



Isle of Wight Safeguarding Children Board

Pathway for Supporting School Age Pregnant Teenagers and Parents

Date agreed: 14th May 2014
Review date: April 2016

1. Introduction:

'The way in which a school/education provider responds to the disclosure of a school age pregnancy will have a significant impact on the response of that new parent to their baby.'

Whilst there are positive outcomes of school age pregnancy and parenthood, there can also be adverse health, social and economic outcomes that can affect both school age parents and their child for the rest of their lives.

The aim of this pathway document is to ensure equitable support for pregnant/parent school pupils, limiting the potential for adverse outcomes, and ensuring the best possible support for them and their children. This pathway has been designed with teachers, pregnant/parent school pupils, their families, and professionals from a wide range of support agencies including health. The 'support package' offered to pregnant and parent school pupils needs to include all of these individuals and agencies to provide holistic support that is focused on the individual needs of each pupil (mother and father) and their child.

Reducing teenage pregnancy and supporting teenage parents is a high priority both nationally and locally on the Isle of Wight, demonstrated through the Teenage Pregnancy Action Plan. The plan has two overarching priorities:

1. Prevention and Well Being
2. Integrated Support for Teenage Parents

With four main aims:

1. To reduce the rate of conceptions under 18 years of age;
2. To reduce the rate of repeat conceptions under 18 years of age;
3. To improve the social and emotional capability of our children and young people;
4. To increase the number of teenage parents in education, training or employment;

This pathway is supported by a range of Government legislation and guidance including Joint Guidance on the Education of School Aged Parents DfES/0629/2001

http://www.teenpregredbridge.co.uk/site/files/pdf/Education_Of_School_Aged_Parents_2001.pdf

A pathway plan has been developed to assist schools/education providers and other agencies in the process of supporting pregnant/parent school pupils. This pathway plan gives an over view of the support process and is designed as a guide for practitioners and to inform the expectation of pupils and their families. The following sections of this document offer guidance and support to practitioners in delivering support in line with the pathway plan.

Every attempt should be made to ensure the inclusion of pregnant pupils. Flexible systems should be developed to support the needs of each individual pupil in line with DfES/0629/2001.

2. Pregnant / Parent Pupil Pathway

If a pupil discloses they are about to become a parent, the flowchart shown in appendix one illustrates what actions you need to follow.

The pathway should be used in conjunction with the 'Protocol to safeguard unborn babies' (appendix two).

3. Confidentiality:

Confidentiality and the rights of an individual pupil should be central when supporting pregnant/parent pupils. Consideration should be given to supporting pupils, their families and children in line with the school/education provider's Confidentiality Policy.

3.1 Under 16 Sexual Activity:

There is no requirement to report under 16 sexual activity as there is no underlying legislation making this a duty. You must share information about sexual activity involving children under 13, who are considered in law to be unable to consent (See Sexual Offences Act 2003, Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland order) 2008 and Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009). This must be reported to a designated member of staff for child protection and in turn to children's social services. This is because sex with someone under 13 is a serious offence and indicates a risk of significant harm to the child.

Sexual activity with a child under 16 is also an offence. Where it is consensual it may be less serious than if the child were under 13, but may nevertheless have serious consequences for the welfare of the young person. Consideration should be given in every case of sexual activity involving a child aged 13-16 as to whether there should be a discussion with the designated member of staff for child protection and whether a referral should be made to the Children's Reception Team- professional line on 0845 002 0095. Child sexual exploitation should also be considered www.iowscb.org.uk/child_sexual_exploitation

Staff should refer to the designated member of staff for child protection and the Isle of Wight Local Safeguarding Children's Board Procedures are available at www.4lscb.onlineprocedures.com for further information.

Reporting sexual activity under 16 involves professional's judgment in each case; the interests of the child should be at the centre of any decision.

'The way in which the issue of confidentiality is handled within a school will be seen by staff, pupils and parents as an indicator of the respect for and value given to the needs and wishes of each individual'

4. Attendance:

The starting point in supporting a pregnant/parent pupil is that the school/education provider should aim to support the pupil to remain in education wherever possible before and after the birth.

4.1 Pregnancy/parenthood should never be a reason for exclusion, whether formal or informal:

Health and safety should not be used as a reason to prevent a pregnant pupil attending school, in the same way that this does not prevent a pregnant member of staff continuing in school.

Schools and the Local Authority need to consult and work with the pupil and their parents/carers to secure a package which is suitable to the individual pupil's needs.

4.2 Medical/Antenatal Appointments:

Appointments should **where possible** be made outside of school. However where this is not possible the school should support the pupil (mother and father) to attend appointments by arranging opportunities to catch up on work missed. Absence as a result of a pregnant pupil attending necessary medical appointments should be recorded as authorised. Midwives will be as flexible as possible and will see them at school if required or at a Children's Centre.

4.3 Maternity/Paternity leave:

Pupils can continue attending school with medical approval for as long as they are physically and emotionally able to prior to the birth. No more than 18 calendar weeks authorised absence period is allowed to cover the period immediately before and after the birth of the child (disregarding term holidays).

Maternity leave may be extended if the health of the mother or child is brought into question. Maternity leave may be commenced at the beginning of the 11th week before the expected date of delivery (EDD). A doctor's 'fit note' should cover lengthy absences before this date. The young woman should provide the school with a copy of her MATB1 certificate, which establishes the EDD. Depending when in the academic year maternity leave commences, it may be appropriate to provide the young woman with coursework modules that she can easily achieve whilst on maternity leave. The young parents are also entitled to 13 weeks parental leave over the child's first five years and this can be taken anytime after the baby is born.

A young parent may be entitled to two weeks consecutive paternity leave. Where required the school should seek guidance from the Local Authority. No more than one period of paternity leave will be granted in any 12 month period. To qualify for paternity leave, a young parent must notify the school as soon as reasonably practicable. Prospective paternal students should be allowed reasonable time off to attend antenatal appointments (see 4.2).

4.4 Alternative Provision:

In exceptional circumstances a pupil may be unable to attend their mainstream school due to **medical/social reasons** during pregnancy and immediately after the birth. In these cases contact should be made with the Local Authority's Commissioner for Alternative provision. The pupil may be offered provision through the island Learning Centre- Thompson House Tuition Centre or another educational centre, provided with a reduced timetable or provided with home tuition.

Please contact the alternative provision team/education welfare team on 01983 821000 / 529790 to discuss attendance issues in relation to school age pregnancy or parenthood or alternative provision options.

5. Supporting School Age Parents:

School age parents (both mother and father) will require support to reintegrate into school after the birth of their child. The level of support will depend on the individual and their circumstances, both in terms of their position now as a parent and also their previous experience of education.

It should be noted that a survey by the Centre for Sexual and Reproductive Research in 2003 found that 78.9% of young mums felt that motherhood had increased their determination to get a good job and therefore succeed in education even where previously there has been a lack of engagement with education or this has been a difficult experience.

There are a range of issues that schools/education providers should consider in relation to supporting a school age parent. It is not necessarily the responsibility of the school/education provider to provide for, nor address all of these issues. However they need to be considered and the school/education provider should offer support to address these issues or access the services/resources as they will all impact on the school age parents learning.

The resource section of this document lists relevant agencies and resources to support school age parents.

For all school age parents (mothers and fathers) the school/education provider should work with the school, Education Welfare Service, pupil, their family, midwife and other relevant agencies/providers to create a support package/plan including consideration of the following and a reintegration programme.

(This is not an exhaustive list and will vary with each individual)

5.1 Supporting positive outcomes

Health

Ante and Post Natal Care (including nutrition and lifestyle)

Post Natal Depression

Health

Sex and Relationships Education / Contraception

Safeguarding

Bullying (including siblings in the same school)

Child Protection/ Safeguarding

Parenting Skills

Enjoy and Achieve

Child Care

Previous experience in education

Attendance

Make a Positive Contribution

Support of family

Pupil's parents and carers

Economic well-being

Housing

Finance / Benefits

Careers / Further Education

6. Common Assessment Framework:

The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is a totally voluntary process that provides a holistic assessment of a child/ young person's need for services. It is a system for recognising signs that a child may have needs that a single universal service cannot meet.

At the centre of the development of the CAF is the principle that it is child/young person centred, and can be shared across agencies and between professionals – as appropriate, and with the family/young person's permission.

For more information on the CAF process visit <http://www.iwight.com/Council/OtherServices/Childrens-CAF/Common-Assessment-Framework-CAF>.

For young people under the age of 16 who decide to continue with their pregnancy a CAF **must** be considered - this should also be considered if the pregnancy is terminated. A CAF should be considered for all young people between the ages of 16-

18 who decide to continue with their pregnancy. Before undertaking a CAF please call the Children's Reception Team on 0300 300 0117 (24 hrs) to discuss further.

CAF is a voluntary process but the principles underpinning the CAF are to encourage the professionals to stay young person focused and work in partnership with the young person and family as emphasised in Working Together 2013. If the young person doesn't want to involve their family, they can consent to be part of the CAF process but you would need to check their competence through the Fraser competency guidelines, see: <http://www.fpa.org.uk/sites/default/files/under-16s-consent-and-confidentiality-factsheet-march-2009.pdf> .

If the young person doesn't want a CAF, you would still need to engage with the young person using a different approach.

7. School Community:

The identification of a school age pregnancy has wide ranging implications, not only for the prospective young parents but for the whole school community.

The issue requires significant sensitivity and a measured approach in its management and the school will ideally have a clear set of protocols to follow as well as access to all relevant agencies which may need to be involved.

A Healthy School will support the best interests of the prospective young parents at **all** times and this notion must be central to whichever pathways the school undertakes. Consideration needs to be given to both the physical and emotional health and well being of the prospective young parents. A healthy school is an inclusive school and the aim should be that the school will be in a position to manage the pregnancy within the school environment. Thus the parents would have the opportunity, as far as possible, to complete or return to education.

To this end a great deal of empathy needs to be engendered with the other students in the school and any stigmatisation is to be avoided at all costs, including by staff. A further issue that will need to be addressed carefully and managed sensitively is the responses of the parents and families of the other young people within the school community. The Head teacher, governors and senior leadership teams will need to identify clearly the means by which to achieve this, so that the best interests of the young people involved are supported.

In supporting potential young parents, schools will need to examine and be guided by the unique values that underpin their positive ethos: values such as equity, fairness, rights, responsibility, caring, choice, dignity, integrity and justice. A school age pregnancy may challenge attitudes, values and differing perspectives within a setting. This can be heightened due to the potentially wide number of supporting agencies that may need to be involved. However, it is a situation that can be managed successfully

and sensitively and with the **best** outcomes for those young parents, provided that the school is caring and supportive of those young people.

8. Resources:

8.1 Care 2 Learn

'Care to Learn' is funding available for parents under 20 years old to help with the cost of childcare whilst studying. To learn more about the scheme see:

<https://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn>

If you wish to apply for the 'Care to Learn' funding the Family Information Zone (FIZ), Choices and the IOW Children's centres can provide support, information and help with the application process for young parents.

- Please see: <http://www.iwight.com/wightchyps/> to learn more about FIZ.
- Please see: <http://www.iwight.com/Residents/Schools-and-learning/Choices/About> to learn more about Choices.
- Please see: <http://www.iwight.com/Residents/Care-and-Support/Childrens-Services/Support-and-Advice-for-families/Early-Help-0-5-years> for more information on IOW Children Centres.

8.2 Isle of Wight Children's services

Contact details for services should you need to share concerns about children and young people's safety and well being.

Children's Reception Team: 0300 300 0117 (24 hrs)

Safeguarding policies and procedures can be found at <http://4lscb.proceduresonline.com/>

8.3 Education Participation Team

The Participation Team offers support to all young people post-16 to participate in education, training and employment. See: <http://www.iwight.com/Residents/Schools-and-Learning/Isle-of-Wight-YouthTube/Choices/Choices-Centre> for further information

All young people and their parents/carers are welcome to make use of the resources in the Choices Centre including supported use of a public telephone and computer to make applications to education, jobs, and apprenticeships, construct CVs, and check access to benefits. If you are not in full-time education or training the Participation Team will allocate you a dedicated Participation Adviser who you can keep in touch with by phone, e-mail or by visiting the Choices Centre.

8.4 Sexual Health Services

Information on contraception, STIs, pregnancy and wider sexual health services is available from www.wish-net.co.uk. The website provides guidance for young people on the Isle of Wight, including local clinics and contact details.

8.5 Family Information Zone

FIZ aims to provide a one-stop point of access for all information relating to children, young people and families, including advice on Childcare and details of local Children's Centres. www.wightchyps.org.uk

Tel: 01983 821999

8.6 Common Assessment Framework

A copy of the CAF form and Pre-CAF form

Also see: <http://www.iwight.com/Council/OtherServices/Childrens-CAF/Common-Assessment-Framework-CAF> for information

8.7 Children's Centres

Provide support to children (0-5) and their parents/carers, including family health services, child development, parenting, information and activities, help with training and employment. Details of your local Children's Centre can be found at www.wightchyps.org.uk and <https://www.iwight.com/Council/OtherServices/Support-and-Advice-for-Families/Early-Help-0-5-years>

8.8 National Support Agencies:

<http://www.bestbeginnings.org.uk/> - The organisation's vision is to see 'a future in which all children in the UK enjoy excellent care from the very beginning'.

<http://www.bubbalicious.co.uk/> - information and advice for young parents

<http://www.fatherhoodinstitute.org/tag/young-fathers/> for advice for fathers of all ages including young fathers

<http://www.iwight.com/azservices/documents/2750-WWM-Ezine-Issue-12.pdf> - for booklets and information for young fathers