

## **Inquiry into teenage pregnancy**

### **Glasgow Pregnancy Crisis Centre**

On behalf of the advisers at Glasgow Pregnancy Centre, may I put forward the following views.

We are pleased to note that many of the recommendations by different groups contributing to the 'Respect and Responsibility Strategy' stress the importance of RELATIONSHIPS as opposed to focusing only on reproductive health and contraception. This is especially welcome as suggested in the 2012 'Curriculum for Excellence' document.

Today's teenagers are surrounded by sexual images both in the marketing of clothes, cosmetics and in the media, and are therefore under greater pressure than previous generations to modify their behaviour in order to be seen as attractive and 'cool' in the eyes of their peers. Some of this may involve being drawn in to early sexual encounters. While they may be using contraception and understand the importance of preventing sexually transmitted diseases, they may also be completely unaware of the emotional and psychological implications of their actions. It would be helpful if much more emphasis were to be placed on the fact that they all have choices to make in many different areas in their lives and that they have the right to choose whether to conform to what they may feel is the accepted norm in their peer group. 'Respect' must include the right to a CHOICE to decline early sexual activity without 'losing face'.

The following evidence also suggests the need for intervention and advice on the potential effects of early sexual intercourse. As advisers, we encounter teenagers who are extremely distressed as a result of the termination of a pregnancy, having believed that undergoing this procedure would solve the problem of an unplanned pregnancy. In effect, they may be completely overwhelmed by the psychological consequences for themselves but also by how this can affect family relationships. (In 2012 our clients included 40 teenage girls between 14-18 years, 25 of whom presented with symptoms of Post Abortion Stress. More than 250 hours of adviser time was spent helping in these situations).

We hope that these comments are helpful and will be given consideration.

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