



meeting

Cabinet

date

3rd May 2006

agenda item number

Report of the Cabinet Member for Culture

Free Pregnancy Testing Service for Young People accessing the C Card Scheme

Purpose of the Report

1. This report seeks approval of Cabinet for County Council employees to offer a free pregnancy testing service for young people who are registered with the C Card Scheme.

Information and Advice

Background

2. Two of the Strategic Objectives of the Nottinghamshire Teenage Pregnancy Strategy state:

‘All young people have access to friendly contraceptive and sexual health services appropriate to their needs in statutory and non- statutory settings’

and

‘All young people have access to free pregnancy testing and counselling and speedy referral to NHS funded abortion or maternity services’.

3. One of the local actions agreed for achieving the first of these objectives is that arrangements are in place for free and easy access to condoms for young people, aged 13 to 19, across the County. To this end the C Card Scheme was introduced in August 2004 and as at 24th February 2006 there were 95 Registration Points and 3,287 young people registered. The Teenage Pregnancy Team lead on the scheme on behalf of the Teenage Pregnancy Board and a steering group, consisting of personnel associated with young people’s services throughout the County from the County Council, health and housing. The scheme works closely with workers from a number of organisations that have established

relationships with young people. All staff involved in the scheme are required to attend training and regular sexual health updates. The workers involved in the scheme are not required to give advice on contraception, as most are not health workers. If this information is requested, the worker can signpost the young person to a relevant sexual health agency, i.e. local Contraceptive and Sexual Health Service.

4. Young people accessing the scheme are assured of confidentiality and are assessed in accordance with the Fraser Guidelines, (Lord Fraser, 1985.)
5. One of the local actions for achieving the second of these objectives is to develop access to free pregnancy testing alongside C-card scheme registration points.
6. If a young person thinks that they might be pregnant, it is important that they have access to an early pregnancy test to enable them to be able to consider all the options and choices available, should the test prove positive. If the test proves negative, young people need to be able to access advice, information and services regarding their future contraceptive and sexual health needs.
7. Consultations have taken place with the Teenage Pregnancy Board, the Teenage Pregnancy Forum, the C Card Scheme Steering Group, the C Card Scheme Providers' Group and the Bassetlaw Primary Care Trust Sexual Health Strategy Implementation Group regarding proposals to implement a pilot offering a Free Pregnancy Testing Service at a number of established Registration Points in the Bassetlaw district. Guidelines for the operation of the pilot scheme have been developed with and agreed by Bassetlaw Primary Care Trust.
8. The service will work closely with workers from a number of organisations, including County Council employees, which have established relationships with young people. All staff involved in the service will be required to attend training and regular sexual health updates. The Training and Development Officers (Young Peoples Sexual Health) will provide sexual health training and the Public Health Practitioner for Bassetlaw Primary Care Trust will provide the pregnancy testing training.
9. All workers participating in the C Card Scheme are required to complete a satisfactory be Criminal Records Bureau disclosure and to have undertaken child protection training within their employing organisation. In addition, staff who will offer free pregnancy testing will receive training from a public health practitioner, who is also family planning trained nurse, on undertaking the tests and attend a course delivered by Education for Choice to enable them to be able to provide information on all pregnancy options available. They will not be required to give advice on contraception and pregnancy choices. The workers will signpost the young person to a relevant sexual health agency as indicated on the "I think I might be Pregnant" pathway developed by the Teenage Pregnancy Partnership.

10. If after 6 months the pilot proves successful in meeting the needs of young people, it is intended to roll out this service to a number of other Registration Points across the County. Prior to any extension of the scheme it will be necessary to seek the agreement to and adoption of the Guidelines by the Primary Care Trusts.

Statutory and Policy Implications

11. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, personnel, Crime and Disorder and those using the service. Where such implications are material, they have been described in the text of the report.

Financial Implications

12. The costs of the scheme will be contained within the Local Government Grant allocation for implementation of the Nottinghamshire Teenage Pregnancy Strategy. For 2006-2007 the grant is £363,000.

Personnel Implications

13. The introduction of pregnancy testing falls within the scope of the existing role, duties and responsibilities of the youth workers who will be trained to undertake it.

Implications for Service Users

14. By offering this service to those young people registered for the C Card Scheme, it can be guaranteed that each young person has received non-judgemental, confidential information and support around sexual health and pregnancy issues from trained workers.

Recommendation

15. That approval is given for workers who are trained to operate C Card Scheme Registration Points to offer Free Pregnancy Testing for young people who are registered with the scheme.

Councillor Chris Baron
Cabinet member for Culture

Legal Services Comments (KK 21/4/06)

The Cabinet is responsible for the discharge of all functions and exercise of all powers of the County Council not expressly reserved to the full Council or to any other part of

the County Council by statute or by the Constitution. The proposal in this report, insofar as it does not come under the remit of any other part of the County Council, is within the scheme of delegation for the Cabinet .

Director of Resources' Financial Comments (C&C/RWK)

The financial implications are set out in the report.

Background Papers Available for Inspection

10 year Strategy for tackling Teenage Pregnancy in Nottinghamshire County 2001.

Electoral Division(s) Affected

All