

Sandwell Teenage Pregnancy Strategy



Review of the year and beyond

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Cover picture:
Shaniek with 12-day-old
Lativia.

Background artwork:
produced at a community
arts project attended by
young people. It illustrates
the issues they think should
be considered by those
involved in the Teenage
Pregnancy Strategy.

REVIEW OF THE YEAR AND BEYOND

APRIL 2005 - SEPTEMBER 2006

CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION



Janine Brown

Chair of the Sandwell Teenage Pregnancy Partnership Board

Welcome to Sandwell Teenage Pregnancy Partnership's Review of the Year and Beyond. Inside you'll find details about the considerable achievements made over the year and some of our plans for the future.

I'm very proud of the work that is continuing to be done to reduce teenage conceptions in the borough and I believe we have turned an important corner this year. Latest figures show that we have more than achieved the target we set ourselves for reducing conception rates in 2004 – and have achieved a rate that is above the national average for the first time.

That is great news, and a testament to the commitment and very hard work of everyone directly involved – some of whom are featured in this report – and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them all very much.

Teenage pregnancy is everybody's business – and that is the theme of our report this year.

Different organisations and professionals working in isolation will have little impact on the aims of our Teenage Pregnancy Strategy and that is why working together is so important. It means NHS bodies, the council, Connexions and other big organisations, voluntary groups and organisations, charities, professionals and young people themselves, all playing an increasingly important role in making the strategy a success.

I'm delighted that the Young People's Teenage Pregnancy Board is now up and running, with members playing an active role in supporting what

we are doing. It's vital that we listen to what young people say if we want to provide credible services that they will use and that can make a difference.

Of course, one size doesn't fit all when it comes to the services that we provide: If it did, things would be a lot easier! The work that we do must address the differences in young people's needs, which is why we have to be innovative and creative.

Vulnerable young people need extra help, and this year we have set up a specific drop-in service for those young people who are in the care of Sandwell Council. I am sure that this will continue to flourish.

In addition, we are continuing to develop links with the African Caribbean Resource Centre and the Asian Networking Group to ensure that we reach young people in our black and minority ethnic communities. The DVD project, run in conjunction with Barnardo's, was another piece of innovative work targeting a specific group of young people.

We have achieved a lot this year, but reaching our targets for 2010 remains a challenge. Whilst we should allow ourselves some praise, there is still much to do.

In the next year we will continue to push boundaries working with professionals, organisations and young people themselves to make further strides towards the aims of our Teenage Pregnancy Strategy.

I look forward to reporting on more success next year.

CELEBRATING A SUCCESSFUL YEAR

Sarah New

Teenage Pregnancy Development Manager

I am absolutely delighted that we have been graded 'green' for our performance last year by the Department for Education and Skills. There are a large number of people and organisations in Sandwell that have been working hard since the strategy came into being in 2001 and this reflects their continuing enthusiasm and commitment to it and to the young people whom the strategy effects. In particular teachers and school nurses who have been delivering the APAUSE programme in schools and contraception services staff must be acknowledged for their valuable contribution towards achieving this reduction.

I am also extremely encouraged by the commitment demonstrated by senior managers and organisations to our strategy as reflected by their commitment to continue to fund elements of the strategy previously funded by the Sure Start Plus and Teenage Pregnancy Grants. 2006/07 alone, £250,000 has been contributed by partners to ensure that the jobs and services continue. This means that we really have a firm footing for continuing to work towards achieving our 2010 vision and targets.

I have thoroughly enjoyed meeting and working alongside many young people this year. Two highlights of the year for me were the Teen Parents Speak Out conference, where young people attending shared their views and demonstrated their talents and the launch, by Looked After Children, of the Education and Children's Services Sex and Relationships Policy.

I continue to enjoy working with all those staff with a responsibility for teenage pregnancy and continue to be impressed by their motivation and achievements, many of which are referred to within this report.

I know that we still have a long way to go and that the issues surrounding teenage pregnancy are complex and challenging. However, I am reassured that there has never been a better chance for bringing about change with so many committed staff, young people and organisations involved in implementing the strategy and with everybody's continued support we move closer to achieving our vision for 2010 of ultimately better lives for young people.



A BIT ABOUT US

Teenage pregnancy is everybody's business

Teenage pregnancy doesn't just affect the young people involved, but has far-reaching effects on the wider community: That's why the government has a national strategic approach to tackle the issue.

The National Teenage Pregnancy Unit (TPU) is the department responsible for this – and the Sandwell Children and Young People's Trust leads this work locally. The Trust is a true partnership organisation involving groups and agencies from across the borough which all have a part to play in helping us achieve our aims.

All of the plans and actions that you will read about in this report are part of the overall national plans, but tailored to suit the needs of the borough through our own Teenage Pregnancy Strategy.

This strategy, which guides all of our work, uses 1998 as our starting point – or 'baseline' year – for improving teenage pregnancy rates. From that date up to 2010, our challenging aim is to reduce the number of teenage conceptions in Sandwell by 55%.

We can only do this by involving young people themselves and all of those organisations that can offer support and expertise. You'll find out all about these in this report.



Children & Young People's Partnership Trust team members responsible for strategy implementation

Our overall aims:

1. To support young people to prevent unwanted early pregnancy.
2. To ensure the support needed by young parents is there – whenever and wherever it's needed.

Our principles and values:

Through our strategy and our partnerships, we have developed principles and values that underpin all of the work that we do. We are committed to:

- Being young people-centred.
- Working together with different organisations and professions.
- Targeting our work to address the inequalities between different areas and groups of people.
- Having a long-term, sustainable approach.
- Basing our practice on what works best.



JARFON BUSTER

Some abbreviations, phrases or references used in this report:

BME	Black and minority ethnic communities
DECCA	Drugs Education Counselling & Confidential Advice
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
Every Child Matters	A government-led programme to ensure the well-being of children and young people from 0 to 19 years. Change for Children is part of this and its five aims are on page nine.
LAC	Looked after children. Young people who may live in children's homes, foster homes, or are living at home – or with extended families – on Care Orders
Mainstream	The standard/existing services provided by organisations, or the permanent funding provided by partner agencies
MAP	Morning after pill. Emergency contraception that may prevent pregnancy if taken within 72 hours after unprotected sex
Multi-disciplinary teams/ multi-agency teams	People from different professions or organisations working together
NRF	Neighbourhood Renewal Fund
PCT	Primary Care Trust*
Peer education	Training young people as volunteers to deliver education sessions to other young people
PSHE	Personal, social and health education
SRE	Sex and relationships education
TP	Teenage pregnancy
TPU	Teenage Pregnancy Unit
Young People Welcome	A local advertising logo used on publicity materials to show young people that the named services are free, confidential, provide free condoms and welcome all young people
You're Welcome	DfES Teenage Pregnancy Unit's 'best practice' guidance on providing services for young people

* The PCTs we have worked with during this year are Rowley Regis and Tipton PCT, Oldbury and Smethwick PCT and Wednesbury and West Bromwich PCT. In this document, we refer to them as Sandwell's PCTs and Sandwell PCT because they joined together to become one in October 2006.

INVOLVING YOUNG PEOPLE IN OUR WORK

There's no point making strategies and plans for young people if we don't talk to young people themselves.

No-one wants to be told what's best for them without being asked for their point of view. Respecting their views and listening to what young people say is something that we are really committed to.

Involving them in what we do, and helping them to shape the services we provide, will play a huge part in making our teenage pregnancy strategy successful – and credible.

Here, we explain more about what we have achieved with young people this year.

OUR BIGGEST ACHIEVEMENTS THIS YEAR

We have set up the Young People's Teenage Pregnancy Board

Young people need a voice and a way of influencing those who make decisions about the things that matter to them: That's why the Young People's Teenage Pregnancy Board has been set up.

Sandwell Teenage Pregnancy Team held a special event to find volunteers to join the new Board – and 29 people put themselves forward. They represent a variety of youth forums across Sandwell including the Youth Cabinet, Youth Parliament and the Young Parents' Forum.

Each member is committed to working with the Teenage Pregnancy Team to ensure that the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy reflects the views and needs of local young people.

The 'recruitment' day involved young people thinking about what they wanted from the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy. Three key areas emerged, and the new Board will focus on them. They are:

- Support (for young people and young parents).
- Sex and relationships education.
- Working for acceptance and against discrimination.

During the day, teenagers also looked at what the priorities of the Board should be for its first year. They decided they should focus on:

- Delivering sexual health workshops to young people, which including raising their confidence and self-esteem.
- Developing 'attitude' training for workers to portray positive images of young parents.

- Developing a 'Mystery Shopper' project to help review contraceptive services.

Since the recruitment day, the Board has held meetings with the Teenage Pregnancy Team and got cracking on actions to start making a difference.

The 'Mystery Shopper' project has now begun and volunteers will be visiting and reviewing the existing contraceptive services provided across the borough. They will be making recommendations for improvements or changes, and this information will be used by us to shape the way that services are delivered in the future.



Some of the Young People's Teenage Pregnancy Board Volunteers

Young people spoke out – and we listened

Everyone wants to get things off their chest every now and again, and young parents in Sandwell had the chance to do just that at an annual conference.

The Teen Parents Speak Out event, supported by Sandwell's PCTs, was held in February in West Bromwich and attracted 50 people. As well as making their voices heard, it was a chance for young parents to take some time out for themselves.

Drumming activities, workshops, an awards ceremony, free nail art and a condom giveaway were just some of the highlights.

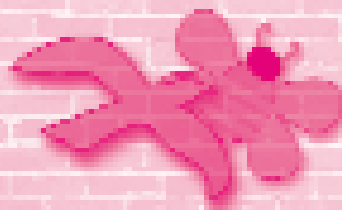
The conference gave young people the chance to meet the Teenage Pregnancy Team and to share their views about all kinds of things related to being a young parent. They were also able to join Sandwell Young Parents Groups, who organise fun activities and trips for young families and lone parents.

A crèche and lunch were provided, and attendees had the chance to browse a 'market place' of stands and displays to find out what help and support is available throughout Sandwell.



FACTS OF LIFE

Respecting young people's views



When we talk to young people, we really listen to what they say.

In the last year we consulted with more than 600 young people about our marketing and campaign materials. As a result, our branding has been changed to reflect their views.

PREVENTING TEENAGE PREGNANCIES

Reducing the numbers of teenage conceptions isn't about telling young people what they should and shouldn't do – it's about working with them so they make informed choices.

We are working hard to find ways of communicating with young people to make sure that they have reliable information about sex, relationships and contraception that's clear, easy to get hold of and relevant to the way they live their lives.

To do all of this, we work with organisations across the borough to improve existing services and also to develop ways of working more effectively within particular areas, or with specific groups of young people.

Our action plan for preventing teenage pregnancies follows the government's Every Child Matters framework. This encourages organisations and professionals to work closely together to improve the well-being of children and young people from birth to age 19 years.

The overall aim of this is for all children, no matter where they are from, to achieve five things:

1. Be healthy.
2. Stay safe.
3. Enjoy and achieve.
4. Make a positive contribution.
5. Achieve economic well-being.

There are three clear areas of work that we focus on to reduce teenage conceptions. They are:

- Improving sex and relationships education.
- Access to advice and contraception.
- How we target our work.

Here, we look at each one and explain what has been achieved in each in the last year, our plans for the future – plus some real-life stories.



Teenage pregnancy youth workers based at Coneygre Arts Centre

OUR THREE AREAS OF WORK

1. Improving Sex and Relationships Education

The more young people know about sex and contraception, the more confidence they will have in making important decisions that are right for them.

In Sandwell, we know that we have a high teenage pregnancy rate, with some areas worse than others. Because of this, we are developing services specifically for young people who need extra help on top of what's provided in schools.

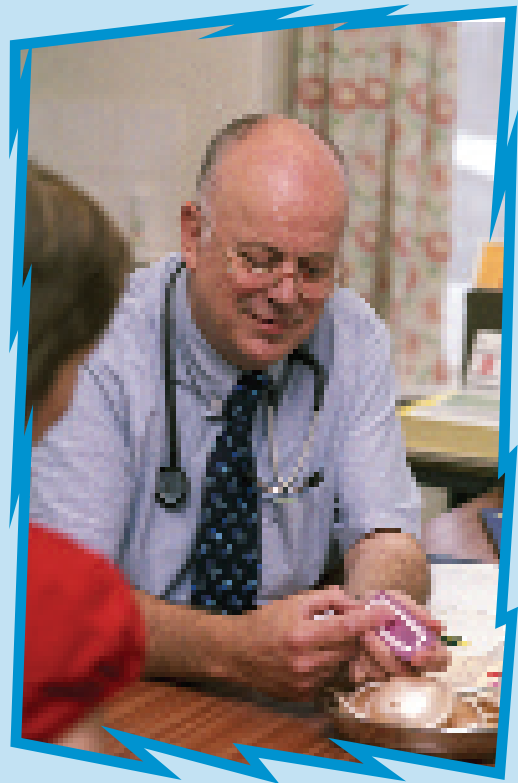
The driving force behind improvements in sex and relationships education (SRE) is Healthy Schools – an award scheme that aims to improve achievement in schools by focusing on all kinds of health improvements across the whole school community.

To date, a total of 26 schools have met the standard for delivering the SRE part of the scheme, supported by the SRE co-ordinator and Healthy Schools workers.

In primary schools, there has been great progress over the last year by the primary schools' SRE Healthy Schools worker. She has used the resource pack 'We want to know what's happening to our bodies' to help children understand more about how their bodies work.

In secondary schools, we have already rolled out good practices such as the Exeter University APAUSE programme, supported by the SRE Co-ordinator. APAUSE – a schools-based sex education programme – is now being delivered in 16 out of 18 of Sandwell's high schools. This is fantastic work from school nurses and teachers. Manor High School has also piloted the peer education element of APAUSE which involved training pupils to deliver SRE to their peers.

All schools have received highly-visible campaign materials twice a year to display on their Young People Welcome notice boards and leaflet racks.



2. Access to Advice and Contraception

We want all young people in Sandwell to know where to get contraception and sexual health advice – and to feel confident about doing so.

But access to contraception isn't just about young people – it's everybody's business. We, and our partners, have a responsibility to make sure that, not only is contraception easily and appropriately available, but young people are fully informed about how to get hold of it.

We are also aiming to help young people develop the skills to use the most effective form of contraception available: Resisting the pressure to have sex in the first place.

3. Targeting Our Work

Everybody's needs are different, so we have been targeting our work so that different groups of young people get what's right for them.

In the last year, we have been working hard to find out more about what is needed and how to reach those young people who may not find it easy to use services already in place.

We have carried out assessments and have spoken to local workers and young people, so we know more about the needs of those who need extra help, as well as the training needed for professionals to support and deliver this.

Targeting our work successfully is everybody's business: We have to work together effectively with agencies like Barnardo's, Sandwell Brook, Connexions – and young people themselves.

A multi-agency group has been set up, to make sure that professionals from different areas of work can reach young people in residential care and those who are fostered in the community.

In order for them to do this effectively, the group has been looking at the training needs of those who work with these young people, including foster carers.

Guidelines for best practice has been developed and we will continue to work with the young people themselves, staff and carers to make sure we get it right.

In high conception areas, the SRE available at schools has been backed up by Brook outreach workers and contraception nurses, funded by the government's Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF).

Specialists from children's charity Barnardo's and the African Caribbean Resource Centre have been working with ethnic minority young people to give them the information they want in a way that's sensitive to their respective needs.

An Asian Development Worker from Barnardo's helped to organise a DVD project as part of the SRE sessions, which proved to be really successful – as well as getting positive media coverage.

Young people attended auditions across Sandwell and are now working as volunteers in a creative arts forum.



Greets Green-funded Parents Group worker Ann Marie Harris with Samantha at the YMCA-based group



Greets Green-funded youth worker, Louise Andrews with Claire at the YMCA Young Parents Group

REAL LIFE STORY

Hooray For Bollywood!

Young people swapped the streets of Sandwell for the magic of Bollywood when they auditioned to star in a new DVD.

Filmed at locations all over the borough, the 20-minute DVD – due out next year – will be aimed at young people from the South Asian community. It will show the different options open to them when it comes to their own sexual health, highlighting available services and advice.

The project is supported by the Teenage Pregnancy Unit, Sandwell Children and Young People's Trust, children's charity Barnardo's and several local voluntary agencies.

Jagruti Duggal, Barnardo's Asian Teenage Pregnancy Development Worker for Sandwell and co-ordinator of the project, said: "Working with young people in a community setting, it became clear that they really enjoyed soap operas, music and dancing, so we thought that this would be a great way of getting the message across.

"Topics such as sexual health and teenage pregnancy can be taboo amongst many communities, and hopefully the DVD will not only educate young people and the older generation, establishing confidence and trust, but will also encourage discussion and open up communication between parents and children."

Pupils at schools across the borough auditioned for roles in the Bollywood-style blend of acting, dance and music. The story follows a young couple exploring choices about sexual health and pregnancy – and ends in a true soap-style cliff-hanger.

Everyone who took part will receive a certificate in recognition of their hard work at a glitzy 'Oscars'-style event to launch the DVD, hopefully in March 2007.



Jagruti Duggal with members of the Mash'd (Mini artistic sexual health deliverers) Project

OUR BIGGEST ACHIEVEMENTS THIS YEAR

1. Improving Sex Education

Better sex education: It's not just for young people, you know!

Improving sex education means making sure that those who teach, or work with, young people also get the best training themselves.

Already, teachers and school nurses are being trained to deliver the APAUSE programme in schools together, as a team. We have expanded our Teenage Pregnancy Training Programme to include a wider range of courses that are high quality and appropriate to the needs of both the professionals and young people and is aimed at:

- Those who provide services.
- Educators.
- Community workers involved in prevention work or supporting teenage parents.

We have also set up support for the different types of professionals who work with, or provide services to, young people. By doing this, we hope they can continue to help us make our Teenage Pregnancy Strategy a success.

Additionally, Sandwell Council's Education and Children's Services department has launched an SRE policy that is supported by a training programme for staff, and we have contributed to the development of a similar policy for Black Country Connexions.

FACTS OF LIFE

Support for all

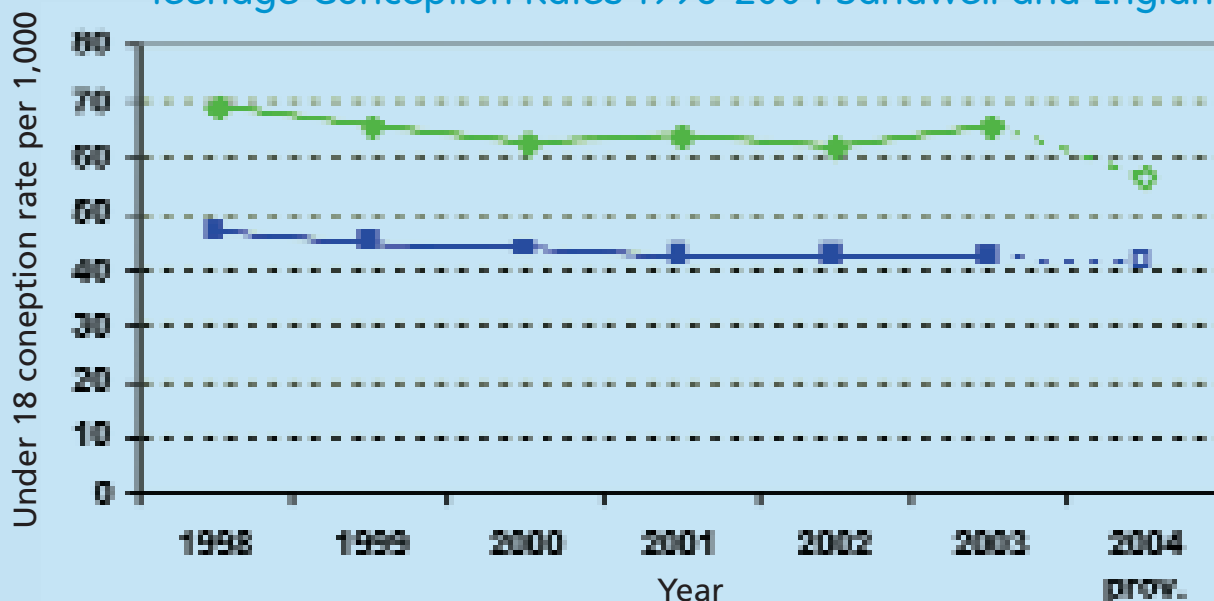


- Specialist help is in place to help young mothers avoid unwanted second pregnancies.
- Young men and vulnerable young people have support from Brook outreach workers.
- Two black and minority ethnic (BME) workers are helping the BME community specifically.
- There's a specific drop-in centre for looked after children (LAC).
- Young people at risk in high conception rate wards and vulnerable groups are now supported through outreach conception nurses.

...STOP PRESS.....STOP PRESS.....STOP PRESS....

Our teenage pregnancy strategy is working

Teenage Conception Rates 1998-2004 Sandwell and England



Source: DfES (Teenage Pregnancy Unit)/Research Sandwell, Sandwell MBC (2006)

We know we've got a tough job here in Sandwell to reduce teenage conceptions and meet the targets laid out in our Strategy – but things are getting better.

In 1998 – our 'baseline year' against which our progress is measured – the conception rate for 15 to 17-year-olds was 69.1 per 1,000 young women. That meant 379 pregnancies. Our target was to reduce this figure by 15% by 2004.

Latest figures show that we actually beat this target figure for the 2004 reduction rate and performed better than the national average.

From 1998 to 2004, conception rates per 1,000 females aged 15 to 17 DROPPED by 18.1% and the number of conceptions was 327 – that means 52 fewer pregnancies.

Sandwell has had a faster rate of improvement than the average for England – which saw a drop of 11.1% since 1998.

Now, our teenage pregnancy 'traffic light' rating has changed from AMBER/RED to GREEN, and Sandwell is one of just 53 local authorities out of 148 to have achieved a reduction of more than 15%.

2. Access To Advice and Contraception

Clinics, condoms and emergencies

Five out of Sandwell's six towns now have a dedicated young person's clinic, so they can get contraceptive advice tailored to their needs.

In addition, the MAP (morning after pill) scheme is run through pharmacies so young people don't have to go far to find help in the event of an 'accident' or unprotected sex.

Condom projects have been set up through the Young People Welcome scheme so young people can get free condoms from a variety of places in their local community.



FACTS OF LIFE

Money money money



The Sandwell Teenage Pregnancy Strategy is receiving £328,000 a year of extra money from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) until 31 March 2008.

For every £1 spent on preventing a teenage conception, £4 of public money is saved on the cost of a pregnancy, including NHS and wider public services.

3. Targeting Our Work

More services for those that really need them

Our target groups are those that need special attention, and in the last year we have had some real success in the way that we have worked together with these young people.

It's a difficult and specialist job, making sure that young people get appropriate advice and education in a non-judgmental way, but we believe we've all achieved a lot together.

New contraception nurses are now in place, thanks to initial funding from the NRF. Sandwell PCT is now providing the money to enable them to continue helping vulnerable young people get the services they need.

The PCT has also extended specialist outreach contraception and home-based services for vulnerable young people and teenage mothers. Almost 700 contacts were made through the Family Planning Service.

In the last year almost 2,500 took part in SRE sessions or received one-to-one advice via Sandwell PCT's Family Planning Service (FPS) or through Brook.

Contraception clinics in Wednesbury, Oldbury and Blackheath – high conception areas – proved to be really popular with the number of attendees more than doubling from the previous year to 911 in the last year.

Work carried out by the Development Workers from Barnardo's and the African Caribbean Resource Centre saw more than 2,600 black and ethnic minority young people taking part in SRE sessions, tailored to their specific needs.

Education outside of schools

Learning about sex and relationships isn't just down to teachers. In the last year, we have been trying to include others to help us strengthen the information given out at schools.

Youth services, social workers and foster carers have all been part of this work, and we have had some success. More than 500 teenagers and vulnerable young people attended SRE sessions run by the Youth Service.

Peer education group sessions were set up – so young people could learn about sex and relationships from other young people – and a total of 73 were carried out.

Looking after looked-after children

A whole network of different agencies, individuals and young people themselves have been working hard to help looked after children (LAC).

This means young people who may live in children's homes, foster homes, or are living at home – or with extended families – on Care Orders.

Regular meetings are taking place between the specialist social worker and young people in care, and two young people in care have been trained as peer educators – so young people themselves can learn from each other.

Together with Brook and the Family Planning Service, the social worker has set up a monthly sexual health drop-in sexual health service specifically for LAC young people. This is supported by regular referrals to the contraception outreach workers.

On top of this, the Brook outreach worker for vulnerable young people has been delivering SRE in residential units, and links have been set up with Sandwell Foster Carers' Forum.



Thihai with three-month-old Trong



REAL LIFE STORY

Gemma's Story

Hi, I'm Gemma, I'm 17 and live with foster carers in Sandwell. This is the story of how I ended up on television doing ballet!

I was asked whether I was interested in joining the Leaps and Bounds project by the Teenage Pregnancy Social Worker. It sounded very exciting and I jumped at the chance.

I've always enjoyed dancing and thought it would be great to have the opportunity to perform on stage and develop my creative talent. I had previously been in the Millennium All Stars marching band, which performed in Sandwell as well as further afield, and I really enjoyed that.

I felt really proud to work with the Birmingham Royal Ballet and 'Ballet Hoo' – which was the name given to the company formed by all the 50 young people who took part. It was like one big family!

It was really hard work. Phase One of the project involved a lot of work on personal development and it was emotionally tough. I did consider leaving at this point because it was quite stressful. I was getting really tired and commitment was high on the agenda because the schedule was so tight.

But I kept going through to the end of Phase Two – which was when I met my boyfriend and I was really proud that he was able to watch me on stage and share in my achievements.

The final performance at the Birmingham Hippodrome was in front of 2,500, with millions of



people watching it on Channel Four. It was really scary before the curtain went up, waiting to go on stage, but once I was on it was absolutely fine. I felt really proud watching it back on television with my boyfriend.

I got so much out of this project. The experience was great. Beforehand, I was in and out of relationships, sometimes drank heavily, skipped school and argued a lot. I didn't have a lot of confidence or friends. But now I'm in a steady relationship, I haven't been drinking, I've got loads of friends, my confidence is really high and I'm happy as Larry. I've lost weight and am eating healthier now and beginning to believe in myself. I've got into Walsall College and am in the first year of a performing arts course and I'm a much better person to be around.

Daljit Gill, Teenage Pregnancy Social Worker said:

The Leaps and Bounds Project was a Black Country-wide project involving Birmingham, Sandwell and Dudley councils, Youth at Risk and Birmingham Royal Ballet.

It was aimed at the most vulnerable and excluded young people in society. We heard about it in March 2005, but by the time we contacted the local co-ordinator, all 50 places had been allocated.

I negotiated an additional five places for Looked After Young People in Sandwell. I asked for staff within Education and Children's Services to nominate any young people they thought would benefit from being involved and Gemma was one.

She was really excited about it and has done extremely well. I'm really proud of what she has achieved – and she should be, too.



I've achieved two personal goals: To perform on stage and be on television. I want to thank everyone involved for everything because they were all brilliant.

OUR PLANS FOR THE COMING YEAR

1. Improving Sex Education

Conceptions in Sandwell seem to follow a pattern. We know from local analysis that in the final year of school (Year 11) there is a peak of conceptions in early summer – which then increases further in the autumn.

Youth workers and Connexions will target this group of young people to try and reduce the conception rates.

To support this, and the rest of our work, we plan to expand the training we already have in place for professionals. Our training priorities include:

- **Improving the skills of professionals**
Helping them to deliver appropriate sex and relationships education.
- **Developing the skills of young people and communities**
Getting more people involved in our strategy.
- **Confidentiality and sexual health awareness training**
To support the delivery of our Condom Distribution Scheme, making sure young people have access to condoms. Training is for those working within primary care teams and community organisations, including Connexions and the council's Youth Service.

All of this training will continue to be reviewed to meet the national and local needs.



Gemma with Dalgit Gill



2. Access to Advice and Contraception

Young people themselves will play an important part in helping us to develop the services that they want. They are already taking part in a 'Mystery Shopper' project to review existing services and we will use their recommendations in the development of new or improved ones. The PCT will listen to what they say when they review services and develop their sexual health strategy for young people.

Other plans for the coming year include:

- **Tailoring new services for boys and young men**
Making sure our condom distribution reaches those who are least likely to take up the services that are already in place.
- **Impartial advice and counselling for pregnant young women**
Helping them to make an informed choice about whether to continue with their pregnancy. We will do this by working with Sandwell PCT's sexual health strategy to develop appropriate services for young women.
- **Providing contraceptive and sexual health services that are young people-focused**
Working with the PCT to develop standards for services so they meet our own best practice guidance and the Department of Health's You're Welcome Quality Criteria.

3. Targeting Our Work

We have lots of plans for the coming year and beyond, but these are our immediate priorities:

- **Target young people most at risk**

We will look at how to meet the needs of vulnerable young people - such as those missing from school, excluded from education and youth offenders - and develop our prevention programmes to ensure that these groups are specifically targeted.

- **Target those working with vulnerable young people**

We will provide training to those working with looked after children. This will include social workers, residential staff and foster carers to support them in their sex education role and, where appropriate, involve them in providing condoms to young people.

We will work with organisations that are currently working with vulnerable young people to explore how they may be further supported to address teenage pregnancy – for example voluntary organisations and training providers.

- **Target work with black and minority ethnic young people and community organisations**

We will review the teenage pregnancy projects being delivered to Asian young people by Barnardo's and African Caribbean young people by the African Caribbean Resource Centre. We will look at how to maintain good practice in these areas beyond March 2008 when the Teenage Pregnancy Grant ceases.

- **Improving awareness among service providers**

So they better understand the needs of young people.

FACTS OF LIFE

What makes conception rates high?

Living in a poor neighbourhood affects conception rates.

- There is a clear link between teenage pregnancy and deprivation. Half of all conceptions happen in the top 20% most deprived wards in England.

Teenagers appear to be more at risk of pregnancy if they:

- Start having sex at an early age
- Don't use contraception properly
- Have repeat terminations
- Have had mental health problems
- Have been involved in crime
- Drink heavily or use drugs and other substances

Education makes a difference, too. Teenagers appear to be at more risk if they:

- Have a low level of general educational attainment
- Leave school at 16 with no qualifications

Family and background is important. There appears to be a higher risk if:

- They are living in local authority (council) care
- They are the daughter of a teenage mother
- If they or their parents have low aspirations or ambitions

Ethnicity may play a part, too.

Teenage pregnancy rates nationally are significantly higher in those who are from 'Mixed White and Black Caribbean', 'Other Black' and 'Black Caribbean' backgrounds. 'White British' are also over-represented while Asian ethnic groups are under-represented.

The DfES says:

Where young people experience multiple risk factors, their likelihood of teenage pregnancy increases significantly.



OUR AIMS FOR 2010



1. Improving sex education

By 2010 we want all young boys and girls in the borough to receive high quality and timely sex and relationships education – regardless of how they are educated or cared for.

This is one of the key priorities in our Teenage Pregnancy Strategy – and it's what our young people deserve.

If we can achieve this, it will give young people the knowledge and confidence to take control of their own lives, delay sexual activity, protect themselves against unwanted pregnancy and infection and to aim for a lifestyle other than teenage parenthood.

If they do become pregnant, we want them to have the knowledge to make choices confidently and with information that is impartial and non-judgmental.

Schools have a crucial role to play in helping us to achieve this, but they are not alone – after all, not all young people are in school. Working with the Pupil Referral and Education Service will help us to reach those who might otherwise miss out on the schools-based sex and relationships education.

There are also other organisations and professionals working with teenagers that will play their part in reaching our 2010 aims: Youth workers, social workers, foster carers and Connexions are all working together to improve what's on offer for those who need and want it.

Our 2010 aim is challenging, but we can achieve it by having clear SRE policies in place for all of those working with young people. Those who are most at risk are being targeted by specialist activities and all of the work should help young people achieve the five outcomes within the Every Child Matters framework (see page 9).

2. Access to advice and contraception

By 2010 we want to see all young people across Sandwell have equal access to services that are 'young people-friendly'. We want young people to feel comfortable about getting the health and contraception advice and support that they want so they can avoid pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections.

We will achieve this by:

- Schools providing up-to-date details of available services via personal, social and health education (PSHE) classes.
- Young women who are pregnant being given impartial advice and counselling.
- Youth, social care and community workers targeting sexual health promotion at young people most at risk of early pregnancy.
- Providing accessible and confidential advice and contraception services for all young people near to where they live.
- Providing specialist advice and contraception services via outreach for young people who find it difficult to access services or are deemed at increased risk of becoming pregnant or having a sexually transmitted infection.

The PCT and the Children and Young People's Trust will pay for services that meet the TPU's best practice guidance, the Department of Health's You're Welcome Quality Criteria for young people-friendly services and the principles of the Our Health, Our Say White Paper.

3. Targeting our work

By 2010 we are aiming to make sure that vulnerable young people, who haven't been able to access standard contraceptive services or sex education, will be able to get all the education, support and advice they need.

REAL LIFE STORY

Carole Collins, Contraception Nurse for Young People

Access to sexual health advice and contraception can be more difficult for some young people. I'm employed by Sandwell PCT to make sure that we reach all of those young people who might not normally get it – for whatever reason.

I started off originally by working with those in pupil referral units, now I work with other groups as well like youth offending teams and DECCA to reach young people who take part in risky behaviours.

I get referrals from professionals such as school nurses, social workers, GPs or family members who might have concerns about young people, and teenagers themselves can get in touch. I'll give them a call and will meet them absolutely anywhere – at their home, a friend's place, school or even a car park! I always respect their confidentiality.

When I ring, they're usually OK about it and we can have a talk about anything from pregnancy testing to much more complex issues. I might only meet them once, or it might be a few times. Once they are 'ready to fly' and get on with things themselves, I just leave them to it.

This job is about enabling young people to get the services that they need. Sometimes they are really shy, but it's great to see them find their feet and have the confidence to get what they want.



The other part of my job is about developing sex and relationships education (SRE) and contraception education. SRE is available in mainstream schools but less readily available for the many young people not in full-time education.

During the year I also developed a drama and peer education workshop around contraception with the help of students from St Michael's High School. It was highly praised and we were asked to take it to the University of London's Institute of Education. We presented it to other professionals during a study day, which was really good fun but also a real personal achievement.

For next year, we are looking at developing condom training and will be having Connexions workers and youth workers issuing condoms in the community.

FACTS OF LIFE

Free for all

It's never been easier to get free contraception in Sandwell

- Young people's contraception clinics are in five of the borough's six towns and young people can also attend Birmingham Brook.
- Free emergency contraception is available from local pharmacists.
- Free condoms are available from all specialist services and from selected GPs and community organisations.
- A domiciliary nurse provides contraceptive advice to young parents in supported housing and at Batmanshill Unit to help delay second pregnancy.
- Family Planning and Brook Contraception Outreach nurses are providing extra services in the community.



SUPPORTING YOUNG PARENTS

Having a baby is a life-changing experience – regardless of how old, or young, you are.

New parents have to learn how to look after their baby, look after themselves and cope with many other things they may not even have thought of before their newborn arrived.

For young people, they need additional support in all kinds of ways. Pregnancy and caring for a new baby are the obvious forms of support that they need, but young parents also have the additional pressures of returning to – or remaining in – school, benefits and housing needs to consider.

Our vision is to give full support for every teenager to help ease the pressures of teen parenthood and

achieve their own ambitions, providing a positive future for them and their family.

The different areas of work that we focus on to improve services to pregnant teenagers and teenage parents are:

- Providing support and special education at school.
- Improving support to pregnant teenagers before birth.
- Improving support to teenage parents.

Below we explain how we do this, what we have achieved, our future plans – and some real-life stories.

How we deliver support

Being a teenage parent shouldn't mean that you risk being set apart from your local community or live in poverty.

Our Teenage Pregnancy Support Strategy aims to reduce the chances of these things happening by improving the support available to pregnant teenagers and teenage parents.

To do this, health services, Connexions and Education and Children's Services all work together to help improve the health, education and social prospects for pregnant teenagers, teenage parents and their children.

In the last year, we were able to be really innovative and creative in our work, thanks to some additional government funding. This came from the Education Standards Fund and Sure Start Plus – as we were one of 20 national pilot sites for that programme.

This funding has now disappeared, but partner agencies have acknowledged the importance of continuing what we started. Sandwell's Education and Children's Services, Connexions and Sandwell PCT have pledged funding to ensure that the work continues where the government funding left off – which is great news.

Sandwell has a number of professionals and services that provide a specialist support to teenagers. These include:

- A Specialist Health Visitor and Midwife.
- A Re-Integration Officer.
- Staff at Batmanshill Pupil Referral and Engagement Unit.
- Connexions Personal Advisor.
- Youth workers, who run weekly support groups.
- Parents with Prospects.
- Part-time Welfare Rights Officer.
- Barnardo's South Asian Development Worker.
- African Caribbean Resource Centre Development Worker.

They all work closely together to make sure that all teenagers and teenage parents receive an assessment of their needs. This means they are visited so the help and support that they need can be planned. A care package is put together to meet those needs and to ensure that all of the services they need are co-ordinated (see below).

Additional specialist services are provided through:

- Batmanshill Pupil Referral and Engagement Service.
- Bromford Housing and the Gap Project.



How we help pregnant teenagers and young parents to be healthy



School nurse Jane Walters facilitating the young mums' and dads' pregnancy hour at Sandwell ante-natal clinic

Developing a tailor-made package of care for each young person is vital to making sure that they get the support they need in all different kinds of ways.

The package that is put in place may include advice and support on: Breastfeeding; parenting skills; topping smoking or post-natal depression. Referrals may be made to other specialists to talk about things like housing or welfare rights.

Healthcare is really important so that young parents look after themselves properly – as well as caring for their baby.

Access to the best health care, before and after childbirth, is the responsibility of Sandwell PCT. Sandwell & West Birmingham NHS Trust Midwifery Service carries out these assessments during pregnancy, and the PCT Teenage Pregnancy Health Visitor does them after birth – so young parents get the care and support they need.

In the last year, the midwife and health visitor have worked closely with South Asian and African Caribbean teenage pregnancy workers at Barnardo's and the African Caribbean Resource Centre.

This was to make sure that pregnant teenagers and young parents from these communities were able to get the services on offer. The development workers raised awareness of their specific needs so they can be built into the standard services provided by different organisations.

Helping teenagers and young people achieve

Having a baby shouldn't mean that young parents put their lives on hold. We are supporting school-age mums to make sure that they get all the help and support they need to continue with their education – and go on to achieve their dreams.

Education and Children's Services lead this work. A Re-integration Officer works with schools, teenagers and their families to look at the best possible options for each young person. They may choose to stay at their own school, with additional support, or may transfer to the Batmanshill Pupil and Engagement Unit in Tipton instead, to continue their education before and after their baby is born.

Black Country Connexions is the lead agency responsible for providing one-to-one help – specifically for teenage parents – to help young people get back into education, training and work.

The Personal Advisor works closely with the Re-Integration Officer and the PCT staff to ensure that each person's education, training and employment needs are considered. She helps the teenager to overcome possible barriers and provides practical help, such as helping to apply for learning skills funding to cover childcare costs.

For some young parents, attending full-time school or college is not an option. We have put in place a number of projects that aim to really connect with young parents, build their confidence and involve them in informal education. This is through either the weekly Young Parents Support Groups or through the Parents with Prospects course.

REAL LIFE STORIES FROM THE SUPPORT TEAM

Rhonda Bird, Teenage Pregnancy Health Visitor

Young parents and those expecting a baby can sometimes feel pretty low.

They might not have anyone to support them, may not know what benefits they are entitled to, could be living in overcrowded accommodation or are finding it hard to cope. My job is to meet these young people in their own homes and assess what help they might need. This could be a lot or not very much at all – everyone is different.

Young people can refer themselves for an assessment or they can be referred by: health visitors; midwives; Sure Start; social services; voluntary organisations or asylum social workers. Once they are referred, I'll visit and carry out the needs assessment.

I'll ask them a number of questions about how they are doing. If they're feeling fed up I can link them up with other young parents or a First Steps support group so they can get some help in coping. I can also refer them for counselling or psychiatric help if it's needed

Other things that myself and my colleagues can help with are giving up-to-date information about breast feeding, contraception and sexual health, as well as providing advice on how to stop smoking. We had six quitters in the last year, which may not sound a lot, but it's six young people who otherwise would still be smoking.

As well as health issues we can also help with social issues, and can arrange specialist support for housing, benefits, welfare rights, finances or lots of other things.

It's a really rewarding job because I can meet young people who may be isolated and having real problems, provide some support and help and watch them really flourish, which is fantastic. I'm amazed at how well they get on with us. I've never met anyone who has been rude or sworn – in fact, quite the opposite.

Everyone I meet is always really welcoming and polite and I get loads of text messages all the time asking me all kinds of questions and I'm happy to answer them, no matter how odd they might seem. It's great



watching these young people develop. We do a lot of work with Connexions and we try to encourage them to pursue their ambitions – whether creative, practical or academic. Most are surprised to learn what help is available to those under the age of 19 who want to return to learning.

In the next year, many more young people will be reached by this needs assessment. Health visitors are being trained to carry them out, and the PCT is making it a statutory service – which means that every young person in the borough will have a right to get this tailor-made support.

Lydia Nestor, Clinical Midwifery Manager

I'm based at Sandwell Hospital and I am responsible for managing the areas of hospital antenatal clinic, maternity ward and community midwifery. I am supported in this role by Team Managers for each of these areas.

Teenage parents are one of a special group of patients that we provide specific services for. It's not that every mum-to-be isn't special – but young girls do have some specific needs that we focus on.

The pregnant teenager will have limited life experiences that can mean particular skills are just being developed. This for example could present itself as difficulty attending appointments and once at the appointment, handling the consultation. As an adult it can take a long time to feel 'listened to' and to 'feel valued'.

Some young girls also need extra help because of the lifestyle issues that can affect their own health and the wellbeing of the pregnancy. These pregnancies are at risk of an 'unhealthily' small baby, due to smoking or poor nutrition. These outcomes are well documented. We therefore tailor services with the aim of minimizing these risks. We also use opportunities in pregnancy to promote the benefits to the mum and baby of breastfeeding.

Good two way communication is important as a lot of information needs to be passed between the young mum -to -be and her carers, so that the right choices can be made and so the consent to treatment can be given. Our responsibility is to act as our users advocate being certain that all women regardless of age, ethnicity, class, have equal access to maternity services.

Until April this year, we had a specialist teenage pregnancy midwife that helped to co-ordinate a package of care for each young mum. While she was in post, a small number of midwives identified themselves as link midwives for the pregnant teenagers to assist in integrating and mainstreaming services – so we do have a number of midwives with specialist interest in this area.

We are now planning to develop the support offered to pregnant teenagers by putting a team together whose main focus will be on addressing the needs of pregnant teenagers. This will hopefully include a new midwife specialist, obstetrician, sonographer – who

does ultrasounds – and admin support. That will be something we can really look forward to for next year so we can give the young parents the best start in life for their babies.

I enjoy my job very much – promoting good health is very rewarding. Over the years I have been working in midwifery, I have worked in most areas: Ante-natal and post-natal care; delivery, and on the wards. Five years ago, on the wards, a young girl would have really stood out and would not have interacted with others. I can really see the difference now in the way that we communicate with the young and the way that the young communicate with us.

We have learned a lot in that time about looking after young people, but I think that we have a long way to go. I'm hoping that, in the near future, we can look at ways involving the users of our services in our plans for developing them and also to seek their opinion so that they can tell us what does and doesn't work. It's important that we have a good understanding of the needs of pregnant teenagers in order to provide care that is effective and therefore make a difference.



Kate Proctor, Re-integration Officer

Here in Sandwell, we have very good provision for young parents when it comes to continuing their education. Sometimes, the mum of a young parent might say "There was nothing like this in my day" – and there wasn't.

Young mums have choices about their education here in Sandwell, and it's my job to support them through that. One size doesn't fit all and what's right for one person isn't necessarily right for the other.

When a young girl is pregnant, she can either stay in mainstream school during and after pregnancy, or can choose to go to Batmanshill. In the past, if they didn't go there, they might never return to school at all. Now there is lots of support in place so they have the freedom to make the choice that's right for them.

That's where I come in. My background is in teaching and I first came to this role in 2000, sharing the post with Ann Savage. She now runs Batmanshill and I work in this post full-time. I'm based at the Unit, but I'm actually employed centrally by Education. I think a lot of people think I am Batmanshill staff; I'm not, but it is easier to be based with people I have a lot of contact with.

My job is very varied but I'm here to offer support to young women up to the age of 16 years. I get referrals from many different professionals: Health visitors; midwives; headteachers; Connexions and others. When a young person is referred to me, I set up a meeting at their school with a relevant member of staff, family member and any other agencies. We have a good talk to see if they are happy at school and if they want to stay there.

We talk through the alternatives, where they are with their education and what they want and I give them the information they need to make an informed decision. If they want to see the provision at Batmanshill, I organise a visit for them so that they know what is available. If they decide to transfer there, I organise everything with the school and then go to pupil review sessions there. If they stay in school, I try to see them a couple of times a term as well as keeping in contact with the family by 'phone. I work together with the staff in school to gradually reduce their timetables in the latter stages of the pregnancy and make any other minor changes to their school day if necessary.

I link in with benefits advisors and Care to Learn and bring in different agencies like Connexions, depending on what's needed. I meet up with Sally Box and Rhonda Bird so, together, we ensure each person gets the help they need.

I spend a lot of time talking to social workers and education welfare officers, but I also put together a lot of data for the DfES and the Local Authority. This role gives me the best of both worlds because I'm



Students Hayley and Laura at Batmanshill

working strategically – collating data, writing reports and linking in with other professionals and agencies – while still working within schools.

Having a Re-integration Officer is really important. It can really help young mums return to education and get qualifications, which is something that really does impress employers because it shows that they can still attend regularly and achieve, despite the fact that they are coping with motherhood as well.

Batmanshill Pupil and Engagement Unit

Anne Savage, Head of Unit

Our unit is here to offer holistic education to young mothers aged up to 19 years. These include girls up to the statutory school age of 16 and then post-16 young women who may, or may not, have been here as part of their schooling.

All of our pupils choose to come here for their academic education, and they will also learn about all aspects of parenting. Other young mums may choose to continue their education at mainstream school during and after their pregnancy and these are well cared for by the Re-Integration Officer for Teenage Pregnancy, Kate Proctor.

It's pretty much a 'one-stop-shop' here for everything that pregnant teenagers and new mums might need. We have a nursery and an ante-natal clinic with midwives from Sandwell General Hospital, which means they can get the maternity support they need during the school day. If a young woman needs hospital care during the day we ensure that she gets it

On top of that, we offer on-site counselling, sexual health contraceptive advice GCSEs, A/SSs, key life skills, careers and benefits advice, citizenship, and qualifications that will get help young women to achieve Level 1 and 2 in parenting skills. Our links with local colleges are excellent.

We work closely with the Sandwell Teenage Pregnancy Strategy, and we will be working even more closely with them over the coming years to help them achieve our shared aims

I have real pride in the achievements made over the last year. The Young Mums-To-Be and Parents With Prospects programmes have been developed alongside the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy. We were also



selected as a centre for a video conferencing pilot – a really ground-breaking project with Shireland Language College in Sandwell.

Hopefully, this will see us offering a video conferencing facility, which will help us link up with schools so we will be able provide courses here that they could access. We are very hopeful about the outcome, which will potentially mean the unit working with schools not just locally, but nationally – and even internationally.

I'm also really proud of the continued achievements of the young women here. Around 90% move on to something else once they leave, such as A levels, college, or part-time work and many will come back to share their experiences with the young women here. It's great to see those who come here develop confidence and self-assurance and that really makes my team's job worthwhile.

WEEKLY YOUNG PARENTS GROUPS

Coping with parenthood when you're young is hard and some might feel like they're on their own – but we want to make sure that they're not.

There is lots of support in Sandwell for young parents, with groups and classes that will help those who attend make new friends, feel supported, share their thoughts – and even have fun!

Young parents themselves are involved in developing a weekly programme of activities, which might include sessions such as arts and crafts, healthy eating, sexual health and child safety. Youth workers also organise trips to events such as the Baby Show at the NEC or to places like Sandwell Valley Farm.

Sandwell's Education and Children's Services employ two youth workers who run weekly groups for pregnant teenagers and young parents and these currently run in Tipton, Wednesbury and Greets Green. The Greets Green group is run jointly with the YMCA and is funded by the Greets Green Partnership through New Deal For Communities funding.

The African Caribbean Resource Centre provides a support group for African Caribbean young mothers called 'Sheroes'. Members meet weekly at the centre and take part in a range of activities that incorporate the specific needs of African Caribbean young parents.

Sally Box, Connexions Personal Advisor working with young parents

I love my job. I love the interaction that I have with young people and it is great to feel that I might have made a difference to their lives.

Many young parents have many barriers placed before them so we aim to help them overcome those and achieve.

I work specifically with young parents, mums and dads, and it is my role to help them make the transition into adult life, focusing on education, work and training. I work on a one-to-one basis or within groups and will go and visit them at home, in a community setting, or at Batmanshill Pupil Referral Unit.

We also aim to identify any gaps in the service and flag them up to the 'powers that be' so that we make sure that there are adequate services for young parents. In the next year, we hope to work with funding organisations to build on our services and also complete a video explaining more about our work to young parents.

Young people can sometimes be confused or unsure about their future.

Often, they are embarrassed about admitting their



Sally with Kylie and her baby Sarah

dreams and aspirations because they don't feel they can achieve them. My role is to help them to identify, plan for and achieve their dreams.

They don't believe they can, but here at Connexions we want to try and motivate them and give them every chance to do it.

The next Dr Christiaan Barnard or our future Prime Minister might be out there working at our local supermarket – it's my job to help them get there.

REAL LIFE STORY

Toni's Story

Hi. I'm Toni, aged 20, and I'm from Tipton. This is the story of how the Young Parents Group in Tipton has helped me.

I first came across it at the start of 2005 when me, my partner and my son attended an open day. There were different events to help young parents have their say about a group that was to open at Tipton Sure Start.

It started every Friday about a month later and we were able to get to know other young parents and get ideas on what we'd like to do in the coming months. We've done a beauty taster course, arts and crafts, day trips, weekends away, first aid certificate, baby massage and loads more great activities.

I have really benefited because it has helped me get out of the house, build my confidence and make new friends. It has also allowed my son to mix with other children.

Now I'm a volunteer for the group and am really interested in becoming a volunteer for the Teenage Pregnancy Team, where I can be a mentor for other young parents.



It has also helped me go back to college because I have realised what I would like to do when I go back into work. I want to go into childcare and I'm now waiting to start an NVQ2 course to train.

The group is still running and we would love some new parents to join and hopefully get as much fun and enjoyment from it as me and the other group members have.

Parents with Prospects

Some young parents want to take their education further – and that's where the nationally-acclaimed Parents with Prospects course comes in.

The Black Country Training Group runs this course through a full-time co-ordinator and young parents attend weekly sessions held at Tipton and Wednesbury. The project was funded through a Neighbourhood Renewal grant, but has now been extended for a further year through Sandwell Teenage Pregnancy Unit and Connexions, until longer-term funding is identified.

Annette Ward Parents with Prospects Co-ordinator

My job is to run and organise the Parents with Prospects programme. This is a first step back into education when baby has been born and the parent feels ready.

Originally, this was funded by the NRF Teenage Pregnancy Grant to follow on from the Young Mums-to-Be programme – but this finished when the New Horizons funding ended in June. Parents with Prospects now runs on its own with Black Country Connexions funding until March 2007.

I'm employed by the Black Country Training Group but I'm actually based at Connexions in Dudley Port. I go out and talk to young people wherever they are and wherever support is needed.

I do outreach work at five different places: Connexions at One Stop, Wednesbury; Bromford Housing group, at Hobart Rd, Tipton; Sure Start, Londonderry and Uplands; Brushstrokes, Messenger Rd, Smethwick, and Meadows School in Oldbury.

The programme is all about helping young parents develop life skills – really practical or 'nitty gritty' things that they might worry about or not know how to deal with. It could be how to budget, how to write cheques or how working could benefit themselves and their family.

We also look at health and safety issues in the home and we do all this work in discussion groups and demonstrations, and with individuals. Everyone knows the answers to the things we talk about – but sometimes they just haven't thought about them, so this makes them really sit up and think.

This project has been really successful in supporting young parents into further education by helping to improve their confidence through an accreditation process.

In the last year, young parents themselves played a large part in the project being held up as good practice by the National Basic Skills Agency. They were involved in the production of a DVD resource aimed at helping professionals across the country to improve literacy and numeracy skills.



Annette at a Parents with Prospects course

Originally, I didn't have referrals. I would just go out and find young people, but now I'm working closely with Sally Box at Connexions so a lot of the young people I see come via her. But, wherever young people are, I'll still go and ask if they want me to give a talk.

The programme has been extremely successful and young parents are progressing really well. We get lots of feedback from them and they really enjoy it and I've seen them move on to do apprenticeships and really grabbed life and moved on.

I get an enormous buzz out of the job – helping young people realise that they have potential and can achieve, despite the negative things that may have been said to them. It's great to see them stand on their own two feet and be good parents – and that's exactly what they are.

Helping with housing needs

The quality of the housing you live in affects the quality of your life. Housing is a really important concern for young parents and there are many reasons why pregnant teenagers and young parents may need to be re-housed.

These could include: Overcrowding; the breakdown of relationships with their family or partner which could lead to homelessness, or needing the extra help and support that can be provided by Supported Housing Projects.

Within Sandwell, this kind of support is provided by the GAP Project in Oldbury and Bromford Housing in Tipton. Bromford Housing also provides a housing scheme that provides additional support to young parents in their own tenancy. This year Bromford Housing was given the go-ahead to build a further nine-bedded housing scheme, which will provide additional accommodation for those young people in need.



Supporting young people's rights

Key to improving young parents' lives is ensuring that they are receiving all the benefits that they are entitled to.

Sandwell Council's Anti-poverty Unit, through teenage pregnancy funding, employs a part-time welfare rights officer to specifically respond to referrals and help young parents. Sometimes young parents are unclear about the benefits available to them and the project has successfully enabled them to receive their entitlement, which can reduce the financial pressures that they face.

OUR BIGGEST ACHIEVEMENTS THIS YEAR

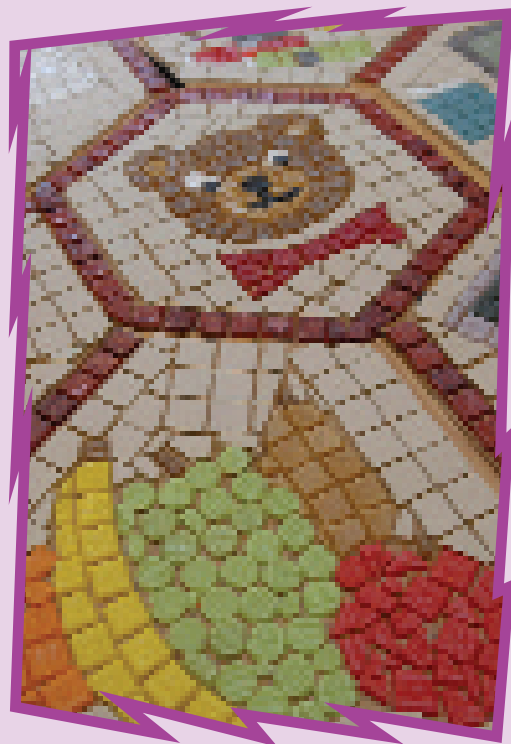
- Securing permanent funding to continue elements of the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy that were previously funded by Sure Start Plus grant and the Education Standards Fund.
- Launching the new Greets Green Young Parents Group by YMCA and the Youth Service – made possible by Greets Green New Deal For Communities funding.
- 50 young parents attended the Speak Out conference.
- Organised Great Expectations in the Black Country conference, which raised awareness of the needs of young parents. It also prompted a discussion on how to reach the national target to increase teenage mothers' participation in education, training or employment by 60%.
- Post-natal depression training run by the Teenage Pregnancy Support lead for community psychiatric nurses and mental health nurses.



Rhonda with Zoe and her brother Ryan

OUR PLANS FOR THE COMING YEAR

- Following the end of the Sure Start Plus grant, the PCT will work with Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust to look at what services might be set up to ensure that the needs of pregnant teenagers are met.
- Nationally and locally it is recognised that there is more to be done to meet the needs of young fathers and we will look at ways of improving our contact with them and will invest in service developments to fill this gap.
- We will involve young parents in the development of training that will challenge negative attitudes towards pregnant teenagers and young parents.



*Artwork created by Greets Green
Young Parents Group*

OUR AIMS FOR 2010

Our aim is to ensure that every pregnant teenager, teenage mother and teenage father is fully supported to live a healthier life, and one which sees them thrive within their own community and beyond.

We will achieve this by:

- Increasing the number of pregnant teenagers in contact with health services by the 12th week of pregnancy.
- Cutting the number of teenage mothers smoking before and after pregnancy.
- Identifying more teenage mothers with post-natal depression.
- Increasing the number of teenage mothers who report the support of their partner, the child's father or their family in that child's upbringing.
- Reducing the long-term risk of isolation (social exclusion) for teenage parents and their children. We will do this by increasing the number of teenage mothers taking up education, training or employment.

FACTS OF LIFE

What works?

Key factors for success

- Getting all partners actively involved: education, health, social services, youth support services and the voluntary sector.
- A strong, high-level 'champion' accountable for and driving the strategy forward.
- Availability of well-publicised, young people-centred contraceptive and sexual health advice service, with a strong remit to carry out health promotion.
- High priority given to PHSE in schools, with local authority support for development of SRE programmes in all schools.
- A strong focus on targeted work with young people at greatest risk, such as looked after children.
- SRE training for those working with the most vulnerable young people including Connexions Personal Advisors, youth workers and social workers.
- A well-resourced Youth Service, providing things to do and places to go for young people, with a clear focus on addressing key social issues affecting young people - including sexual health and substance misuse.

Teenage Pregnancy Next Steps Guidance, DfES, 2006



FINANCE AND PEOPLE

Finance

The Teenage Pregnancy Board acknowledges and appreciates the funding received in 2005/06 to support the implementation of Sandwell's Teenage Pregnancy Strategy.

Neighbourhood Renewal Fund

An additional £160,000 has enabled the piloting of new approaches.

Funding was specifically allocated to:

- Family Planning Service, for a full-time contraception outreach nurse in high conception rate wards.
- Brook, for a part-time contraception outreach nurse.
- Education and Children's Services, for a social worker to target work with Looked After Children and care leavers.
- Sandwell New Horizons, for the Parents with Prospects co-ordinator and course.
- Education and Children's Services, for two youth workers and two peer educators to enable the development of peer education and sex education in high conception wards and development of weekly support groups for young parents.

We are pleased to note that, following ending of NRF funding on 31 March 2006, all the above projects – except the Parents with Prospects course – have been funded by partner agencies. Further funding for Parents with Prospects is being sought.

Greets Green New Deal For Communities

A £20,000 grant in 2005/06 has enabled:

- The employment of a specific development worker by Education and Children's Services (youth) to target a prevention programme at young people in Greets Green.
- A weekly programme for young parents at the YMCA, in conjunction with the Youth Service.

Department for Education and Skills (DfES)

A £328,000 Teenage Pregnancy Grant. Through this, the following services have been funded to provide additional services in 2005/06:

- A Family Planning Service for extra Young People's Contraception clinics and domiciliary (home-based) service for vulnerable young people.
- Sandwell and Dudley Brook, for extra clinics and outreach and education workers
- Education and Children's Services, for SRE primary schools worker, delivery of APAUSE programme in schools and a development grant to support teenage pregnancy youth workers and peer educators.
- Primary Care Trust, for SRE nurse co-ordinator.
- African Caribbean Resource Centre, for teenage pregnancy project.
- Barnardo's, for South Asian Teenage Pregnancy project.
- SMBC Anti-Poverty Unit, for Welfare Rights Service for young parents.

The grant also supported the following:

- Training for staff.
- Community involvement.

- Media and communications.
- Teenage Parents Speak Out Conference.
- Condom Projects.

DfES

A £150,000 Sure Start Plus Grant

The following services have been funded to provide additional services for pregnant teenagers and young parents in 2005/06:

- Primary Care Trust, for a health visitor.
- Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust, for midwife.
- Connexions, for personal advisor.
- Home Start, for young parents worker.
- Education and Children's Services, for Young Parents Groups.

People

Teenage Pregnancy Partnership Board

Janine Brown	Chairperson and Director of Partnerships, Children and Young People's Trust
Sarah New	Sandwell Teenage Pregnancy Strategy Co-ordinator and Service Development Manager, Children and Young People's Trust
Cindy James	Board Secretary and Teenage Pregnancy Business Manager, Children and Young People's Trust
Monica Anderson	Education and Children's Services
David Pitches	Sandwell Primary Care Trust
Teresa Douse	Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Hospitals Trust
Martin Duffell	Housing, Sandwell MBC
Peter Forth	Children and Young People's Trust
Liz Green	Sandwell Primary Care Trust
Peter Hotham	Black Country Connexions
Frank Maloney	Sandwell and Dudley Brook
Hugh Sherrife	Barnardo's
June Maw	Education and Children's Services, Sandwell MBC
Margaret Storrie	Education and Children's Services, Sandwell MBC
Shane Ward	African Caribbean Resource Centre
Sue Whalen	Sandwell Primary Care Trust

Teenage Pregnancy Virtual Team

Louise Andrews	Senior Youth Officer, Greet's Green Partnership
Louise Arliss	Outreach Contraception Nurse, Sandwell Brook
Rhonda Bird	Teenage Pregnancy Health Visitor, Sandwell PCT
Carole Collins	Contraception Nurse for Young People, Sandwell PCT
Jagruti Duggal	South Asian TP Development Worker, Barnardo's
Daljit Gill	TP Social Worker, Education and Children's Services
Cindy James	Teenage Pregnancy Business Manager, Children and Young People's Trust
Anna Kaur	Teenage Pregnancy Administration Officer, Children and Young People's Trust
Jackie Haden	Sex and Relationships Co-ordinator, Sandwell PCT
Rachel Hathaway	African Caribbean TP Development Worker, African Caribbean Resource Centre
Rachel Hopkinson	Senior Youth Officer, Education and Children's Services
Sarah New	Children's and Young People's Service Development Manager, Children and Young People's Trust
Kate Proctor	Teenage Pregnancy Re-Integration Officer, Education and Children's Services
Anne Savage	Head of Batmanshill Unit, Education and Children's Services
Nikki Sroy	Senior Youth Officer, Education and Children's Services
Annette Ward	Future Prospects Co-ordinator, Black Country Training Group
Rebecca White	SRE for Primary Schools Worker, Education and Children's Services
Sue Wilson	Youth Service TP Development Worker, Education and Children's Services

New Recruits Over The Past Twelve Months

Sally Box	Teenage Pregnancy Personal Advisor, Black Country Connexions
Keren Hodgson	Outreach and Education Worker, Brook
Stacey Moss	Part-time TP Personal Advisor, Black Country Connexions
Rosie Thomas	African Caribbean TP Development Worker, African Caribbean Resource Centre

Departures Over The Past Twelve Months

Maxine Dennis	Sure Start Plus Team Leader, Connexions
Paulette Duzan	Midwife, Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Hospitals Trust
Steve Pritchard	Education and Outreach Worker for Young Men, Brook
Kate Smith	Young Parents Project Worker, Home Start
Sally Turner	Youth Service Peer Educator, NRF

THANKS

We would like to thank all the young people and young parents who have worked with us over the past twelve months and have willingly given up their precious time and shared with us their invaluable knowledge and views.

In particular, thanks to:

- The young parents who have assisted in developing the weekly groups.
- The young people in care who have been involved in launching the SRE policy for social workers and foster carers.
- Those who contributed their ideas and time to the development of a Young People's Teenage Pregnancy Board.
- Members of the Creative Arts Forum who have been developing a South Asian Teenage Pregnancy DVD.
- The young parents involved in planning the Speak Out conference and developing the Young Parents' Forum.
- Young people involved in the Sex Education Forum and in the Youth Service peer education programme.
- Young people in the pilot schools who were trained as peer educators and delivered SRE sessions to their peers.
- The Parents with Prospects young parents who volunteered and assisted the development of the National Basic Skills Council DVD on literacy and numeracy.

We would also like to thank all the partner agencies and individual workers who have contributed to our strategy over the last year. Without their hard work and commitment we would not have had such a successful year.

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Background artwork: produced by managers at the Teenage Pregnancy Partnership Board away day. It illustrates the vision, issues and priorities that need to be addressed in the strategy.

Sandwell 
Primary Care Trust



Children & Young People's
Trust Partnership

