

Reducing Teenage Pregnancy in Devon

1. Key Messages for School Governors

- 1.1 In accordance with the duty of schools to promote the wellbeing of their pupils, governors are in the unique position to positively influence the delivery of quality sex and relationships education within the school environment, enable young people to access information, advice and guidance on sexual health related matters and where appropriate, access to contraception.
- 1.2 Easy access to contraceptive services was found to be the single most important factor in reducing teenage conception rates in England (DfES, 2006). Research in the USA found that 86% of the recent decline in US teenage pregnancy rates is the result of improved contraceptive use (Santelli et al, 2007). In the school-age adolescent population (15-17 years), 77% of the decline in pregnancy risk was attributable to improved contraceptive use.
- 1.3 Currently 23 of the 37 secondary schools in Devon have a Level 1 sexual health drop-in service at all schools (Devon Young People's Sexual Health Strategy 2008).(Appendix 1). Work continues towards a 12 month plan to have a Level 1 service on or adjacent to a school site.
- 1.4 School governors are invited to view the content of the Department of Health R U THINKING website, www.ruthinking.co.uk , and consider how this could be publicised and accessed by pupils in the school setting. There is a variety of literature that illustrates key messages from the website, which could be displayed on a notice board alongside details of local services.
- 1.5 Young people are disproportionately affected by Sexually Transmitted Infections – they represent 12% of the population but account for half of all of the diagnosed sexually transmitted infections in genito-urinary medicine clinics.
- 1.6 In the Southwest in 2007, young people in the 16 to 24 year old age group accounted for:
 - 68% of all Chlamydia diagnoses
 - 51% of all gonorrhoea diagnoses
 - 42% of all genital herpes
 - 57% of all genital warts (in young women there is a link between genital warts and cervical cancer)
- 1.7 The Devon wide chlamydia screening programme is in progress for 15 – 24 yr olds www.checkinitout.co.uk and online test kits may be obtained at <http://freetest.me.uk/> .

1. 8 A young people's consultation event was held in and March work continues to support the implementation of the Devon Young People's Sexual health brand, "DOWN2U". It is anticipated that this brand will be adopted by a wide variety of settings across Devon which young people are likely to access. Amongst other things, this will provide the opportunity for young people to get confidential, consistent and appropriate messages on resisting peer pressure to have early sex and using contraception when they do become sexually active.
1. 9 Training is underway to develop staff in Tiverton, Newton Abbot and Exeter to pilot the Devon C-Card condom distribution scheme, which will be extended throughout Devon later in the year. Young people up to the age of 25 will be able to register at a C- card outlet and in addition to receiving confidential information and advice, will be provided with condoms. Young people will be able to return to the C-card outlets to obtain further information and supplies.
1. 10 The development of a sexual health training plan is in progress to target those individuals who work with directly with young people and further information will be disseminated to all partners in due course
- 1.11 The Family Planning Association (<http://www.fpa.org.uk>) has developed a course called *Speakeasy* to encourage parents and carers to provide positive sex and relationships education in the home and take on the role of sex and relationships educator. Course attendees can achieve Level 2 accreditation for evidence of learning via the Open College Network and for some, this is a gateway to further education.
- 1.12 The *Speakeasy* course is suitable for parents/carers/grandparents/kinship carers/foster carers and teenage parents. In a number of local areas around the country the *Speakeasy* course is delivered through Healthy Schools and increasingly, is part of the role of Parent Support Advisors. Outcomes for schools who have delivered this programme demonstrate that parents have become more engaged around Sex and Relationships Education and in some cases, Sex and Relationships Education delivery has been revised as a consequence.

Julia Loveluck
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Appendix 1

Devon Young People's Sexual Health Service Model

LEVEL ZERO SERVICE

- Sexual health promotion literature including details of local services
- Signposting to local sexual health services or other youth support agencies, as appropriate
- Free condom issue for registered scheme users

LEVEL ONE SERVICE

As Level Zero plus:

- Confidential sexual health advice and support, including information about the full range of hormonal, reversible and long acting methods of contraception
- Free condoms and lubricants, with information and guidance on correct usage and registration to scheme
- Free pregnancy testing and opportunity to obtain accurate and unbiased information about pregnancy options and non directive support
- Free emergency hormonal contraception
- Free Chlamydia screening
- Referral to Termination of Pregnancy services
- Referral to antenatal care
- Referral to GUM