

THE PREVENTATIVE WORK AWARD



Winner: Teens and Toddlers, COUI UK

Teens and Toddlers takes a practical approach to tackling teenage pregnancy by giving young women and men real-life experience of caring for a child.

The programme, which is based on an American model, is run by non-profit foundation Children, Our Ultimate Investment (COUI UK). It identifies teenagers most at risk of becoming pregnant and gives them work experience in nurseries.

Participants attempt to build a relationship with one child and are given training and counselling to help them gain a better understanding of the huge responsibility in having children.

Facilitators help them develop communication skills, confidence and learn more about sexual health and relationships. The programme has also helped boost young people's educational attainment.

Meanwhile, schools report that young people who have taken part are less likely to truant and become more interested in schoolwork. Teens and Toddlers is operating in seven London boroughs and three local authorities outside London.

Young judge's comment

“ The project used research-based methods and had a clear vision for tackling teenage pregnancy ”

The programme can be delivered in a range of ways, depending on budgets and how many young people the local authority wants to reach. A recent study that followed up young people who had been through the programme showed it had a real impact. Of more than 60 young women, none had become pregnant under the age of 18 and none of the 20 male participants said they had caused a pregnancy.

The programme has encouraged 90 per cent of participants to think about having children at a later age, while 70 per cent said it had a big influence on their attitude to safe sex.

Criteria

For the initiative or project that has made the most effective early intervention with young people at risk from problems such as homelessness, crime, substance abuse, poor health or dropping out of education.

Also shortlisted

- Buckingham Community Childminding Network
- Drug Education, Counselling and Confidential Advice (DECCA), Sandwell
- Newbiggin-by-the-Sea and Lynemouth Children's Centres, NCH
- St Christopher's Fellowship
- Unisafe

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