

**SCRUTINY BOARD (HEALTH)**

**INQUIRY INTO REDUCING TEENAGE CONCEPTIONS IN LEEDS**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 In April 2008, the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board (as it was then known), published a statement on Teenage Pregnancy. This was the product of a one-off 'task and finish' working group which had been established to consider the issue.
- 1.2 The working group was established following the publication of performance data during 2007 which showed that Leeds was repeatedly failing to make progress in reaching government targets on reducing teenage conception. The issue was also identified by the Audit Commission as part of their Comprehensive Performance Assessment of the Council.
- 1.3 The working group considered the following areas:
- The facts and figures around teenage pregnancy in Leeds
  - The findings from a recent report on the situation in Leeds produced by the Teenage Pregnancy National Support Team (TPNST)
  - The action being taken to reduce teenage conceptions in the city
  - The options open to young women to complete their studies or access training after childbirth
  - Whether the Board might make recommendations to assist the work around reducing teenage pregnancies in Leeds
  - Whether any further scrutiny should be undertaken in the next municipal year in the form of a full inquiry.
- 1.4 The statement produced by the group concluded that, while there were excellent services in Leeds to support teenage parents, there was still much work to be done around reducing teenage conceptions.
- 1.5 The main recommendation of the working group was that a further inquiry be carried out during the coming municipal year, into the issue of reducing teenage conceptions. The working group also recommended that the inquiry involve members of both the Children's Services and Health Scrutiny Boards, and that young people be co-opted as members for the inquiry, as they had made a very valuable contribution to the working group.

## **2.0 Scope of the inquiry**

2.1 The Teenage Pregnancy working group recommended that the terms of reference for any future inquiry include the following:

- an investigation of the links between teenage pregnancy and low aspiration
- consistency of Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) for both males and females in primary and secondary schools
- the availability of access to family planning for young males and females in the city, outside standard school/working days
- the rise in conception rates in under 15s

2.2 It is planned that young people from the Youth Sexual Health Action Group (YSHAG) will be involved in the inquiry, either as coopted members, or as witnesses.

## **3.0 Comments of the relevant Director and Executive Member**

3.1 In line with Scrutiny Board Procedure Rule 12.4 the views of the relevant Directors and Executive Members have been sought and have been incorporated where appropriate into these Terms of Reference. Full details are available on request from the Scrutiny Support Unit.

## **4.0 Structure of the Inquiry**

4.1 It is proposed that a range of approaches to evidence gathering are used in this Inquiry, including the one or more of the following:

- A working group of the Scrutiny Board to consider some evidence and question key witnesses
- Full meetings of the Scrutiny Board to consider some evidence and question key witnesses
- Discussion with key stakeholders
- Visits to selected establishments, as appropriate, to engage with service users and staff
- Visits to other authority areas and/or areas of best practice, as appropriate

4.2 The Inquiry will conclude with the publication of a report, or statement, and recommendations by the Scrutiny Board that will be submitted to the appropriate forum.

**5.0 Timetable for the inquiry**

5.1 It is initially planned that the Inquiry will take place over three sessions with a view to issuing a final report or statement during the 2008/09 municipal year.

5.2 The length of the Inquiry is subject to change.

**6.0 Submission of evidence**

6.1 The following formal evidence gathering sessions are scheduled:

**6.2 Site visits – dates to be confirmed**

**6.3 Session one – (date to be confirmed)**

The purpose of this session will be to consider background information on Teenage Conceptions in Leeds, in particular:

- The final report of the Teenage Pregnancy National Support Team on the situation in Leeds
- The most recent statistical information
- SRE policy in Leeds
- The availability of family planning for young people

Towards the end of the session, consideration will be given to any further and/or specific information required as part of the inquiry.

**6.2 Session two - (date to be confirmed)**

During the second session of the inquiry the board will look at the wider situation and examples of best practice from other authorities. In particular the board will consider:

- The evidence for a link between low aspiration and teenage pregnancy
- The prevalence of teenage pregnancy amongst certain social groups – for example, Looked After Children
- Possible methods for reducing the number of teenage conceptions

Towards the end of the session, consideration will be given to any further and/or specific information required as part of the inquiry.

**6.3 Session three - (date to be confirmed)**

Subject to any additional information being identified, consideration will be given to the content and recommendations of a draft final report or statement.

**7.0 Witnesses**

7.1 The following witnesses have been identified as possible contributors to the Inquiry:

- Leeds PCT
- Director of Children's Services
- Members of YSHAG
- Leeds Youth Service
- Education Leeds
- Leeds Teenage Pregnancy and Parenthood Partnership
- Representative from the Teenage Pregnancy National Support Team
- Representatives from other authority areas

**8.0 Post inquiry report monitoring arrangements**

8.1 Following the completion of the Scrutiny inquiry and the publication of the final inquiry report and recommendations, the implementation of the agreed recommendations will be monitored. The Scrutiny Board will determine those arrangements at the end of the Inquiry.

8.2 The final inquiry report will include information on the detailed arrangements for how the implementation of recommendations will be monitored.

**9.0 Measures of success**

9.1 It is important to consider how the Scrutiny Board will deem if their inquiry has been successful in making a difference to local people. Some measures of success may be obvious at the initial stages of an inquiry and can be included in these terms of reference. Other measures of success may become apparent as the inquiry progresses and discussions take place.

9.2 The Board will look to publish practical recommendations.