

Special points of interest:

- The Development of a Parenting Services Quality Mark
- Teenage Pregnancy
- Fixed Penalty Notices for Young People
- 16-17 Housing Protocol

This monthly update is intended to let you know what happens at a strategic level so that you are aware of things that may affect you in the future, or things that you may want to find out more about. If you have any concerns or suggestions that you wish to be fed into this process please contact Sally Perks at YOW on 01902 771163.



July 2007

The Development of a Parenting Services Quality Mark

At the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Strategy and Development Board Meeting this month a report was discussed regarding the proposed development of a quality mark as part of the commissioning of parenting services.

'Having a Parenting Services Quality Mark, will ensure the quality of services which are commissioned.'

Wolverhampton has a substantial investment in parenting support services, however no one single parenting programme has been found to meet the information, advice and support needs of all parents.

By developing a Parenting Services Quality Mark, the City will be able to ensure the consistency, continuity and quality of programmes and inform the commissioning process. The process of developing a Parenting Support Services Quality mark is at the very early stages; we will keep you informed and ensure that the voluntary sector is consulted with in partnership regarding this issue.

Teenage Pregnancy

The data for the first quarter of under 18 conception figures 2006 were recently released by the Office for National Statistics. For England, the latest quarterly data shows an encouraging continuation of the reduction in the under-18 conception rate. For the first quarter 2006, England's under-18 conception rate was 39.7 per 1000 girls aged 15-17, compared with 41.1 per 1000 girls for the first quarter 2005.

For Wolverhampton however, the recent data is not so encouraging with figures increasing again. For the first quarter 2006, Wolverhampton under-18 conception rate was 63.7 per 1000 girls aged 15-17, an increase when compared with 61.8 per 1000 for the first quarter 2005. We are the second worst performing area in the West Midlands.

The reviews and the consultations already taken place with the Youth Council will result in a refreshed teenage pregnancy strategy, where good and effective practise that is based on evidence is embedded into local activity aimed at reducing these alarming figures.



Fixed Penalty Notice for Young People

The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environments (CNE) Act 2005 was fully implemented on 6th April 2006. This enabled local authorities to deal quickly and effectively with the perpetrators of environmental crimes such as littering, graffiti, fly-tipping, fly-posting, abandoned and nuisance vehicles etc.

Clearly tackling environmental crimes is important if we are to improve the quality of life for local communities. One of the new provisions contained in the CNE Act is to extend the ability for a local authority to deal with environmental crimes by issuing Fixed Penalty Notices (FNP's) to offenders.



It is clear that young people, including those aged 10-17 years old (as well as adults) do commit environmental offences and therefore there is a need to consider measures of enforcement.

There has previously been very little Environmental Services enforcement activity focussed on young people specifically, but a draft Enforcement Policy: 'Issuing Fixed Penalty Notices to Young People', has now been produced outlining a process whereby young people between the ages of 10-17 will receive Verbal and written warnings followed by Fixed Penalty Notices and fines up to a maximum of £250 for a 10-13 year old and £1,000 for a 14-17 year old. This process would also mean that young people would be entering the Criminal Justice System for an offence such as dropping a piece of litter.

As you can I am sure imagine the proposal to criminalise young people for environmental offences raised a lot of concerns and points raised included:

- A need to carry out more provisional work such as education within schools and litter picks. 'Education rather than prosecution.'
- The resource implications that would be placed on the Youth Offending Team.
- The criminalisation of young people, if you call a young person a criminal, they may begin to act as such.
- Need to encourage pride in the area.

A lively discussion was held surrounding these issues, and in conclusion it was felt that the board could not support the proposal as it stands. Further work will be carried out to take on the suggestions made. We will keep you informed.



16-17 Housing Protocol

A Housing Protocol has been completed in response to the increasing numbers of vulnerable young people aged under 18 presenting as homeless, in order to try and resolve the issue through advice and mediation before it becomes a crisis situation. It hopes to in time; eliminate the need to use inappropriate bed and breakfast accommodation for young people at instead prevent homelessness at the earliest stage.

A mediation service for young people who are experiencing relationship breakdown with their families is also being planned, and funding is currently being sought to implement this. If you would like more information on the 16-17 Housing Protocol, contact Sally at YOW.