

teenage motherhood

Laila Al-Ayobi and Laetia Kitege interview a teenage mother who is about to give birth and another who has just given birth in Kingston to compare their experiences.

STORY ONE - SARAH* AGED 16 DUE TO GIVE BIRTH IN 5 MONTHS

How are you coping with the pregnancy?

Coping? God you make it sound so dramatic, nobody's died or anything, I'm pregnant! It's like...when I first found out I was pregnant, that was the time I had to 'cope' with it, but now it's just there and I'm cool with it. In fact I love it! Fussing over names and baby stuff, my best friend's going to be the God Mother. Everyone makes out getting pregnant is like, the worst thing ever but it's not that bad, it does have its good moments too.

You mentioned when you first got pregnant. How did you break the news to Mum and Dad?

That was probably the hardest part of all. Well, my Mum couldn't really say much because she works with pregnant teenagers as part of her job, but she was disappointed, which made me feel so much worse. My dad went mad though, he's like, well strict and religious. He actually tried to kick me out of the house but Mum was trying to cool him down, telling him "this is the time when she needs us most" and she was right. My Dad's cool with it now and my Mum's even helping me to pick baby clothes for her (it's a girl by the way – I had a scan). When I was actually telling them, my heart was beating so fast! I didn't know how I was supposed to tell them so I came out with it – "I'm pregnant" and I showed them the test which was positive (gritting my teeth). They didn't react at first, I think they was shocked; it seemed like something from

Eastenders.

Gosh. Well have you thought about what you are going to do once the baby's born?

Well I'm still going to finish my GNVQ! My parents and grand-parents are gonna look after her while I'm at college. I just don't wanna be a young mother with no qualifications. Decent jobs require qualifications plus, I've got to be able to support my child because when she's a little older she'll be wanting toys and stuff. I never really had any big career plans but I have to be realistic.

But won't the father be able to help support the child?

....I'd rather not talk about that to be honest.

Oh ok, no pressure. Is there anything else you'd like to say about him?

Yeah, he's a *****! He's still going to see her and but he hasn't exactly been enthusiastic about it! You've heard it a million times haven't you, the man freaks out and sods off as soon as you mention the word 'pregnant.' Anyway, I'm going to love this baby with or without him.

Speaking of that, what have you been doing to prepare yourself for motherhood?

I've been preparing more for the birth to be honest; all the breathing techniques and the classes. I don't want to take any drugs for the pain as this is a really important part of my life, and I want to experience it fully. In terms of motherhood I'm going to pretty much take it as it comes really.

And lastly is there anything you would say to anyone else in your position?

The whole pregnancy thing can seem really bad at first but trust me it does get better. People say it will ruin your life but **bu**nday it actually gives your life a deeper

* NAMES HAVE BEEN CHANGED