



Support Pathway for expectant parents under 20

Supporting Guidance for Professionals

These notes have been written as guidance for using the support pathway for parents under 20. The following guidance provides information for professionals on the support options available in Central Bedfordshire for teenage mothers to be and their partners where appropriate.

Key aim's of the pathway

- To clarify the routes of support available for parents to be
- To ensure that all pregnant women under the age of 20 are enabled to access a range of support in their local community.
- To improve health and social outcomes for local teenage parents and their children
- To support parents to be, to continue in Education Employment and Training (EET) to reduce their increased risk of social exclusion and poverty
- To raise awareness of the different services available locally such as parenting support, benefits advice, housing advice, information on Care 2 Learn for those returning to EET after the birth
- To work with the whole family where possible to empower and enable them to understand and meet their own needs
- To monitor the outcomes for teenage parents and be able to influence services to respond accordingly

Key information professionals working with this group should highlight

All professionals working with this group of young people should provide the same messages. This consistency increases the likelihood of positive and continued engagement with services.

- Let the young person know that all young parents under 20 are offered this support in Central Bedfordshire
- Raise the profile of Children's Centres and what they can gain from visiting their local centre and the activities that they, their partner and their baby can take part in
- Care to Learn Funding- child care costs can be covered by this funding when they go back to school, college, work or other forms of training
- If there are conflicts within the family about the pregnancy or with the baby's fathers family, Family Group Meetings can be arranged to help overcome some of these difficulties
- If they are having any difficulties, there are professionals who can help

Safeguarding Sexually Active People Under the Age of 18 and 16

All clinical and non clinical staff working with sexually active young people must read and work in line with the Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board Safeguarding Sexually Active Young People Protocol 2011. This includes guidance and protocol for working with young people under the age of 16 and 13.

In some cases urgent action may need to be taken to protect the young person. However, in most circumstances there will need to be a process of information sharing and discussion in order to formulate an appropriate plan. Anyone concerned about the sexual activity of a young person should initially discuss this with the nominated person in their agency responsible for child protection. There may then be a need for further consultation with the Children's Social Care Team. All discussions should be recorded, giving reasons for action taken or not taken and who was spoken to.

School Aged Mothers (13-16)

The Locality Parenting Support Advisor (LPSA) will make contact with the young person via phone and give a brief overview of the different services and groups that are available to support the young mother and where possible her partner, during the pregnancy and after birth. Prior to this contact, the LPSA will check to see if a CAF has been initiated. The support package for 13-16 year olds will include their school and the LPSA will then arrange a meeting with the young person and their school to look at what needs she, her partner and the unborn baby may have. If a CAF has not already been initiated, it would be at this point one should be completed for the mother, with her consent where possible, and if necessary a CAF for the unborn child.

CAF Team Central Bedfordshire Council - 0300 300 8119

Please also refer to the guidance document - NHS Bedfordshire & Central Bedfordshire Council- Supporting School Aged Mothers in Central Bedfordshire 2011'

Available at: www.bedfordshire.nhs.uk, www.healthy-schools.co.uk and www.under-cover.org.uk from Nov 2011.

Mothers to be aged 17-19 years

The Children's Centre Outreach (CCOO) worker will make contact by phone and arrange a meeting to discuss the different support available locally during pregnancy and after birth. The CCOO will ensure that the young person is linked in with their local children's centre and can even attend an initial visit with them. The CCOO will establish the level of need and where these needs appear more complex, a CAF will be completed.

Timescale for initiating support

The referrals should be received by the LPSA and the CCOO within two weeks of the booking appointment with a midwife. The LPSA and CCOO will make initial contact the young person by phone and there may be times many attempts will be required.

Adoption

If the young person is considering adoption, they or a professional can contact the Adoption and Fostering Team for an informal discussion or to initiate and receive support throughout the whole process. Contact Adoption and Fostering Team Central Bedfordshire- 0800 218 2002 (During office hours)

A young mother wishing to give up her child for adoption will need to be able to give clear reasons for her decision to the Adoption and Fostering Service. Some of the other options she may want to consider are:

- What about the father's decision or the father being considered to care for the child?
- Has the young mum considered the option of the baby's grandparents becoming the foster/adoptive parents?

The young person may require additional support and counselling throughout this decision making process and should be referred to the appropriate services.

If you have questions relating to any aspect of the support pathway please contact Charlotte Jackson, Public Health Coordinator (Teenage Pregnancy) at charlotte.jackson@bedfordshire.nhs.uk or 01525 636928