

**durex** committed to RSE in schools

Increase awareness of services



# Aim

To build in-school access and awareness to professional health services, in order to ensure that young people are supported and well-informed

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# The benefits of a school and sexual health service partnership

**In England, for example, case-study research has found that the areas that achieved the greatest reductions in teenage conception rates had provided both good quality school RSE as well as accessible sexual health services for young people<sup>1</sup>**

Surveys suggest that between a third and a quarter of young people have had sex by the time they are 16 years old.<sup>2</sup> However, this same group of under 16s are also least likely to access contraceptive and sexual health advice, leaving them at risk of unplanned pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.<sup>3</sup> Inconsistent behaviour like this is just one of the reasons why being able to access sexual health advice and services via school is so important for young people.

The best way to offer external advice and services is through partnerships between schools and professional services, which can benefit young people in a number of ways, including:<sup>3</sup>

- Ensuring that young people are able to complete their education by helping them avoid issues that may jeopardise their achievement and attendance at your school
- Protecting vulnerable young people who require professional help and advice beyond your school's capacity
- Helping young people and their families to truly believe and trust that your school is acting in their best interests
- Ensuring that every young person has access to essential advice, support and services

Partnership with professional services can also benefit your RSE teachers as they can:<sup>3</sup>

- Provide up-to-date knowledge to ensure accuracy and consistency of information, advice and support are provided to young people
- Share awareness and knowledge of certain local issues to help make your RSE programme, provision and lessons responsive to local needs



# What should additional services include?

**There is no set framework for providing health advice services in schools – services available will depend on your location within the UK, your region and county<sup>3</sup>**

## **VISITING HEALTH PROFESSIONALS**

Professionals trained and experienced in sexual health can enhance your current RSE programme, especially if frequent visits are made by the same person. They will provide a familiar face so that young people can feel more comfortable about discussing their concerns. Once you've set up a partnership with a professional service, ask them for details about their procedure, their location, their policy – anything that will help encourage young people to use and trust them.<sup>4</sup>

## **IN-SCHOOL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS**

School nurses can be a great asset for co-ordinating health advice services and referring young people onwards when needed. Ensuring your school nurses are able to remain trained, informed and up-to-date is essential – this is an area where external service partnership can be of benefit to staff. Lunchtime or after-school clinics run by the school nurse can be a really effective way of helping young people to discover and access advice through school.<sup>4</sup>

## **CLINIC VISITS TO SCHOOL**

Arranging visits from professional services that young people can attend on their own terms is also an effective way of bridging the gap between schools and external services. These can include sessions provided by charities such as Brook or the FPA or even talks from members of local contraception and sexual health (CASH) clinics, or similar.<sup>4</sup>

## **LOCAL HEALTHY SCHOOLS PROGRAMME (IF AVAILABLE IN YOUR AREA)**

The National Healthy Schools Programme provides a framework that brings together schools and their local communities so that they can identify and target needs to help reduce health inequalities, promote social inclusion and raise educational standards. A local programme co-ordinator may be available for you to work closely with to ensure you can provide the necessary support in your school.<sup>5</sup>

## **MOBILE SERVICES**

Mobile sexual health services, that offer things like drop-in sessions for contraception and information leaflets, have been available across the UK for a while now. These services are particularly important for providing support for young people who are reluctant to attend mainstream services or who live in rural locations where access to services is limited.<sup>4</sup> Availability of these services is dependent on location – [www.nhs.uk/service-search](http://www.nhs.uk/service-search) can help you to identify what is available in your local area.



# Raising awareness of services in your school

**Most secondary schools are already providing young people with some information on local support services. However, it's not always as simple as providing information. Research has shown that young people need some support in using these services – they worry about things like whether they will have to give their name, whether their parents will be informed and what is likely to happen when they arrive at a clinic.<sup>6</sup>**

The basic information you provide about sexual health and advisory services should include:<sup>3</sup>

- Who these services are for
- Where to access these services
- When they are open
- How to book an appointment
- What will happen during a visit
- Reassurance that they are confidential and free

...but there are other ways of making sure young people overcome their worries and reluctance.

## THE RSE CLASSROOM

While RSE lessons are extremely valuable in helping young people recognise when they are in need of additional support, the RSE classroom may not always be the most appropriate place to ask questions or to highlight the need for help. Options such as lunchtime clinics or meetings with the school nurse can help encourage young people to discuss concerns and ask questions about their needs, providing an excellent opportunity to refer them to the appropriate health services.

## LEAFLETS AND NOTICE BOARDS

While it may seem like placing information about sexual health services in a frequently used, busy area is the best way to get exposure, it might be too out in the open for young people to use it. Placing these posters in discrete areas where young people can take the time to read them without their peers seeing them may help them to overcome their fear and embarrassment to make contact.



## How to secure additional services

There are various organisations accessible nationwide and locally that can help you secure additional services for your school – find out more on the next page. The nature and scope of the services you provide is ultimately down to you and your school governing body to determine. However, consultation with parents, teachers and young people can help you effectively tailor your decisions to needs and requirements.<sup>1</sup>

If, for any reason, you are unable to provide in-school services, you should develop a strong referral to local services procedure within your school and make every effort to provide information about them to young people – the RSE or PSHE classroom is very well placed for this.



# Services from the DO...Collaboration

One of the main reasons you are reading this resource right now is because of the DO... Collaboration. This group of experts are from a variety of established and dedicated sexual health associations that can help the young people in your school, online and potentially in your local area. These include:

## BROOK

Brook delivers a wide range of affordable relationships and sex education sessions in primary schools, secondary schools, special schools, colleges and community settings. These sessions cover all aspects of sexual health, from contraception and sexually transmitted infections through to negotiating relationships and managing risky behaviour. They also run sessions on general health and wellbeing. Brook can scale these programmes for all key stages, for large or small groups, individuals, and tailor for groups with specific requirements. As well as working in classrooms, they can also provide speakers for school assemblies, various young people settings and run stalls at health promotion events. Find out more about Brook and how it can help at [www.brook.org.uk](http://www.brook.org.uk)

## BISH

Justin Hancock, creator of BISH, is a qualified youth worker and sexual health trainer who has worked in RSE for over 15 years. As well as writing and managing a website aimed at over 14s, Justin also delivers participatory and interactive RSE in person. He facilitates a variety of RSE topics in educational settings with over 14s and also offers training and resources for professionals working with young people in educational or clinical settings. Find out more about BISH and how it can help at [www.bishuk.com](http://www.bishuk.com) and [www.bishtraining.com](http://www.bishtraining.com)

## THE SEX EDUCATION FORUM

The Sex Education Forum is a membership organisation that works together with its members and other stakeholders to achieve quality RSE. You can find an abundance of resources, some free to access for non-members, that can further guide you through providing additional support services for young people in your school. Find out more about SEF and how it can help at [www.sexeducationforum.org.uk](http://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk)

## THE RSE HUB

The RSE Hub can offer quality assurance, expert advice, guidance, training and resources on all aspects of relationships and sex education (RSE) for educators. You can find case studies, facts and figures, information about confidentiality and equalities, as well as top tips for educators. They also offer data and research, supportive partnerships and networking. Find out more about The RSE Hub and how it can help at [www.rsehub.org.uk](http://www.rsehub.org.uk)



# Services from the DO...Collaboration

## NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR HEAD TEACHERS

NAHT is an independent trade union and professional association representing over 28,500 school leaders in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. They provide an effective voice in educational practise and policy-making, offering their members the finest one-to-one support across all phases. Take a look at their website for outstanding publications and guidance documents, as well as an extensive range of training and development programmes; including induction for performance management and new school leaders. Find out more about NAHT and how it can help at [www.naht.org.uk](http://www.naht.org.uk)

## THE MIX

The Mix is a multi-channel service dedicated to giving young people the information and support they need to make the best decisions. It helps them take on the embarrassing problems, weird questions and “please-don’t-make-me-say-it-out-loud thoughts” they might have, whether it’s by digesting articles and videos, talking with others going through similar situations in forums and group chats, or seeking support with trained volunteers and counsellors over the phone. Find out more about The Mix and how it can help at [www.themix.org.uk](http://www.themix.org.uk)

## FAMILY PLANNING ASSOCIATION

FPA is a UK-registered sexual health charity providing straightforward information and support on sexual health, sex and relationships to everyone in the UK. They work for the sexual and reproductive rights of people of all ages; encompassing contraception, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), pregnancy choices (including abortion), relationships and sex education (RSE), sexuality, sexual wellbeing and pleasure. In addition to this FPA provides a broad range of online training programmes and resources that deliver high-quality information and education, including programmes tailored to the needs of people with learning disabilities. Find out more about FPA and how it can help at [www.fpa.org.uk](http://www.fpa.org.uk)

## NATIONAL AIDS TRUST

NAT is dedicated to transforming the UK’s response to HIV, by changing attitudes, behaviours, decisions and policies. They focus on influencing the law and those whose actions have the biggest impact on the lives of people effected by HIV in the UK. They offer a range of informational resources for educators that can help them teach students the realities of HIV. They also provide online education, publications and articles to help shape positive attitudes. With over 30 years of experience fighting for health and equality in HIV, NAT has the expertise and practical resources needed to make a real difference. Find out more about NAT and how it can help at [www.nat.org.uk](http://www.nat.org.uk)



## Further information

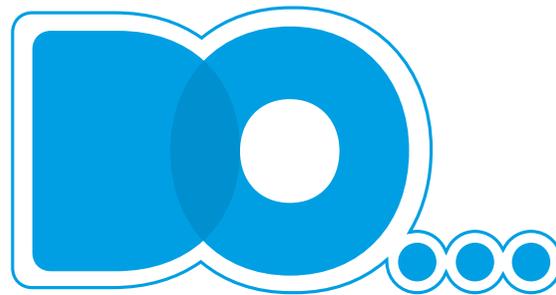
- **Sexpression:UK** – a student organisation that empowers young people to make decisions about relationships and sex by running informal and comprehensive sex and relationship sessions in the community. Sexpression:UK have branches in various locations and can also be invited to run sessions in your school.

[www.sexpression.org.uk](http://www.sexpression.org.uk)

## REFERENCES:

1. Department for education and skills (2006) Teenage Pregnancy Next Steps: Guidance for Local Authorities and Primary Care Trusts on Effective Delivery of Local Strategies.
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3. Department for Education and skills (2007). Extended Schools: Improving Access to Sexual Health Advice Services.
4. Thistle S, Sex Education Forum (2003). Secondary schools and sexual health services: forging the links. Published by the National Children's Bureau.
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