

**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY REVIEW OF TEENAGE PREGNANCY
7TH NOVEMBER 2005**

MEMBERS: Cllr Gideon Bull* (Chairman), Cllr Judy Bax*, Cllr Melanie Simpson*.

(*Members present).

ALSO PRESENT:

Susan Shaw - Pupil Support Strategy Manager (The Children's Service), Jean Croot - Head of Safer Communities Unit (The Chief Executives Service), Martin Bradshaw - Research Consultant.

28. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

29. URGENT BUSINESS

None.

30. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Deferred to the next meeting of the Review.

31. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS, IF ANY, IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

None received.

32. MINUTES

Deferred until the next meeting.

33. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS

None.

34. STEPPING UP PROJECT EVALUATION

Members received a presentation from Martin Bradshaw –Research Consultant on the evaluation of Stepping Up carried out in March 2005. Copies of the Stepping Up Evaluation report, published June 2005 were distributed for reference.

The Evaluation Aims & Objectives for the Evaluation of Stepping Up were outlined. These were to:

- Analyse the nature of support provided to teenage parents
- Analyse the nature of partnership working in supporting teenage parents

- Identify unmet needs /service gaps
- Make recommendations to guide and inform future development

The Evaluation Methods for the Evaluation of Stepping Up were outlined. These were:

- Data monitoring
- Interviews with project workers
- Interviews with partner agencies
- Focus group and interviews with teenage parents
- Survey of all teenage parents on database

The views of Teenage Parents obtained through the evaluation teenage parents' focus groups were discussed. The experiences of teenage mothers included discrimination, isolation, poor social circumstances and poor emotional health.

Teenage Parents interviewed found Stepping Up to be empathetic providing One-to-one support, providing advocacy. It was also provided access to a range of other services through information and referral acting as a one-stop-shop.

Teenage Parents interviewed found that Stepping Up provided access to a valuable peer support group. This provided:

- Space for teenage parents and their as well as their children.
- Helped develop social networks
- Helped develop parenting knowledge & skills
- Contributes to child development

The evaluation of Stepping Up project workers & other services was discussed.

The evaluation found that there were some capacity and role definition issues for Stepping Up project workers. These included:

- Case loads,
- Their advocacy role,
- The complex and varied needs of Teenage Parents,
- Lack of administrative support
- Service development needs of the Stepping Up service were identified. These included:
 - Post 20 support
 - Peer support group
 - Mental health provision (counselling)

Partner Agencies - The evaluation found that there were good working relationships between Stepping Up and partner agencies.

The evaluation found that there was a need for geographical clarification of referrals. Uncertainties surrounded eligibility for the Sure Start teenage parents support

programme, as Sure Start is based around certain geographical localities. The evaluation also identified strong local boundaries for local youth culture, where teenagers may be based.

The evaluation found that the referral mechanisms from Stepping Up to partner agencies needs improved procedures, for example, definition as to the appropriate use of blanket referrals and referrals based upon need.

Key local developments were identified. These included:

- The development of Children's Centres (with Teenage Parent responsibilities)
- The Teenage Parents Nursery in Wood Green

Key findings of the Stepping Up Evaluation were discussed. The evaluation found that the needs of teenage mothers are complex and varied. It found that teenage parents suffered from isolation, prejudice, exclusion, and often had limited social support.

The evaluation found that Stepping Up provides effective support to those teenage mothers in contact with the project. It provides peer support and a convenient and accessible site for advice for welfare services

The evaluation highlighted concerns at the number of teenage parents not in contact with services. A significant number of teenage parents in the borough are not in contact with services & not receiving support, this included both particular ethnic groups as well as generally across Haringey.

The evaluation identified some problems with the statistical basis used to inform policy, e.g. there are divergent opinions as to the number of teenage parents in Haringey.

The evaluation found that there to be sound partnership working, including good collaborative working across statutory agencies. It however found that further integration with voluntary sector was needed.

The evaluation found that significant barriers to reintegration of teenage parents remain. It found that there were issues around the availability of childcare, including overall capacity, and particularly provision for children under 12 months and provision in educational Institutions (e.g. colleges of further education). It also found that there is often a "benefits trap" for those in temporary accommodation.

The evaluation identified some **key strengths** of local provision in Haringey. These include:

- Dedicated Provision
- Teenage parents more at ease and more likely to access services provided for them
- Peer Support Group – this provides a vital role in lessening social isolation, contributing to the social development of parent and child
- Advocacy – Stepping Up is providing a strong advocacy role in local provision is highly beneficial to teenage parents
- A One Stop Shop approach: This helps in negotiating a myriad of services and provides accountability and prevents young parents being passed around the system

- Local coordination

The evaluation identified some **key weaknesses** of local provision. These include:

- Capacity of Stepping Up
- Short term pressures through lack of maternity cover
- Lack of definitive local database of teenage parents. Such a database would help to understand the scale and nature of local need, needed to inform policy and local targets and to develop a coherent and systematic referral system (esp. from Midwifery services)
- Undefined exit strategies for teenage parents. There are complexities of age related services and benefits and there is a need to ensure smooth transition to other support services
- Geographically centred service provision. There is a need to develop services in other areas of the borough to facilitate greater access (especially peer support group)
- Young fathers provision remains undeveloped in Haringey There is a need further work especially in relation to issues with relationships and domestic violence

The evaluation identified some **Key Development Priorities**. These include:

- Develop information sharing across the sector to facilitate creation of a definitive local database of teenage parents
- Develop local strategy for targeting those young parents not in contact with services
- Peer support group mechanism needs to be further developed to promote access to a broader spectrum of teenage parents in Haringey.
- The need to influence Children's Centre development to ensure that there is appropriate provision for teenage parents.
- Developing dedicated childcare provision for teenage parents in Haringey (in colleges that they attend)

AGREED:

- **To note the key findings of the Stepping evaluation as evidence to the Review.**

The meeting closed at 8.00pm

COUNCILLOR GIDEON BULL

Chair – Scrutiny Review of Teenage Pregnancy

Date:

