

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

REPORT TO: CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 14 September 2009
Report of: Strategic Director People
Subject/Title: Teenage Pregnancy

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 The report provides an update on issues arising from the recent visit of the National Support Team and makes recommendations that Cheshire East Council working with partners within the Children's Trust, particularly Central and Eastern Cheshire PCT, are asked to accept to further the work to deliver Cheshire East's Teenage Pregnancy Strategy.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Board accepts the recommendations made by the National Support Team and that Cheshire East Council works with the PCT and other partners to finalise Action and Delivery Plans in line with the timescales outlined.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 There has been lack of progress in addressing teenage pregnancy prevention and conception rates for under 18 year olds has not reduced since the introduction of the national teenage pregnancy strategy in 1998.

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 All

5.0 Local Ward Members

- 5.1 All

6.0 Policy Implications including - Climate change - Health

- 6.1 Policy and actions will need to be reviewed in order to secure progress in this area.

7.0 Financial Implications for Transition Costs (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)

7.1 None

8.0 Financial Implications 2009/10 and beyond (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)

8.1 The Local Authority receives funding in the form of a Teenage Pregnancy Grant to secure leadership in this area. This funding enables the Local Authority to recruit a post to lead on this work. A small amount of funding is available within this grant to commission some targeted preventative work and sits alongside funding held by partner agencies, notably health, to commission relevant sexual health and prevention programmes for young people.

9.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)

9.1 The Local Authority needs to comply with the terms of the Teenage Pregnancy Grant in order to ensure the funding is not withdrawn. The adoption of the recommendations will ensure that the Local Authority fulfils its obligations as a lead partner in this area of work.

10.0 Risk Management

10.1 Continued failure to reduce teenage pregnancy will impact negatively upon the performance of the Council in CAA.

10.2 Additionally risks associated with failure to address teenage pregnancy are of poor outcomes for young parents and for their children in terms of longer term life choices.

11.0 Background and Options

11.1 The National Support Team visit was planned after a period of sustained underperformance in the reduction of teenage pregnancy rates across Cheshire. The aim of the visit was to develop an understanding of the local area and to provide immediate feedback to all partners about what actions could be taken to reverse this trend. There was also a clear offer of further NST support which will inform the Cheshire East's Teenage Pregnancy Action Plan.

11.2 Whilst the visit was not part of a formal performance management review, it aimed to influence key players in relation to, for example, the priority placed on delivering the strategy and the policies and actions necessary to achieve this. Significant work occurred around collation of data to illustrate the current position and data packs were produced for key players. Planning meetings between representatives of the core services produced presentations from both the PCT and Cheshire East Council which served to illustrate the current position and the joint commitment, with an agreed number of core messages for future work.

- Joint approach to commissioning
- Joint structures
- Intelligent use of data to inform joint commissioning and service deliver
- Targeted preventative approach
- Further engage schools/colleges
- Shared understanding of finance and joint budget agreements
- Sharing of information/joint information
- Pursue integrated/joint/shared sexual health strategy
- Engagement and consultation with young people and their families and carers
- Strong and joint leadership across key agencies and advocacy on all occasions
- Target money collectively
- Senior Strategic post to lead on Teenage Pregnancy – separate post
- Clear performance framework

11.3 The key messages from the presentations were that Under 18 conceptions were focused in small geographical areas, 'hot spots'. In relation to deprivation the emerging teenage pregnancy pattern of conception was significantly greater than would be expected in these areas, indicating that deprivation was only one of a number of responsible factors. Despite historic coverage of prevention services within our 'hot spot' areas rates have remained steady or have increased. Some areas have shown high levels of single or repeat terminations. There was also concern for the vulnerable groups such as care leavers.

11.4 In order to provide customized advice and gain further understanding of the local area, the visiting team members held a series of informal one-to-one discussions with key players. The interviews were in the form of informal discussions, focussing mainly on the themes identified in the Teenage Pregnancy Unit's Self Assessment Toolkit.

11.5 Feedback was given to the local partnership by the National Support Team at the end of the visit, with opportunities for discussion and problem solving at the feedback session. A formal report was then produced and shared with all key players. A brief overview of the salient points includes recommendations based around 4 key areas.

11.5.1 Strategy

- An Executive Board needs to be developed and chaired by Directors from LA and PCT to lead, drive forward and performance manage the teenage pregnancy prevention strategy.
- The urgent recruitment of a senior strategic post to lead on teenage pregnancy prevention, this is to be led by Cheshire East Council.

11.5.2 Data

- As part of the Children's Trust arrangements, data should be disseminated in an accessible and relevant format by all and between all partners, to inform better planning, targeting and performance management of the strategy.

11.5.3 Communication

- The LA and PCT communications leads are made responsible for the urgent development of a Teenage Pregnancy Communication Strategy and Action Plan.

11.5.4 Implementation

- There needs to be an explicit and detailed young people's Sexual Health Needs Assessment, to inform the design and delivery of young people's contraception and sexual health services as part of a strategic commissioning plan.
- There needs to be a radical overhaul of current Contraceptive And Sexual Health (CASH) provision, including the condom distribution scheme, to ensure it meets the needs of young people and the 'You're Welcome' standards. A regional team of experts will facilitate the planning event.

12.0 Overview of Year One and Term One Issues

12.1 None

13.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

Name: **Lorraine Butcher**
Designation: **Head of Service, Children & Families**
Tel No: **01270 686021**
Email: **lorraine.butcher@cheshireeast.gov.uk**