

## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT – RESULTS

<b>Title of Policy</b>	Pregnancy and Parenthood in Young People Strategy
<b>Summary of aims and desired outcomes of Policy</b>	The Pregnancy and Parenthood in Young People Strategy aims to drive actions that will decrease the cycle of deprivation associated with pregnancy in many young people under 18 and provide extra support for young parents, particularly those who are looked-after up to age of 26 in line with the Children and Young Peoples (Scotland) Act 2014.
<b>Directorate: Division: team</b>	Health Protection Division Population Health Improvement Directorate

### Executive summary

This is the first Scottish Strategy focused on pregnancy and parenthood amongst young people. It aims to increase the choices and opportunities available to young people which will support their wellbeing and prosperity across the life course. Evidence shows that having a pregnancy at a young age is a contributor to the cycle of poor health and poverty as a result of the associated socio-economic factors before and after pregnancy as opposed to the biological effects of young maternal age. The Strategy therefore addresses the fundamental causes of pregnancy in young people and its consequences, with actions focused on how we can impact on the wider environmental and social influences and individual experiences which effect inequalities of this particular group.

The strategy feeds into the National outcomes:

- We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society
- Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens
- We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk

The EQIA indicated that the majority of the Strategies' actions were expected to impact on young people equally, at least in terms of the protected characteristics for which data is available. But it was noted that there was limited evidence generally in relation to the following protected characteristics: Gender Reassignment; Sex (in terms of fathers); Sexual Orientation; Religion and Race. These gaps suggest the need to improve evidence-gathering. However, for the purposes of this EQIA, the evidence gaps did not materially affect the overall results. This is because the Strategy will in the main affect Community Planning Partnerships involved in planning, delivering and monitoring young people's services (and as such, not subject to protected characteristics); and users of services whose protected characteristics will

naturally be taken account of, given that the services are intended to be person-centred.

As for promoting equality, the Strategy aims to have positive outcomes for young people and young parents and advance equality of opportunity and access to services.

## **Background**

Pregnancy in young people is often a cause and a consequence of social exclusion and should not be seen narrowly as a health challenge. Reducing levels of pregnancy in young people helps to reduce the likelihood of poverty and a recurring cycle from one generation to the next. A report by the Institute of Fiscal Studies concluded that to significantly reduce levels of teenage pregnancies you cannot concentrate on high risk groups alone, therefore a proportionate universalism approach is needed to ensuring the needs of young people are met. Universal services, across all agencies, have an important role to play in identifying and supporting the needs of young people. These responsibilities will be strengthened through the commencement of the provisions and duties in relation to the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. The Act will further the Scottish Government's ambition for Scotland to be the best place to grow up by placing children and young people at the heart of planning and services and ensuring their rights are respected across the public sector.

The rate of pregnancy (defined as all conceptions i.e. live births and abortions) in young people has been decreasing in Scotland but it is still high compared to other comparable western countries and remains a concern for policy makers and communities (appendix 1). Between 2007 and 2013, Scotland experienced decreases in the pregnancy rate in the under 20, 18 and 16 age groups. However, the gap in inequality is increasing. The data shows that young people living in the most deprived areas are 4.6 times more likely to experience a pregnancy and nearly 12 times more likely to continue the pregnancy as someone living in the least deprived areas of Scotland.

## **The Scope of the EQIA**

A online consultation with young people aged 11-25 took place in November 2014 which had over 800 responses regarding what they would like to see as part of the strategy to help meet their needs. A public consultation on initial proposals for a new pregnancy and parenthood in young people strategy took place between 7 July 2015 and 29 September 2015. We received 66 responses from a broad mix of interested parties including community planning partnerships, local authorities, third sector organisations, Health Boards and individuals. During the development phase the policy team also met with various stakeholders and groups to ensure a wide range of needs were considered as part of the CRWIA and EQIA. Taking account of the feedback and analysis from the consultation, the CRWIA and EQIA aims to ensure that the concerns raised are addressed.

The likely effects of the proposals were assessed through a range of evidence, including a consultation with young people and a full public

consultation. Scottish Government Policy officials, Analytical Services and NHS Health Scotland colleagues also examined evidence from a range of studies, reports and surveys, including:

- NHS Health Scotland (2015) Outcomes Framework evidence paper for the Pregnancy and Parenthood in Young People Strategy.
- Policy Mapping for the Pregnancy and Parenthood in Young People Strategy.
- Young Scot Report on Co-designing the Pregnancy and Parenthood in Young People Strategy.
- Scottish Government (2013) Growing Up in Scotland. Growing Up in Scotland is the longitudinal research study tracking the lives of thousands of children and their families from the early years, through childhood and beyond. Housing is covered as part of this.
- The policy objectives of the Strategy have been developed through building on the Health and Sport Committee's inquiry report on teenage pregnancy and extensive consultation and discussion with stakeholders.
- In July 2015, the Scottish Government launched a Consultation on the pregnancy and parenthood in young people strategy. It received 66 responses. They came from a range of interested parties including third sector organisations, NHS, academia, individuals and local authorities. The Scottish Government had the responses analysed independently.
- During the consultation period, NHS Health Scotland also held consultation events in Aberdeen, Glasgow and Edinburgh to highlight the consultation to key stakeholders and encourage them to respond. Approximately 180 people attended the events.

### **Key Findings**

The EQIA process has confirmed that the Strategy is expected to have a positive or neutral impact on service users, at least in terms of the protected characteristics for which data is available. The Strategy is unlikely to impact on the elimination of unlawful discrimination or on promoting good relations. In terms of advancing equality of opportunity, the policy is expected to generate some positive impacts.

### **Recommendations and Conclusion**

In shaping the policy for pregnancy and parenthood in young people, we were confident that it would not impact adversely or unfairly on any groups. To ensure this, our consultation included a question on equality impacts to which comments were invited. The comments we received did not indicate that there would be any adverse equality impact. The EQIA process has provided reassurance that the proposed Strategy for pregnancy and parenthood in young people is not discriminatory and is unlikely to give rise to any issues that would adversely affect service users with protected characteristics.

However, we did take on board comments on the importance of engagement in identifying equalities issues. Therefore, we have ensured that an action is included to help with evidence gaps for certain groups of the population.

In terms of plans for implementation, monitoring and review, the Strategy provides for continual review of the Strategy and its actions and also through formal evaluation. We will ensure that the Strategy observe equality requirements. In developing the arrangements for planning, reporting and evaluation of the Strategy, we will ensure that all parties involved are reminded of the need to consider equality issues, including equality of opportunity and equality of access.

In appointing the National lead for the Strategy, Scottish Ministers will continue to seek ways of advancing equality of opportunity.