

Press Release..



April 29, 2008

What do young parents really want?

The best people to identify what teenage parents want are the young people themselves. Community Links has published a short report detailing how service provision for young parents could be improved based on research by a group who are themselves young parents. Too often teen parents feel they are judged badly - people assume their pregnancy is unwanted; that mothers don't know who the father is, they are not in stable relationships and they are not good parents. In some cases this can be the opposite of their situation.

The Community Links "Everyday Innovators" method was used to carry out the research. This approach puts the experience of service users at the centre of the analysis and can lead to more effective services. The project, funded by the Clore Duffield Foundation, trained and supported a group of young parents to design and carry out research into What Young Parents Want. The method includes peer-to-peer research; creativity sessions and meetings with service providers and policy makers. The result is a short report full of good, realistic ideas for improving service provision and in the process helped the young parents gain confidence and skills one participant Sarah said: *"I felt this project helped me to interact with my child and peers. It gave me confidence to speak to people who offered services to Teen Parents; I hope it helps other young parents like me"*.

Angie Jasper from Community Links youth team who co-ordinated the project said: *"Whilst doing this project I was able to see the confidence being built up in the young parents, it gave them a chance to have a voice; they all feel like they have achieved something that is relevant to those working with this area of youth"*

Some interesting findings were identified, young parents are often all grouped together but a small age gap can make a big difference to what they need: a 14 year old parent may have very different needs and interests to a 19 year old parent. All the young parents however want projects where their children can have fun and are stimulated, they were keen to know that their children were learning allowing them to concentrate on their own educational or project work.

Copies of **What Young Parents Really Want** are available from LinksUK, Community Links 105 Barking Road Canning Town E16 4HQ. Tel: 020 7473 2270 or a copy can be downloaded from the website www.community-links.org Further information from the young parents' blog: <http://donthushdiscuss.blogspot.com> or linksUK blog www.community-links.org/linksuk

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. **Community Links** is an innovative charity running community-based projects in east London. For 30 years we have helped thousands of children, young people, adults and older people in deprived neighbourhoods. LinksUK leads our programme of national work of training, consultancy, research, publications and demonstration projects sharing the local lessons across the country to widen the impact of our projects; inform policy makers and practitioners and generate lasting social change. www.community-links.org
2. **The Clore Duffield Foundation** kindly supported the work of this project
<http://www.cloreduffield.org.uk/>
3. **Interviews:** Some of the young participants will be available for media interview or further comment as well as **Angie Jasper** youth co-ordinator or **Aaron Barbour** research and policy manager. Tel: 020 7473 9666 And interviews e-mail: aaron.barbour@community-links.org
4. **Background information** about the young parents group can be found on their blog
<http://donthushdiscuss.blogspot.com>
5. **Background information** about linksUK from www.community-links.org/linksuk
6. ***What Young parents really Want*** is published by Community Links and is available free of charge by post or PDF download from our website www.community-links.org
7. **Photographs** taken by the project participants can be supplied as high resolution digital images suitable for re-printing. Contact richard.mckeever@community-link.org
8. **For further information** please contact:

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