

Cabinet  
29 February 2012



**Children and Young People's Scrutiny  
Committee Report – Under 18  
Conceptions in County Durham**

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**Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive**

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**Purpose of the Report**

- 1 The attached report presents the findings of Children & Young People's Scrutiny Working Group which has reviewed under-18 conceptions in County Durham.

**Background**

- 2 The Children and Young People's scrutiny committee agreed to review under 18 conceptions at their meeting on 2 September 2011. The focus of the review was to:
  - ensure that the figures received are the most up to date available
  - ensure Communication at all levels and between all stakeholders is fit for purpose
  - examine the levels of Sex and Relationship Education in schools to determine if they are providing information to help young people make informed decisions and manage risks accordingly
  - explore accessibility of contraception services for young people
  - consider the support offered to teenage parents and teenage mums to be to continue in education and training.
- 3 The review followed four key lines of enquiry which focused on:
  - Sexual and Relationship Education
  - Contraceptive Services
  - Support to Teenage Parents
  - Data Intelligence and Communication.
- 4 The Teenage Pregnancy Strategy was a 10 year plan with two important goals to halve the rate of conceptions among under 18 year old girls by 2010; and to achieve a long term reduction in the risk of exclusion of teenage parents and their children. The strategy also produced guidance for local authorities and health authorities to produce their own local teenage pregnancy strategies.
- 5 In County Durham there has been a significant reduction in the numbers of under 18 conceptions from the 1998 base line figure but the very challenging and optimistic target of 55% set in the County Durham and Darlington Teenage Pregnancy Strategy is not expected

to be achieved when the final rates are published in 2012. County Durham has managed to sustain a considerable downward trend in reduction of under 18 conceptions.

- 6 The attached summary report makes five recommendations including systematic review that relate to communications, standardised sex and relationship education, refresh training for school governors and using the sexual health bus to reach young people who may otherwise find it difficult to access contraception and sexual health services.

### **Service Response**

- 7 The impact of under 18 conceptions is one which we recognise and aim to tackle through our Children and Young People's Plan. Within this plan, we have worked with partners to identify and tackle the root causes of teenage pregnancy. We acknowledge and welcome the Teenage Pregnancy Scrutiny report as a further opportunity for us to enhance and build upon our current plans and would like to thank everyone involved for providing such a comprehensive and evidenced based report. We welcome the findings and will be building these into our plans as part of continuous improvement process to provide the best services for children, young people and families in County Durham.
- 8 County Durham PCT has responded that the report is a fair and true reflection of current issues and has highlighted areas for further exploration such as child trafficking. They look forward to addressing the recommendations with their provider services in the New Year.

### **Recommendation**

- 9 Cabinet is asked to note:
  - the recommendations in the report (attached) and to formulate a response within the six month period identified in the report for systematic review of the recommendations; and
  - that the report will be shared with the Children's Trust for information.

### **Background Papers:**

None

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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**Finance** - Potential cost implications related to recommendation two regarding a standardised SRE framework in local authority maintained secondary schools; and four regarding utilising the sexual health bus have been identified but are as yet unquantifiable. However any costs in relation to this recommendation should be seen as an 'invest to save' initiative against the costs associated with underage pregnancies and should be borne jointly by the Council and health services Partners.

**Staffing** – None

**Risk** - None

**Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty** – The report addresses issues of accessibility to services that some young people in rural areas face. Recommendation four suggests utilising the sexual health bus as a remedy to this situation. The report suggests that young people receive information on all types of relationships as part of Sex and Relationship Education. By providing information on gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender relationships young people become aware and therefore reduce incidents of bullying out of ignorance. An Equality Impact Assessment of the recommendations has been carried out.

**Accommodation** - None

**Crime and Disorder** - None

**Human Rights** - None

**Consultation** – Evidence in the report was provided by colleagues in Children and Young People's Service and Partners from County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust. The Chair and Vice Chair went on a site visit to a Young Parents Session at Woodhouse Close Children's Centre and a Sheltered Housing Project at Bishop Auckland where they were able to talk to vulnerable young parents about the support they receive.

**Procurement** - None

**Disability Issues** – None

**Legal Implications** - None