



Executive
6 April 2009

**Report from the Director of
Policy and Regeneration**

Wards Affected:
ALL

**Healthy Relationships - Reducing Teenage Pregnancy task
group report.**

Forward Plan Ref: PRU-0809-20

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the findings and recommendations of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny task group investigation into how parents and faith groups can be encouraged to share positive messages with young people about sex and relationships. This work will contribute to the reducing teenage pregnancy agenda which is a corporate priority and target within the Local Area Agreement.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Executive are asked to note the recommendations and the service department response.
- 2.2 That members of the task group be thanked for their work.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 At its meeting on 10 October 2007 the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny committee commissioned this task group to consider the role of parents and faith groups in talking to young people about sex and relationships. The task group met on seven occasions and included the following members:

Councillor Will Motley
Councillor Bertha Joseph
Councillor Lena Ahmed
Reverend Phil Stone

Mrs Georgina Bondzi Simpson, Parent Governor Representative
Petergaye Palmer, Youth Parliament Member

The aims of the task group were to:

- Consider how parents and faith communities can be supported in talking to their children about relationships and sexual health including looking at what literature is available for these target groups.
- Identify good practice from other local authorities

Findings of the Task Group

- 3.2 The UK has the highest teenage pregnancy rates in Western Europe and until recently Brent has been one of the national hotspot areas. Statistics now show that rates in the borough are on a downward trajectory.
- 3.3 Reducing teenage pregnancy is a target within the councils Local Area Agreement. It is also a priority within the corporate strategy and services for youth is one of the Administration's priorities.
- 3.4 A visit by the National Teenage Pregnancy Support Team in 2007 commended Brent on its work on reducing teenage pregnancy and recommended that more emphasis be placed on the preventative agenda including involving parents and faith groups in talking to young people about sex and relationships.
- 3.5 A report commissioned by the Department for Children Schools and Families entitled "Everyday conversations, Everyday" highlights that 75% of 11-14 year olds are eager to their parents about sex and relationships, but currently find it difficult to do so. Similarly, the task group found that parents need more support and information on how to broach this subject with their children.
- 3.6 During their investigation members found that many faith groups shy away from talking to young people in their congregations about sex and relationships. There are two main reasons for this; firstly they believe that the young people who attend their place of worship would adhere to their beliefs and not have sex outside of marriage. Secondly leaders believe that speaking about sex will encourage young people to go out and do it.
- 4.0 After considering all the evidence the task group developed the following recommendations:**

Recommendation One

That the council and its partners host an awareness raising conference on a range of teenage issues aimed at faith groups and establish regular communication with this group via leaflets and the website.

Recommendation Two

That the Strategic Joint Commissioning Manager for teenage pregnancy, sexual health and substance misuse, ensures that faith monitoring is included in data gathering for STI's, teenage pregnancy and terminations.

Recommendation Three

That the council and it's partners including NHS Brent work together to distribute literature specifically for parents and faith groups on teenage issues including substance misuse, sexual health and obesity.

Recommendation Four

That schools be encouraged to provide a forum for parents to discuss 'talking to their children about sex and relationships'

Recommendation Five

That an officer within the Children and Families Department is given clear responsibility for leading on work with parents and faith groups on matters relating to giving information to young people on sex and relationships

5.0 Service Department Response

Recommendation	Service Response	Officer Responsible
1. That the council and its partners host an awareness raising conference on a range of teenage issues aimed at faith groups and establish regular communication with this group via leaflets and the website.	The commissioning plan for teenage pregnancy and substance misuse has identified the need for regular communication to all groups including faith groups. We will be holding regular stakeholder network meetings and this will be extended to include faith groups. In addition, we will liaise with the Brent Multi Faith Forum to host an awareness raising conference in quarter 3 of 2009-10.	Commissioning Manager for SH & SMS
2. That the Strategic Joint Commissioning Manager for teenage pregnancy, sexual health and substance misuse, ensures that faith monitoring is included in data gathering for STI's, teenage pregnancy and terminations.	All commissioned services are robustly monitored against a performance monitoring framework. The Strategic Joint Commissioning Manager will ensure that faith group data is requested from service providers on STIs, teenage pregnancy and terminations. This will take place on a quarterly basis.	Commissioning Manager for SH & SMS
3. That the council and it's partners including NHS Brent work together to distribute literature specifically for parents and faith groups on teenage issues including substance misuse, sexual health and obesity.	All Service Level Agreements for commissioned services (through the LA and jointly with NHS Brent) will require organisations to publicise their services and produce information on teenage issues including substance misuse, sexual health and obesity, to all faith groups. The Strategic Joint Commissioning manager will also be developing a Service Level Agreement with NHS Brent's Health Promotion	Commissioning Manager for SH & SMS

	service. We will ensure the SLA includes publicity of literature for parenting and faith groups.	
4. That schools be encouraged to provide a forum for parents to discuss 'talking to their children about sex and relationships'	The Joint Commissioning team has commissioned a local voluntary organisation to deliver parenting support to raise awareness on sexual health and relationships. Group workshops are a part of this service. Schools would be encouraged to refer their parents to these sessions as an avenue for them to discuss how to talk to their children about sex and relationships.	African Child who is commissioned to deliver the service.
5. That an officer within the Children and Families Department is given clear responsibility for leading on work with parents and faith groups on matters relating to giving information to young people on sex and relationships.	The Strategic Joint Commissioning Manager for sexual health and substance misuse will have the lead responsibility to ensure services are in place for working with parents and faith groups on sex and relationships.	Commissioning Manager for SH & SMS

6.0 Legal Implications

Sex education occurs in some parts of the National Curriculum and, separately in the basic curriculum. Sex education is mandatory for secondary pupils, but not mandatory at nursery or primary schools, Education Act 2002 section 80. The governing bodies of schools must keep a statement indicating their policy on sex education.

Local education authorities, governing bodies and head teachers must do what is reasonably practicable to ensure that sex education, where given, encourages registered pupils at schools "to have due regard to moral considerations and the value of family life" Education Act 1996 section 403.

7.0 Financial Implications

The cost of implementing the recommendations will be contained within existing budgets, as indicated in the table below:

Service Area	Income Streams
Teenage Pregnancy	Area Based Grant - 127,000.00
	Local Authority Base Budget - 50,000.00
	Total Teenage Pregnancy Funding - 177,000.00
Substance Misuse	Area Based Grant - 136,677.00
	Pool Treatment Budget - 168,856.00

	Youth Justice Board - 45,898.00
	Total Substance Misuse Funding - 351,431.00
Sexual Health Commissioning (NHS Brent)	Young People's Sexual Health – Strategic Commissioning Directorate 118,302.00
	Total Sexual Health funding - 118,302.00
Total	£646,733.00

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