

## Evidence Based Public Health Practice

### Teenage Pregnancy



### Youth Outreach Nurse Specialist – Contraceptive Services Reducing Teenage Pregnancy and improving young people's sexual health

#### Introduction

The NST identified this initiative as an example of an outreach contraceptive and sexual health post which has been clearly focused and evaluated. Targeting sexually active vulnerable young people and those who are involved in risk-taking behaviour for contraceptive and sexual health advice and support is an important factor in reducing teenage pregnancy. Increasing the uptake of long acting reversible contraception (LARC) among sexually active young women with more chaotic lifestyles helps to protect them from unintended pregnancy. This initiative is demonstrating success in making contact and engaging with these target groups of young people.

#### Background

Berkshire West PCT covers the unitary councils of Reading, West Berkshire and Wokingham. The percentage of repeat under-19 abortions for the PCT was increasing steadily (9.2% in 2006, 12.3% in 2007 and 15.2% in 2008, higher than the national percentage in 2008 of 11%.)

A substantial proportion of the under-18 conceptions in this PCT are to young women from Reading and the Reading Teenage Pregnancy Needs Analysis (2009) identified that a significant number of under-18 conceptions were ending in abortion (53% of under-18 conceptions in 2007, n=67). This project was based on the premise that a reduction in the under-18 conception rate could be assisted through increasing access to contraception for young women, particularly Long Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC).

The focus of this project has been to deliver targeted specialist contraception and sexual health support to vulnerable young people at high risk of unintended pregnancy and poor sexual health who are not effectively accessing mainstream services. A Youth Outreach Nurse Specialist (YONS) was appointed within the existing Contraceptive and Sexual Health Service. Clinical areas managed by the YONS are:

- Management of all contraceptive needs.
- Pregnancy advice, termination referral and follow up support.
- Basic sexual health screening and advice.
- Treatment of confirmed Chlamydia infections through the Chlamydia Screening Programme (CSP).
- Issuing of C-cards for the local condom distribution scheme.

- Sign posting to other agencies and services as required.

The nurse is trained to fit contraceptive implants, administer Depo injections, prescribe oral contraception, issue emergency contraception and provide treatment for Chlamydia as a non-medical prescriber. The nurse can carry these out in appropriate non clinical settings. Young women who opt for other forms of LARC are supportively fast-tracked to the main clinic.

To maximise reach and access, protocols, including care and referral pathways, were developed for the YONS. Assertive outreach has been key to the success of this service and we have used a persistent approach to support young people until such time that they feel ready to make informed contraceptive choices.

Consultation with young people drove the development of the service and is crucial to increasing access for vulnerable groups. Professionals have benefited from having one referral route into accessing contraceptive services for vulnerable young people, and the service has facilitated a better understanding of why there is a need to prioritise the sexual health needs of high risk groups.

## Aims and Objectives

### **Aim:**

Provide expert contraceptive care to young people who do not access this effectively through mainstream services, breaking down barriers that prevent engagement.

### **Objectives:**

- Target young people considered to be at greater risk of teenage pregnancy and poor sexual health, including those who have recently had an abortion and those with complex clinical, social and psychological needs who are known to the local Children's Workforce.
- Engage with young people through a flexible and responsive service that is young person focused and where possible, delivering care in settings of their choice where they feel comfortable, at a time that suits them.
- Support sexually active young people, assisting them to make informed choices about methods of contraception that best suit their needs and lifestyle.
- Through discussion and support, increase uptake of LARC methods above other methods of contraception for this group of young women.
- Ensure that safeguarding assessments are undertaken in all consultations to identify and react to issues of exploitation and abuse.
- Reduce the PCT percentage of repeat under-19 abortions.
- Reduce the Reading under-18 conception rate.
- Reduce second conceptions to young mothers under-18 in Reading.

## Appropriateness

The YONS is successful in making contact with a wide variety of sexually active young people who previously had not been engaged with health professionals for their contraceptive and sexual health needs. Referrals from the Termination of Pregnancy Service have led to wider support needs being identified and addressed, as well as their contraceptive needs.

### Reasons for referral:

- Young women under-19 who have had a termination of pregnancy.
- Young people under-19 who are at high risk of, or causing, unintended conception e.g. young people supported by Children's social care, those with erratic school attendance or attending Pupil Referral Units, those who are already mothers, those in the criminal justice system, involved in substance misuse and those who are NEET.
- Young people who are identified as very vulnerable through risk-taking behaviour.

### Follow up consultations and interventions are largely due to:

- Management of problematic bleeding patterns as a result of Long Acting Reversible Contraceptive (LARC) methods. This is managed by early intervention and support by the YONS in order to minimise the removal rates and can take multiple interventions.
- Support with their chosen contraceptive or a change in method.
- Issues that have arisen due to unplanned pregnancy or termination.
- Sexual Health Issues.
- Other issues that require referral or sign posting to another service.

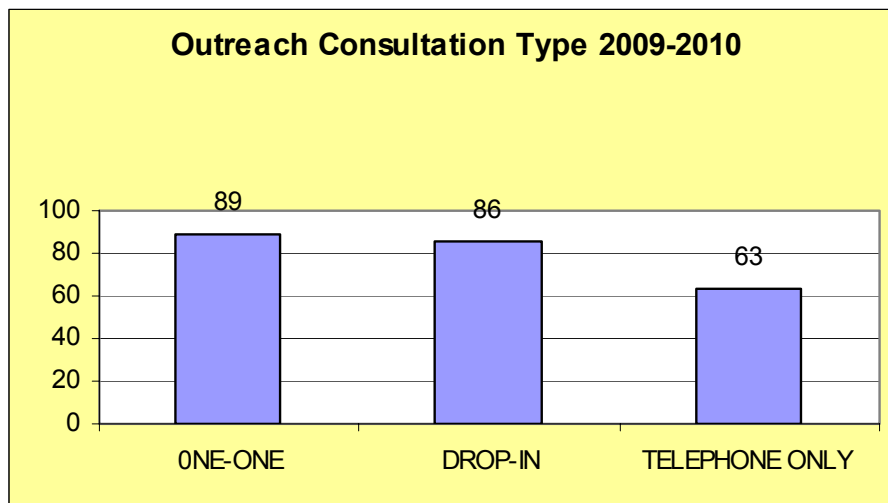
Whilst young mothers are encouraged to visit the contraceptive and sexual health service in Reading for their Day 21 contraception appointment, the attendance rate is low. However there is a good level of engagement through the YONS.

## Accessibility and Acceptability

Consultations and clinical delivery take place in a variety of non clinical and clinical settings across Reading including Connexions, Health and Social Services Centre, schools, colleges, pupil referral units, NHS Walk-in Centre in the local shopping centre, GP practices and through home visits. The venue is very much driven by the choice of the young person as it is considered essential that they feel comfortable, will turn up and engage with the nurse - any setting is considered, providing it is fit for purpose and can offer a confidential area.

### Drop-in clinic sessions are held at:

- Pupil Referral Units
- Young People's Substance Misuse Service
- Youth Offending Team
- Local secondary school with a pupil roll particularly vulnerable to teenage pregnancy
- YMCA supported accommodation for young people
- Young Mums' Drop in



**These figures capture the nature of the first consultation or attempt to contact that takes place, repeat consultations are not shown. The vast majority of telephone contact is following up referrals from the Termination of Pregnancy Service.**

### Interventions

Consultations are undertaken face-to-face or by telephone, or occasionally by text messaging. Due to the complex needs and situations of the young people targeted by this service, it can take multiple consultations and interventions to complete an episode of care. The majority of consultations are initiated by referral from another agency or from YONS drop-in clinics in non clinical settings, so building relationships based on trust plays a major part in the willingness of the young person to engage with YONS contraception and sexual health service.

## Service User Feedback

“The young people I work with are resistant to attending drop-in clinics etc. and through the flexibility of the service I have been able to co-ordinate with the YONS to take them to consultations so that their needs are met. Without this level of support they would have been unlikely to receive contraceptive/sexual health advice/guidance/intervention.” **Referring professional**

## Partnership Working

Robust partnerships with services supporting vulnerable young people have been crucial to the success of the service. These include:

- Teenage Pregnancy multi agency network
- Contraception and Sexual Health Service
- Local termination of pregnancy service provider, Marie Stopes International
- Local schools
- Pupil Referral Units
- Further Education venue
- Connexions
- Intensive Services (Youth Offending Team / Substance Misuse)
- Supported accommodation services for young people
- Community School Nurses
- Health Visitors
- Youth Services
- Social Services
- Community pharmacists
- Primary Care Services
- Youth Counselling

### **Pathways developed include:**

- Youth Outreach Nurse Specialist Consultation Pathway.
- Referral Pathway for under-19s in the Berkshire West PCT area who have undergone a Termination of Pregnancy at Marie Stopes International (MSI) Reading.
- Positive Intervention Pathway to engage young mums with contraception by Day 21 post-delivery and pre-natal contraceptive questionnaire. This pathway has been

further developed where there is a high risk of a further pregnancy e.g. if the baby is likely to be taken into care.

- Integrated pathway for new residents being inducted to Reading YMCA which provides supported accommodation for young people.
- Pregnancy testing pathway for the Youth Engagement Service linking to the YONS.

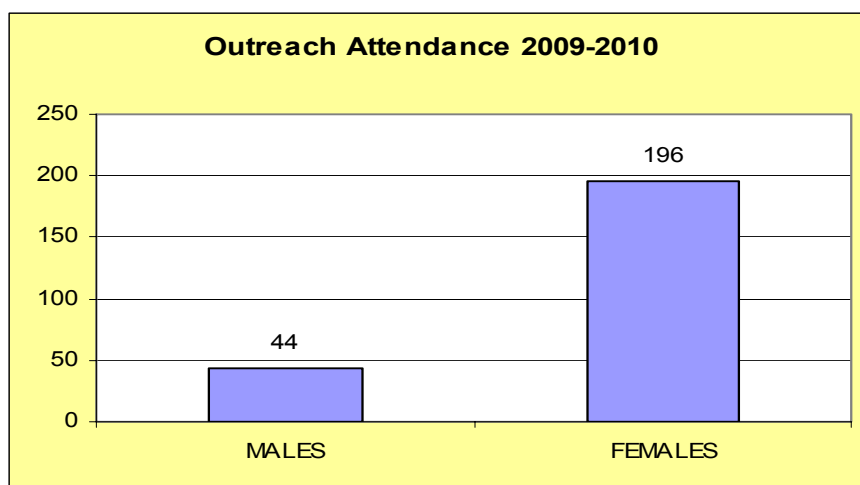
## Funding

The project has been initially supported through the Department for Health Improving Access to Contraception funds channelled through the Strategic Health Authority for £50,000 p.a. until March 2011. The PCT has identified a source for recurrent funding within its resources beyond March 2011.

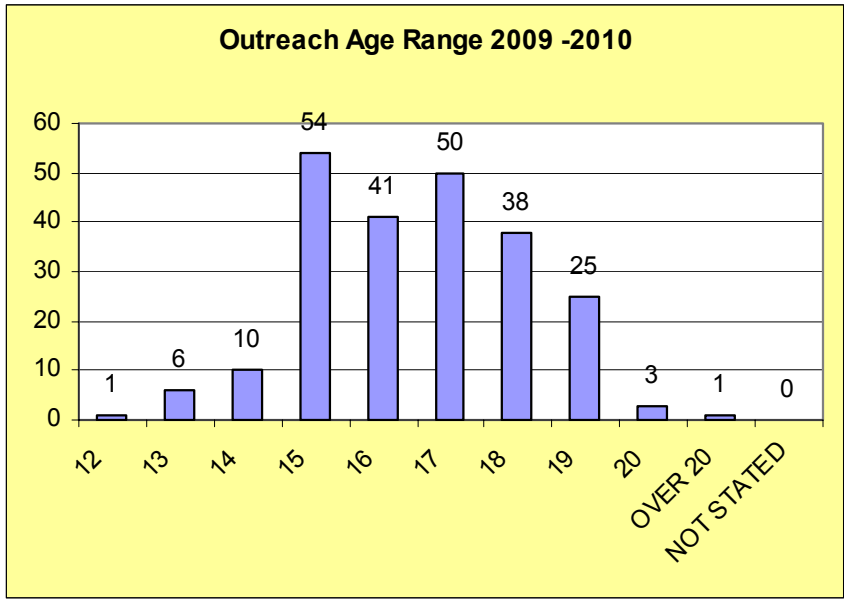
## Effectiveness, Efficiency and Equity

**Reach Number:** In 2009-2010, 240 young people were referred and 95% of these were contacted.

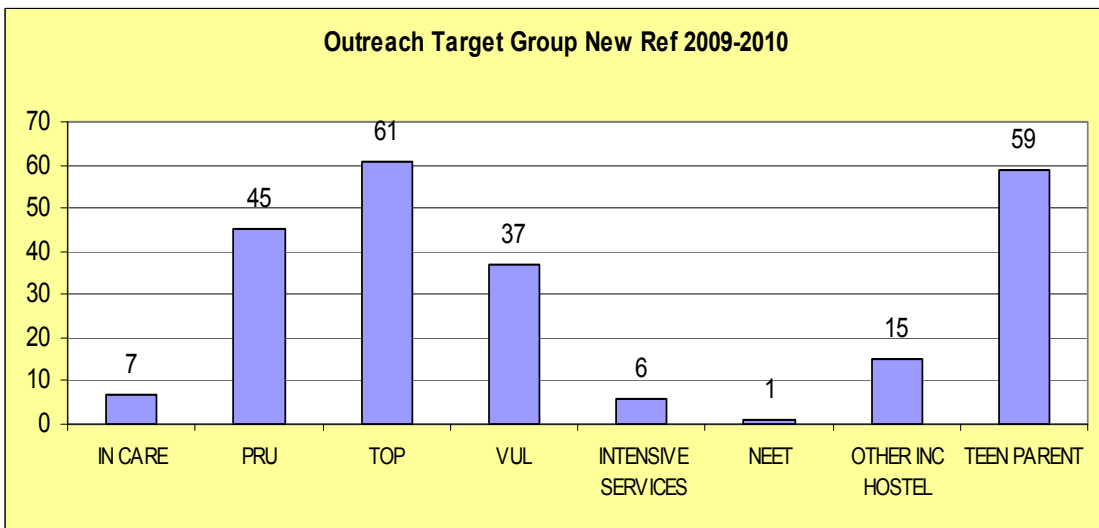
**Gender:** The target group for the YONS was initially females, however during drop-in sessions at pupil referral units and the YMCA a need was identified to support males with access to condoms, Chlamydia screening and sexual health advice. The Youth Offending Service also identified a need to see young males as a route to facilitating contraceptive interventions with their partners.



**Age:**



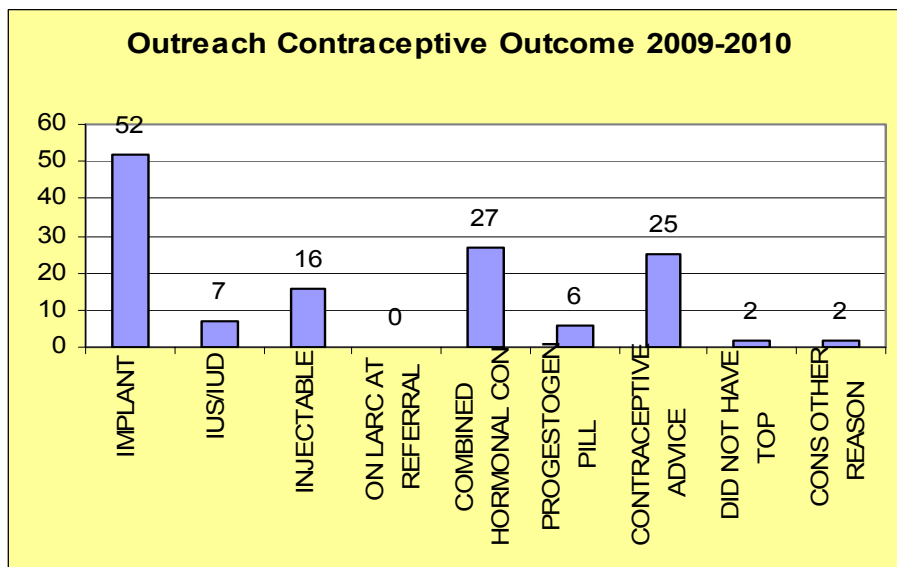
**Background of individual young people in contact with the service:**



**TOP = Referred by Termination of Pregnancy Service; VUL = Referred as vulnerable young person; INTENSIVE SERVICES = Referred by Youth Offending and Substance Misuse professionals; 9 not recorded**

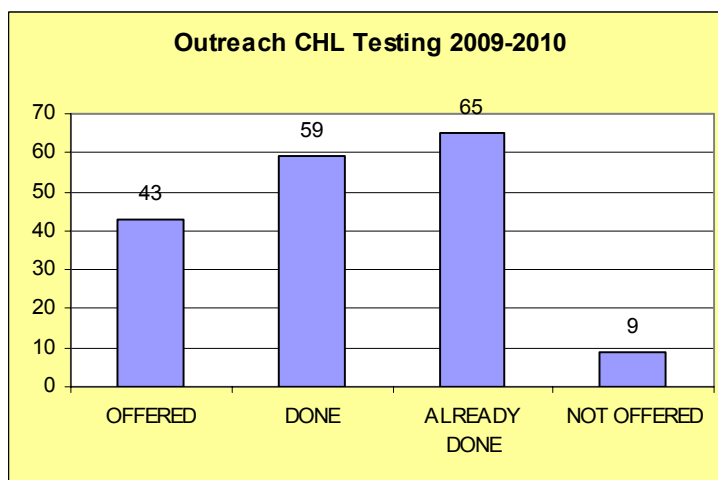
**Contraceptive Outcomes**

The uptake of LARC methods has been high (56%) in comparison with other contraceptive methods. This compares to 14% take-up of LARC methods in Primary Care for 2008/9 as quoted in *NICE implementation uptake report: Long-acting reversible contraception (LARC), clinical guideline 30, September 2009*. Success has been attributed to working closely with young people and positively promoting the use of a method that best fits with their challenging circumstances and lifestyles as well as providing on-going support. The YONS was only aware of three implants that were discontinued during 2009/10, one of which was a 19 year old who was planning another pregnancy.



### Sexual Health Outcomes

Chlamydia screening is an integral part of the YONS service and every effort is made to offer the self-taken test as part of the Chlamydia Screening Programme where appropriate. The YONS manages young people who have a positive result and will only access treatment via YONS.



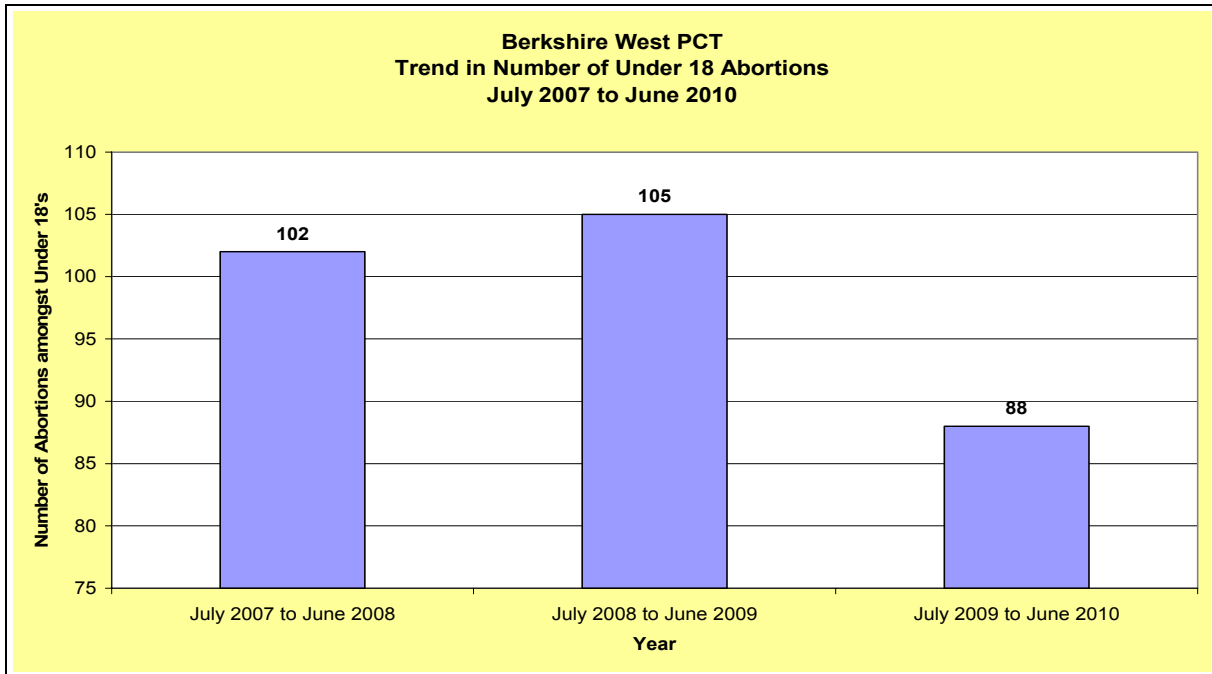
The 'Already Done' column is predominantly made up of young people who have had Chlamydia tests via the TP midwife or where they have accessed a full STI screen at the main clinic. The 'Offered' column are those who declined a test.

The YONS was appointed in March 2009 and her work seems likely to be contributing to:



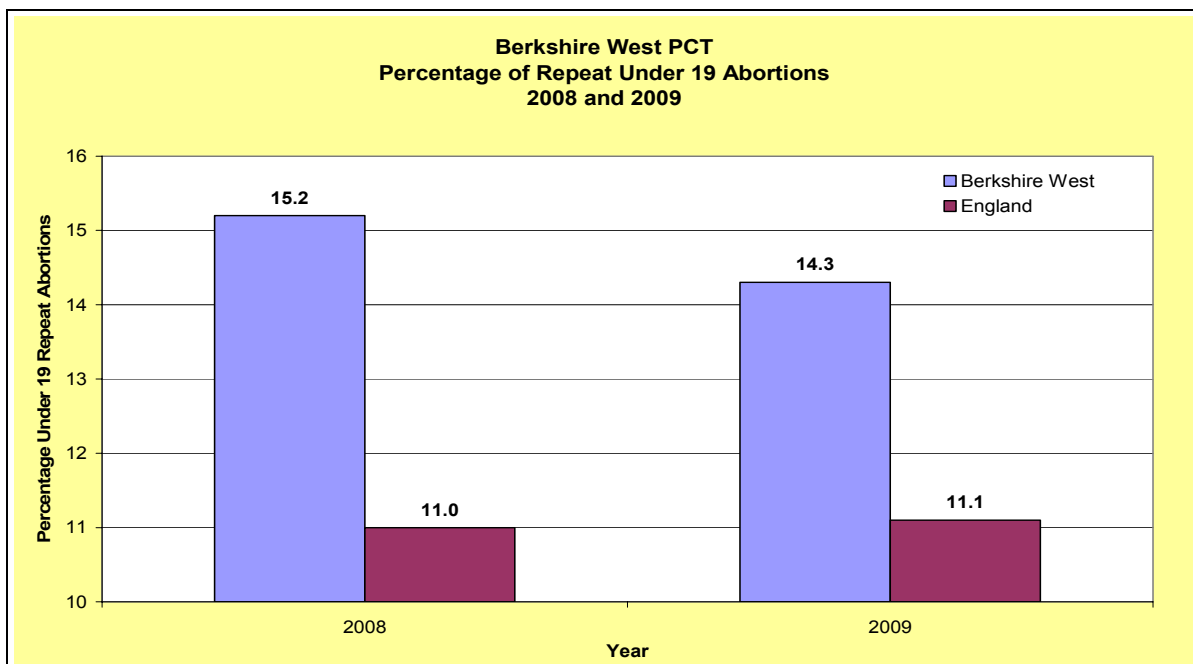
### Reduction in under-18 abortions

In Berkshire West PCT there were 102 abortions to young women under-18 in July 2007-June 2008; 105 in the same period 2008-9 but 88 in the same period 2009-10.



### Reduction in percentage of repeat under-19 abortions

The Berkshire West PCT percentage fell from 15.2% in 2008 to 14.3% in 2009 (n = 22), reversing the previous upwards trend but still higher than the national level of 11.1% in 2009.



## 5 key Steps to Setting Up the Service

1. Be clear about the needs.
2. Work collaboratively between commissioner and provider to develop the model.
3. Have clear outcome measures for the role that are systematically monitored.
4. Appoint an experienced Contraceptive and Sexual Health Nurse who can relate well to young people and is committed to making the role work.
5. The Outreach Nurse needs to be persistent, both with getting other services to refer young people and in following up young people who are referred.

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