



Meeting the needs of Young Parents

Guidance Notes

Contents

Background

Rationale

Initial responses when first learning of a pregnancy

Working with young women who have poor / non-attendance

Educational Planning During Pregnancy

The role of home tuition in school-age pregnancy

Educational planning post-birth

The needs of young fathers

Appendix A - Documents consulted in developing this guidance

Appendix B - APP I Notification of Pregnancy

01 Background

1.1 Education Services is committed to raising the attainment and achievement of all learners, including those young people who come to parenthood at an early age. The focus of this guidance is on the educational needs of young pregnant women and young mothers due to the impact that disrupted education can have on the future life chances of the young woman and her child. Work is being undertaken elsewhere to ensure that the needs of young fathers are identified and addressed.

1.2 This guidance is based on the work of the Support and Re-integration Officer in Glasgow schools between 2007-10 and is reflective of a range of good practice that was identified in this period. This work is part of a wider strategic approach in the City, co-ordinated under the auspices of the Young People’s Sexual Health Steering Group, of which Education Services are a key partner. This document replaces ‘Improving Supports to Young Parents - Interim Guidance’.



1.3 In Glasgow, teenage pregnancy has been highlighted as an issue which requires focused intervention because of its strong associations with a range of social, health and economic inequalities and exclusion. Poorer outcomes are not only associated with the young women and men who become parents but also with the outcomes and life-chances of their children.

1.4 The approach in Glasgow is based on research which indicates that many of these poorer outcomes are not inevitable but are the result of a number of structural and attitudinal barriers that young parents encounter. Changes in how services are constructed and delivered can have a significant impact on helping young parents and their families positively adapt to their new circumstances.



1.5 Education Services has a crucial contribution to make towards improving the life-chances of young women who become pregnant when of school-age. Not only can schools enable young women to become successful learners, they can also provide a supportive and nurturing environment in which young women can grow in confidence and adapt to their new, dual role of being both young mothers and students. In addition, although an unintended outcome, research has shown that pregnancy can be a key motivating factor for many young women to re-engage with learning. There is also evidence that young women who are welcomed back into education begin to develop educational aspirations for their own children.

1.6 Whilst Glasgow does not have the highest teenage pregnancy rate in the country, it has rates consistently higher than the Scottish average. Between 2006-8 an average of 100 young women in Glasgow, aged 13-15 years, became pregnant each year. Just under half of these will have proceeded to a live

birth. Young women who come from areas of high deprivation are more likely to become pregnant and are more likely to proceed with their pregnancy. It should be noted that these figures do not include young women who were at school and who became pregnant in S4 when they were 16 years of age.

1.7 This guidance is based on a wide range of national and local policies which promote an inclusive and holistic education that upholds children's rights. It will therefore be familiar to educational professionals. ([Appendix A identifies some of these](#)). Of particular relevance here is the Additional Support for Learning legislation which identifies young carers as having additional support needs. In addition, by adopting the Learner Entitlement model, Glasgow City Council has shown a commitment to the progress and attainment for all pupils through creative and tailored programmes of learning.

02 Rationale



2.1 This guidance establishes the standard that all young women who are pregnant or who have had their babies can expect to receive, irrespective of which school they attend. It is based on a number of examples of good practice and positive approaches which have been developed in conjunction with Glasgow schools. Consistent application both across and within schools will ensure that individualised and tailored supports are offered to meet the holistic needs of young women who become pregnant when of school-age.

2.2 This guidance aims to assist schools to recognise and meet the needs of school-age pregnant women and young mothers, enabling them to maintain their education, reach their full potential and remain as fully integrated in the school community as possible. It highlights the responsibilities that schools have in this regard, as well as other services the young woman can be referred onto. To successfully achieve these aims schools should:

- Encourage young women to remain involved with education during their pregnancy and in the post-birth period or
- Re-integrate young women back into learning, particularly if they were disengaged from school prior to their pregnancy.

[Photo details in here](#)

2.3 The development of this guidance has the additional purpose of countering some negative approaches. There is no evidence to suggest that the presence of a young pregnant woman within a school encourages other young women to become pregnant. Anecdotal information would indicate that the opposite effect may be the case. Equally, it should be noted that either directly or indirectly indicating that a young woman is no longer welcome at school once their pregnancy becomes physically obvious, is discriminatory behaviour and should therefore be avoided. Schools also have a role in supporting the parents of the young woman. They need to reassure them that continued involvement in education will benefit their daughter and her ability to successfully support her child.

2.4 In the first instance, young women should be assisted to either continue or re-engage with learning at their own school. In most cases, this is where their educational and friendship networks are established. Only when it is assessed that a young woman will not or cannot engage with her own school, should alternatives then be explored.



03 Initial responses when first learning of a pregnancy

- 3.1** The overwhelming majority of young women who become pregnant when of school-age did not plan to do so. It can therefore take time for her and her family to come to terms with such life-changing news. For many, letting the school know about the pregnancy is an important first hurdle to be negotiated. How the issue is handled by the school can therefore affect both the young woman and her family's immediate and long-term responses to education and wider offers of assistance.
- 3.2** It is very important for the young woman and her family that the response from the school is non-judgemental and offers reassurance that supports will be available to meet her changed circumstances. In particular, it is important to highlight that educational attainment is still possible and desirable and that the school will look at options as to how the situation can be managed, both before and after the baby is born, taking into account the young woman's individual circumstances.
- 3.3** A young woman will make a conscious choice about when and who to tell. It is important therefore for her to know that her information will be dealt with sensitively and appropriately. In general, if a young person or her parent / carer do not inform the Head Teacher directly, she should be made aware that the Head Teacher and the relevant Pastoral Care staff have to be informed. Which other school staff are informed should be negotiated with the young woman.



3.4 When a young woman discloses to the school that she is pregnant the school must complete the 'Notification of Pregnancy' form and send it to the QIO (Pastoral Care) and the Co-ordinator of the Young Parents' Support Base. The Co-ordinator will be able to provide support and guidance to the school on a range of issues.

3.5 In the vast majority of cases the first notification of the pregnancy usually comes from the young woman and her parent / carer. In only 1% of cases, to date, have young women not informed their parent / carer prior to the school being made aware of the situation. If a teaching professional hears of a potential pregnancy through rumour, often via other pupils, this information should be passed to the Head Teacher and the Child Protection co-ordinator only and discussion should take place as to which member of staff is most appropriate to talk with the young woman.

3.6 All teaching professionals should be familiar with the 'Glasgow Protocol for Working with Young People Who Are Sexually Active' (GP) This has been developed to help all professionals in Glasgow, including teaching staff, to identify, assess and respond appropriately to situations of sexual activity.

3.7 Pregnancy in young women under the age of 16 should be dealt with using the criteria set out in the GP. If it is assessed that the pregnancy is the result of mutually-agreed teenage sexual behaviour and/or relationship in which there are no concerns of abuse or exploitation, the matter should not be considered a child protection matter: the emphasis should be on ensuring that the young woman's health, educational, social and emotional needs are appropriately assessed and support is offered. If it is assessed that a child protection concern may exist, a Management Circular 57 referral should be completed.

3.8 The issue of confidentiality is also addressed in the GP. In summary, it is recognised that confidentiality is not absolute and can be departed from in exceptional circumstances i.e. where a child protection concern exists. However, in the absence of a child protection concern, young women have a right to have their information rights respected i.e. that personal and private information should not be shared without consent. In the rare





Some details in here about the girls and their babies. These photos were taken on location at the Young Person's Support Base in Smithycroft Secondary School.



circumstance that a young woman has not told her parent / carer of the pregnancy it is good practice to encourage her to do so. However, it is not the duty of the school to inform parents of the pregnancy. Involving either the Link Midwife (Teenage Pregnancy) or the Co-ordinator of the Young Parents' Support Base, can assist in this rare circumstance.

- 3.9 Although, to date, this has not been a frequent occurrence, it maybe the case that at the point when the school is informed, the young woman is unclear as to whether she wishes to proceed with the pregnancy. In such circumstances, the Co-ordinator and / or the Link Midwife can provide support to the young woman.
- 3.10 The young woman and her family should be made aware that the school will be informing the Co-ordinator of the Young Parents' Support Base about the pregnancy. It is helpful to let the young woman and her family know that someone from there will make contact with them.
- 3.11 It is also helpful to let the young woman and her family know that the Young Parents' Support Base along with the Link Midwife (Teenage Pregnancy) post are services that have been specifically designed to help young parents both during the pregnancy and once the baby is born. The Co-ordinator of the Support Base, in particular, will work closely with the school to ensure that any issues are positively managed.
- 3.12 Schools should note that not all pregnancies that they are made aware of will necessarily proceed to full term, either as a result of a termination or of a miscarriage. If there are signs that a young woman is struggling to cope with the loss of a pregnancy contact should be made with the Link Midwife (Teenage Pregnancy) who can either assist the school to sign-post the young woman to appropriate services or who can see the young woman at a place of her choosing.

04

Working with young women who have poor / non-attendance

- 4.1 Many young women who become pregnant when they are of school age have had attendance issues prior to pregnancy. For these young women re-integration into school can be difficult. However, one of the unintended consequences for some young women is that the pregnancy acts as a real motivating force for her to make something of her life and develop options for her future. It is important therefore, that schools harness this potential and offer young women a flexible and encouraging approach which ensures they stay in education.
- 4.2 For young women where attendance has been an issue, re-integration back into learning is useful at any time. Even those close to the official school leaving date can benefit from engagement in learning and may choose to return to S5 and S6. School, as opposed to other learning opportunities, can provide a stable and nurturing environment for young pregnant women and young mothers who have to adapt to a range of emotional and social changes in their lives. The role that a supportive school can play in improving young women's mental health and self-esteem and identifying needs, should not be underestimated.
- 4.3 It may be unrealistic to expect all of the young women to attend school on a full-time basis. Methods like a phased return, a reduced timetable and / or studying in the pupil support base have proved to provide some level of re-engagement. If it is proving difficult to re-engage a young woman with learning or to sustain a plan that has been put in place, the Co-ordinator of the Young Parents' Support Base can provide guidance on the suitability of the base at Smithycroft.
- 4.4 If a young woman who is attending an alternative educational placement becomes pregnant, the school should complete the notification form as normal. Discussions with the school and the alternative provider will then take place as to how they can continue to support the young woman through pregnancy and motherhood.

05

Educational Planning During Pregnancy

- 5.1 The key to supporting young women is regular communication, both formally and informally. Ideally, pastoral care teachers or the depute Headteacher with responsibility for pupil support should meet with them to discuss their educational progress and any other issues they may need support with. Research indicates that these meetings serve to encourage attendance, help to motivate the young women and allow the school to respond to needs that will invariably change during the pregnancy and in the post-birth period.
- 5.2 Alongside her educational needs, young women may experience a range of social and emotional issues that may affect their ability to continue to engage with learning. These issues could include perceived bullying by other students, experiencing discrimination, having mixed feelings about the pregnancy, mood swings or depression, conflict with the father of the baby (particularly if he is in the same school), disruption at home, financial or housing worries. It is not the school's responsibility to respond to some of these issues but acknowledging that they exist and signposting to appropriate services can be invaluable to the young woman and her family.
- 5.3 Drawing up an additional support plan has proved to be a valuable method of structuring the support that the young woman requires. It assists to identify needs, to note how the school can meet these requirements and who has responsibility for putting these plans into action.
- 5.4 The number of formal meetings that are held will depend on how early on in the pregnancy the school are notified. It has been found that a review every 2-3 months is sufficient. At a minimum, an initial planning meeting shortly after first notification and a review meeting approximately 8 weeks before the due date should be held. Who attends formal meetings will depend on the individual circumstances of the young woman. At a minimum, the young woman and her family should be invited to attend, as should the Co-ordinator of the Young Parents' Support Base.



5.5 It is recommended that the depute headteacher with responsibility for pupil support should chair all such meetings. Experience to date, has shown that young women from the same school can receive very different levels of support depending on how an individual member of staff responds to their situation.

The initial planning meeting

5.6 The purpose of the initial planning meeting is to give the young woman an opportunity to be involved in decisions around her future, allow her and her family to discuss their concerns and for them to be reassured by the school that it will try its best to accommodate her needs. Research indicates that emotional support and re-assurance are of equal importance as practical help.

5.7 It is important that this is a positive meeting where it is explained that it is perfectly feasible for pregnant young women and young mothers to attend school and successfully achieve their educational potential. The emphasis should be on the young woman maintaining, as much as possible, full attendance and continuation of all of her subjects. It is recognised that this may not

always be achievable but it sets a tone that educational attainment is still important.

5.8 Points which could be discussed at the meeting include:

- The young woman's current academic potential and work required to maintain or improve on this.
- The expected delivery date of the baby and how this may affect her studies e.g. preliminary examinations, final examinations, portfolio deadlines, work experience etc.
- Which school professional will provide day-to-day support and be the main contact person for the family. To date, this has tended to be the young woman's pastoral care teacher.
- Immediate requirements in school, including who needs to know, what practical supports are required etc.
- How time off, both during the pregnancy and afterwards, will be managed.
- How to maintain studies during time off e.g. home tuition, work being sent



home etc.

- How other professionals can contribute to the support package.
- Childcare considerations for returning to school and assistance that can be offered.

5.9 There have been instances where schools have suggested that a pregnant, young woman must stop attending school as a result of the pregnancy itself or on the grounds that her pregnancy is a Health and Safety issue. This is discrimination.

5.10 The work undertaken by the Support and Re-integration Officer with Glasgow schools highlighted a number of practical supports that have made a real difference to the school experience of young women during pregnancy. They have included:

- A toilet pass.
- An 'early class release' pass, to avoid busy corridors, or the rush for the school bus.
- Transport to examinations.
- Additional support to allow the

young woman to catch up on any work missed due to absences.

- Supplying school work for the holidays to enable the young woman to 'get ahead' of her class in preparation for time off.
- Arranging online work for easier access.
- Referring a young woman for counselling.
- Booking a careers interview to help a young woman plan ahead.
- Being flexible with uniform requirements as the pregnancy progresses.

The most important support has been a positive, welcoming and non-judgemental approach by all staff in school.

5.11 It is important to encourage young women to be off school as little as possible. If the school is advised that a young woman cannot attend due to illness in her pregnancy, some discussion should take place as to the nature of the illness. (The role of the Link Midwife (Teenage Pregnancy) can assist in this situation). If the illness relates to morning sickness, a flexible approach, allowing the young woman to come to school a little later, has proven to resolve such matters. Authorised absences need not affect the Education Maintenance Allowance criteria providing the school completes an EMA adjustment form.

Reviews / pre-birth planning meeting

5.12 It is good practice to review progress around 8 weeks prior to the due-date to a) ensure that arrangements are in place to cover any work that needs to be completed during the period of absence and b) to discuss arrangements for after the baby is born. This is also a useful meeting for learning whether the measures that were put into place during pregnancy were helpful or not.

5.13 The development of a plan around the birth-period needs to take a balanced and sensitive approach, particularly taking into account the emotional and physical demands that will be placed on a new mother. Research



evidence and experience indicates that if this process is handled sensitively, actually having a plan (even if it needs to be adapted) helps to encourage and motivate young women to return to school and provides reassurance that a) they will be welcomed back to school and b) that motherhood is not a barrier to learning. Also, having a structure in place can enable young women to feel a measure of stability during a time that can be unsettling.

- 5.14 Although a young mother naturally needs time to bond with her baby and adjust to her new circumstances, missing too much schooling will have an impact on her learning. The period of absence post-birth should be dependent on each individual's circumstances. At the pre-birth meeting this issue should be discussed and a provisional return-date should be identified. It should be made clear that this date can be changed if required. Factors to consider include the stage of the school year, if there are deadlines for portfolio work to be submitted, examination dates, the number and level of subjects being taken, and how

difficult it would be to catch-up. Experience to date in Glasgow, indicates that most young women return to some level of learning 6 -8 weeks after the birth, with a minority returning earlier.

- 5.15 A major barrier to young mothers returning to school and maintaining their education is childcare. The Coordinator of the Young Parents' Support Base can support the planning for this.

06

The role of home tuition in school-age pregnancy

- 6.1 In relation to school-aged pregnancy, home tuition can be a useful intervention if young women are absent from school for a considerable period of time e.g. just prior to birth, if there is a medical reason that prevents her from attending school or just after the birth when she is adjusting to her new circumstances. Home tuition should be seen as a temporary intervention to support a return to education and should not be used as an alternative to school or over a long period of time. Being at home can be isolating for the young woman and can affect her mental health as well as limit her academic achievement.
- 6.2 In Glasgow, home tuition is organised through the Interrupted Learners Service (ILS). Guidance and referral forms can be [accessed on connect](#). Tutors sourced from the young woman's school are the preferred option when dealing with school-aged pregnancy. Using a member of the school's teaching staff as a tutor maintains positive home / school links and, for previous poor or non-school attendees, can help promote re-integration.
- The established Guidance in respect of home tuition needs to be followed. If home circumstances are not suitable, tuition can be arranged to be delivered at an alternative venue.
- 6.3 Schools retain full responsibility for the young woman whilst she is receiving home tuition. This can include:
- Assessing completed material.
 - Presenting the young woman for examinations, making exam arrangements, ensuring folio completion and the submission of work.
 - Providing and reviewing plans.
 - Managing child protection issues should they arise.
- 6.4 A young woman on home tuition should be recorded on the school register 'sickness with educational provision' (SEP), or 'other attendance out of school' (OAT)

07

Educational planning post-birth

7.1 Just prior to the young woman's provisional return-date to school a further review meeting should be held to discuss plans for the young woman's return. Circumstances may have changed considerably since the last meeting and plans will need to be adapted accordingly. Factors that may influence what educational programmes the young woman is able to undertake will include:

- The young woman's energy levels
- If the baby or young woman is ill.
- The level of support that is available in the family.
- Post-natal depression.
- If the young woman feels ready to leave her baby in the care of others.
- The availability of suitable child-care.

7.2 As was the case during pregnancy, schools should be as flexible as possible during this return-to-school phase. Demonstrating a willingness to listen to a young woman's needs can greatly encourage her to remain connected to her social contacts and to learning. Options that have been utilised by some schools in this period have included:

- Extending home tuition for a further period.

- Supplying the young woman with additional work for independent study at home.
- Agreeing a part-time timetable.
- Looking at a short-term phased-return to school.
- Ensuring that the young woman is sign-posted to other appropriate services.
- Authorising time off to attend medical appointments or if the baby is unwell.
- Allowing a young woman to arrive later and register at the office if she requires to take her baby to nursery.
- Organising a room for expressing milk if required.
- Being flexible with uniform requirements
- Providing a transport pass to enable a young woman to attend school and visit her baby in hospital.

7.3 If a young woman indicates that she feels unable to return to her own school after the baby is born, contact should be made with the Co-ordinator of the Young Parents' Support Base so that a possibility of a placement at Smithycroft, with on-site nursery facilities, may be explored.

7.4 Some young women who had originally thought of leaving school after the birth of their baby have re-considered their position once the baby is born. Some of these young women have successfully gone on to complete S5 and S6. Some very flexible practice as been adopted by some schools in allowing these young women to re-register. A discussion with the Head of Service, with responsibilities for inclusion, should take place to assess the young woman's individual circumstances.



08

The needs of young fathers

- 8.1 Whilst this guidance has overwhelmingly focused on the needs of young women who become pregnant when of school age, it is also recognised that schools can offer similar types of support to young men who come to fatherhood at an early age.
- 8.2 Again, acknowledging that for the vast majority of young men the pregnancy was not planned, they too will have a range of responses and mixed emotions about their potential new role and responsibilities. These may be more emphasised

depending on if they have an on-going relationship with the young woman and if they attend the same school. Authorising agreed absences to allow the young man to attend medical appointments and to be present at the birth are examples of how schools can provide support. Also, pastoral care staff can act as a listening ear and also sign-post young men to the Young Parents' Support Base at Smithycroft, which is also able to offer support to young fathers.

Appendix A

Documents consulted in developing this guidance

1. The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 (Edinburgh, HMSO, 1995)
2. United Nations Convention on the Rights of The Child (UNCRC, 1989)
3. For Scotland's Children (Scottish Executive, 2001)
4. Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000 (Edinburgh, HMSO, 2000)
5. The Glasgow Protocol for Working with Young People Who Are Sexually Active (Child Protection Committee, 2007)
6. Management Circular 57, Child Welfare and Safety (Glasgow City Council, Education Services 2009)
7. Curriculum for Excellence (Scottish Executive, 2004)
8. Learning and Teaching Strategy (Scottish Executive, 2008)
9. More Choices More Chances (Scottish Executive, 2006)
10. Determined To Succeed (Scottish Executive, 2004)
11. Happy, Safe and Achieving Potential (Scottish Executive, 2004)
12. Children's Charter (Scottish Executive, 2004)
13. Education (Additional Support For Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 (Scottish Executive 2004)
14. Every Child is Included (Glasgow City Council, Education Services, 2009)
15. Included, Engaged, Involved (Scottish Government, 2007)
16. Safe and Well (Scottish Executive, 2005)
17. Anti-Bullying Policy (Glasgow City Council, Education Services 2009)
18. Looked After Children Policy (Glasgow City Council, Education & Social work Services, 2009)
19. Corporate Parenting Strategy (Glasgow City Council, Education & Social Work Services, 2007)
20. Secondary Strategy 2009-2014 (Glasgow City Council, Education Services 2009)
21. Glasgow Child and Family Services Plan 2009-2012 (Glasgow City Council, Education, Children and Families Policy Development Committee, 2009)



Educational Establishment - Form APP1 Notification of Pregnancy

PLEASE USE BLACK INK AND BLOCK LETTERS

1 DETAILS OF YOUNG WOMAN	
Name	Date of Birth
Address	Postcode
Phone Number	
If known, how many weeks pregnant is the young woman?	
2 DETAILS OF ESTABLISHMENT	
Name of Establishment	
Name of pastoral care teacher	
Address	Phone Number
How, and when, was the establishment made aware of the pregnancy?	
What has been the establishment response to date?	
3 DETAILS OF REFERRAL	
As a result of your risk assessment, has it been considered necessary to make a referral through Management Circular No. 57? (If so, please provide brief details of the basis of this referral)	
4 OTHER AGENCIES/PROFESSIONALS	
Are there any other professionals/agencies involved with the young woman or her family? (Please provide names/contact details)	
5 EDUCATION SERVICES	
Does the young woman know that her information is being passed on to Education Services?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

Signature of notifying person (SMT) _____ Date of notification _____

Name (BLOCK CAPITALS) _____

Thank you for completing this notification.

Please send copies by email or by post to:

YPSB Coordinator, c/o Smithycroft Secondary School, 282 Smithycroft Road, GLASGOW G33 2QU.
Email unithead@ypsb.ea.glasgow.sch.uk

Jim Doyle, Quality Improvement Officer, Education Improvement Service (EdIS), Education Services, City Chambers East, 40 John Street, G1 1JL.
Email jim.doyle@education.glasgow.gov.uk

