

What do young parents want?

Summary of consultation with young parents autumn 07

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Introduction

Two events for young parents were held in September and October, entitled 'Every Young Parent Matters'. The events included a mixture of workshops, information stands, taster sessions for various therapies and consultation sessions on a range of topics. This report summarises the feedback received during the consultation sessions, giving a snapshot of the current concerns and hopes of the young parents involved.

Purpose

The consultation sessions were held with the following aims in mind:

- To engage with young parents on a broad range of issues of relevance to them
- To establish positive and negative experiences of being young parents and identify how support could be improved
- To establish positive and negative experiences of accessing a range of services and identify how services could be improved
- To use feedback gathered to inform future strategies around supporting young parents
- To enhance local services by relaying the feedback to them

Who took part?

Fifty six young parents attended the events, and most, although not all, took part in the consultation sessions. Of these, six were dads or dads to be and the rest mums or mums to be.

Age: the events were strictly targeted at teenage parents up to the age of 19yrs, but some people who came were older. The majority of attendees were in the 17-19yrs age bracket:

Age	No. at Hemel	No. at Stevenage	Total
15	3	0	3
16	1	1	2
17	6	5	11
18	8	6	14
19	6	5	11
20	5	1	6
21	2	0	2
22	1	1	2

Geography: In terms of geography, we have information about where some of the young parents live, but not all. The Stevenage event attracted young parents from a slightly wider field than the Hemel event:

Hemel Hempstead Event

Location	No. attending
Hemel	16
Watford	5
St Albans	2
Garston	1
Leavesdon	1
Rickmansworth	1

Stevenage Event

Location	No. attending
Stevenage	7
Hatfield	2
Hertford	2
Enfield	2
Hemel Hempstead	2
Hitchin	1
Stansted Abbots	1
Ware	1

Method

Although it is acknowledged that the methods used were not 'scientific' we did aim to be as consistent as possible across the 2 events by using exactly the same consultation questions (see Appendix for the lists of questions).

In the Hemel Hempstead event, 15 minute consultation sessions were tagged onto the end of subject specific workshops. For example, a workshop about money matters was followed by a 15 minute consultation about money issues. Each person had the opportunity to attend 2 consultation sessions on different subjects.

In Stevenage, the consultation sessions were held separately from the workshops, within a 30 min slot. Each person attended just one consultation session. In both cases young parents did not make a conscious choice about which consultation session to attend although, in Hemel the consultation subject was linked to the workshops which they *had* chosen.

The young dads and dads to be sessions were held in addition to the other consultation sessions and at a different time. This meant that dads and dads to be were able to participate fully in other consultation sessions as well as their own specific session.

All sessions were facilitated by a member of the event planning group, who asked a set of open questions and recorded answers on a flip chart. Participants were also given a hard copy of the questions and advised that if there were responses they would rather not give verbally they could hand in written, anonymous comments at the end.

Subjects covered

It had been the intention to run parallel groups across the two events and this was achieved for 5 of the 7 topic areas. However, 2 of the sessions were not held in Stevenage – ‘contraception and sexual health’, as this subject had not been factored into the programme for the event, and ‘training/education and childcare options’ as nobody turned up to attend this session. Subjects were as follows:

- Experiences of being a young parent
- Experiences of being a young dad/dad to be
- Employment
- Housing
- Money Matters
- Training options and help with childcare (Hemel only)
- Access to Contraception and Sexual Health Services (Hemel only)

Common themes

A reading of all the feedback taken together across the 2 events reveals some strong general themes:

On the positive side: firstly, strong positive feelings were identified with being a young parent including the joy of feeling love and the rewards of caring for a baby or small child. Dads too specifically reported feeling positive about their role in parenting. Secondly, support from TP Midwives, Connexions, Health Visitors, family and friends and support groups was very much appreciated and felt to make a real difference.

On the negative side: a picture emerges of young parents being generally quite keen to improve their circumstances but being continually frustrated in their attempts to do so, by a number of factors. These include a general lack of information and support, as well as services that do not cater to the specific needs of young parents.

Some cross cutting issues were highlighted at both events, as follows:

- Information. Accessing good quality information is a real issue. The need for better, more specific and more readily available information came up in nearly all the sessions. It would seem that young parents currently feel unable to make informed choices about many aspects of their lives due to this perceived lack of information on topics such as childcare options,

financial assistance, education and training opportunities, housing and employment

- Negative attitudes. Young parents strongly perceive that they are being judged by society including professionals in housing, benefits, potential employers and the older population in general
- Old enough to be a parent but not to be considered an equal citizen. Being a young parent can be a contradictory experience: on the one hand you are responsible for children and may be a householder. On the other you cannot vote or have a bank account in your name, or sign your own claim forms etc
- It is difficult to remain in a relationship. It is difficult for young parents to stay together as a couple because housing and benefits entitlement are easier to claim if you are single
- Hesitation in arranging childcare. Young mums feel guilty and anxious about leaving their child in the care of someone else in order to work or attend college
- What happens when you're 19? Generally information and support seems to stop at the age of 19yrs which causes some anxiety

Overall, the reading makes fairly depressing reading, showing in general that the young parents who participated had far more negative experiences than positive, across a broad range of services. But if we focus on what the young parents say they want, rather than on the long list of concerns, we can start to think constructively about what we might do to improve things.

Consultation feedback - What young parents want

The main issues arising from each consultation session are summarised below, along with details of what young parents would like to be done to improve things. For full details of each session see Appendix 2 .

Being a Young Parent

Twenty four young parents attended a session about being a young parent.

Being a young parent proves to be both a positive and negative experience. Positive feelings were all to do with the joy of having a child, in terms of having someone to love, look after and teach. A lot of comments were also made about the advantage of being a youthful parent, with enough energy and time to enjoy parenting as well as still having time to pursue a career in the future and even to be young enough to enjoy grandchildren one day.

Negative experiences (and more of these were reported than positive) centred around a number of factors. Some young parents described having negative 'feelings' such as being scared, stressed, angry and having mood swings. Other concerns were about the attitude of others towards young

parents with some reporting being stared at, judged or dismissed 'even by professionals'. There were also some practical issues such as lack of sleep, and not knowing what is right and wrong in terms of looking after children. Finally, not knowing where to find information made it difficult to access support.

Support that had been accessed so far included groups, courses, mums and other family members, midwife, health visitor and partner. There was strong endorsement for support groups, and some ideas about what makes them work well.

It was generally felt that things would be better for young parents if there was more information about support and it was more readily available. It would also make a difference if society was not so judgemental and if something could be done to change negative attitudes.

What young parents want

- More support groups for young parents, facilitated by young parents if possible
- More accessible information about what support is available
- More information from GP and midwife
- Somebody to coordinate all the information for you
- Better financial and housing support
- More positive attitude from society in general towards young parents

Being a young dad/dad to be

In all, six dads attended one of these sessions, which were facilitated by Will Crowhurst, TP outreach worker.

The young dads felt quite strongly that their needs are overlooked. In many cases they perceive that things are easier if the mum is a single woman rather than being part of a couple.

Feedback suggested that there is a need for services to be more inclusive when it comes to young dads, and to respond more directly to young dad's needs. Information resources specifically for young dads would be a positive way forward and providing more opportunities for young dads to meet informally would also be welcomed.

What young dads want

- Specific support for young dads via professionals including help with accessing benefits and housing
- Support groups specifically for young dads
- Specific information for young dads including on how to deal with relationships/pregnancy
- More flexibility and support from employers

- Improvements to benefits and housing so that couples are not forced to separate

Housing

Twenty three young parents took part in a housing consultation session.

Far more negative housing experiences were reported than positive. Housing is a pressing concern, made worse by unreliable and contradictory advice, delivered in an unsympathetic way . The few positive experiences mentioned were that one person had eventually got accommodation, that the council had given good advice about the housing process and that the midwife had been helpful.

The negative comments were largely focused on council housing departments. It was felt that staff were unhelpful and reliable information hard to come by. There were also cases of inaccurate or contradictory information being given and in one case a feeling that 2 councils argued about who was responsible for helping.

Inevitably, there were also comments around inadequate housing circumstances. In workshops preceding the consultation at Hemel (involving 17 people) the groups were asked to describe their current housing circumstances. Hardly any were in permanent accommodation. Many were living with family in almost intolerable overcrowding situations or in hostels in which they did not feel comfortable. Some had already experienced homelessness and some faced a threat of homelessness imminently.

Surprisingly, very few of those consulted had used the services of HYHG or even heard of them.

What young parents want

- Safe, clean housing with enough space to meet needs of family
- Clearer and more accessible information on what you are entitled to and how to access it
- Information about housing available at Jobcentre as well as council offices
- Housing staff who:
 - know what they are doing
 - do what they say they'll do
 - are polite and give you enough time
- Once re-housed young parents want:
 - help with managing money
 - information on start up grants
 - help in dealing with gas, electric, bills etc
 - floating support

Money Matters

Seventeen young parents took part in a money matters consultation session.

Again, more negative experiences were encountered than positive. Main concerns focused on inadequate information, unhelpful staff who often seem unable to advise properly, and not being able to manage on very limited resources. There was a need for better information, advice about budgeting and staff with a more positive attitude toward young parents and better able to deal with young parents' enquiries.

What young parents want

- Specific staff at jobcentres trained in helping young parents
- Full, clear, easily accessible information about everything you are entitled to
- Benefits staff to work in partnership with health staff and provide a pack containing all the information you need
- Jobcentre staff that are forthcoming with all the information that applies to young parents
- Budgeting advice

Employment

Seven young parents attended a session on employment. Only one of the young parents was currently in employment, which was weekend/part time. Some were keen to work but others wanted to wait until their child was at school. There were clearly frustrations around accessing employment and a feeling that employers regarded young parents negatively.

The easiest route into employment was via friends/family recommending the young parents to their employers. Approaching employers directly did not prove effective.

It was also felt that many jobs were unattainable as they required exams or experience. Childcare was not felt to be flexible enough or affordable to enable young parents to go back to work.

What young parents want

- Lone parent advisors at Jobcentres specifically trained in helping young parents
- Clearer job adverts with precise details about timings and conditions so young parents know if they can realistically apply
- Affordable childcare
- More user friendly databases for job searching
- More flexible employers
- Better employer attitude towards young parents

Training/education options and help with childcare

11 young parents attended this session at Haven House. The session did not run at Bowes Lyon in Stevenage.

The majority of the young parents would like to access training or education. However, many of them felt that there are too many barriers to make it possible – eg, childcare not being flexible enough to meet their needs, courses not being run at suitable times, travel and childcare costs being too high etc. There was also, for some, a confidence issue about returning to education. And none of those taking part felt positive about the thought of leaving their child in the care of others.

What young parents want

- More information about funding for education/training for young parents
- More and clearer information about childcare and help with childcare costs
- Advice and help for those lacking confidence to help them return to education
- More government help to ensure young parents don't lose out on benefits
- More information for those over 19yrs and help to get on the career ladder
- Training/education opportunities in: nursing; childcare; mid-wifery; fashion; cooking/catering; maths and English; first aid; IT; admin; work related training; youth work via connexions

Contraception and sexual health

This session was attended by 2 young women on work experience who were helping with the event and were not young parents, and 2 young parents.

Although the group were quite positive about the ease with which they could access contraception and information, it should be remembered that the young women on work experience were still at school and therefore currently in receipt of information, so their views are not representative of young parents.

It is interesting to note that the main negative experience was cited as being the expense of emergency contraception. This suggests that there is not a good level of awareness about the availability of free emergency contraception.

What young parents want

- More public information about the risks of STIs including adverts in public places and TV

Next Steps

It should be possible to look at each of the identified 'wants' and decide how to progress on each issue. In some cases solutions might already be in hand – for example the planned production of the young parents' directory will answer some of the needs expressed for clearer information. In some cases solutions may lie within the teenage pregnancy strategy, and in other cases it will be a case of contacting specific services to see how they can act on the feedback. Other issues will be harder to deal with – such as changing society's attitude towards young parents.

In order to act on the feedback given by young parents it is proposed that:

1. The planning groups for the 'Every Young Parent Matters' events initially assess the feedback and decide what can be done about each of the 'wants'
2. A set of proposals for taking action are agreed and taken forward by the teenage pregnancy partnership
3. A summary of the feedback and action to be taken is drafted and sent to the young parents who took part (where their addresses are known) and circulated to young parents support groups.

Appendix 1

Consultation Questions

Being a Young Parent

1. What positive experiences have you had with being a young parent or parent to be?
2. What negative experiences have you had with being a young parent or parent to be?
3. What sort of support has helped you the most so far? Who provided it? (eg, TP Midwife, young parents support group, connexions PA etc)
4. Are you in touch with a young parents' support group? Yes or no?
 - If yes – does the group meet your needs? Could it be better? How?
 - If no – Why not? (eg, haven't been put in touch with one, wouldn't want to join one etc)Whether yes or no – what sort of activities would you like to do at a young parents support group?
5. How could things be improved for young parents and parents to be?
6. Would receiving parenting support in some way either as part of a group or individually, be of benefit to you?

Being a young dad/dad to be

1. What positive experiences have you had with being a young dad or dad to be?
2. What negative experiences have you had with being a young dad or dad to be?
3. What sort of support have you received so far? (eg, ante natal group, young parents support group, one to one help from connexions P.A etc)
4. Has the support met your needs?
5. What sort of support would you like in the future?
6. Would you like the opportunity to meet other young dads? If so, how would you like to do this? What sort of activities would you like to do?

Employment

1. Are you currently in employment?
2. What are your feelings about accessing employment? Eg – is this something you want to do now? Or do you want to stay at home with your child/ren now?
3. What positive experiences have you had with job searching and accessing employment?
4. What negative experiences have you had with job searching and accessing employment?
5. Have you received any support?
 - If so from whom/which agency?
 - has the support been useful or not useful?
6. How could things be improved for young parents/parents to be who are trying to access employment?

Housing

1. What have been your positive experiences with accessing housing?
2. What have been your negative experiences with accessing housing?
3. Have you accessed any housing services for young people?
 - what do you think of these services?
 - were your needs met?
4. What sort of housing would be ideal for you?
5. What sort of housing support would you like if you were in your own accommodation?
6. How could the experience of accessing housing be improved for young parents?

Money Matters

1. What positive experiences have you had with accessing benefits/maternity grants etc?
2. What negative experiences have you had with accessing benefits/maternity grants etc?
3. What do you find most challenging about managing your money?
4. Have you received any support with the following:
 - budgeting advice
 - entitlement to benefitsIf so, from whom? (eg, young parents support group, Benefits Agency, CAB, friends family etc). Has the support been useful or not?
5. What type of support would you like in future?

Training Options and help with childcare

1. Would you like to access training or education options now or in the near future? What are your reasons (whether yes or no)
2. What would make it difficult for you to access training or education?
3. What would make it easier to access training or education?
4. What type of training or education are you interested in?
5. How do you feel about arranging for your child/ren to be looked after whilst you train or study?
6. What do you think would help you to get the childcare support you need?

Contraception and sexual health

1. Where do you go to for advice/information about contraception?
2. What positive experiences have you had with accessing contraception?
3. What negative experiences have you had with accessing contraception?
4. Do you feel that contraception and sexual health information and advice is adequate for young people? How could it be improved?
5. What are your biggest concerns around sexual health?

Appendix 2

Consultation Feedback

Detailed feedback from each of the sessions is summarised below

Being a young parent

1. **Positive experiences were reported as:**

- being the main influencer/teacher
- learning what to do
- feeling love
- having time to devote to baby
- 'it's 'my' baby'
- being young enough to enjoy children and one day grandchildren
- still having time left for a career
- looking forward to all the fun
- children won't be 'embarrassed' by parents
- having more energy than older parents
- 'precious moments, milestones'

2. **Negative experiences were:**

Feelings

- feeling scared
- having mixed feelings
- feeling angry, stressed and tired
- mood swings

Other

- 'body not mine'
- being judged/stared at even by professionals
- dismissed as 'too young'
- not knowing what's right and wrong when looking after your child
- putting life on 'hold'
- lack of sleep
- feeling neglected at hospital
- not knowing where to find information

3. **We asked what support had helped most so far:**

- young parents support groups and courses
- talking with other mums
- midwife (information has been consistent, reliable and reassuring)
- ante natal class – 'brilliant', 'confidence building', 'get to know others of similar age', 'no judgement'
- health visitor
- mum and other family members
- partner
- advice (when given in a non judgemental way)
- honesty

- 'Super nanny'
 - peer support
4. **We asked whether any of them were in touch with a young parents' support group and if so what it was like**
- Many young parents indicated that they had been, and gave the following comments:
- it's excellent
 - would recommend it as can meet parents and children
 - 'new chances', 'new friends'
 - crèche and courses were appreciated
 - could extend it to 19yrs plus
 - group is too structured now – used to be better
5. **Those who had not been to a young parents' support group gave the following reasons:**
- didn't know about them – it's hard to find out what's available
 - locality
 - accessibility
 - feeling shy
 - scared of being judged
6. **We asked how things could be improved for young parents and parents to be and received the following responses:**
- more groups facilitated by young parents or someone who has been a young parent
 - more information about what's available
 - more information from GP, midwife (leaflets etc)
 - educate the public not to judge
 - have a coordinator of all the information that's available
 - better housing service
 - improve financial benefits in the early years
7. **Finally, we asked whether support with parenting either as a group or individually would be of benefit:**
- all responded yes, in both groups
 - the young parents preferred 'closed' groups to build trust
 - five people in one of the groups also said they would like individual support

Dads and Dads to be

1. **Positive experiences were described as:**
- actually being a dad
 - support received from TP midwife, Connexions, a young parents support group and family

- assistance with housing from an MP

2. **Negative experiences - many of these were given, as follows:**

- information, advice and support is not directed at young dads and does not meet their needs
- the emphasis for information and support always seems to be on young single mums
- it is easier to separate than stay together in terms of being re housed and accessing benefits and dads are not allowed in hostels if it's a single application
- finding affordable housing is a big issue
- employers do not make allowances for young dads when they need to take time off for parenting purposes
- ante natal classes were during the day instead of in the evening
- being judged
- there is nowhere to release stress

3. **We asked what were the main sources of support for dads:**

So far support had come from family, friends, TP midwife, and support with housing issues

4. **We asked whether the support had met needs:**

Some of the support received had met needs but most felt that there needed to be more support specifically for dads and dads to be

5. **When asked what sort of support they would like in the future, the young dads listed the following:**

- specific support for young dads via professionals including help with benefits and housing
- support group for dads
- information on how to deal with relationships and pregnancy
- support from work/employers
- improvements to benefits so that mums don't have to claim to be single if this is not so
- IT support

6. **When asked whether they would like the opportunity to meet other young dads and if so how and where etc there was popular support, with the following responses:**

- yes, young dads could meet at the same time young mums do
- have antenatal classes and post natal specifically for dads
- needs to be a group of young dads sharing experiences, not one to one
- groups should be informal but with help/advice

Housing

1. Positive housing experiences were listed as:

- eventually got accommodation
- good advice given by the council about the process
- midwife was helpful
- the amount of points I was given by the council

2. Negative housing experiences were:

council housing departments

- information and advice from the council is unhelpful
- phones are not answered
- not much info is available about what to do/ what you're entitled to
- inconsistent information
- issues over whether the council has a duty to help
- 'council has not been helpful – they say until my baby is born there is nothing they can do'
- 'staff are rude when they know your age and talk across you to your mum and dad'
- being passed between 2 councils arguing who is responsible
- 'no one seems to want to help – they pass the buck'

other issues

- current housing being overcrowded and/or inappropriate
- the amount of time you have to wait for feedback
- it took a long time to be helped
- limited housing options
- 'get a flat' – it's a myth
- not clear on how you stand if you're a couple
- partner not being allowed to stay at the hostel

3. The young parents were asked whether they had accessed any housing services for young people:

Responses were mixed. Altogether 3 had accessed support via HYHG and 2 via councils. A large number had never heard of HYHG. Two that had accessed support via HYHG found them to be helpful, but one felt the advice given was confusing. Those accessing support for young people via councils thought it was difficult to access

4. We asked what the young parents considered to be ideal housing for them:

This was mainly identified as being 2 bedrooms, house with a garden if possible, but above all else somewhere safe and clean and suitable for a baby and with enough space

5. When asked what type of housing support they would like once in their own homes the young parents responded:

- help with managing money
- information on 'start-up' grants for moving in
- Help in dealing with gas, electric, bills etc

- 'floating' support was preferred to having to go to an office

The young parents' ideas for improving housing support were:

- be clear with information: people don't know what they're entitled to
- provide more information and make it easier to get hold of
- housing information and help should be available at job centres and council offices
- staff that do what they say they are going to do and know what they are doing
- staff that are polite when dealing with young parents and give you enough time
- leaflets and information should be sent to me in the post

Money Matters

1. Positive experiences regarding money matters were:

- Nothing (9)
- Getting maternity grant quickly (2)
- Midwife was very helpful with everything
- Connexions were helpful
- E.Y.S was helpful
- 'I got my Income Support very quickly after I applied'

2. Negative experiences were:

Information

- lack of information
- staff not forthcoming with information
- not being given the right information
- information incomplete – eg 'you apply for Income Support and they don't tell you about tax credits'

Staff

- Jobcentre staff don't help – they seem 'clueless' and 'don't answer your questions'
- Lone Parent Advisors don't seem to know what young parents are entitled to
- 'they give you the run-around – don't answer your phone calls'
- 'they lose your documents'
- 'staff make things worse – get your money wrong and then you have to sort it out'
- not being told what you are entitled to

Waiting

Having to wait a long time for money seemed to be a fairly common experience - eg 3 weeks for maternity grant, 12 weeks to get any benefits, 6-9 months to get Child Tax Credits

Other

- Filling in the form and getting someone to sign it
- All the benefits numbers are 0845 and are more expensive from a mobile

3. The following were given as the most challenging things about managing money:

- just not having enough money to live on (3)
- saving enough to pay the bills each month
- remembering to pay bills
- realising that money doesn't stretch- it's much harder when you get your own place - £100 doesn't go anywhere
- thinking about everything
- finding any money left for myself
- what I'm spending each month

4. We asked whether the young parents had received any support so far with budgeting advice or entitlement to benefits:

- 2 mums had accessed support from CAB. One had a good experience the other did not
- others had accessed support via connexions, midwife, health visitor EYS, Jobcentre 'my dad' and friends and had found the support helpful

5. The young parents were asked what sort of support they would like in the future:

staff

- have specific people trained in helping young parents at jobcentres
- benefits staff should work with health staff and give you a pack containing everything you need
- staff should not be rude
- real people
- let us know what we are entitled to

Other

- budgeting advice (4)
- being given the facts about what you are entitled to
- 'I would like any support and advice I can get'

Employment

Seven young parents attended a session on employment. Only one of the young parents was currently in employment, which was weekend/part time

1. We asked the young parents what their feelings were about accessing employment:

- 3 were keen to access employment
- 1 would consider employment after her baby is born
- 1 would like to go back to work when her child is at school
- 1 would rather stay at home
- 1 was starting a childcare course at college
- there were concerns over how having a job would affect benefits and whether you'd be any better off
- there were also concerns over the cost of childcare and leaving your child with a stranger

2. The following positive experiences with job searching and accessing employment were identified:

- it seemed to be a common experience in both groups that it was easier to access employment when a friend or family member recommended you to their employer
- support from family, e.g. with writing CV
- jobcentre CV writing course for over 18yrs
- working tax credits and child tax credits help with childcare

3. Negative experiences were identified as:

- professionals make assumptions about the kind of job that would be good for you
- not hearing anything back after putting in an application form
- all the jobs advertised in job centres/connexions need high exam results or experience you haven't got
- it's hard when young parents try to access employment directly themselves : end up leaving their CV with lots of different places and no one gets back to you
- employers are not flexible enough when it comes to considering what young parents can and can't do – eg, not being able to work late hours
- employers think young parents are unreliable
- no help with childcare if you have savings
- not much support from lone parent advisors
- working tax credits are confusing
- it's hard to find work
- boring jobs
- can't afford childcare and it's not very flexible
- playgroups won't take children until they are 2yrs and 9mths

4. We asked about support that had been provided so far – who provided it and was it helpful?

- 1 person had had a very negative experience with a lack of support - they had been out of school since the age of 13yrs and nobody had been in touch with advice or support, and connexions had not been helpful (this experience had occurred outside Herts))
- generally though, Connexions was felt to have provided good support that was tailored to the individual and actually did practical things to help you

5. Finally we asked how could things be improved for young parents who are trying to access employment:

- lone parent advisors at jobcentres should be available for under 18s
- clearer job adverts with precise details about timings and conditions so you know whether it's something you could consider
- need affordable childcare
- someone to offer support post 19yrs when connexions can't help any more
- more user friendly databases for job sharing

Training/education options and help with childcare

1. We asked whether the young parents would like to access training or education. The following responses were given:

Yes

- IT support
- youth work through connexions
- more free courses
- self help to join courses

Unsure

- 1 person was unsure

The following issues were raised on the subject:

- training/education needs to be local to where you live
- over 19s find it hard to get support – childcare costs
- wait until children are old enough to attend government paid play group
- Sat/Sun courses would be better as it's easier to get childcare
- nurseries and childcare are not really available at weekends
- 1 day courses are hard as so much is crammed in

2. We asked what would make it difficult to access training or education:

- public transport is not reliable and too expensive
- childcare is an issue for many - nursery times are not suitable for a lot of courses, and some feel guilty for leaving their child
 - funding needs to be readily available before or during courses as opposed to being re-imbursed after the course

3. We asked what would make it easier to access training or education:

- more information about funding for 'high' income and 'low' income families
- more information for those over 19yrs
- more information about childcare and help with costs
- advice and help for those who were bullied at school and are 'scared to go back to that situation'
- confidence in meeting new people needs to be boosted
- more help from the government and not losing out benefits wise
- help to get on the career path when you are older than 19yrs

4. The following were given as the types of training/education that the young parents were interested in:

- nursing
- childcare
- mid-wifery
- fashion
- cooking/catering
- maths and English
- first aid
- IT
- admin – pay roll, credit control, letter writing, how to speak on the phone
- work related training

5. We asked how the young parents felt about arranging for their children to be looked after:

- guilty
- worried
- wouldn't want a stranger looking after your child
- would ask my family as I trust them
- nervous

6. Finally we asked what the young parents thought would help them get the childcare they need:

- clear information
- internet access
- job centre
- inland revenue

Contraception and Sexual Health

1. We asked where the young parents would go to for advice/information about contraception:

Most young people would go to the school, school nurse or leaflets to access advice and information about contraception. Other sources were magazines, friends, internet, clinic, doctor and health centre

2. Positive experiences were:

Helpful staff, there being lots of contraception types to choose from and condoms being easy to access

3. And negative:

Negative experiences were reported as being that the 'morning after' pill is too expensive and also that a friend had experienced chest pains with the pill

4. We asked whether they felt contraception and sexual health advice was adequate or could be improved:

Two commented that they thought it was easy to obtain information about contraception and sexual health but there was also a strong feeling that more needed to be done to advertise where to go for help and to raise the issue of STIs through public health information adverts in pubs, clubs, public toilets, TV etc

5. We asked what were the young people's biggest concerns around sexual health:

The biggest concerns in this area focused on STIs: including being unaware of having an STI, becoming infertile through not knowing you had an STI and there not being enough suitable protection from STIs