

Warwickshire Health and Wellbeing Board

20th November 2013

Smoking in Pregnancy - Upping our game

Recommendations

That the Warwickshire Health and Wellbeing Board:

- 1) Makes the reduction in smoking in pregnancy one of its key priorities.
- 2) Endorses the proposed actions to reduce the harm from women smoking during pregnancy.
- 3) Requests partner agencies to participate in the delivery of a detailed action plan.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Tackling tobacco has been recognised by the Board as one of the most important things we can do to improve the health of people in Warwickshire as it is the number one preventable cause of premature death and disease within the County.

1.2 The Tobacco Control Plan for England (2011) sets out a national ambition to reduce smoking as recorded at the time of delivery to 11% or less by the end of 2015. If rates continue to fall at levels seen over the last six years, this ambition will not be achieved. This is especially true for Warwickshire where around 1 in 6 pregnant women are still smoking at the time of delivery.

1.3 On 17th July 2013 the Health and Wellbeing Board signed up to the Local Government Tobacco Control Declaration which set out the Council's commitments in relation to reducing smoking among the local population and tobacco control. This declaration has been well received and praised by national bodies such as Public Health England.

1.4 When making the declaration the board agreed to act at a local level to reduce smoking prevalence and health inequalities; to raise the profile of the harm caused by smoking to our communities; develop plans with our partners and local communities to address the causes and impacts of tobacco use. Emphasis was given to the importance of reducing smoking in pregnancy.

2.0 Smoking in Pregnancy in Warwickshire

- 2.1 Smoking in pregnancy is known to have a number of adverse effects on the outcomes of pregnancy, including an overall increase in the risk of infant mortality by an estimated 40%. Specific risks include an increased risk of miscarriage, premature birth, stillbirth, placental abnormalities, low birth-weight and sudden unexpected death in infancy.
- 2.2 Action needed to reduce smoking in pregnancy has been known for some time but taking it is not always easy, as there are obstacles that face both women and the professionals who support them.
- 2.3 Many women will quit as soon as they discover they are pregnant. For others, their understanding of the risk posed to their unborn baby may not be sufficient to motivate them to quit; or they may face significant barriers that prevent them from stopping. Midwives and other professionals working with pregnant women can also face significant obstacles: not all receive appropriate time, training and tools; and IT systems, referral pathways and communication mechanisms can be insufficient.
- 2.4 In Warwickshire the specialist stop smoking in pregnancy service (now commissioned through Public Health) helps women who are pregnant and smoke to make quit attempts and support is extended to partners and families. Whilst the service is relatively successful for those who engage with the service there are some pregnant smokers who are not identified and others for whom the support is not appropriate.
- 2.5 These and other barriers can be overcome. The attached draft strategy report provides recommendations on how significant progress can be achieved. It highlights that by working together we can make changes that will give babies born in Warwickshire a much better start in life.
- 2.6 Virtually all partner agencies have a role to play to ensure that the prevalence of smoking in pregnancy is driven down and that future generations of Warwickshire citizens begin their lives smokefree.

3.0 Next steps

- 3.1 The proposed action plan has been developed to improve and enhance the current provision and to ensure that at every stage pregnant women are given the opportunity to receive support to quit smoking. Partner agencies are encouraged to endorse the action plan and commit to help reduce smoking prevalence among pregnant women.

Background Papers

1. An Action Plan to Reduce Smoking in Pregnancy in Warwickshire (Revised Draft V7)

	Name	Contact Information
Report Author	Paul Hooper	paulhooper@warwickshire.gov.uk
Head of Service	John Linnane	johnlinnane@warwickshire.gov.uk
Strategic Director	Monica Fogarty	
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Stevens	