfolk Sexual Health Training Programme.
- advice on training relevance and priority.

In addition, the Partnership can:

- provide an exemplar scheme of work.
- provide information about local service provision re: training programme and sexual health support programme.
- raise awareness of ineffective practice through consultation and guidance.

- offer continuing advice and support.

Given the relatively limited engagement of the schools in the West with the partnership, this is clearly an area where partnership working with Children's Services is essential if one of the key causes of NEET is to be addressed.