

Guidance on accommodation and support for lone teenage parents and their children



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Joint Ministerial Foreword by Ministers for Local Government and Children, Young People and Families

Supporting lone teenage parents to live independently is vital to their social inclusion, educational achievement and career prospects. It is clear to us that young mothers, who cannot live with their own parents or partners, should be accommodated in housing with support and not in isolated accommodation on their own without any support.

We are pleased to endorse this guidance, to which Housing teams, Supporting People teams, Local Teenage Pregnancy Co-ordinators and supported housing providers for teenage parents have contributed examples good practice on issues such as mediation and the allocation of housing to teenage parents. It outlines some of the gaps and difficulties in the provision of support for this client group, and why it is essential that they are placed in good quality accommodation with support. This will help them to achieve better outcomes in terms of their parenting, re-engagement with learning, their own and their babies' health and supporting them into an independent tenancy.

We have already done a lot to support teenage parents:

- the government funded 1,500 units of accommodation;
- we have provided essential support in providing teenage parents with a stable home through the Supporting People programme;
- we have carried out research into the most suitable design of supported accommodation for lone teenage parents; and
- we have ensured that they can take up learning through the Care to Learn scheme of childcare support, which we have recently extended to 19 year olds.

We are now putting the focus on housing and support providers to take this agenda forward.

With this in mind, we commend this guidance to you as a useful tool to help practitioners make the best use of resources to cater for the needs of lone teenage parents. We thank everyone who has been involved in pulling it together.

Phil Woolas, MP

Beverley Hughes, MP

Introduction

This guidance is primarily aimed at commissioners of housing and support services for teenage parents, including Directors of Children's Services, housing teams, Supporting People teams and the Housing Corporation. It sets out the reasons and rationale behind the Government's policy on the provision of housing and support for lone teenage parents, and explains the importance of providing them with appropriate housing and support. It identifies best practice in the provision of services to young parents, and the key stakeholders involved in making it happen such as Supporting People teams, those providing Connexions services and health workers. The guidance provides examples of promising practice from Local Authorities across England. It responds to the need identified in the Audit Commission report on the Supporting People programme (2005)¹, to help Local Commissioners understand the needs of different client groups on which they may not have specific expertise.

This Guidance re-emphasises messages given in the earlier Guidelines for Good Practice in Supported Accommodation for Young Parents produced in 2001 (DTLR and Teenage Pregnancy Unit, 2001)². However, importantly, it adds significantly to the earlier guidance by drawing out key points from

subsequent research and trial projects on supported housing for lone teenage parents and their wider needs. It outlines the gaps and difficulties in the provision of support and accommodation for this client group, and focuses on particular issues which have been identified by this research, including:

- lone young parents with very high needs;
- assessing unmet housing need among lone young mothers;
- the role of mediation to enable young women to remain with or return to their families where this is possible, safe and desirable;
- training for housing support workers;
- the need to plan move-on accommodation and avoid 'bottlenecks' in supported housing accommodation;
- the important role of floating support and suggested standards for such support (in Annex A) both as an alternative to on-site supported housing and as part of a phased transition to independent living;
- the importance of considering the needs of young fathers in providing accommodation with support.

This Guidance expands on previous guidance, by discussing the holistic needs of lone young parents as well as their housing needs.

The term 'lone young parent' is used in this Guidance. Although we recognise that most on-site supported housing is for mothers only, it is vital that work continues locally to engage with and involve young fathers to strengthen families and ensure the best possible outcomes for the young parents and the children.

Young mothers who are not yet 16, and who cannot live with their parents or carers, will normally be accommodated under arrangements for looked after children, generally in foster care.

Section 1 sets out the national policy context for this work, including previous Guidance on this issue, the National Teenage Pregnancy Strategy, the Supporting People programme and more recent policy changes such as Every Child Matters and Youth Matters reforms and Local Area Agreements. It also looks at the progress made towards meeting the housing support needs of lone teenage parents.

Section 2 highlights the findings of research carried out since the publication of the 2001 *Guidelines for Good Practice in Supported Accommodation for Young Parents*². For example, it highlights findings of new research commissioned by ODPM and undertaken by the University of Bristol on six Supported Housing projects for teenage parents³ and the national evaluation of the Sure Start Plus pilot project⁴, which emphasised the high level of housing need of lone teenage mothers; and demonstrated that these accommodation issues need to be dealt with first before action can be taken on re-engaging young mothers with education and training.

This Section outlines the reasons for providing lone teenage mothers under 18 and their children, who cannot live with their parents or partners, with accommodation with support. It explains why independent tenancies without any support are not, in the vast majority of cases, appropriate for this group. It identifies some of the problems faced by young parents and their children, looks at what approaches might be taken to deal with the often complex needs of lone teenage parents, and provides examples of promising local practice. It shows how different Authorities and housing providers have provided support, whether in purpose built or refurbished semi-supervised housing for teenage parents with on-site facilities or through floating support. It covers issues such as mediation with families, training for housing support workers, as well as suggested standards for floating support, and emphasises the importance of more engagement by and with other agencies to help young people, such as health services and those providing Connexions services. It also deals with planned access to move-on accommodation or floating support.

Much of this housing related support will currently be provided through Supporting People funds but other services like Connexions (or those providing Connexions services) and Sure Start Children's Centres will be involved. Local Commissioners will need to consider and draw on a range of funding sources, including mainstream funding, as they consider new or enhanced services for teenage parents.



Section One

National policy context

1. The Teenage Pregnancy Strategy and its housing dimension

The provision of accommodation with support for lone parents is a key part of the Government's Teenage Pregnancy Strategy.

The Teenage Pregnancy Strategy is a multi-faceted cross government strategy, originally developed by the Social Exclusion Unit⁵, drawing on a strong international evidence base. The goals of the Strategy are:

- a reduction target of halving the under 18 conception rate by 2010 (using 1998 as the baseline year). This is a Public Service Agreement (PSA) shared by the Department for Education and Skills and the Department of Health;
- a social exclusion target of increasing to 60% the level of participation of mothers aged 16-19 in education, training or employment by 2010 to reduce their long term exclusion; and

- a housing target: that all lone teenage mothers aged 16 and 17, who cannot live with their parents or partners, should be provided with suitable accommodation with support.⁵

Every top tier local authority has a local ten year Teenage Pregnancy Strategy in place which has been developed jointly with the Local Authority, health organisations and other relevant partners. Each area has a Teenage Pregnancy Coordinator, or equivalent lead, working with a Partnership Board, which should include senior representatives from Supporting People and the Housing Authority(ies).

Housing Authorities will want to work with local Teenage Pregnancy Co-ordinators and Partnership Boards on meeting the housing needs of teenage mothers and many are already doing so.

2. Existing Government Guidance

The *Code of Guidance for Local Housing Authorities on the Allocation of Accommodation*⁶, pages 26 and 29 (2002) advises housing authorities to work with other local partners to ensure the availability of suitable supported housing provision for young parents and their children. Accommodation should be suitable

for babies and young children and support may be provided either through an on-site project, or through floating support, based on a consideration of the needs and views of individual young parents. Further guidance is set out in *Good Practice in Supported Housing for Young Mothers*⁷ (Housing Research Summary no. 171, ODPM 2002) and in the *Guidelines for Good Practice*² (DTLR and Teenage Pregnancy Unit, 2001).

3. Supporting People

Supporting People (SP) provides housing-related support services to vulnerable people, including teenage parents, to ensure that they receive the support they need to live independently in their home. This help can take a variety of forms including:

- the development of life skills, such as understanding tenancy agreements, cooking and budgeting;
- support in accessing services and benefits; and
- support in accessing training and employment.

It should be noted that while the ODPM takes the lead on the overall policy for SP, it is top tier authorities (County Councils, Unitaries and Metropolitan Boroughs) who make decisions on the allocation of money for the provision of support to individuals.

Further information on SP can be obtained at www.spkweb.org.uk. Information on where services can be obtained is available at www.spdirectory.org.uk.

4. The Children Act 2004 and Change for Children Programme

The Children Act 2004⁸ provides the legislative framework for a whole system reform of universal and targeted support for children and young people. The Act places a statutory duty on all

Local Authorities and their partners to work together on local needs assessment, joint planning and commissioning to meet the five 'Every Child Matters' (ECM) outcomes⁹ set out in the *Children Act (2004)*. These are: being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution, and achieving economic well-being. Youth Matters¹⁰ and Youth Matters: Next Steps¹¹ apply the principles of Every Child Matters to young people, including in the area of reforming targeted support.

From April 2006, the local Teenage Pregnancy Strategy, as part of a national PSA, is expected to be an integral part of a Local Authority's Children and Young People's Plan. This should include how the housing needs of lone teenage parents are going to be met. The ODPM also proposed in their consultation strategy for Supporting People 'Creating Sustainable Communities: Supporting Independence'¹², that the idea of housing-related support for teenage parents, and other young people covered by Children's Trust arrangements, should be actively considered.

Children and Young People's Plans may include the following on supported housing for lone teenage parents:

- annual needs assessments are undertaken to identify numbers of under 18 lone parents who might need accommodation with support;
- the provision of accommodation with support is included in the local Supporting People Strategy, the Housing Strategy and the Homelessness Strategy. Where there is clear evidence of the supported housing target not being met, plans should specifically detail steps and a timetable to meet the target;

- there is a teenage pregnancy lead on the Supporting People team (who sits on the Teenage Pregnancy Partnership Board) and, in two tier authorities, a representative from the Supporting People Team and one of the District level housing authorities on the Teenage Pregnancy Partnership Board;
- arrangements are in place to support teenage parents in the transition to independent living. A phased transition to independent living for 16 and 17 year olds supported by Housing Authorities/Supporting People helps to achieve the wider objectives of reducing the isolation of these young women. It enables them to acquire parenting skills, involves them in learning, helps them contribute to their communities and reduces the likelihood of long-term benefit dependence and unwanted pregnancies. It also contributes to reducing teenage pregnancy and crime in the next generation.
- the support needs of groups of particularly vulnerable young parents such as care leavers, those released from custody, young asylum seekers and refugees are addressed.

Practitioners working with lone under 18 parents in supported accommodation have the skills and knowledge to ensure young parents access specialist advice on education, training, and employment.

Training of practitioners working with young parents in supported accommodation is an important aspect of this guidance and an example of good practice is provided (see pages 23 and 24).

5. Local Area Agreements

Increasingly, the delivery of local Teenage Pregnancy Strategies will be through Local Area Agreements (LAAs), bringing greater flexibility in how Local Authorities (LAs) can pool funding resources to meet local needs. In the context of the Supporting People programme, LAAs provide a potential route towards integrating services. The approach of testing closer alignment of Supporting People funding, including for client groups such as young parents, is already going ahead in 5 Authorities.

6. Neighbourhood Renewal

50% of teenage conceptions are concentrated in the 20% of most deprived wards. Regional Housing Boards, Supporting People teams and other local partners should be aware of the likelihood of higher conception rates in deprived areas and should take this into account in planning their housing and support services. Many New Deal for Communities (NDCs) have included reducing teenage conceptions and also supporting teenage parents as an objective in their programmes. Further information and case study information is available through the NDC evaluation site: <http://ndcevaluation.adc.shu.ac.uk/ndcevaluation/Reports.asp>.

7. Progress towards meeting the housing needs of lone teenage parents

Evidence from the 5 year Supporting People strategies, produced by LAs in 2005, suggested that there has been good progress towards meeting the target, with new units accommodating teenage mothers opening up and an expansion of floating support in many areas. At the same time, it is clear from the Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix (HSSA) for 2004-2005, Section A, to the Housing Investment Programme 2005¹³ and reports from Teenage Pregnancy Partnership Boards, that

there is still some way to go in meeting this target nationally. At 1 April 2005, there were still around 940 lone teenage parents in housing without support. A full breakdown of HSSA data can be found at www.odpm.gov.uk/pub/922/HSSA2005SectionsAGExcel778Kb-id162922.xls¹³

Regional housing and teenage parent research in the East Midlands¹⁴ identified gaps and barriers in areas such as housing choice, availability and support. There were instances of young teenage mothers being given unsuitable provision with little or no floating support.

Similarly, the Supporting People strategies indicated that many areas (even some with quite high numbers of under 18 mothers), still do not have any on-site units for teenage mothers, and instead rely on floating support or sometimes referral arrangements with neighbouring authorities. LAs will want to consider whether there is an unmet need for such on-site support (or an expansion of existing provision) particularly in areas with high numbers of under 18 births. Using the figures in the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) report on Teenage Pregnancy⁶ as a basis for numbers not living at home, about 40% to 50% of mothers in the 16 and 17 year age group are likely to need housing.

These gaps in provision were reinforced by the national evaluation of the Sure Start Plus pilot which was published in May 2005⁴ covering 35 LAs with high rates of teenage conceptions. It showed how valuable the enhanced packages of support provided by Sure Start Plus were in helping to address immediate crises in the young women's lives, which were often housing related, especially just prior to the birth. This was particularly the case for those isolated from family or other support.

Good practice in relation to housing is given in 'Reaching out to Pregnant Teenagers and Teenage Parents: Innovative Practice from Sure Start Plus pilot programmes'¹⁵ published as part of the national evaluation.

Section Two

Assessing and meeting the need for housing support

This Section identifies some key issues in assessing teenage parents' need for housing support, drawing on reports and research done on the issue since the publication of the 2001 Guidelines for Good Practice. In parallel it provides examples of promising practice in each of the key areas, to inform Local Authorities' response to these issues. They will provide a guide to commissioners and others involved in finding accommodation and support for 16 and 17 year old teenage parents. It covers the issues of:

- Effective supported housing for those with high support needs
- Assessing need and auditing provision
- Preventing homelessness
- Mediation
- Support for those with lower level needs
- Effective floating support
- Wrap around/seamless services
- Need for move on accommodation
- Joint protocols
- Links to the private rented sector
- Working with fathers
- Training needs of housing support workers

- The contribution of Teenage Pregnancy Co-ordinators
- Broader dimensions of support – arts and peer work

Providing accommodation with support for 16 and 17 year old lone parents is important for this very vulnerable group at risk of social isolation. It increases the likelihood of them making a successful transition to an independent tenancy and reduces the risk of subsequent homelessness. The Government's objective is that all 16 and 17 year-old lone parents who cannot live with their parents or partner and who require social housing should be offered semi-independent accommodation with support. Housing authorities should work with social services, Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), the local Teenage Pregnancy Co-ordinator and relevant voluntary organisations in their Authority to ensure that the Government's objective is met. The allocation of appropriate housing and support should be based on consideration of the young person's housing and support needs, their individual circumstances and their views and preferences. Young parents under the age of 16 must always be referred to children's services so that their social care needs may be assessed.

In taking forward arrangements for assessing need and providing support to teenage parents, local partners will need to make sure they take full account of the developments in relation to common assessment, information sharing and the provision of lead professionals, as part of the Every Child Matters and Youth Matters reforms.

How Teenage Pregnancy Co-ordinators can contribute to commissioning of Supporting People Accommodation and Services

The local Teenage Pregnancy Co-ordinator (TPC) has information about high conception rate areas down to District and ward level. Tom Jeffery, Director-General of CYPFD in DfES wrote to LA Chief Executives about such hotspot wards on 24 February 2005. The TPCs have local intelligence on the need for housing among under 18 parents (including levels of actual need and possible unmet need) and Local Commissioners for Supporting People services may want to discuss this with them when planning provision of both on-site supported accommodation and floating support for teenage parents.

Such a need may be evident in deprived urban authorities; for example, in London and the larger conurbations with particularly high conception rates (figures on the Teenage Pregnancy website www.dfes.gov.uk/teenagepregnancy); however, it may also exist in seaside towns with high levels of young transient populations as the 'Living on the Edge' report¹⁶ for the Teenage Pregnancy Unit identified. There are hotspot wards in almost all LA areas, including such wards in rural areas and in isolated former industrial and coalfield areas with high but localised levels of deprivation.

Effective Supported Housing for young mothers with high support needs

The University of Bristol research for ODPM³ identified that it is often difficult for supported housing in their locality to meet the needs of young mothers with high support needs, particularly if there is no on-site support with 24 hour cover. Young parents tended not to be accepted at interview stage or were evicted once resident because of behaviour issues. The research also showed, from its second round of interviews, that with hindsight some mothers recognised that they did have high needs when their babies were born – but they had not accepted these at the time; possibly because they felt under pressure at the time of the birth to demonstrate to services that they were good or 'good enough' mothers.

The provision of effective supported housing for teenage parents starts from the premise that many of them will have high support needs that should be addressed in a holistic way, building on their strengths and motivation to do the best for themselves and their babies.

These needs cannot always be met by the supported housing for teenage mothers on offer in their locality. Many Supported Housing schemes feel they do not have the expertise or resources to deal with young mothers with very high level needs, for example, young women on release from custody, with substance misuse, mental health or behavioural problems, and want at the same time to protect existing residents from violence or the threat of it and provide a calm living environment. However, Housing Authorities need to try to find ways of providing accommodation for this group of teenage parents for whom either 24 hour support provision or intensive floating support may be necessary and for which cross-Authority provision may be need to be considered.

The University of Bristol report³ made clear that *“It is vital to be clear from the outset regarding the aims and objectives of the scheme and how these translate into a model of support that builds from a positive empowering philosophy”*.

Such a philosophy is important when developing an effective supported housing scheme for teenage parents.

Lindsey Court – 8 self contained properties for young vulnerable parents – Suffolk.

Babergh District Council in Suffolk have developed a scheme with Orbit Housing Association and Colchester Quaker Housing Association, consisting of 8 self-contained properties grouped around a communal courtyard with an adjoining block comprising a communal lounge/training room, kitchen, laundry and office. The general philosophy of the scheme is to empower the young parents and give them the confidence and life skills to move on.

The scheme is situated within an exclusive boundary with a private entrance, car parking facilities for visitors and an outdoor play area. The scheme provides a safe housing environment with dedicated staff, support, and training available on-site, which allows young parents to develop the skills to care for their babies and move on to successfully take up a secure council tenancy or other independent accommodation. The project also works closely with Suffolk Connexions and supports the parents to access appropriate educational opportunities.

The scheme is available for young vulnerable parents of either sex and couples are encouraged to be together as a family unit. Typically, however, the scheme accommodates young, single mothers facing homelessness who are unprepared for parenthood or running a home. The project is overseen by a multi agency Joint Advisory Group that includes Babergh District Council, Suffolk Social Care Services, Colchester Quaker Housing Association and tenant representatives.

Contact: Tim Cottrell, Principal Housing Support Officer, Babergh District Council. Cheryle Pepper, Project Manager

Tel. TC – 01473 825762 CP – 01787 881904

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cheryle.pepper@cqha.org

Dock Street and Whitehead Street Young Person’s Schemes – South Tyneside.

The Dock Street and the Whitehead Street Young Persons schemes in South Shields have been developed by the Places for People group in partnership with South Tyneside Council and provide an example of supported housing with an empowering philosophy.

Dock St is a development of ten self-contained units of furnished accommodation and Whitehead St consists of eight units. The Places for People Group has created a warm, safe and attractive environment, designed specifically with the needs of the young people in mind. The schemes are located in separate buildings, each having office space and communal training areas for the young people. Both projects are staffed on a twenty-four hour basis, having scheme staff available to offer support and guidance and night porters offering an out-of-hours concierge service.

The young people stay at the schemes as an interim measure, developing independent living skills, before moving on to appropriate accommodation within the community. The Dock Street scheme is a mixed scheme accessible to single young people aged 16-25 including teenage parents and Whitehead St is available for pregnant young women and single parents. There is also a unit for couples that has recently opened.

Contact: Sue Southern, Sure Start Plus Co-ordinator, South Tyneside

Telephone: 0191 283 1159

Email: Sue.Southern@stpct.nhs.uk

Grace Court & Lewis Crescent – 2 Supported Housing Schemes for young parents – Darlington and Sunderland.

The Tees Valley Housing Group Teenage Parent Support Programme won the 2005 iBbiz National Housing Federation Award for some of their schemes in the North East of England.

Grace Court in Darlington provides 6 two bedroom fully furnished flats and Lewis Crescent in Sunderland provides 8 two bedroom fully furnished flats, all having access to a separate communal lounge, laundry and kitchen. This is temporary supported housing for single parents aged 16-25 to enable them to develop life skills to eventually live more independently in the community.

Project staff shifts provide 24 hour overnight and weekend cover as well as during the week. The scheme also benefits from CCTV.

The aim of the scheme is to provide a safe environment for young parents to bring up their children in a place where they can make informed decisions about their future, so they can develop their full potential.

The key worker will complete a Support Agreement with the young parent, and this is reviewed regularly. Key working focuses on different aspects of support to enable the young parent to live independently and equip them with the skills to maintain their future tenancy. This includes household management, health, parenting skills, education/training/work, living within the law and behaving responsibly, child protection issues, move-on aspirations, maintaining family and social networks.

When the time is right, in consultation with the young parent, the key worker will implement the planned move. Floating support will then liaise with housing providers and support the resident in their new tenancy for an average of one year.

Contact: Sharon Brown: 31 Lewis Crescent, Hendon, Sunderland, SR2 8NQ

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Contact: Zoe Payn: 15 Grace Court, Darlington DL3 6GA

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Assessing need and auditing provision

The South West Region Public Health Observatory report *Teenage Parents and Housing Need: a review of need and availability in the South West*¹⁷ focused on teenagers in housing need or at risk of homelessness who do not approach housing authorities for help. The TPU and ODPM recommend that LAs as part of their Homelessness and Supporting People Strategies and review processes for them, ensure that referral arrangements are robust enough to identify such cases. This could take place through, for example, home visits of community midwives and health visitors or contacts with Connexions or those providing Connexions services and other Youth Support Workers. It is clearly important for professionals such as those providing Connexions services and others working with teenage mothers to work closely with housing authorities to ensure that LAs address the needs of teenage parents in their homelessness strategies in line with *'Sustainable Communities: settled homes; changing lives – a strategy for tackling homelessness'*.¹⁸

Resources to support the audit of need

Three useful resources that can be used to support the auditing of need of provision come from the South West Region, the city of Leicester and Hampshire.

1. The South West Region Public Health Observatory (PHO) Report

The South West Public Health Observatory report on *Teenage Parents and Housing Need: a review of need and availability in the South West*¹⁷ has a comprehensive audit tool that can be adapted to local situations.

2. Leicester City's Joint Working Partnership Research

Research was undertaken by Response Consulting for the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy in Leicester¹⁹. It developed out of a strong partnership in Leicester which has been shown to provide an effective way of working to support young parents.

A working group was formed in January 2004 comprising representatives from the Supporting People Team, local authority Leaving Care and Housing Planning Teams, supported accommodation and floating support providers and the Teenage Pregnancy Co-ordinator for the City. This working group oversaw a detailed piece of research into the housing related support needs of teenage parents in Leicester and formed a steering group for the researchers. The research involved an audit of need and provision in the City and identified gaps, which was strongly reflected in the 5 Year Supporting People Strategy for the City.

The group, officially the teenage parent housing advisory group, will take forward the actions from the research and the Supporting People Strategy. It is involved in informing the joint commissioning activities of the Supporting People Programme following a successful bid for monies from ODPM to take forward joint commissioning of services for young people in Leicester.

Contact: Sally Vallance – Policy and Service Development Officer, City of Leicester Supporting People Team

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3. Hampshire's Best Practice in Housing Teenage Parents' Guide

Hampshire has also developed a valuable guide²⁰ that can be used by housing authorities to self-evaluate their services. Hampshire's best practice guide to housing teenage parents includes an audit tool and summarises a range of practical ways to improve housing and support for teenage parents. Completion of the audit can stimulate discussion on gaps and new approaches and act as a tool for sharing good practice between authorities. The guide was developed by a working group of the Hampshire Teenage Pregnancy Strategic Partnership Board.

Copies are available from
teenagepregnancy@hants.gov.uk

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Preventing homelessness

Parents, relatives or friends who say they are not able or willing to provide accommodation is the highest cause of homelessness. In some cases, teenage pregnancy may be a contributory factor. Preventative approaches have been particularly positive in addressing this driver of homelessness. The use of home visits and the availability of mediation services can help to reconcile families and friends and either prevent homelessness from occurring or allow more time for a planned move.

Mediation

Mediation can provide a valuable way of supporting young parents and their family members and preventing homelessness.

RE-CONNECT – Mediation Service – Swindon

Swindon Borough Council have developed Re-Connect, a mediation service for young people, including young parents, who are becoming or have become estranged from their families and fear they may become homeless.

Mediation is a way of resolving conflict and reaching agreement between young people and their parents or carers.

Re-Connect aims to:

- prevent or delay homelessness;
- improve the relationship between young people and their families; and
- is for young people 13-25 years old in the Swindon area including young runaways under 16;
- is a partnership of Swindon Borough Council Housing Department and Family Mediation; and
- is free to users, confidential and voluntary.

Contact: Kate Skelton, Re-Connect Co-ordinator

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Support for those with lower needs – Minimum Standards for Floating Support

A few young women cope reasonably well with motherhood and bringing up a child independently in difficult circumstances; these women generally have close family support networks, even if they cannot live with their families, or they have good levels of support from partners. Despite such support, it is anticipated that in most cases they will need some level of extra support from housing services in the form of floating support.

In rural areas, being near family support networks may outweigh the advantages of being in on-site

supervised accommodation and floating support may be a particularly appropriate option. In large authorities with relatively low teenage conception rates, it may not be good practice to accommodate all lone teenage mothers in one unit in the main centre of population as some young mothers would be detached and isolated from their support networks without the means to travel to them. For this group, even if they have quite high support needs, floating support, again, is an option. However, the level of floating support would need to be intensive particularly in the first months after the birth. Each case should be assessed on an individual basis.

In order to maintain contact with partners, floating support may be a better option especially where the on-site options are restrictive in terms of access for the father.

Effective Floating Support

Floating support can be defined as an all-encompassing term for services using support workers who travel to the young parent's accommodation in order to provide support. The service is flexible both in terms of the frequency of visits and the intensity of the support offered as the young parent's needs dictate. Floating support can and should be offered in any setting – whether a private tenancy, social tenancy, owner-occupied property or temporary accommodation. It can also be offered to the young mother in the home she shares with her parents or carers.

The support is linked to enabling users to maintain independence and is offered on a time-limited basis. The floating support worker will act as a 'broker' and the support 'floats off' when it is no longer needed by the user. The support can return if the user has a recurring need for support.

The University of Bristol research³ advises that it is *good practice to provide the option of floating support after young parents leave supported on-site housing.*

Providing the service from within the scheme on a time-limited basis makes good use of existing trusting relationships during the period of transition when young people may be particularly vulnerable. Tapering off the support in a planned way ensures that autonomy is enhanced and an abrupt withdrawal is avoided. For a few young parents, referral for continuing floating support may be necessary. The University of Bristol research also suggests that maintaining informal links after moving on, offers the possibility of the scheme being used as a valuable resource on an 'as-needed' basis by ex-residents.

Lead professionals and other key workers should ensure that move on is planned and support tapered off and not abruptly withdrawn. The following points give some ideas of what key workers can do to support young parents in the transition to more independent living:

- Keep young parents informed about the process and timescale of the move – clearly discussing expectations and potential outcomes.
- Provide assistance to claim relevant benefits, buy items for example through the Sure Start Maternity Grant (for those on Income Support) and plan for their new home, taking into consideration the needs of the child at this time of change.

- Explore relevant floating support services and make referrals where appropriate, acting as an advocate and 'broker' for the young parent.
- Plan a handover meeting prior to move on, with the young parent, the current and new worker. This meeting will be useful for the floating support worker to make an initial assessment of the young parent's needs.
- Agree with the young parent prior to this meeting what they want to discuss and the support they will require from the floating support worker.
- Aim to facilitate the development of the new relationship and enhance communication between agencies, thus increasing the standard of support being offered.
- Arrange an ending session with the young parent and child in their new home. At this meeting ensure that the client has all the relevant information they need and are linked in to the appropriate support services for themselves and their child.

The aim is that all local authority accommodation – either temporary or permanent tenancies – will have floating support services attached for vulnerable groups who require it. At the very least there should be generic provision but in some areas there is specialist provision for Teenage Parents.

In considering floating support, commissioners may find it helpful to consider suggested guidelines at Annex A, which draw on those developed by SITRA.

Stop over Floating Support – Impact Initiatives – Brighton and Hove

Stopover Outreach Services is part of a charitable organisation in the City of Brighton and Hove and delivers a specialist floating support service to teenage parents living in temporary accommodation and permanent tenancies. Stopover has delivered supported

housing, floating support and mentoring services to young women over the last fifteen years and has a high level of expertise. The Outreach Team typically work with 6-8 young women intensively and 35-40 young women less intensively.

The floating support service works closely with named leads within the Housing Department and all pregnant young women or teenage parents are referred through an agreed process. The workers delivering the service have all completed training on benefits, are aware of services and resources available to teenage parents and work closely with other teenage pregnancy professionals. The Teenage Pregnancy Personal Adviser service is also housed within the Outreach team, which strengthens the overall service that is delivered to Teenage Parents in Brighton and Hove.

The floating support package covers all aspects of practical and emotional needs with the ultimate aim of assisting teenage parents to access appropriate services and enable them to acquire the skills necessary to both maintain their tenancies and empower them in their role as parents. The support is user led and focuses on an agreed action plan which identifies achievable outcomes and is regularly reviewed. The young women are encouraged to engage in education, training and employment and are given the opportunities to link into learning and training providers.

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Wrap Around/Seamless Services

Northamptonshire provides a good example of a very effective way of supporting young parents and parents to be by offering them a seamless service.

Teenage Parents Support Team – Northamptonshire

Northamptonshire has a teenage parents support team of 10 staff that provides a full flexible countywide service to address the needs (e.g. parenting, welfare rights/homelessness) of young parents and parents to be. They work within a keyworker system – which has a primary link role to access services for the young person and so enhances the services their team offers. The key worker works in partnership with the young people and their families and also works with social work teams to provide support to young parents in need up to the age of 23, including care leavers. Their current floating support caseload involves 87 young parents – within which there are 6 fathers absent from their child and 6 fathers with child; one male is the sole carer for his child, the other fathers live with the mothers.

The team provides intensive, flexible and creative support and aims to prepare young parents with basic skills in parenting, budgeting, domestic and lifeskills whilst enabling them to reach their full potential in education, training and employment.

The supported accommodation service consists of 8 units; 4 in the east of the county and 4 in the west, which work in partnership with the District Council housing teams. Young parents are assisted in securing appropriate secure tenancies after their period of residence and, if appropriate, the support is attached to tenancies. The team provides assistance with move on at the appropriate time. Their caseload has had no instances of second pregnancies during their 5 years developing the service and this is believed to be as a result of the very proactive advice and support that the team gives to the young parents about sexual health, contraception and counselling to prevent further pregnancies.

The team has a partnership arrangement with a local hospital to support the young people to access termination services if wanted and post termination

support is also given. The team is also working with young looked after men in residential and foster care and those leaving care around issues regarding sexual health and parenting.

All staff from the project receive induction and further training, undertaking an NVQ 3 in working with children and young people, unless they are already qualified to that level or above.

The project is funded through a number of different sources, including the Supporting People grant, Children and Families service, LPSA and the local Teenage Pregnancy Implementation Grant.

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Blackpool, as a unitary authority, provides a very good example of an authority that has an active agenda to support teenage parents in need of different levels of housing support. The examples below show their commitment to interagency working and their recognition for the need and availability of medium needs supported housing ('the Place').

Interagency Housing Referral Panel – Blackpool

The panel was set up to co-ordinate supported housing referrals for teenage parents to address levels of support according to individual need. The panel also monitors provision to meet the needs of teenage parent referrals; the overall outcome being the improvement of inclusion of teenage parents gaining employment, education and training opportunities.

The membership of the group incorporates the wide range of support services in Blackpool that are involved in supporting teenage parents.

Referrals are received and discussed at regular fortnightly meetings. There are three levels of support. These are:-

- 1.) **High Support (6 places):** In house 24hour support available from Stonham Housing;
- 2.) **Medium Support (13 places):** Full time workers, based on site, providing support 9am-5pm Monday-Friday which is available from the Stonham Housing and New Leaf schemes;
- 3.) **Low Support (30 places)** which is the home visiting support service available through the Floating Support schemes run by housing associations.

Negotiations are currently taking place to enhance the number of both high and low support places in line with different needs identified by service users.

Partners involved: Homeless Health Team, Specialist TP Midwives/Connexions advisers, health visitors, Supporting People, Sure Start TP support workers from all 3 Sure Starts in Blackpool, Housing Association support workers, Education Reintegration worker and TP project worker.

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'The Place'. Medium Support to pregnant teenagers/ teenage mothers and their babies – Blackpool

'The Place' provides 7 units of medium support to pregnant teenagers/teenage mothers and their babies. This support is provided in seven purpose built, self-contained flats via a fulltime support worker. Young women with medium support needs are identified and referred on to the scheme via a multi agency support panel.

The current funding stream for the flats is largely through housing benefit and supporting people monies. The young women are supported through pregnancy and birth and then supported into move on accommodation when their needs are reduced.

The Place officially opened in September 2003, but the project began in 2001 when funding was secured through the Housing Corporation. A steering group of partners led the development where the location, design, purpose and referral procedures were determined. A consultation event organised for young mothers at the early stages of design ensured that their views were considered in many aspects of the project, including exterior and interior design, safety, furniture and the name of the building. From the consultation event, two young mothers joined the steering group and continued to provide advice. Furniture packages for the flats were provided through Neighbourhood Renewal (NR) funding to ensure the young women were given the best start, and start up packages of household items were provided to the young women as they moved into the scheme. The support worker was appointed to the scheme earlier than the completion date of the flats to ensure strong referral and care protocols were established from the start. The support worker post was funded through NR monies until the flats became self-funding.

Partners involved: Teenage Pregnancy Co-ordinator, Blackpool Council Housing, North British Housing – New Leaf, Places for People, Mellors Architects, Supporting People and the Housing support panel.

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A need for move-on accommodation to avoid 'bottlenecks' In Supported Units

The University of Bristol research³ suggests there needs to be a pro-active attempt by all parties to provide a co-ordinated service to ensure smooth and timely transitions into independent tenancies. Without effective co-ordination and support there is a risk of young people becoming frustrated and alienated by remaining too long in on-site supported accommodation. Unfortunately, some Local Housing Authorities do not always have enough move-on accommodation available, when it is needed, which results in overlong stays and bottlenecks which in turn has a negative impact on young mothers to be and young parents that urgently need to come into supported accommodation.

In many Authorities the issue of bottlenecks (sometimes referred to as 'silting up') in Supported Units through a lack of move-on accommodation (and a need for a sudden move when accommodation does become available without much warning) is an issue. This was identified in some 5 Year Strategies. It appears to be most prevalent in areas of high housing need, where there is no directly owned housing stock and a reliance on Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) or private sector provision.

It is vital to integrate Supporting Housing provision with Regional Housing and Homelessness plans so that suitable move-on accommodation is identified as early as possible to enable a smooth and planned transition to it. Supported housing is by its very nature a transitional housing situation which is generally found to be most effective as an intervention for up to the first year of a baby's life. However, by the time the baby is one year old, and sometimes before that, many mothers are ready to leave supported units which are not always suitable in design and space terms (particularly shared facility type accommodation) for growing babies and toddlers.

If a young woman cannot move on to a tenancy when she is ready, it means that another young mother or young mother to be, possibly in acute need, cannot benefit from the supported housing facility and what it has to offer. There is evidence of some young women avoiding accommodation in supported housing units because they fear they may not be able to move on for up to two years and so prefer taking bed and breakfast or other temporary options as they think they may qualify for a housing tenancy more quickly.

To avoid the bottlenecks in supported housing schemes the local authority should provide move on opportunities to young parents who have successfully completed a programme of intensive housing related support. This then opens up places in the supported housing scheme for young parents in more need of the support. Close working links and open communication between the provider and the local authority also means that appropriate referrals are made to the scheme and adequate support packages are put in place to support clients moving on to independent tenancies.

An example from the Wirral shows how Supporting People funding can be utilised to provide a worker linked to a specific scheme to offer continuity of support, as suggested in the University of Bristol research.³

Provision of Support to Young Mums moving on from Supported Accommodation – Wirral

Supporting People funding is being utilised to support an Outreach Worker who is providing a service to young mums who move on from a supported housing scheme into general mainstream accommodation in the Wirral. Originally, the scheme was finding that young parents were returning to the supported accommodation and still having ties with it because they needed further support to help them sustain their tenancies and not feel isolated. The scheme has been up and running now

for over a year and is in high demand. Pipeline funding is being used to build a new residential mother and baby unit and the next part of the overall scheme is to look to develop move on accommodation that will be linked to the support provided at the main core unit.

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Referral Forum – Wolverhampton Young Families Single

Through the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy a group of agencies has formed a Forum for referrals to the two supported housing schemes in Wolverhampton, to floating support and move on accommodation from the fixed schemes. The Forum meets monthly to consider applications. It includes representatives from the two housing associations that manage the fixed schemes (Bromford and Nehemiah), the two Floating Support Workers (from Bromford and Heanton Housing Associations), Wolverhampton City Council (Housing Support), the Teenage Pregnancy Unit Support Team, the Teenage Pregnancy Co-ordinator and Touchstone Housing Association.

It is hoped that by having a central point for referrals young parents will be able to access the most appropriate accommodation and support. By considering individual applications for move-on accommodation at each meeting, moves can be planned and supported, thereby reducing the risk of failed tenancies. There should also be less of a 'bottleneck' in the fixed schemes and vacancies should be filled quickly.

The Forum also ensures that people are allocated according to priority need rather than whoever gets in first and this means that all of the agencies are able to answer the strategic needs of the local authority in a 'joined-up' approach to allocating referrals. It also means that instead of applying to 5 or 6 different

services, only one application/referral has to be made, making it much more efficient and easily accessible.

This is an innovative approach and to get a Forum and central system agreed between all of the providers is a huge achievement and a step forward for local partnership working.

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Teenage Pregnancy Outreach Referral Worker – Carlisle (Cumbria)

Impact Housing Association have created an Outreach Referral Worker post with funding from Supporting People, Carlisle PCT, Teenage Pregnancy Local Implementation Grant and Sure Start (Carlisle South).

The outreach worker operates a formal system of needs assessment, and reviews this continually with the client on a weekly or fortnightly basis relative to the need. This enables the clients to move onto independent living and empowers them to achieve their aspirations through a structured programme of action plans and clear targets and goals.

Support is provided through one to one contact, group work and working in partnership with health visitors, midwives, social services, Sure Start, Housing, Cumbria Connexions and the Benefits Agency. Support can include: independent living skills including budgeting and cooking; parenting skills; breastfeeding, smoking cessation, sexual health; empowerment and self esteem through confidence building; training and education; peer support and diversity issues.

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Another possibility to overcome the issue of bottlenecks in Supported Units, is to limit the time period spent in the on-site supervised accommodation with a planned transition to floating support in the community once the young mother no longer needs such intensive levels of support. Ideally, this would be in the tenancy she is going to occupy long-term, although this may not always be possible. The level of floating support provided can be tapered in response to need until the young mother has made a successful transition to independent living. It is also essential to ensure that young women are not penalised for accepting accommodation in on-site supported units in terms of qualifying for tenancies.

Joint Protocols to enable adequate move on accommodation

Developing joint protocols are another means of ensuring that there is a through flow of accommodation support preventing silting up of accommodation.

In order for move-on to more independent accommodation to be successful, it is important that supported housing providers and local authorities work closely together and develop joint protocols such as the one developed in Bassetlaw District, Nottinghamshire.

Supporting move on accommodation – Bassetlaw

In Bassetlaw, Nottinghamshire, a joint protocol has been put in place between the Local Housing Authority and the provider of the Teenage Parents accommodation with support scheme.

The scheme allows rehousing tenancies to be granted to Teenage Parents when they have successfully completed a programme of intensive housing related support in on-site supported housing. Joint working between the

partners ensures that any offer of accommodation is appropriate to the needs of the young parent(s) and their child. The agreement also requires floating support to continue for a minimum of three months, once the teenage parent has been rehoused, to ensure a successful outcome as an independent tenant. The Protocol ensures continued movement through the accommodation-based scheme – moving in a managed way from on-site supported accommodation to an independent tenancy with tapering off floating support.

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Increased links to the Private Rented Sector

Other areas which have found it a challenge to provide sufficient Local Authority Supported Housing Units have managed to increase the level of provision by linking into the private rented sector.

Provision of accommodation with support in the private sector – Bassetlaw

Bassetlaw, have developed the provision of supported accommodation in the private rented sector, which has increased the number of units available to the Support Provider for Teenage Parents.

One-off funding from Bassetlaw District Council has allowed for bonds or bond agreements to be issued to private landlords along with rent in advance. It has also facilitated the provision of essential items including white goods such as washing machines and cookers enabling vulnerable young parents to occupy with immediate effect.

The provision of floating support to these units offers an increased likelihood of tenancy sustainability and a successful outcome.

The young parent is eligible for priority rehousing, using the joint protocol between the LA and the Support Provider. This allows the bond and any white goods to remain in place for subsequent young parents.

This initiative enables accommodation to be utilised in the Private Sector, which would not normally be available to this client group, without the intervention of the Support Provider. It also gives access to additional suitable accommodation in locations outside of existing provision and has allowed for fathers/partners, who would otherwise be excluded, to be housed as part of the family unit.

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Working with Fathers

It is recognised that working with fathers is an essential part of supporting young teenage parents and one which is not often sufficiently prioritised. Policies by Supported Housing providers that are directed towards keeping the father at a distance do not encourage co-parenting and yet co-parenting is known to produce better outcomes for the child. It is recognised that some such relationships can, however, be unstable and therefore a mix of provision is proposed in response.

In relation to working with fathers, the University of Bristol research³ proposed that:

Projects need to be clear about their remit to work with fathers and partners and to develop explicit strategies to pursue this aim where a more inclusive approach to working with men is desired.

The physical layout of projects can either facilitate or impede the inclusion of men. Where communal space is integral to the design of the scheme, the presence of men can be perceived as a threat, particularly in the

evening. Self-contained flats with their own kitchen and bathroom are more likely to encourage men's participation in the care of their child and the development of shared parenting.

Working with Fathers at Rachel House – Banbury, Oxfordshire

A project in Banbury, Oxfordshire provides a good example of how supported housing providers can work with fathers alongside mothers in an effective and inclusive way.

Rachel House offers temporary supported housing for vulnerable single young mothers, aged between 16 – 24 years old, but also works informally with their partners if appropriate. Between 8am and 10.30pm (11.30pm by arrangement) partners are welcome at the Project; they may also stay overnight for up to three nights a week, following an interview/risk assessment with the management.

Staff are aware that young men often feel intimidated and unsure with professionals as the focus is usually on the mother as the baby's prime carer and so staff ensure they receive a friendly welcome and include them in communication, gradually building up an atmosphere of mutual trust.

Work with young fathers began when individual clients asked if their partners could be part of key working and support sessions. This led to one-to-one practical sessions with bathing the baby; help with feeding/weaning, establishing night time routines, etc. Project staff will also occasionally support young fathers to complete forms or look for work, education and training and give advice on finding accommodation. They can be signposted to the "job club" at the local Foyer.

A Saturday afternoon 'Dads Group' was trialled by a project worker with past experience of running a similar group but the young fathers at that time preferred to work individually with workers rather than in a group

and did not attend. Young fathers continued to be involved in key work, support and practical sessions and more recently baby massage.

Several fathers currently involved with the Project have shown an interest in group work and in response a local midwife, a male sexual health youth worker and a Connexions worker, are developing a multi agency resource to deliver a variety of group sessions, tailored to meet the fathers' requirements.

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Training needs of Housing Support Workers

The Leicester report¹⁸ identified the need for training for housing support workers to enable them to work more effectively with other support workers from Connexions and health agencies. Housing support workers often have a good working relationship with teenage parents and are in an excellent position to be able to encourage them to access service providers for appropriate education, training, health and sexual health services to support their future development.

In terms of education, having a child motivates many young mothers and fathers to re-engage with education, even if they were previously poor school attenders (around 40% of girls who become pregnant by 16 were already persistent non-attenders or truants prior to the pregnancy) and around 37% of them have no or few qualifications at the time of the birth. Housing support workers are in a strong position to capitalise on this desire to take positive action on re-engagement with learning and to put the young person in touch with relevant agencies. They should inform the young women and their partners of the support that is available for young parents, for example:

- The Care to Learn scheme of childcare support for teenage parents (including from April 2006, 19 year old teenage parents) enables them to return to education or work based learning (especially as Supported Housing schemes are not usually able to provide daytime childcare). In 2005-2006, £145 per week per child including associated transport costs was available.
- The Education Maintenance Allowance of up to £30 a week plus completion bonuses (which does not affect benefits).

Training Project Workers – Southend-on-Sea

Southend-on-Sea has a valuable training programme in place for their housing workers. There are 2 supported housing projects and 4 move-on flats for under 19s in Southend; the housing workers are offered training to support them in their work with the teenage parents.

The training programme is organised each year by the teenage pregnancy team. The training offered is based on the needs of the project workers and includes sessions from a range of partners, including: Midwifery, Health Visiting, Connexions and Health Promotion. Around 7 project workers attend each session which takes place in the lounge area of the supported housing accommodation.

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Areas may want to bring in an outside organisation to train their staff. For example, SITRA provides professional training for the housing needs of teenage parents.

SITRA – Training

SITRA (Specialist Information, Training and Resource Agency) is an umbrella organisation, operating

throughout England, committed to raising standards in the housing, care and support sector including work with teenage parents. It is perhaps best known as a leading training provider, offering a general programme or tailor made in-house courses for members and clients; SITRA also provide a range of seminars and conferences on supported housing related themes.

They have a SP Provider Helpline: sphelpline@sitra.org

To book training courses, download information on their services or ask their policy section questions visit their web site at: www.sitra.org.uk

National Children's Bureau (NCB) – Get set for health!

A useful resource has recently been produced by the National Children's Bureau (NCB) '*Get set for health! – A guide for promoting the health and well-being of young people in supported housing*'²¹ This gives advice to providers of supported housing and their key partners to build positive approaches to promote young people's health and wellbeing in supported housing, including for teenage parents.

Broader Support

Arts Project – Bolton

Bolton, in Greater Manchester, provides an interesting example of a project that is working in a broader way to support teenage parents within the housing sector.

Bolton Housing provides 50% of the funding for a large Arts Project 'Bolton at Home', which devises arts projects as part of the local regeneration programme and is based on a wider partnership approach. A fundamental part of the project is to use the arts to encourage communication; the initiatives must be participatory and involve social housing residents to a significant degree. 'Bolton at Home' has been involved in some

specific work with teenage parents – many of whom are social housing residents. Initiatives from the project include working with young people from a housing estate to develop a resource to go into schools, a dad's photography project and some consultation work with young parents using the arts to develop a young people friendly single referral form for supporting people providers.

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Step up – Peer Young Parents Support Workers – Leicester

This innovative project employs two Peer Young Parent support workers who have first hand experience of teenage pregnancy through being teenage parents. Funded through Leicestershire Connexions, they work in the community giving floating support advice to mothers-to-be and young parents. They offer information, advice and guidance in relation to

parenting skills, education, life skills, housing, benefits and training etc, using a person-centred and holistic approach designed to enable the young person to return to education, employment and training after the birth of their babies. The Peer Support Workers advise on options and opportunities that meet the needs, abilities and aspirations of mothers-to-be and young parents. The Peer Support Workers write action plans/intervention plans for each mother-to-be and young parent on agreed future options. This mirrors the Leicestershire Connexions/Leicester Sure Start Plus protocol to ensure quality assurance.

The Peer Support Workers also provide confidential pregnancy testing when required and offer options and support with regards to pregnancy.

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Suggested Guidelines for delivering an Effective Floating Support Service for Teenage Parents

- **Access:** The process of application and how young parents access floating support services need to be clearly laid down.
- **Referral:** At referral mutual trust should be developed by being open and non-judgemental and enabling the young parent to describe their situation in their own words. This situation will often be complex and possibly one of housing crisis but this will facilitate a better understanding of their needs.
- **Assessment:** Assessment can be split into two parts; 1) an initial assessment to determine eligibility and 2) a more in-depth assessment at the beginning of the support relationship. This latter assessment process should identify strengths, gaps in skills and issues or problems for the young parent. Particular areas will be prioritised by the worker and the young parent and this will form the basis of a support plan. The plan will detail types of intervention, service providers, frequency of visits, other activities outside the home and where the floating support will be provided. As a minimum, contact should be maintained by the housing support services or other agency responsible with the young parent(s) every few days to avoid the young parent becoming isolated.
- **Support package:** The stages of a focused package of support are planning, implementation, review and case closure.
 - **Planning** will include what needs to be addressed, what is the goal, how the goal can be reached, who will be involved, what is the timescale and when will it be reviewed. Goals need to be achievable and can be broken down into short, medium or long term.
 - **Implementation** is the action part of the plan and may include practical help with life or social skills, debt and money management, household repairs, sexual health and contraception to prevent second pregnancies, parenting skills and education and training activities. It is important at this stage to identify who is responsible for doing what.
 - **Review:** The purpose of review is to monitor the level of support and look at what has been achieved, identify strategies that have been effective and those that have been less effective. This review meeting will also help to prioritise and allow for changes in circumstances, including what may no longer be needed.

- **Tapering off the support:** It is crucial that the support framework employed enables the support to end in an appropriate way. Sometimes support is needed for longer than initially envisaged and this is entirely appropriate if carried out in a focused way using the process of assessment, planning, implementation and review so that support levels are tapered to need.
- **Ending floating support:** When ending a floating support relationship, the main issues to consider include: planning the case closure in advance; involving the young parent; agreeing a plan for gradual withdrawal of the service; ensuring the young parent is linked up with other services, such as those providing Connexions services or sexual health services and allowing flexibility so that the tenant is aware that they can come back into the service if they need to be re-referred.

These suggested standards are adapted from those developed by SITRA (Specialist Information, Training and Resource Agency).

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