

TEENAGE PREGNANCY PROGRESS REVIEW

Summary of Key Issues:

- Progress since the original Review, conducted by the Director of Public Health and the Director of Children, Young People and Families in July 2008, has been patchy. Not all the Review recommendations have been implemented.
- The Director of Public Health and the Director of Children, Young People and Families are therefore recommending to the PCT and Oxfordshire County Council that a new post be established to lead this work at a strategic level.
- The Children's Trust Board is asked to comment on the recommendation and to suggest how other agencies involved in teenage pregnancy work might be held to account more effectively via the newly established Area Trust Boards.

Background

The Director of Public Health and the Director of Children, Young People and Families conducted a Review of Teenage Pregnancy in late July 2008 because of concerns about Oxfordshire's poor performance in reducing the rate of teenage conceptions. The Review made a series of recommendations which were agreed by the Children's Trust.

Progress Review

On 30th April 2009, a Progress Review was undertaken by the Director of Children, Young People and Families and the Head of Partnerships and Health Inequalities. (The Director of Public Health was otherwise engaged on influenza pandemic matters.) Findings can be summarised as follows:

1. Progress on the recommendations is patchy – some have not been implemented at all whilst others have made some progress.
2. Areas of concern include lack of engagement with schools, training only attended by the most interested people, rather than those in greatest need, and training not being evaluated.

3. There is still no single joined-up plan.
4. The four officers nominated to lead improvement after the Review have effectively been reduced to two-and-a-half because of sickness and capacity issues. The arrangements lacked overall leadership.
5. There are no robust joint arrangements for prioritising, managing the workload, managing the current team (Coordinator and Project Manager) and reporting on performance.
6. The coordinator role has not been able to influence other services. The post holder has changed due to a secondment with the Strategic health Authority.

Recommendations

a) Short term

- The two-and-a-half remaining officers and the new Coordinator should carry on implementing the recommendations and not lose momentum in the progress being made, whilst other options are being investigated. This should include urgent work on a single, comprehensive plan.
- These officers should send a fortnightly update on progress against the original recommendations to the Director of Public Health and the Director of Children, Young People and Families, until the new arrangements are in place.

b) Longer term

- Strategic influence is needed to persuade all appropriate agencies to cooperate in reducing teenage conception. Many effective interventions overlap with those used for other issues of risky behaviour, such as drugs, alcohol and sexual health. Currently, these areas of work are not brought together under one lead. The Director of Public Health and the Director of Children, Young People and Families are therefore recommending to the PCT and Oxfordshire County Council that a new post (Strategic Lead for Healthy Lifestyles) be established to lead this work at a strategic level.

- The post would be funded jointly by the PCT and OCC and responsibilities would include: teenage pregnancy, drugs, alcohol, sexual health, obesity/eating disorders and Healthy Schools.
- The Children's Trust has accountability for performance against teenage conception targets and needs a mechanism by which other agencies involved in this work might be held to account more effectively. Given the distribution of the teenage conception hotspots, this could be via the newly established Area Trust Boards.

Janet Tomlinson
Director of Children Young People & Families
01865 815122
janet.tomlinson@oxfordshire.gov.uk