The following three case studies illustrate how councils have applied the evidence and lessons for effective action on teenage pregnancy. They focus on a key element of what the local authority has done and by no means represent the totality of their work on teenage pregnancy.

**Bristol City Council: linking relationships and sex education to 1-1 advice in school based drop-in clinics and youth friendly services**

Working with schools is of course, an essential part of tackling teenage pregnancy. Investing in good quality relationships and sex education is something many areas have done, but Bristol City Council has taken that a step further by establishing a network of drop-in sessions in secondary schools. The weekly clinics are run by a sexual health nurse and youth worker and are held during lunchtimes. Julia Nibloe, service manager at Brook, which runs the service, says: "We provide contraception and some STI testing and when we can’t or if a clinical setting is more appropriate we can refer them on. But most of our time is really spent talking with young people about sexual health and healthy relationships – we discuss what that involves, what is consent and staying safe. We also talk about other things, such as alcohol or pornography and the safe use of the internet. We really encourage young people to discuss anything they need to. It’s about getting students to discuss things in an open and non-judgemental environment”

But this is just one of a number of ways the council’s public health team has sought to reduce teenage pregnancy. When the national healthy school programme was discontinued, Bristol developed its own version which has just been re-launched after months of redesigning and consultation with schools. Rather than one large programme Bristol now has 8 smaller ‘badges’ covering different health and wellbeing topics including relationships and sex education and emotional health and well being. This is a universal programme that reaches thousands of pupils by ensuring that schools take a whole-school approach to tackling health and wellbeing issues including sexual health and teenage pregnancy. The major focus is the schools in the most deprived areas of the city. Alongside the actual awards are a stack of guidance and support documents from lesson plans through to example policies. The aim is to make it as easy as possible for schools which have very little capacity, to get best practice in place. There is also a programme of free or low cost training and a number of networks schools can attend. Our web address is [www.bristol.gov.uk/healthyschools](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/healthyschools).

Two years ago the council launched a new scheme, Bristol Ideal, in partnership with the police to tackle domestic abuse and sexual violence. Guidance and training is provided to schools helping them to learn how to identify pupils at risk and how to address that. As part of that schools are expected to appoint one member of staff to take responsibility for the issue. All the work seems to be paying off. Teenage pregnancies in Bristol have shown a steep decline, with the rate now 17.2/1000, lower than the England average and 66% below the rate in 1998.

Cllr Asher Craig, Deputy Mayor with responsibility for Public Health said: “In recent years we have seen a significant fall in numbers of teenage pregnancies within the city. Our teams have been working with organisations across the city to get to this great result and I hope we will be able to continue to improve this in the years to come.”

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North Tyneside Council: creating a hub and spoke network of youth-friendly services

North Tyneside has seen a significant reduction in the teenage pregnancy rate of 74% since 1998. At the heart of North Tyneside Council’s success has been its partnership working which has allowed it to make great strides in creating youth-friendly services.

There is an integrated sexual health service – One to One – delivered by the local NHS through a ‘hub and spoke’ model. The hub is the centrally-located clinic, which has been given the ‘You’re Welcome’ accreditation for being young person-friendly. There is also a network of drop-in clinics that offer access to sexual health advice, including contraception, from trained staff. These are based in a variety of settings, including alongside health services and in community venues where need is greatest. The drop-in clinics run across the borough with some running into the early evening, while the hub is open until 7.30pm Monday to Friday and during part of the day on Saturdays.

Operational Service Manager for Integrated Sexual Health Services, Anne Tierney says: “The important thing is to be prepared to be flexible and monitor how services are being delivered. We are constantly asking whether we are providing services in the right place, at the right time.”

The drop-in service has also been accompanied by more dedicated support for the most vulnerable teenagers and those who become young parents. A range of training courses is available to all health and non-health staff. These include everything from an introduction to sexual health to C-Card training for receptionists and pharmacy counter assistants. As part of that, dedicated training has been provided to staff working with the most vulnerable children such as those in youth offending, drug and alcohol and young people’s care so they are aware how to help young people access services.

There is also a young parent midwife who works with all parents under the age of 20, offering a wide range of additional support including discussing antenatal contraception as early as possible in pregnancy and, in most cases, agree a method before birth with the aim of preventing second unplanned pregnancies.

To ensure everyone has access to accurate sexual and reproductive health information and details of local services, a sexual health website and app have been developed for Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust which are widely publicised. Ms Tierney says: “Our aim has been to make sure young people feel comfortable accessing our services. But you can only do that through partnership working. We have worked closely with the voluntary sector, with schools and health.”

Wendy Burke, North Tyneside’s Director of Public Health, says making sure such health services are accessible has been a key part of the success. But she says it is just one part of the wider strategy on teenage pregnancy, citing good leadership and data collection, having committed staff, promoting long-acting reversible contraception and providing high quality sex and relationships education. “Reducing teenage conceptions in the borough is multi-faceted and complex,” she adds.

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Hull City Council: targeting help at the most at risk

When Hull first started its teenage pregnancy work progress was a little slow. Conception rates were coming down, but not as fast or consistently as the city’s Teenage Pregnancy Partnership would have liked. So in 2004 a review, Mind the Gap, was carried out. The findings led to a re-think about how the whole issue was tackled with a much greater emphasis placed on targeted intervention.

Gail Teasdale, integrated services manager for children and young people's health, says: “We realised it was too clinically focused. We were not reaching those young people we needed to – the ones who were becoming teenage mothers and fathers.”

This led the Partnership to set up several new projects. Cornerhouse, a local sexual health charity was funded to run a drop-in clinic in the city centre. It is open six days a week with late opening from Monday to Friday and provides advice, support and information about sex and relationships as well as condoms, chlamydia testing and pregnancy testing. Contraception is also available as is testing for some other sexually transmitted infections. A nurse holds a clinic there twice a week to provide access to more clinical services, such as the contraceptive implant. “It is very popular,” says Ms Teasdale. “Teenagers see it as a safe and non-threatening environment in which to come for advice. It’s quite relaxed – there is even a PlayStation there. The service talks to young people about having positive, happy relationships as well as supporting them to deal with other issues, for example peer pressure, sexting and the risk of CSE. You cant just talk about STIs and teenage pregnancy in isolation. Getting that atmosphere right is essential because our research showed that teenagers were almost more afraid of the sexual health services than they were of becoming pregnant.”

Laura, aged 17, is typical of the young people who use the service. “I come to the drop-in for condoms and my appointment with the nurse for my depo, but I also have a cup of tea and a chat and usually sort out other stuff too.”

As part of the drop-in service a boy’s and young men’s worker has been employed to ensure they are engaged – and the post has had such an impact that 51 per cent of the 5,500 visits a year made to the drop-in centre are now by males. Young men can also be supported in other venues around the city. Changes have also been made to the way RSE is delivered with the Cornerhouse peer education project training fellow teenagers to go into schools to talk to their peers.

But getting out and about has also formed an important part of the work in recent years. This is done via street-based outreach work with workers going out to talk to young people in parks, on the streets and other places they gather. These projects have been combined with greater training for the non-clinical workforce, such as teachers, youth workers and voluntary sector staff who work closely with children. Ms Teasdale says: “Often a young person, when they want to talk, will find someone to trust. It may not always be the person we plan it to be – the school nurses or clinic staff – so we have tried to make sure that people who work with children are comfortable about talking about these issues and know where to refer them.” The figures for 2016 show an under-18 conception rate of 30.6 - a fall of 64 percent from the 1998 baseline. The number of conceptions to younger teenagers is now low with 16 per cent of under-18 conceptions occurring in under-16s year olds compared with 20 per cent in 2010.

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Cornwall Council: a multi-agency whole system approach.
In tackling teenage pregnancy, Cornwall Council has taken a whole system holistic approach. Whether it is the way relationships and sex education is delivered to how parents, young people and the children’s workforce are supported, the local authority has ensured no stone has been left unturned as it has driven down the under 18 conception rate by 60 percent since 1998.

At its heart is strong leadership and accountability. There is a Sexual Health Commissioning Board of senior local leaders, which oversees a Sexual Health Partnership Group, composed of front-line representatives and strategic leads from all the main partners. Together they monitor local data, take charge of evaluating projects, carry out consultations with young people and their families and ensure clear approaches to communication are taken.

Sexual health charity Brook offers relationships and sexual health education to young people in all Cornwall’s secondary schools and offers bespoke support to those who need it, while CLEAR, a local charity, offers a six-week intensive healthy relationship programme. Brook also runs the young people’s sexual health clinics across Cornwall so is able to refer young people from the school sessions to the nearest clinics Brook clinics for young people to be able to access services.

Cornwall has also developed a dedicated film and interactive lesson toolkit for colleges and sixth forms. The video combines myth-busting with information about how to access local services. To complement this are a range of ‘youth friendly’ services from the Savvy information website with linked Facebook page and Twitter feed to the C-card scheme, which is available in over 200 places across the Cornwall area.

Cornwall has also made working with the local care sector a priority because children who have experienced care are 2.5 times more likely to become teenage parents and are least likely to have received both formal and informal RSE due to both disrupted education and pre-care experiences. Cornwall has done this by developing a bespoke version of the Family Planning Association Speakeasy training programme for foster carers in partnership with the local designated nurse for children in care. It has proved so successful that it is now accepted as a mandatory part of the training programme. Training around healthy sexual development using the Brook Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool has also been provided to members of the children’s workforce, including teachers, care workers and youth workers. There is a core three-hour session which more than 6,000 staff have completed since 2014. More advanced support is then available for those who want it.

The final piece of the jigsaw is the support provided to those who do become teenage parents. The Wild project provides a wide range of support to teenage mothers, including help with finances and housing as well as running parenting skills and healthy lifestyle workshops, while Brook deliver a project aimed at young fathers. Also a two-day per week education course – Young Mums Will Achieve has been set up with the help of Cornwall College and local childcare provider Fit n Fun Kids to help get teenage mothers back into education.

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