

## **Inquiry into teenage pregnancy**

### **North Ayrshire Council - Focus Groups for Teenage Pregnancy**

#### **Do you have any views on the current policy direction being taken at the national level in Scotland to reduce rates of teenage pregnancy?**

The current policy direction to focus on reducing teenage pregnancy using a prevention approach, with particular focus on the under 16 year age group was supported.

There was a need to clearly link the National Sexual Health work with the Alcohol and Drug Partnership agenda at a national level.

It was also felt that there should be further strategy promotion to highlight this agenda.

The North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership Single Outcome Agreement contains outcome measure to reduce teenage pregnancy as this is seen as an important issue.

#### **Do you have any views on the action being taken at the local level by health boards, local authorities and other relevant organisations to reduce teenage pregnancy, particularly in the under 16 age group?**

There is a wide range of services in place across North Ayrshire working in partnership to reduce teenage pregnancies, particularly in the under 16 years age group.

The health and well-being agenda is well embedded within our local Curriculum for Excellence with Education Services being supported by NHS school nursing services, who provide sexual health advice and a CCARD contraception scheme.

Homelessness service users link with the public health nurse to provide wide public health messages, including sexual health advice and CCARD contraception.

The 'fitba for u' homelessness football team also targets young men with sexual health advice and support to reduce teenage pregnancies.

Our Looked after children and young people are supported by a NHS Looked after and accommodated nurse and there has as a result not been a teenage pregnancy in residential care settings for many years.

Our Throughcare Services and Community Education services regularly provide young mums and mixed gender groups providing sexual health support and advice.

Education Services also work with the TOTs (Truth on teenage Pregnancy) programme providing a programme across the partnership with social services, youth work and health to provide a virtual baby scheme and visits for vulnerable young women to neo-natal services to view the impact of alcohol and drugs during pregnancy.

The Pearly Centre in Saltcoats provides a interagency drop-in centre for young women from 16-30 years and provides a wide range of advice including sexual health support and contraception provision.

There was a view that services often focussed on young mums once a pregnancy had commenced and there was the need to explore further early intervention and prevention approaches linked to improving positive self-esteem, aspirations for educational outcomes, jobs or further training opportunities to change the culture of low aspiration in some communities.

There was some concern that the national policy may not have been fully embedded within all areas of the council and a more strategic approach, with a strategic lead, would be helpful to reduce possible service fragmentation.

**What are your views on the relationship between high levels of teenage pregnancy and socio-economic inequality?**

In North Ayrshire there is a clear link between teenage pregnancies and deprivation.

There is a view that the culture of lower expectation to achieve an education, job or further training opportunities is a difficult barrier to overcome within some areas of North Ayrshire and there have been generational teenage pregnancies as a result.

The partnership would also like to receive partnership reporting on other issues linked to teenage pregnancy and socio-economic impacts e.g. prescribing of the morning after contraception and termination levels, but generating data on such issues can be challenging.

The North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership Single Outcome Agreement contains outcome measure to reduce teenage pregnancy as this is seen as an important issue.

**What are the barriers and challenges to making progress in achieving positive change communities that might lead to reductions in the levels of teenage pregnancy?**

Due to the small numbers of teenage pregnancies it is often difficult to explore the issue in more detail, as service user confidentiality may be placed at risk. This is a barrier as partnerships would like to target geographical areas, schools and communities more effectively as required.

Community Learning and Development have trained their staff to deliver the CCARD contraception scheme, as they work with many young people within their Youth services, but permission for this new approach has not yet been confirmed, as this has traditionally been an NHS service.

There is a view that the culture of lower expectation to achieve an education, job or further training opportunities is a difficult barrier to overcome within some areas of North Ayrshire and there have been generational teenage pregnancies as a result.

The growth in social media and the sexualisation of young people the media was seen as a barrier to positive sexual health, including teenage pregnancies and STDs.

**What are your views on the current support services available to young parents / young mothers, e.g. range of services, focus of services and whether services are being delivered in the most appropriate settings?**

There are a wide range of services available which build on the capacity of existing services to work effectively with young parents and young mothers within their local communities and their homes.

Social services, education Services and Community Learning & Development Services regularly undertake staff training to increase their capacity to effectively identify sexual health issues and to signpost users to the appropriate services for support and advice within their local communities.

Our services can access a vulnerable persons midwife to support young mums from the pre-birth stage of pregnancy to birth. During this pre-birth assessment stage services across the partnership are organised to provide support before and after the birth.

The new family Nurse Partnership is also due to commence in 2013 which Council services will engage with young mums and access partnership services for support.

Homelessness service users link with the public health nurse to provide wide public health messages, including sexual health advice and CCARD contraception.

Our Looked after children and young people are supported by a NHS Looked after and accommodated nurse and there has as a result not been a teenage pregnancy in residential care settings for many years.

Our Throughcare Services and Community Education services regularly provide young mums groups signposting to sexual health support and advice.

Our services use a Ayrshire website of public health resources as required.

**Are there specific initiatives that you would wish to highlight to the Health and Sport Committee that you consider indicate good practice with regard to reducing teenage pregnancy rates in Scotland, either in the public sector, voluntary sector or in partnership?**

The current provision of a wide range of partnership supported services from the homelessness nurse, midwife for vulnerable people and looked after and accommodated nurses are areas of good practice.

The development of multi-agency drop in centres, a special interest multi-agency group focussed on young women across education, social services including addictions and community learning and a joint partnership response to domestic abuse in North Ayrshire are all seen as good practice.

**Are there specific approaches to reducing teenage pregnancy that are not currently getting sufficient attention in order to affect positive change for children and young people?**

There was a need to clearly link the National Teenage Pregnancy work with the Alcohol and Drug Partnership agenda at a national level.

There is a need to provide more of a focus on diversionary activities and prevention activities with young men and women to strengthen aspiration.

The role of social media requires to be explored further.

**Do you have any comments on any other aspect of teenage pregnancy policy or examples of good practice that you wish to raise with the Committee?**

#### **Focus Groups for Teenage Pregnancy**

<b>NAC Focus Group Members</b>	<b>Contacts</b>
Housing	Janine Barratt – Homelessness
Social Services	Roseanne Burns – Rosemount Shona Longmuir – Childrens and Families Lisa Mullan – Addictions Anne Tait – Throughcare Alison Paterson, Senior Manager
Chief Executive	Andrew Hale
Education and Skills	Angela Morrell – Community Development Yvonne Munn – Extended Outreach

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