



Wakefield Teenage Pregnancy Strategy

The Teen Pregnancy Strategy for Children, Young People and Families in the Wakefield District 2024-28

Foreword

In Wakefield, we are ambitious for all our districts children and young people to be happy, healthy, and safe, thriving in communities where families and services work together to help them achieve their potential and dreams. We recognise that teen parents will need support and a strong local partnership will help achieve this ambition.

This strategy has been developed jointly with partners and young people from across the district including Wakefield Council, Voluntary Community Social Enterprise Sector (VCSE) and Health & Education colleagues. Our strategy outlines key priorities to ensure we continue to improve the experiences of teen parents and their children, measure impact and build on the work to date, ensuring to improve outcomes.

All children, young people and their families should benefit from the Wakefield Families Together approach. This will provide integrated multi-agency support from the earliest opportunity through to adulthood and beyond. Parents need to know what support is available including self-help, knowing what to expect from all services,

so that they can access the right support at the right time to enable them to make the best choices for their children.

For this strategy to succeed, it recognises that engagement with families and their communities, voluntary partners across the sector, is vital. It will evolve through wide engagement and consultation to ensure that all voices are heard and that contributions are reflected in the work that we do together.

Wakefield serves a richly diverse community and to be successful, this strategy must reach and improve the life chances of children and young people across the district.

Stephen Turnbull

Mr Stephen Turnbull

Interim Director of Public Health

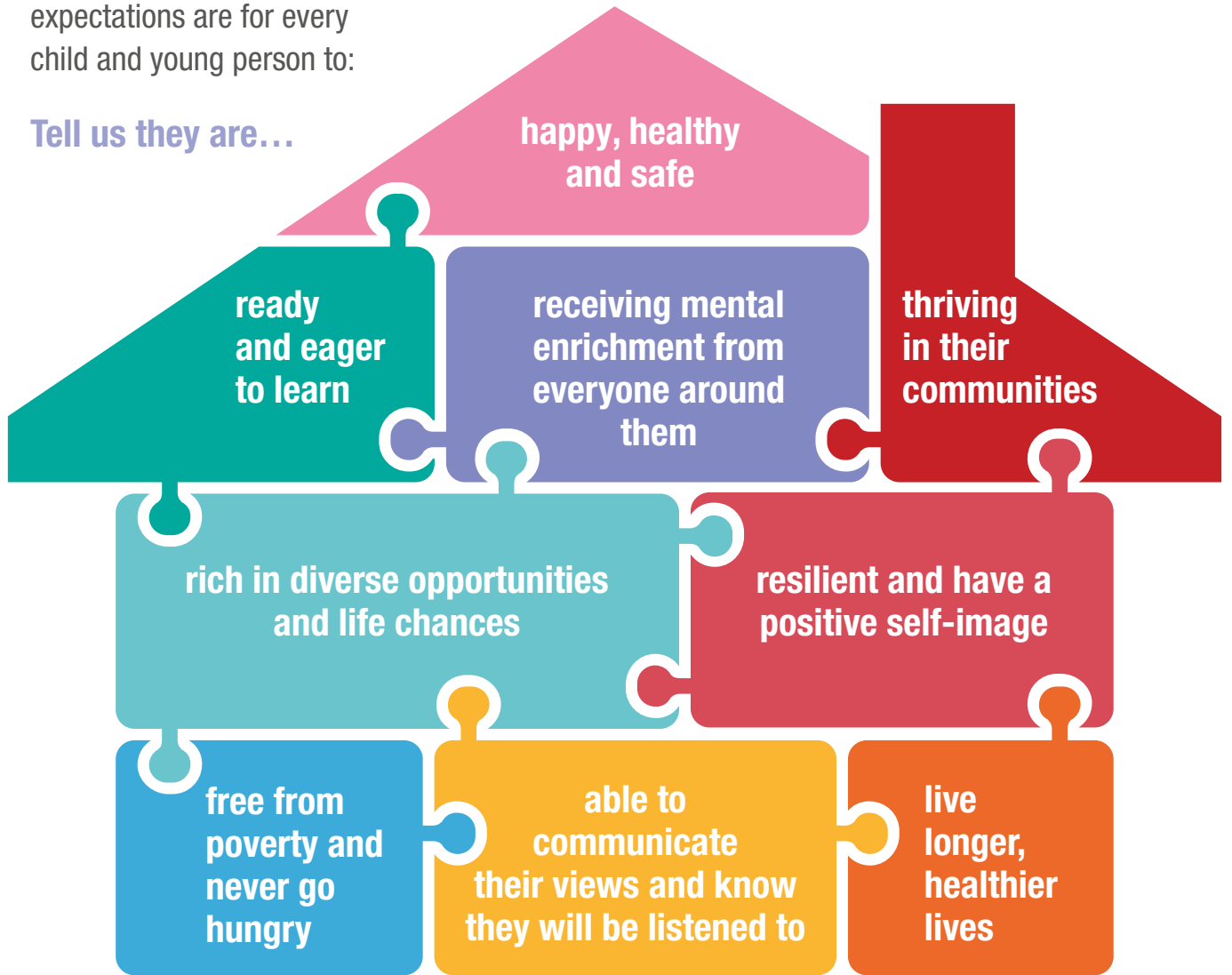
Margaret

Councillor Margaret Isherwood

Children & Young people

The Wakefield Families Together Partnership aspirations and expectations are for every child and young person to:

Tell us they are...



Introduction

The Wakefield Teenage Pregnancy Strategy identifies the action towards effective local delivery of comprehensive support, education and access to services for young people, alongside support for pregnant teenagers and young parents, as part of a whole system approach. By addressing the underlying factors that can lead young people to become pregnant or parents, we can support young people to make positive decisions, and active choices based on what matters to them to stay healthy, connected and safe.

Teenage pregnancy refers to under 18 conceptions, including those leading to live births and terminations. Research shows that teenage pregnancy is associated with poorer outcomes for both young parents and their children. Reducing rates of teenage

pregnancy and improving outcomes for young parents and their children is an important priority in Wakefield.

A Framework for Sexual Health Improvement in England¹ has an ambition to ‘Continue to reduce the rate of under-16 and under-18 conceptions’ and the Teenage pregnancy prevention framework² provides local authorities with guidance to help young people avoid unplanned pregnancies and develop healthy relationships.



Impact on health, education and life outcomes

Teenage mothers are less likely to finish their education, are more likely to bring up their child alone and in poverty and have a higher risk of mental health problems than older mothers. Infant mortality rates are 60% higher for babies born to teenage mothers.

The children of teenage mothers are 1.9 times more likely to die from Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy, twice as likely to be hospitalised for gastro-enteritis or accidental injury, have a 30% higher rate of low birth rate, and at age 5 be 4 months behind on spatial ability, 7 months behind on non-verbal ability and 11 months behind on verbal ability.

Young fathers are significantly more likely to experience depression and are twice as likely than older fathers to be unemployed at age 30. Over one third of young fathers want support for their mental health and over one third do not live with their child full time. Young fathers are often struggling in isolation while experiencing greater parenting stresses than older fathers.

There is growing recognition that socio-economic disadvantage (health and education inequalities) is both the cause and consequence of teenage parenthood.



National and local trends

Between 2011 and 2021 the national teenage pregnancy rate reduced by 57%. This national reduction has been achieved through a long term evidence based teenage pregnancy strategy, delivered with concerted effort by local government and health partners. However, despite this success, a continued focus is needed to sustain and accelerate the downward trend as it should be noted that the rate for Wakefield remains significantly higher (with a small increase in 2021) compared to the England rate and inequalities continue to exist between neighbourhood areas.

Local data

The under 18 conception rate in 2021 for Wakefield was 20.5 per 1000 population, a slight increase on 16.0 per 1000 population in 2020 (though 2020 rates nationally should be treated with caution as they are uncharacteristically low - possibly due to the pandemic and disruptions to registration services). The 10 year trend shows a decrease of 46% in the Wakefield under 18 conception rate from 2011 to 2021, with a 49% decrease for Yorkshire and Humber and 57% decrease for England.

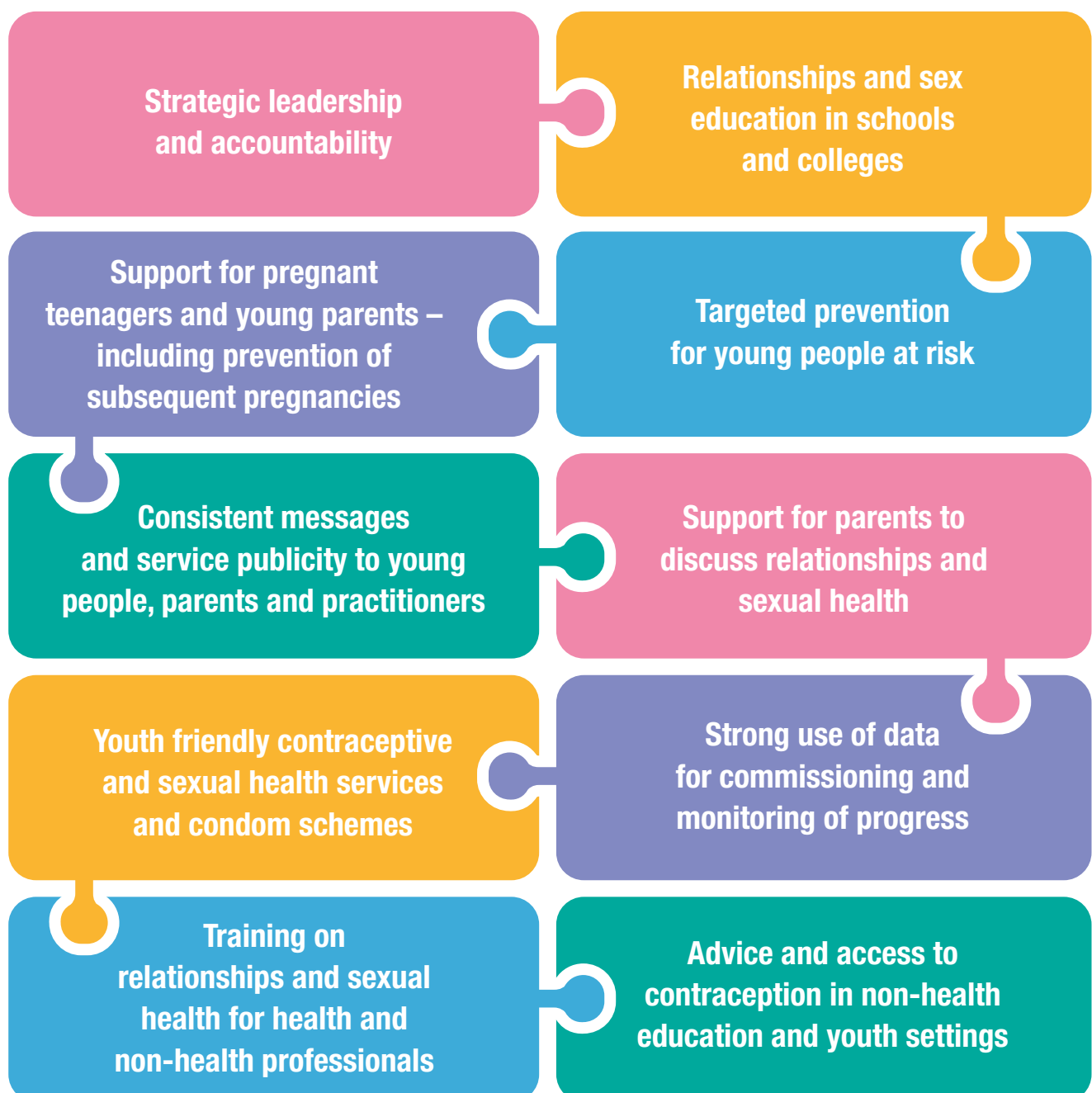
The under 16 conception rate in 2021 for Wakefield was 3.2 per 1000 population, this rate has declined consistently over 10 years. The 10 year trend shows a decrease of 67% for both Wakefield and England.

The percentage of conceptions to under 18s leading to abortion was 34% in 2011 compared to 49% in 2021.

Whole System Approach

The international evidence for reducing teenage pregnancy has shown that building the knowledge, skills, resilience and aspirations of young people and providing easy access to welcoming services, helps them to delay sex until they are ready to enjoy healthy, consensual relationships and to use contraception to prevent unplanned pregnancy. An open culture and ease of parental communication around sexual issues are also associated with lower teenage pregnancy rates.

The following 10 key factors from the Teenage Pregnancy Prevention Framework have been used to assess the approach in Wakefield and identify priority areas to help sustain and accelerate progress:



Wakefield's vision

Wakefield has a clear priority to give every child the best start in life as set out in the Wakefield District Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2025³:

“ We are ambitious for our district’s children and young people. Our vision is for children and young people to tell us they are happy, healthy and safe and thriving in communities where families and services work together to help them achieve their potential and dreams. ”

This vision, purpose and transformation is delivered through a number of key alliances and programmes including the Children and Young People’s Partnership Board, Wakefield Sexual and Reproductive Health Network and through the Wakefield Families Together programme which works to maximise effective early intervention and prevention by aligning key children and young peoples services to be delivered in an integrated and coordinated way.

This strategy is interdependent with other key strategies which share a common purpose to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families:

- Children and Young People’s Plan 2022-2025⁴, which sets out the priorities that matter to our children and their identify, safety, future, health and education.
- Early Help Strategy 2023-2025⁵, which sets out the vision as to how we will ensure services support children, young people and their families at the right time and place, underpinned by the principles of early help and prevention for all children young people, parents and families.
- Family Hub Start for Life Programme⁶, which sets out priorities and interventions; provides family help and support from pregnancy through to the early years delivered through a family and youth hub network across the district. Developing a parenting pathway is a key element of the programme which directly links to this strategy.

Our priorities

- Improve whole system working through interdependencies mapping and ensure the voice of young people influences the way we work together through co-production and engagement.
- Utilise different levels of data to inform commissioning and monitoring of progress such as local intelligence and service level data.
- Expand the C Card scheme (The C-card scheme is aimed at young people who can register to get free condoms, information and advice from community locations) - training, knowledge and locations.
- Share information of existing services across the system to improve support and signposting, ensuring vulnerable young people have access to the right help at the right time in the right place.
- Increase the confidence of parents/carers to discuss relationship and sexual health through engagement and support.
- Increase prevention work and raising aspirations of young people, through working in a co-produced way with VCSE organisations.
- Focus on support for teenage parents to reduce the likelihood of second pregnancies.
- Ensure everyone working with vulnerable young people have the knowledge and confidence to talk about relationships and sexual health.
- Ensure support is available for young fathers/partners.



How we will measure success

- All partners understand the impact their service contributes to the wider system around teenage pregnancy.
- Clear communication channels exist across the system that ensure and allow efficient and effective working.
- Services are appropriate, approachable, young person friendly and young people tell us that they know how to access them and have the confidence to do so.
- The number of young people accessing services increases.
- Partners tell us that data and intelligence is being shared to enable quick whole system early intervention and prevention actions.
- The number of C-card locations increases and C-card is accessed by an increased number of young people.
- There is a clear understanding across the system of the targeted prevention for young people at risk and young people are able to access this support.
- Parents/carers tell us that they are more confident to discuss relationship and sexual health with their young people.
- Young fathers/partners tell us they feel supported.
- Practitioners tell us that their confidence has improved.
- To continue the 10 year downward trend of the teenage pregnancy rates in Wakefield.

Wakefield Risk and Resilience Framework

The Wakefield Risk and Resilience Framework⁷ was created with children, young people, families & practitioners with a particular focus on teenage pregnancy. The framework supports the Wakefield Families Together partnership.

www.riskandresilience.org.uk



Footnotes

- ¹ A Framework for Sexual Health Improvement in England (2013)
- ² Teenage Pregnancy Prevention Framework (2018)
- ³ Wakefield District Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022 – 2025
<https://www.wakefielddistricthcp.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Wakefield-District-Health-and-Wellbeing-Strategy-2022-2025.pdf>
- ⁴ Wakefield's Children and Young People's Plan 2022-2025
www.wakefieldfamieliestogether.co.uk/about-us/our-vision/
- ⁵ Wakefield's Early Help Strategy 2023-2025
www.wakefieldfamieliestogether.co.uk/about-us/our-vision/
- ⁶ Family Hubs and Start for Life programme
www.gov.uk/government/collections/family-hubs-and-start-for-life-programme
- ⁷ The Wakefield Risk and Resilience Framework
www.riskandresilience.org.uk

Find out more about the
services and support available:
wakefieldfamieliestogether.co.uk

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