



# Talking with your teenager about relationships and sexual health

For parents and carers of children  
between 10 and 13 years old



## Acknowledgements:

This booklet has been produced with support and input from both parents and professionals across a range of interests and perspectives. Thanks to everyone who has been involved in getting this resource published as without them, this information would have lacked a sense of realism!

Further copies available from the resources department at your local health board.

[www.healthscotland.com/publications](http://www.healthscotland.com/publications)

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# Why is this booklet important?

This booklet is for parents of teenagers who are 10 to 13 years old but may also be useful for parents of older teenagers and other family members if sexual health and relationships arises during conversations. (A complementary booklet for parents of younger children is also available as part of this series – contact the resources department at your local health board for copies.)

Advice and information is provided to help you talk about sexual health and relationships with the teenagers in your family. Of course, every young person and family is unique and how you discuss sex and relationships will be influenced by your own values, religious beliefs or cultural traditions.

Remember you don't have to read this booklet all at once – but it may give you some useful starting points if you have not started to speak about sex and relationships with your children. Even if you have, it might help you build on

what you have already discussed. Use what you find helpful – depending on your own moral or faith perspective, what you find useful may be different from other parents.

It has not been possible to provide detailed information to support parents and carers of young people with disabilities as we recognise the particular difficulties in producing a generic booklet that will cover all the particular needs of young people with disabilities – but we give some pointers on appropriate resources in the information and support section (page 36).

**“Lots of parents are not told anything. They need access to information, facts, answers and correct advice”**

– Parent

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# Why should I talk to my teenager about relationships and sexual health?

You may feel that you didn't get enough information about sex and relationships when you were younger. You might also be too embarrassed to raise the subject, not know the right words to use or know the right answers to some of the questions asked. Even if you don't already talk about sex with your teenage children, you will be giving out strong messages about it as you go about your day-to-day life.

As well as protecting children and young people from harm, you can help them develop into independent young adults, and make good choices about how they live and develop relationships. Helping them to understand sex and their own sexuality is part of this.

Young people get many different messages about sex and relationships from books, magazines, films, TV and adverts. These often conflict with messages given out by you as their parent and other adults in their lives.

On one hand, ads and television programmes suggest that sex is easily available and enjoyable and that everyone is "doing it" when the majority of young



people under 16 are not. On the other hand, as a parent or carer you will encourage young people to wait until they are older, in particular to wait to have reached the age of legal consent or until they marry or are in a mature, loving relationship before becoming sexually active. Because we don't always find it easy to talk about sex and relationships, we don't always explain why this might be a good idea. Young people find these mixed messages very confusing.

Young people discuss sex and relationships with their friends, but this information may not be accurate. By talking to your teenager about these issues yourself, you can be sure that they get the information that you think is important – and that you know is correct. Also they can then understand why you promote respect as a key sexual health value.

**“Put the relationship first because that’s ideally what you are aiming for!”**

– Parent

Surveys show that the majority of young people under age 16 do not have sex until later in their lives. Whilst most used condoms once they do have sex, some don't use any protection at all so it is important for young people to be aware of what they need to do to avoid the risks of becoming pregnant or having a sexually transmitted infection (STI) when they are sexually active.

Drinking alcohol or taking drugs usually means that young people will use no protection or may be coerced into having sex, particularly for their first experience. But if young people can discuss issues around sex and relationships openly with their parents, they are more likely to wait until they are older for their first sexual encounter and then use contraception and condoms when they are sexually active.

Young people also need to know how to negotiate what feels right for them and help them avoid abusive or exploitative situations. They have the right to say no to anyone who touches them in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable or wants them to do something they might regret later.

Above all you, as a parent, have a key role in helping your son or daughter to develop healthy, positive relationships just as you helped them to make friends when they were much younger.

## Young people need support to:

- develop communication skills to help them form good relationships
- develop relationships in which they feel comfortable
- explore their feelings and emotions as part of developing relationships
- delay having sex until they are ready
- resist pressure from other young people and the media to have sex before they are ready
- develop the confidence to be able to say no as a positive choice
- negotiate with their partner what they do and do not feel comfortable with, and
- agree to have safer sex with their partner.

Young people need accurate information about the risks of unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, and the knowledge with which to make good choices about contraception and protection from STIs. But as well as practical advice, young people also need encouragement to explore their feelings and appreciate the emotional side of relationships. For some young people, how they deal with these issues will be important morally and you may be able to put these into the context of what you value as responsible behaviour.

# Where do I start?

Ideally you should start talking to your child about their body from an early age, when they begin to ask questions. But don't worry if you didn't begin talking to them about relationships and/or sexual health issues when they were very young – it is never too late. You can build on what they already know to start these conversations now. Talking about the physical, emotional and moral aspects of sexual relationships helps your son or daughter to make informed choices about their lives, and to stick by these even if they come up against pressure from their peers or a partner.

Remember, throughout their childhood and teenage years, you mould your son's or daughter's view of sex and relationships not just through direct discussion but also through your everyday comments, actions and interactions in your household. Be aware of this and try to send out positive messages, whether it's in the way that you and your partner conduct your relationship in front of your teenager or in your reaction to a sex scene in a film.



## Talking with teenagers

Young people need to feel comfortable and secure before they will talk openly about their feelings towards sex and relationships. As a parent, you can help your son or daughter to feel supported by listening to their opinions as well as giving your own, and by keeping private discussions in confidence.

Talking about ordinary things with teenagers can be difficult enough, so you may feel daunted at the

**“I think it’s really about how we can get together and speak about these things. A lot of the time kids will only come to you once the damage is done and they’ve got a problem. It is difficult but it’s great if you can get them to speak about it”**

– Dad

prospect of opening up a conversation about sex and relationships with them. You may be tempted to steer clear of it altogether.

Many parents worry that their teenagers no longer confide in them and that they won't come to them for advice about sex. There may be a number of reasons for this. Teenagers may hold back because they:

- think that they already know everything there is to know about sex
- want to be independent and find out about sex from other sources
- feel too embarrassed to ask
- are aware of your embarrassment
- realise that sex is never discussed in the family
- feel that the language that you or they use to talk about sex is inappropriate or if they raise it, you will think they are already sexually active.

If you want to talk about sex and relationships with your teenager but are worried that they won't initiate a discussion with you, you could try raising the subject in one of the following ways:

- Take advantage of everyday opportunities to check out their knowledge and ask them if they want to talk, after a TV programme or film for example.
- Try using one of their magazines as a prompt to discuss sex and relationships.

- Leave appropriate books and booklets (about sexual health services such as the young people's drop-in services) lying around to let them get accurate information or to use if they want to ask questions. Ask them what they thought of a particular book.
- Use examples of your own experiences – good and bad – of being a teenager if this will help explain some of your thinking. It may help them understand where you are coming from as well as taking some of the pressure off them. But remember, the world has moved on since you were a teenager, and young people today face a range of new and challenging issues that you never had to deal with.

You may have to accept that your teenager doesn't want to talk to you but that doesn't mean that you have failed as a parent. Being more independent and making their own decisions is part of growing up – the important part you have is making sure your teenager has your support when they need it and the knowledge of where to go for advice if they don't want to speak to you.

# How should I answer questions?

## Some hints and tips

Let your teenager know that they can always come to you with their questions or problems, no matter what they are. As well as saying this, it's important that you back your words up with your actions. So, if you are asked questions or for advice, be calm and supportive, whatever the circumstances.

The following hints might also be helpful:

- Be truthful and honest.
- Try not to judge, and be sensitive to their feelings and their need for privacy.
- Agree a convenient time to talk and away from other family so you won't be distracted.
- If you both have different viewpoints, try to work together to find a compromise.
- If you don't know the answer to a question, say so. But say that you'll find out the answer and tell them later. Or perhaps you could find out the answer together (some of the websites/helplines shown on pages 36 – 40 might help or speak to your local GP or staff working in sexual health services as they will be able to help).



- Don't try to hide any shock or embarrassment you may initially feel when discussing sex. Instead, explain how you feel and why. Your son or daughter will probably feel exactly the same.
- Use open questions to avoid getting yes/no responses. "How did it go?" rather than "Did it go okay?"
- Try a little humour, sometimes this can help put things into perspective.
- As you answer questions, check out what is already known and understood or why a particular topic is raised. Correct any information that is wrong or misunderstood.
- Remember that how you answer questions (on whatever subject) will affect how comfortable they feel about approaching you in the future to discuss sex. Just because the question is asked doesn't mean that they are sexually active, pregnant or gay! Treat all questions seriously and try to answer honestly.
- If you have values that come from your own religious or cultural background, then take the time to explain the reasons for certain beliefs or traditional practices.

- If you are asked for your opinion on something, explain it to them but also let them know that other people may have a different perspective. Although you will probably want to have a shared point of view, encourage your teenager to make up their own mind. Ask them what they think about the issue.
- Remember that as well as needing the facts, young people need to be able to share their feelings and worries. They also need guidance to help them make their own decisions.

Remember that body language, gestures and eye contact often convey more than the spoken word!

## Questions and answers

The following pages give some **sample questions** that young people might ask and how you might answer them. There are **no right or perfect answers** (or questions), of course, and only you will know the most appropriate response to questions from your son or daughter. We have given some alternative options as these may help you start to think about how you might respond.

## “What’s an STI and how do you get one?”

asks your 13-year-old son, after flicking through a woman’s magazine at the dentist’s surgery.

A sexually transmitted infection (or STI) is an infection that both men and women can get, and pass on, from sexual activity. These include HIV, gonorrhoea, syphilis, chlamydia and genital warts. These last two are the most common among young people today – using condoms can reduce the risk of getting these. It is important for all young people to know that STIs exist and that many may not have any symptoms so you don’t know if you have been infected or not. Condoms are used not just as a contraceptive but also to protect against infections, including HIV. Having sex without taking proper precautions not only puts you at risk of having an unintended pregnancy, but can also have longer term health implications such as infertility which you might not find out about for many years. Of course, not having sex means that you can avoid getting an STI entirely.

*Andrew: “STI stands for sexually transmitted infection. That means that it’s an infection that you*

*can get, or pass on, by having sex. There are lots of different kinds of STIs, most of which can be cured. HIV, on the other hand, which also is an STI cannot be cured. People can reduce the risk of getting most STIs by having safer sex, which means always using a condom."*

*Emma: "An STI is a sexually transmitted infection – an infection that can be passed between sexual partners (boy/girl, girl/girl or boy/boy). Condoms can act as a barrier and so can prevent the spread of STIs. Apart from totally avoiding any form of sexual activity, no contraception can do this. Some STIs have symptoms, but others can go unnoticed. Being treated for a STI is nothing to be ashamed of, but some have no cure, so it's important to avoid them in the first place by using a condom if you do have sex or by not having sex at all."*

Your 16-year-old daughter hasn't been herself for several days. After much coaxing, she eventually confides in you:

**“My boyfriend wants me to go on the pill but I don't know if I want to. What should I do?”**

Learn to read between the lines. Your daughter's concerns may not be about taking the pill itself, but about one of a range of other issues. Perhaps she is feeling under pressure to have sex, or maybe her boyfriend wants her to go on the pill because he doesn't want to use condoms.

Try to broaden the conversation. Even if she doesn't want to discuss them further with you, your daughter will at least think about whether there are other issues she has concerns about surrounding her boyfriend's request. The pill is only one contraceptive option and it might not be suitable for your daughter so as well as talking to you, encourage your daughter to discuss other contraceptive options with your family doctor or Family Planning Clinic staff or with staff at youth friendly drop-in centres if these are available locally.

Helen: *“When taken properly, the pill can be an effective way to prevent an unintended pregnancy,*

*but it should be used with condoms, not instead of them because it doesn't prevent STIs. Thinking about contraception and protection before beginning a sexual relationship is a really good thing. But only you can decide if you are really ready for that. If you're not 100% sure, then it is ok to say no as it might mean that you're not really ready."*

*James: "If you decide that you want to start having sex, the pill can be a good way to prevent pregnancy. To make sure that you keep yourself safe from infection, you also have to use a condom. If you're thinking of starting a sexual relationship, you need to feel comfortable discussing these things with your boyfriend. You might decide to wait until you are older and that's ok."*

After watching a film that includes a gay character, your 13-year-old son asks:

**“How do people know that they’re gay?”**

Such a question may simply mean that your son is curious or it could indicate that he has feelings he is confused about himself. Bearing this in mind, be as open and positive as possible when answering his question.

*Danielle: “People often question their sexuality when they’re growing up. It’s quite common for teenagers to have a crush on someone of the same sex, but it doesn’t always mean that they’re gay. Sometimes these feelings simply stem from admiration and lessen with time, and sometimes they can be a sign of sexual orientation. Talking things through can sometimes help people who are feeling confused.”*

*Alex: “Some people know from a very young age that they are gay, others discover later in life, often when they start to have romantic relationships. No one can tell you whether you’re gay, straight or bisexual – it’s something that you feel inside. For people who are*

*confused about their feelings, it can help to talk to someone who has been through the same experience. There are lots of helplines and websites set up to offer support.”*

**“I’m not afraid to talk to them about it any more because I’m more informed and I’m more confident because I’m more informed”**

**– Father of teenager aged 13**

Your 13-year-old son's girlfriend hasn't phoned him for more than a week. When you gently ask him if everything's okay, he admits that she broke up with him.

**"What's wrong with me?" he asks.  
"Why doesn't she want to go out  
with me any more?"**

Try to remember what it was like when you went through your first break up. When you're younger, it's easy to assume that it's your "fault" when a relationship ends. Your first relationship can really boost your ego, so when it ends your confidence can be shattered. Everyone feels bad about themselves following a split – let him know that this is not something unusual.

Tell your son that what he is feeling is normal and that it will pass. Explain that you have been through the same experience and that he will feel better in time. At the same time try to show him how special he is, perhaps by reminding him of all the great friends he has who care about him.

*Cameron: "Nothing is wrong with you. People often break up because their feelings change over time or they simply grow apart. It's very upsetting to split up with someone you care so much about, but each*

*relationship also helps you to find out more about who you are and what you want from a partner."*

*Susan: "Remember all the good qualities you have that made your girlfriend want to go out with you in the first place. You had lots of great times together, but it's very difficult to find a partner who is the perfect match. That's why most people don't settle down until they are in their twenties or thirties and some people never settle down with a partner. Try to enjoy more time with your friends just now and look forward to enjoying a relationship with a new girlfriend in the future."*

Your 15-year-old daughter and her friend are discussing an older friend who has taken the “morning-after” pill.

**“Does it only work the day after having sex?”** they ask.

This confusion arises because emergency contraception is often known as the “morning-after” pill. Despite this name, emergency contraception can be taken by a woman up to 72 hours (around 3 days) after having had sex without using a condom. It’s important that you dispel any myths surrounding contraception, so that your daughter can make informed choices about how to prevent unintended pregnancy if she does decide to have sex.

Young people should know that emergency contraception is available, and can be effective in preventing unintended pregnancy, but that it isn’t a regular and reliable form of contraception. It’s also vital to stress that emergency contraception offers no protection against STIs. You may also have a particular view about emergency contraception which you may want to share with your daughter.

Craig: "A woman can take the 'morning-after' pill up to 72 hours after having sex, but it's more effective the sooner it's taken. It can prevent an unintended pregnancy if a couple's usual method of contraception hasn't worked. That's why it's also called emergency contraception. But it doesn't protect against STIs. Only using a condom can help do that."

Shona: "The 'morning-after' pill can be taken within three days of having unprotected sex, though it works best if you take it within 24 hours. It's no substitute for using a condom, though, as it doesn't protect against infection. GPs, and places like the family planning clinic or some sexual health drop-in services can give out the morning-after pill for free. You can also buy it from chemists if it is not provided free of charge."

On the way home from school your 12-year-old daughter tells you that some older kids were laughing at one of her classmates because he had had a wet dream.

**“Does that mean that he wet the bed?” she asks.**

It's important that you explain to girls what boys go through at puberty, and vice versa, so that young people grow up with a good understanding of the opposite sex. Knowing that the other sex also has its own issues to cope with during puberty can make a young person less self-conscious about the changes that they are going through themselves.

*Kate: “No, he didn't wet the bed. When a boy reaches puberty, often between the ages of 10 and 13, he begins producing sperm. A wet dream is when a boy releases some of that sperm – or ejaculates – while he is asleep. It's completely normal, and boys don't have any control over it. Nobody should tease your friend about it.”*

*Matthew: “No. A wet dream is when some of a boy's sperm is released when he is sleeping. Wet dreams and unexpected erections are part and parcel of growing up for a boy, and aren't anything to be ashamed of or teased about.”*

Your 13-year-old son is reading the newspaper and comes across the term "safer sex".

## "Does that just mean having sex with a condom?"

Using a condom when having sex is one of the ways to avoid becoming pregnant or getting a sexually transmitted infection (STI), including HIV. But your son or daughter should know that "sex" doesn't just mean penetrative sex and that there are other ways people can enjoy being intimate with one another, completely risk-free.

Robert: *"Yes, 'safer sex' does mean using a condom when having penetrative sex, to reduce the risk of getting HIV or other STIs. But having sex doesn't always involve penetration. People also enjoy kissing, stroking and mutual masturbation, which are all classed as 'safer sex' because they don't involve the exchange of body fluids."*

Marie: *"'Safer sex' means always using a condom no matter what kind of sexual activity is involved. It's called 'safer' sex rather than 'safe' sex as even protected penetrative sex involves some risk. Kissing, massage and mutual masturbation, however, are 'safe' sexual activities, as the risk of infection is rare."*

**“All the guys in my class say that they’ve already had sex. Am I the only person in the world who hasn’t?”**

**asks your 15-year-old son.**

Feedback from young people tells us that most of them don’t have sex before they are 16. So it’s highly unlikely that your son is the only person in his class who hasn’t yet had sex. This may reassure your son that his experience is quite normal.

Explain to your son that peer pressure can lead young people to embellish their sex lives – or invent them entirely if they are non-existent. Your son shouldn’t feel rushed to have sex when he’s not ready, and certainly not just to “keep up” with his mates or save face. Choosing to wait until he is older or is in a mature, loving relationship can be a positive choice.

David: *“Surveys of people your age show that only a third have had sex, so you’re unlikely to be the only guy in your class who is a virgin. Some people like to brag about having sex and others make things up because they don’t want to feel like the odd one out. Don’t feel pressured into having sex, especially not by*

*your mates. Ignore their questions or tell them that you don't feel the need to discuss your sex life. They don't need to know all the details if you don't want them to."*

*Megan: "The people who brag most loudly about having sex are probably just trying to hide the fact that they haven't done it. Choosing whether or not to have sex is a very personal decision and 'keeping up' with your friends shouldn't come into it. If you feel under pressure when friends ask about your experience, just say to them 'Don't worry about me. I'm having a great time – I just don't need to tell the world about it'."*

**“I thought girls usually got their periods by my age. Why haven’t mine started?”**

**asks your 15-year-old daughter.**

Everyone develops at different rates, and puberty is no exception. Let your daughter know that she is by no means the only 15-year-old girl to have not had a period yet. In fact, puberty may begin for boys and girls at any age between 10 and 18. But if you or your daughter are concerned about her absence of periods, then encourage your daughter to talk to your family doctor (GP) and offer to go with her if she wishes.

*Lesley: “It’s OK, you’ve not been left behind. Plenty of girls don’t start their periods until they are 16, 17 or even 18 years old. Everyone is unique, so it’s only natural that puberty is a completely individual process.”*

*Stuart: “Many girls will have started their periods by the age of 15, but by no means all. You will start yours soon too, but in the meantime enjoy not having to think about tampons or pads just yet.”*

Your 14-year-old daughter comments on a soap opera in which an under-age girl goes for advice about contraception without discussing it with her parents or getting their consent.

## “That’s against the law, isn’t it?”

Young people often worry that they have no rights to confidentiality when accessing sexual health services, especially if they are under 16. This is not the case. In fact, many services are set up specifically with young people in mind.

Make your daughter (or son) aware of the local services available to them, and that they can be used for all sorts of different reasons – from condoms and contraception to counselling. Display booklets from local young people’s clinics next to your doctor’s details on the noticeboard, and encourage your daughter to look at some of the informative websites listed at the back of this booklet.

Young people do not need your permission to go to their GP or a sexual health clinic to be prescribed contraception. A young woman also has the right to confidential abortion services. There is no age limit for access to sexual health services, but the health

professional concerned will assess the young person's ability to make informed decisions and will always encourage parental involvement/discussion. Having a good relationship, including open discussions about sexual health, with your teenager means that they will be more likely to involve you if and when they need help.

*Iain: "No. Young people also have the right to privacy when discussing matters with their doctor. You can discuss sexual matters with your GP or a clinic doctor at any age, (and because of medical confidentiality guidelines, they will keep that information confidential). Young women can also be prescribed contraception without their parents' permission – and boys and girls can access condoms again without their parents' permission. It's important that you know the services are there for you to use, so that you can be prepared if you decide you're ready to become sexually active."*

*Janet: "Young people can expect their private matters to be kept private by a doctor, whether it's their parents' GP or a doctor based at community clinics. Contraception and protection can be provided to young people without their parents needing to know about it, even if they are under 16. Young people who are thinking about starting a sexual relationship should visit their doctor or local clinic to make sure they are prepared."*

# What do young people learn about relationships and sexual health in schools?

Despite what they get at school, young people still need the opportunity to talk to you as their parent about sex and relationships. Growing up today can be confusing with many conflicting messages about what is appropriate or is an acceptable relationship. As a parent, you can help reduce this confusion and in particular you can provide a moral perspective.

Remember that the questions and issues that your son or daughter might raise will probably have been discussed at their secondary school. Sex and relationships education is usually provided as part of the Personal, Social and Health Education programme building on the basics explored at primary level about body and relationships – in some schools this is delivered by guidance staff, sometimes jointly with school nurses and other staff working in sexual health services. In denominational schools (mainly Catholic), programmes of “relationships and moral education” are taught. In 2001, guidance for sex and relationships education in Scottish schools was published and reinforced by Scotland’s first sexual health strategy, Respect and Responsibility. As a result, schools should now be clearer about the need



for good quality sex and relationships education that is easy to understand, and set within the context of relationships based on love and respect.

These programmes usually cover basic information about contraception, the mechanics and biology of sexual activity (although how this is covered varies from school to school as does the skills and knowledge of those delivering sex and relationships education programmes). If you don't already know about what issues are covered in the school programme, check out the school handbook.

*Sex Education in Scottish Schools* is a booklet which explains your and your child's rights in relation to sex and relationships education. It explains that the school should have spoken to you about sex and relationships education and that you have the right to have your religious and cultural needs met in this regard. If you don't already have a copy, speak to the school or the parents representatives on the School Board – you can also download a copy from the Learning and Teaching Scotland website (see page 40).

# Where can I get more information and support?

Contraception and sexual health information is available to young people (including those under 16) from family planning clinics, GUM (genito-urinary medicine) clinics, local health centres and young people's services.

Local health promotion departments also have useful information – check out your local telephone directory for their contact details. Other helpful websites are listed on the following pages.

**“I didn't realise there were so many places you could go for help and advice. This has been so helpful to me. I can go onto these websites and have a look to see if there's anything I can take from it”**

– Mother of 10 and 15-year-old girls



## Where can I get help or support as a parent?

### ChildLine Scotland

Gives confidential information and support to young people. Contact them by telephone for free or by writing (no stamp needed) to Childline, Freepost 1111, Glasgow G1 4BR. The website gives information on the kind of things that concern or worry young people and can give you some pointers for potential discussion topics.

**Phone: 0800 1111 (24 hours)**

**Website: [www.childline.org.uk/helpandadvice.asp](http://www.childline.org.uk/helpandadvice.asp)**

### Family Planning Association Scotland

Provides information and resources to support parents in talking to their children about sexual health as well as information directly targeted at young people.

**Helpline: 0141 576 5088**

**Website: [www.fpa.org.uk](http://www.fpa.org.uk)**

## Parentline Scotland

A free, confidential telephone helpline for parents and anyone caring for a child in Scotland. You can call about any problem, however big or small. Open Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 9am-5pm and Tuesday and Thursday, 9am-9pm.

**Phone: 0808 800 2222**

**Website: [www.children1st.org.uk/parentline](http://www.children1st.org.uk/parentline)**

## Parents Enquiry Scotland

Offers support to parents and their gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender children across Scotland. Parents who have experience of learning to understand and support their own gay children operate the helpline.

**Phone: 0131 556 6047**

**Website: [www.parentsenquiryscotland.org](http://www.parentsenquiryscotland.org)**

## Parent Network Scotland

Run by parents for parents, offers information and resources to provide parents with new skills and support so that they can get on better with their children.

**Phone: 0131 555 6780**

**Website: [www.parentnetworkscotland.org.uk](http://www.parentnetworkscotland.org.uk)**

## UK Parents

Provides information on a range of issues affecting parents, both mums and dads, from a range of different viewpoints and interests. Contains feedback from parents themselves about breaking down the barriers of sex education.

**Phone: 0191 260 2616**

**Website: [www.UKparents.co.uk](http://www.UKparents.co.uk)**



## For parents and carers of young people with learning disabilities

All children need information about sexual health and relationships regardless of any disability. But if you are a parent or carer of a child with a learning disability, finding resources that help them discuss body changes, relationships, keeping safe and sexual health can be a huge challenge. For a list of resources to support your role as parents, see

[www.phis.org.uk/projects/download.asp?p=FCL](http://www.phis.org.uk/projects/download.asp?p=FCL)

or contact Health Scotland for your own copy

(tel: 0141 300 1050). Many of these resources will

be held in libraries for free use – and if they don't

hold them, ask them to get a copy for you to look at

and use.

### British Institute of Learning Disabilities

Campion House, Kidderminster DY10 1JL

Phone: 01562 723010

Website: [www.bild.org.uk](http://www.bild.org.uk)



## What websites would be helpful for my teenager?

There are many websites that teenagers can visit – always remember to give them safe surfing tips. For help on this, visit [www.besafeonline.org](http://www.besafeonline.org). Remember – you should visit a site yourself if you have questions or concerns about it.

### Healthy Respect

Provides advice and information to parents and carers on sexual health and relationships as well as downloadable practical resources such as newsletters and toolkits. The website has been designed by teenagers for teenagers.

**Phone: 0131 536 9454**

**Website: [www.healthyrespect.co.uk](http://www.healthyrespect.co.uk)**

### The Hormone Factory

A website for children aged ten to twelve explaining sexual and reproductive development and the physical, emotional and social changes associated with puberty. It presents information in a clear, straightforward and light-hearted way to answer the questions this age group often ask ... and the ones they don't (but still wonder about).

**Website: [www.thehormonefactory.com](http://www.thehormonefactory.com)**

## LGBT Youth Scotland

Gives support and information to young people who are lesbian, gay and bisexual as well those who are transgender.

**Phone: 0131 622 2266 (LGBT Youth Scotland)  
0845 113 0005 (LGBT Youthline, Tues  
7.30pm – 9.00pm)**

**Website: [www.lgbtyouth.org.uk](http://www.lgbtyouth.org.uk)**

## Sexwise

Provides a website through which young people can access information on local sexual health services and also a free confidential advice line for young people under 18 years on sex, relationships and contraception.

**Phone: 0800 28 29 30 (advice line, 7am to  
midnight, Mon-Sun).**

**Website: [www.ruthinking.co.uk](http://www.ruthinking.co.uk)**

## Thinkaboutit

A website from Health Scotland aimed at teenagers – provides series of frequently asked questions and answers as well as factual information on sexual health and relationships.

**Website: [www.healthscotland.com/thinkaboutit](http://www.healthscotland.com/thinkaboutit)**

## Young Scot

Advice and information on a range of issues important to young people, including relationships, lifestyles and sexual health.

**Website: [www.youngscot.org.uk](http://www.youngscot.org.uk)**



## Where do I get information about what happens in schools?

### Learning and Teaching Scotland

Provides guidance and resources for teachers and others working in schools. Guidance on how schools should consult with parents and the suggested programme content for sex and relationships programmes can be downloaded from this site.

**Website:** [www.ltscotland.org.uk/sexeducation](http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/sexeducation)

### Scottish Catholic Education Service

Gives information about Catholic education and Catholic schools in Scotland and offers support and practical resources to parents, students, teachers and others. This includes guidance on how to provide sex and relationships advice in line with the teachings of the Church in today's society.

**Website:** [www.sces.uk.com](http://www.sces.uk.com)

### Parentzone

Managed by the Scottish Executive, this site gives parents access to resources and information about new and existing developments affecting the education of children and young people in Scotland.

**Website:** [www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk](http://www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk)



## Where can I get information on young people's rights and the law?

### The Scottish Child Law Centre

Gives information and advice about the law and children's rights.

**Phone: 0800 328 8970 (free)**

**Website: [www.sclc.org.uk](http://www.sclc.org.uk)**

### The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

The international law that states what rights children and young people have from birth until they reach 18 years of age. To find out more information on how the UNCRC affects your child and family relationships see [www.unicef.org/crc](http://www.unicef.org/crc).



[www.healthscotland.com](http://www.healthscotland.com)

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