

Working with young parents

A guide for health professionals

little
lullaby

the
lullaby
trust



WE SPOKE TO A GROUP OF YOUNG PARENTS about their experiences of antenatal and postnatal healthcare. Also an Early Intervention Health Visitor who works primarily with young parents shares her knowledge.

We surveyed a wide range of young parents and health professionals and, while the quotes are only from the group interviewed, **the research helped to identify 6 key areas that are important to young parents.**

Professionalism

“I experienced a health care professional praising me for choosing to breastfeed. However, I felt like with every positive came a negative in that it was ‘Oh we don’t experience many young people deciding to breastfeed’ and I just think maybe if the statement was kept at ‘Oh well done on choosing to breastfeed. Is there anything we can do to support you with that’. That age shouldn’t always need to be mentioned.”

Morgan, 20, Mum

“Some health care professionals were more understanding of age than others.”

Stacey, 18, Mum

Communication and active listening

“Within my pregnancy journey most of the information I was given was in the form of leaflets, which I liked as I could look back on them. However, I’d prefer it if within the appointment there was a question and answer in regards to leaflets so you could get the questions you wanted out there and then.”

Stacey, 18, Mum

“Being responsible for the engagement, understanding that young people do find services difficult to access so being mindful of communication style is really important. I use a strength based approach where I do a lot of positive noticing, positive affirmations to build that confidence and self efficacy up with the young people.”

Kerri, Early intervention Health Visitor

“Young people do find services difficult to access”



Consistency of care

“My experience of consistency of care was really good. I wanted to breastfeed my daughter so I was given a breastfeeding expert that came to my house for 10 days after she was born. This made me feel really good, really empowered. Even after I was doing it for quite a while and I felt confident doing it, it was really nice to have someone there that championed you and told you you were doing a good job.”

Rebecca, 18, Mum

“I felt like because I was a man I wasn’t interacted with as much. It was more they’d talk to her (Julianne and deal with stuff with her and then I just felt a little excluded.”

Aubrey, 21, Dad

“Continuity of care is really important so where possible the same health professional. When they’re seeing that same face and they’re building that trust, they’re more open to receive information and they feel that they can rely on you and they can trust you because you’re consistently being there for them.”

Kerri, Early Intervention Health Visitor



“It’s about empowering them to make changes”



Feeling safe

“Because I was a guy I didn’t get any say in the choice of my partner’s pregnancy.”

Aubrey, 21, Dad

“Just having someone to speak to makes you feel well listened to and that no you haven’t got a silly question and you’re not being judged for any of your thoughts and feelings because you don’t always have control over them.”

Morgan, 20, Mum

“A supportive approach is really important, I think you need to be mindful that that young person is the master of their own life so it’s about empowering them to make those changes for themselves and their child.”

Kerri, Early intervention Health Visitor

Parental instinct

"I went to the pregnancy assessment unit with contractions, I got put onto the monitor and was told I wasn't contracting, nothing was showing up. I was pretty adamant that something was happening so I pushed a little bit and I got offered an internal examination, which I took. This showed that I was actually dilating and in slow labour so I was contracting the whole time and this led to me being induced and having my daughter. Having that experience made me feel like I was in control of the situation and that they really listened to what I needed. They trusted what I was saying was happening and I think that they acted upon that really effectively."

Rebecca, 18, Mum

"They really listened to what I needed"

Information provided

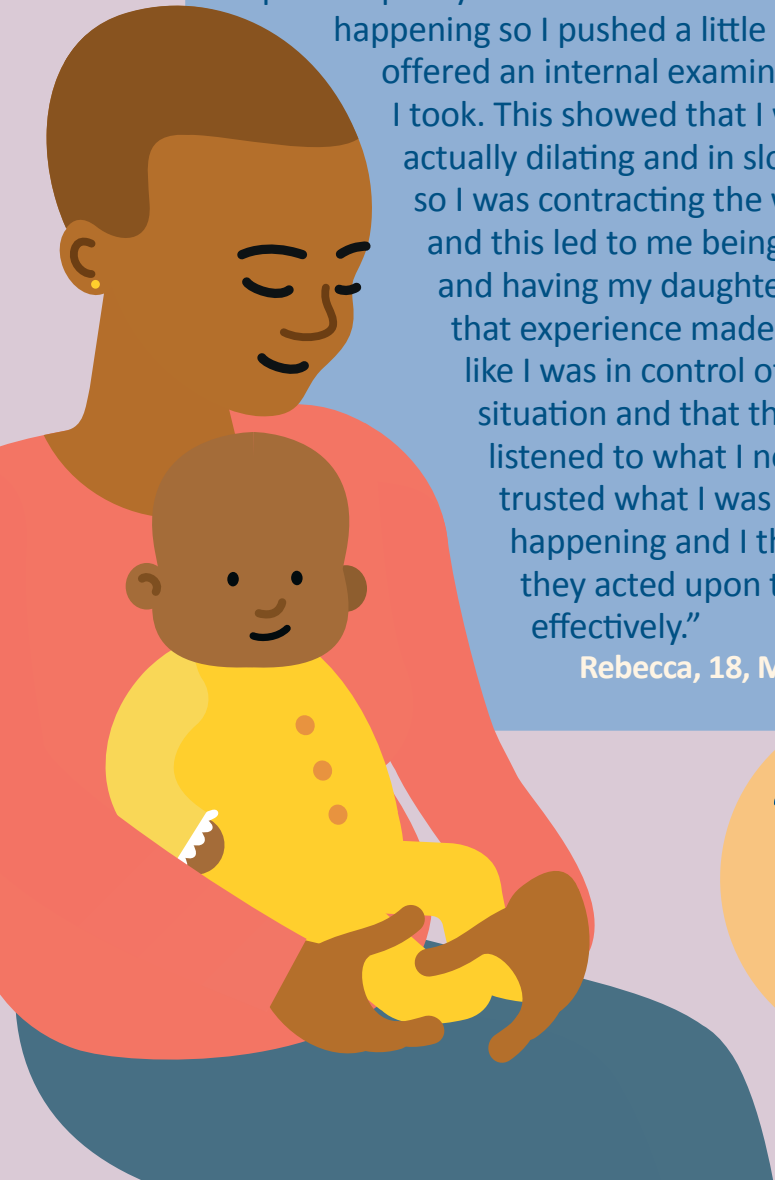
"I think probably the best thing about my whole pregnancy experience was the advice line because when I was worried instead of sitting at home being scared until the morning I could call a midwife's office. It was 24 hours and it was someone in the labour ward answering it so they could be like 'yeah come in I'll see you'."

Julianne, 18, Mum

"The information young parents receive is really important so you need to think about how that's delivered. I use an iPad or we look at apps, video resources, visuals that help them learn, I use hands on activities, crafts, life skills, so we could make up a sleep space together, make a feed together, whatever works to help that information really sink in."

"It's important to remember that the teenage brain is actually going through a reorganisation period. So from adolescence up to the age of 25 is the second biggest time that our brain reorganises, the first being in infancy so the positive side of this for a health professional is that actually the brain is quite flexible at this time so it's open to change and it's a great time for young parents to learn new things."

Kerri, Early intervention Health Visitor





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Working together
to save babies' lives

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