

October 2018

Sexual Health Policy and Guidelines

P&G 087



**Fun, Learning
and Achievement**



National Federation of Young Farmers Clubs' Sexual Health Policy and Guidelines

Introduction

The National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs (NFYFC) is a caring organisation committed to the welfare of its members whose ages range from 10 to 26 years. We still actively support the Every Child Matters agenda and the 5 national outcomes for young people: being healthy; staying safe; enjoying and achieving; making a positive contribution; and economic well-being. Through our varied programme of activities, the Federation is well placed to make a significant contribution towards these outcomes and help members gain social education. As an organisation we have a responsibility to raise important issues that affect our membership. Sexual health is one of these issues. Many young people will engage in sexual experimentation while they are still of school age, sometimes resulting in harmful consequences; rates of teenage pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections are very high in young people under the age of 25.

From September 2020 relationships education (RelEd) in primary and relationships and sex education (RSE) in secondary will be taught in schools as a statutory subject. As a youth organisation NFYFC can complement RSE. We can support and build on members' knowledge, skills, values and attitudes, and skills in managing emotions in order to help them to stay healthy and safe by making sure that key messages around sexual health are addressed and promoted. This can be done in two ways:

- A planned, proactive approach dealing with issues that are of interest and relevance to members
- And a more reactive response to individual situations through fostering a climate where members feel they can safely ask for specific help and advice.

The intention of this policy and supporting guidance is to encourage the NFYFC to take up this important area of work at Club, County and National level. It sets a framework that supports good practice and gives clear boundaries on what should be done. It will enable leaders, workers and others to act in the knowledge that their position is supported and that they are following correct guidelines.



As a Federation, we take sexual health seriously and recognise that sexuality is a core aspect of identity and a person's self-perception. Adopting a positive attitude towards young people's sexuality and relationships is the foundation of promoting positive sexual health. Sexual health issues should be approached from the basis of empowering young people to make informed choices, explore what is right and wrong and explore their own attitudes and values.

At NFYFC we support -

Young people have the right to:

- Have their sexual development acknowledged as a part of their personal development
- Information, education, guidance and support that will help them in their sexual development, identity and relationships
- Protection from exploitation and abuse
- Have their personal information kept confidential (within Child Protection guidelines and Adult Safeguarding guidelines)
- Access local sexual health services
- Not be subjected to personal attitudes and beliefs of leaders which go against these guidelines
- Be surrounded by role-models who demonstrate qualities of kindness, mutual respect and trust

Leaders have the right to:

- Information on where they stand on the law and the rules under which they must work
- Their own opinions and attitudes about relationships, sex and sexuality, as long as these are not expressed to members in ways that go against these guidelines
- Support from the county team (Officers and staff)
- Training coordinated by the county (using qualified sexual health services) on how to put these guidelines into practice
- Information on local child protection procedures and adult safeguarding procedures

NFYFC will:

- Ensure that sexual health promotion/education is included in NFYFC provision
- Ensure that all work in this area is inclusive and addresses diversity
- Support this work with appropriate resources and current, relevant and up to date information
- Support counties to source local training for leader and workers to take work around sexual health forward
- Ensure that the policy is consistent with the law and supports the welfare of young people
- Encourage and develop partnerships with local and national bodies who can help



What is meant by sexual health?

It is useful to look at definitions for sexual health, sexuality and RSE as they all inform each other.

Sexual health

“Sexual health means enjoying the sexual activity you want without causing yourself or anyone else suffering, physical or mental harm. Making positive choices about contraception and sexual health is important not just for your physical health, but also for your general well-being.” FPA (Family Planning Association)

Sexuality

“Sexuality is a central aspect of being human throughout life and encompasses sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction. Sexuality is experienced and expressed in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviours, practices, roles and relationships. While sexuality can include all of these dimensions, not all of them are always experienced or expressed. Sexuality is influenced by the interaction of biological, psychological, social, economic, political, cultural, ethical, legal, historical, religious and spiritual factors.” WHO (World Health Organisation working definition)

RSE

“RSE is lifelong learning about sex, sexuality, emotions, relationships, sexual health. It involves acquiring information, developing skills and exploring attitudes and values. It helps young people to understand themselves, negotiate and take responsibility for their relationships and to neither exploit others, nor be exploited themselves. It builds young people’s self-esteem and confidence, and creates a values framework that will guide young people’s decision-making and behaviour. RSE also helps to develop a positive view of sexuality and sex and supports sexual self-acceptance. It aims to meet the needs of all young people”

Sex Education Forum (2006) *Sex and relationships education with young people in non-formal setting* (Fact sheet 36)

In the NFYFC our emphasis will be on sexual health promotion. However all initiatives must be carried out with a clear understanding of the scope of relationships and sex education as well as those who are most at risk.

impairments: those with a religious or faith tradition – everyone, whatever their background, community or circumstance.

Planned needs led programmes of relationships and sex education may well be delivered in clubs but only if there are leaders and workers interested in taking this forward and most importantly if they have been fully trained in the delivery of RSE and the use of effective evidence based methods (See Implementation). This does not preclude bona fide outside providers with these skills, being invited into clubs to deliver a programme if at a local level these partnerships have been well-established, and that the partners completely uphold the aims and values of this policy, and if members are keen.

Summary of the law (England and Wales)

The Sexual Offence Act of 2003 updated the law and clarified what constitutes sexual crimes against children, young people and adults. It brought in a new group of laws to protect children under 16 making it easier to prosecute people who pressure or force others into having sex they don't want. Both men and women can be prosecuted for all sexual offences with the exception of rape, which remains the only male perpetrated offence for which young men of 10 years upwards can be prosecuted.

Below are some key points. (For more detail please see the Further Help section)

Age of consent

The legal age for young men and women to have sex is 16 years whether they identify as straight, lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer¹, questioning or any other sexual orientation. The legal age of consent is also the same for young trans² women and men.

Young people under the age of 13 are unable in law to give their consent to sexual relationships. Rape, assault by penetration and causing or inciting a child to engage in sexual activity all carry the maximum life sentence. These are absolute offences, which mean there is no defence of mistakenly believing the child to be 16 as there may be in cases of sexual crimes involving 13-15 year olds.

However the Government has been clear that there is no intention that the law should be used to prosecute mutually agreed teenage sexual activity between young people of a similar age where there is no evidence of exploitation or coercion.

Trusted adult

¹ 'Queer' is an umbrella term for all sexual and gender minorities that some young people may use to describe their sexu

to harass,

² 'Trans' is assigned

An offence exists to protect those under 18 years of age from abuse of trust in the form of inappropriate sexual relationships. The offence applies to teachers, social and youth workers, carers and others in a position of trust, including leaders of YFC groups, even when they are of a similar age to the young person in the sexual relationship. More information on the Abuse of Trust Act can be found in the Safeguarding Children and Young People's Policy.

Working with under 16's in sexual health

Working with under 16's in this area of health can often cause concerns however research shows that accurate, high-quality information about sex, relationships and contraception does not encourage sexual activity. In fact, the research evidence, as summarised here http://www.ncb.org.uk/media/494585/sef_doessrework_2010.pdf shows that good quality SRE can delay sexual activity for young people and increase the likelihood of using contraception. In addition, the most recent National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles (NATSAL, 2013) showed a clear link between the delivery of RSE programmes and reductions in teenage pregnancy. Helping young people develop their knowledge, skills and values will equip them to make informed decisions when they decide to engage in sexual activity. Giving young people the information and skills before they need it equips them to make informed decisions when they do.

The law protects those providing information and support to under 16's if their purpose is to:

- Protect the child from sexually transmitted infections
- Protect the physical safety of the child
- Prevent the child from becoming pregnant
- Promote the child's emotional well being by the giving of advice

NFYFC leaders and workers can give members, including those under 16, general information about:

- Contraception
- STI's, and other sexual health issues including the importance of using condoms
- Details of where to find local services offering contraception and sexual health services
- Help a member to make contact with a sexual health service

The Fraser guidelines

The Fraser guidelines are an accepted tool for working with under 16's first outlined in 1985 they are a set of legal criteria for health and other professionals when giving contraceptive advice to young people under the age of 16, without parental consent. Health professionals use them to establish a young persons' competency to consent to contraceptive and other treatments, including abortion.

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- the young person will understand the advice
- the young person cannot be persuaded to inform their parents
- the young person is likely to have sex anyway
- the young person's physical and mental health would suffer
- the young person's best interests require it.

These guidelines, slightly modified, are now also widely used as a good practice structure for anyone working in the field of sexual health promotion. NFYFC personnel should use them in this way by considering:

- Is this young person likely to begin or continue having sex with or without contraception?
- Is it within their best interest to get some advice or condoms from you?
- Have they understood the information and advice you have given them, including the consequences of their choices?
- Can they be encouraged to inform their parents or a guardian about the advice they are seeking?

An example would be for instance when directing an individual member who is under 16 to contraceptive and sexual health services. They should be encouraged to get support from their family but parental permission is not needed if the individual can understand the issues and appreciate the consequences.

Source Sex Education Forum Fact sheet 36 (2006)

Under 13s

If a young person is 12 or under and engaging in sexual activity the law would treat them differently. Under 13s are viewed in law (the Sexual Offences Act 2013) as not being able to consent under any circumstances and therefore if a staff member is aware of an under 13 year old who is sexually active they should follow safeguarding procedures.

Young people, explicit images and pornography

It is important in any RSE work with young people that they understand different aspects of the law concerning sex and sexual activity. You should let young people know, as part of the activities that you are planning, that in law someone is a child until s/he is 18. This means that if they take, send or receive naked images on a webcam, phone or camera which, for example, show the breasts or genital area of someone who is under 18 then they could be charged with a sexual offence of taking, possessing, distributing or publishing indecent images of children. This could apply even if someone aged under 18 takes a picture of themselves and the image is not sent to anyone else or the device is not used to send or receive images.

You should also let young people know that the law concerning pornography is quite complex. While some pornography showing adults having sex is legal, there is some pornography which is illegal to view in the UK. If you are working with young people around these issues then the following link from Brook might be helpful

<http://www.brook.org.uk/your-life/staying-safe-online>

What is clear is that explicit images in any form showing any of the following are illegal:

- those showing children (anyone under 18), or
- anyone who appears to look like a child (regardless of their age), or
- any image created by computer or otherwise which looks like a child

It's important to remind young people that if someone sends them a photo or clip that might seem funny at the time, it could contain content like the above which is illegal. So they should not open anything if they are unsure what it contains and they should consider deleting without opening anything that does not say what it contains and they were not expecting. It can always be sent to them again if turns out to be something that they want.

In 2017 the government introduced a new offence of Disclosing private sexual images with the intent to cause distress which includes sending pornographic images of people as revenge when a relationship breaks up. Young people should also be aware that this is an offence, even when the images were sent to them with consent.

Further advice and guidance on these issues is available in the NFYFC Policy for the safeguarding of children and young people and the NFYFC E-safety policy. There are also relevant links to the law in this area at the end of this document.

Young people and social media

The ways in which young people communicate with each other have changed a lot in recent years due to rapid advances in technology and this has meant that young people have increased opportunities for contact which can decrease social isolation and them feel connected to each other, especially if they live in remote or rural areas.

However, some young people have reported that they have received unwanted messages, sometimes of an explicit nature, and that sometimes they are bullied online, including sexual bullying. It is important that your RSE programme includes information and advice for young people about how to deal with these issues.

The following link from Brook might be helpful If you are working with young people around these issues <http://www.brook.org.uk/your-life/staying-safe-online>. There are also some suggestions at the end of this document.



Further advice and guidance on these issues is available in the NFYFC Policy for the safeguarding of children and young people and the NFYFC E-safety policy.

Confidentiality

It has been established that young people under 16 have a right to confidentiality and it must be respected. YFC members should feel safe and in no doubt that they can ask for confidential support. Sexuality is a private matter and any information you have about someone else should not be discussed casually. Parents (or anyone else) do not have to be informed if you know about or suspect any sexual activity even if it is under the age of consent. If you have concerns about underage teenage sexual activity and you are unsure whether abuse or exploitation may be taking place, or you are unsure whether or not you should keep something confidential, then you should not keep this to yourself as you will need further advice. The person that you can talk to initially in NFYFC is Jodie Green.

If a 10, 11 or 12 year old member discloses that they are sexually active, this information must be shared with safeguarding, to protect the young person, even if they are at no immediate risk of harm. You do not have to inform the parents. As above if you have any queries about this, speak initially with Jodie Green.

When a young person comes to talk to you, listen, allowing them to lead the way. Your role is to support them. If what they confide is serious (or they are under 13) and you know you must break their confidentiality be absolutely clear with them. Make sure that they know why and how their confidentiality is to be broken, and are supported through whatever happens next.

If you believe someone under 18 is at risk of significant harm, or of harming someone else you must follow local Child Protection referral procedures. If you believe someone 18 or over is at risk of significant harm, or of harming someone else then you will need to follow local adult safeguarding procedures.

Personal beliefs and values

Your beliefs and values belong to you, and you have a right to them. However in the arena of sexual health it is very important to be aware of any strong views you hold and the potential to make assumptions and judgements based on these.

As a leader or senior your attitudes can have a strong effect on how members feel about themselves, their sexuality and their behaviour. Your messages must be consistent with young people's rights, showing respect for their individuality and cultural, religious, moral and ethical beliefs and the



anything you say should be within the values framework of this policy and other relevant NFYFC policies.

If you are uncomfortable with any aspect of sexual health education ask for further training or seek support.

Disclosing information about yourself

Information about your own relationships and sex life should not be disclosed. Keeping boundaries emphasises the importance of privacy and encourages respect for self and other others. Use the third person to illustrate discussions and explore fictional problems rather than real ones.

Keeping parents informed

There is no legal obligation to seek parents' permission for young people to participate in sexual health education as part of NFYFC activities. It is considered good practice to inform and involve them in planning. Most are pleased that their young people are getting education and information about sexual health from a variety of sources. Some parents and members may have concerns about sexual health education and how it will be delivered because of religious and ethical beliefs. All sexual health promotion should be delivered in accordance with the NFYFC equal opportunity policy.

If your YFC are thinking about introducing relationships and sex education into the club programme contact Jodie Green for advice and guidance.

Responding to individuals

There are different levels of advice and information giving. Work within the limits of what you know and what you have been trained to do. Remember we are not health professionals and should never give individual advice on which method of contraception to use apart from general condom promotion.

Some members may need more specialised counselling or therapy. It is not our role to counsel, get help from others if you do not know where to refer someone.

Always consider Child Protection issues with everyone under 18. If under-16s ask for advice about sexual matters, make sure you check that the Fraser Guidelines conditions apply (See above).

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information in a clear, accessible format. We should try and provide this information in a way they can understand. If we cannot find accessible information organisations such as FPA or Brook might be able to help. Their websites can be found under some sources of help.

Opportunities for promoting sexual health

Below are some opportunities and ideas for promoting sexual health however, members themselves will have good ideas and consultation is to be encouraged so that initiatives are needs led.

Condoms

NFYFC supports the distribution of condoms. Encouraging their use to those who are sexually active and familiarising those not yet ready for sexual relationships is an important sexual health promotion strategy. Condoms are an effective way to prevent sexually transmitted infections, unplanned pregnancies and cervical cancer.

There are a variety of opportunities to promote condom use in the NFYFC. For instance:

- At social events –following or with the follow up of an RSE session
- As part of a workshop on healthy relationships
- Through local partnerships and clubs becoming part of Condom card schemes (Many areas of England and Wales have well established condom distribution schemes operated by Primary Care Trusts Local Health Boards, Teenage Pregnancy Partnerships).

The provision of condoms should:

- only ever be given out by trained workers with access to on-going support and supervision
- refer to the Fraser Guidelines – young people under 16 should be encouraged to discuss issues with their parents
- be supported by verbal or written information on the use of condoms, pregnancy and STI's
- supply a variety of quality condoms, well within their expiry date, displaying the British Kite Mark and EC standard
- have their correct use demonstrated (and get the young person to practice this)
- give advice on how to access emergency contraception
- advise a young person to visit a doctor or local clinic in order to obtain the best possible contraceptive advice and service and give information on services
- and wherever possible be supported by a wider programme of education, and training for staff to ensure that they are able to help young people with their sexual health needs.

Original

Sexual health information

Sexual health information can be imparted in a number of fun ways for instance:

- Discussion groups
- Quizzes that test knowledge and opinions
- Drama based activities
- Competitions
- Art based activities which use sexual health themes e.g. risk-taking

National Campaign Days and weeks

National campaign days and weeks can provide a great focus for sexual health promotion. The targeted ones such as World AIDS Day, Contraceptive Awareness Week, Sexual Health Week and Condom Week all have publicity and promotion material associated with them and a plethora of ideas and activities for engaging young people.

More generic events like Youth Week can also be used as a focus to highlight issues that are relevant to members.

Give positive messages

Make sure that members know they can get confidential support. You could display a confidentiality policy

Most groups of young people will contain at least one member who identifies as lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, questioning and/or trans. It is important to create an atmosphere and culture of acceptance and support. Challenge any discrimination or insults based on someone's sexual orientation or gender and encourage open discussions about attitudes and difference. Ensure that information about appropriate support groups, help lines and useful resources is on offer to all young people. Couch sexual health messages in the positive e.g. the majority of young people intend to use condoms.

Making local services known

Encourage members to seek advice from local health services:

- Gather and display relevant up-to-date information. This should include a list of local services with opening times and phone numbers, and any special young people's clinics.
- Sometimes individual members will need urgent help, for example about emergency contraception, an infection or for a pregnancy test. It is important that you refer to the right places and in the right way. Find out about your local clinics and health services, when young people would be welcome and whether they need appointments. Different clinics and centres offer different services. If in doubt, ring ahead

phone services to find out information and make appointments. This will prepare them for accessing services on their own.

- In some areas young people have undertaken 'mystery shopper' visits to services to check out how good they are and reported back to peers and the service providers.

Developing partnerships

It is essential to work within the wider sexual health policy framework of your County. Developing partnerships with for example the Teenage Pregnancy Partnership, Children's Services (schools and youth services) and Public Health will mean YFC's are linked into developing local strategies, joint work, local agreements and training.

Drawing on partnerships with other agencies in the field can be very beneficial, particularly if leaders are uncomfortable with the subject. There are many agencies and who are trained in the delivery of RSE programmes.

Education about sex and relationships

If you are going to deliver planned programmes of sexual health or invite others in to do so, trained personnel who are confident and comfortable with the subject must carry out the work. They should be competent in group work skills and active learning methods.

Programmes should complement schools' Personal, Social and Health Education curriculum, so it is useful to be familiar with what it sets out for the different learning stages.

Your work should:

- Encourage individuals to value themselves and all aspects of their sexuality, mental and physical health and well-being
- Provide education and information about the processes of growing up, reproduction, and contraception; and explore aspects of healthy sexuality, relationships and parenthood
- Provide opportunities for learning interpersonal skills and positive attitudes, which will help young people to manage their lives
- Promote positive and caring relationships, linking these in with development of good
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Plan a programme that is appropriate to the age, understanding and varied needs of the young people you are working with. It should provide content on morals and the law, and examine self-worth, body image, assertiveness and decision-making. Present factual information in a balanced manner, and focus on positive messages. Include sexual responsibility, the benefits of stable relationships and the responsibilities of being a parent. Include exploration of issues such as gender, sexuality, disability, race and culture.

Some of the young people you work with may be sexually active, but do not assume that all of them are. Emphasise the benefits of friendships. Make sure that being choosy about a sexual partner and waiting until the time is right are affirmed as positive options. Some young people in every group will have suffered sexual abuse, so plan your sessions sensitively with them in mind.

The Sex Education Forum provides very helpful guidance on what to include in RSE programmes and sessions for young people of different ages and their guidance is in line with what is currently being taught in schools. This guidance should be used when planning any sessions or programmes in order to ensure that what you are providing is appropriate to the age of the members.

You can find some examples of age-appropriate topics for RSE by following this link:
<http://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/resources/curriculum-design.aspx>

Policy Implementation

Training is crucial for the implementation of this policy. Staff, management committees and all those in a position of responsibility should be aware and aim to receive training on general sexual health issues.

Those who have a particular interest in sexual health and wish to work with YFC members to lead sexual health promotion initiatives or provide programmes of education must also be aware of the policy and have successfully completed appropriate training e.g. on condom distribution, sexual health information/support and the effective delivery of Sex and Relationships Education.

The lead person at NFYFC responsible for supporting and arranging the training of leaders in this area is Jodie Louise Green, who can be contacted,
By post - NFYFC, 10th Street, Stoneleigh Park, Kenilworth, Warwickshire, CV8 2LG
By email – Jodie.green@nfyfc.org.uk
By telephone – 02476857222



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