

UK Social Policy Association 2004 Conference

From Third Way to Which Way?

Sub-theme: Education and Learning

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Mainstream school: the major barrier to the education of pregnant young women in England?

Abstract

TPU funded research undertaken by the universities of Newcastle and Bristol explored the educational experiences of pregnant young women and young mothers of school age in England. Interviews were conducted with 93 women who experienced pregnancy whilst of school age and survey results were obtained from schools and professionals working with pregnant young women in ten LEAs in England.

This paper focuses on the key barriers to education faced by pregnant young women in England. The paper explores both the educational experiences of young women prior to and during pregnancy. A particular emphasis is placed on how schools responded to the issue of pregnancy in their school and addressed the potential needs of these young women to facilitate continued education during pregnancy. The paper proposes that perhaps the biggest barrier to the education of pregnant young women in England is the structural inflexibility of, and prevailing negative attitudes amongst staff within, mainstream school itself.