Written evidence from Healthwatch Suffolk

Q1. Who would you prefer to talk to if you were worried about sexual health? (N = 5168)

Percentage of respondents who ticked each option:

32% of 11-18 year olds told us that this question didn’t apply to them. Of those who did feel the question applied to them, the top choices were:

- Parents - 57%
- Friends - 45%
- Doctor - 29%

Gender differences

We also found that girls are more likely to speak to their friends than boys are. 53% of girls would talk to their friends, whereas only 35% of boys would:
Percentage of respondents who ticked each option, by age

There is variation between ages in who respondents would talk to about sexual health

As they got older, respondents were less likely to talk to their parents

- 78% of 11 year olds would talk to their parents, but only 34% of 16 year olds would

Preferences to talk to friends increased with age

- 32% of 11 year olds would talk to their friends, but 52% of 17 year olds would

Similarly, respondents were more likely to speak to their doctor as they got older

- 17% of 12 year olds would speak to their doctor, but 61% of 18 year olds would

Graph to show variations in responses by age

Differences between different sexualities

Of those respondents who identified as Heterosexual, most would choose to talk to their parents (58%).

Of those respondents who don’t identify as Heterosexual, far fewer (39%) said they would talk to their parents.

- Instead, most told us they would prefer to talk to their friends instead (59%).

Free text responses

We also provided space for respondents to tell us who they would go to. 200 young people responded. Of these, the majority (50%) told us they wouldn’t speak to anyone.

“I don’t feel comfortable enough to tell anyone” - Female, Age 13

7% said they would talk to people online about it, and 3% told us they would speak to their partner.
Q2. How would you like to find out information about sexual health? (N = 5166)

Most respondents told us they would like to find out about sexual health in lessons (59%). Websites were the second most popular source of information (27%). 24% would like to find out information from NHS Sexual Health Services or their GP.

“We don’t do enough sex ed in school and many girls are confused about their own body and have to find out online/through others” - Female, age 12

“[I’d like] lessons where males and females are split into separate classes” - Male, age 17
Percentage of respondents who ticked each option, by age

There is variation between ages when it comes to how they want to receive information on sexual health.

**Lessons**

The preference for receiving information in lessons falls from 62% at age 11, to 37% by age 17.

**Websites**

Only 13% of 11 year olds said they wanted to get information from websites. However, for 19 year olds, websites were their preferred choice, with 60% saying they would like to receive information in this way.

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**Free text responses**

We also provided space for respondents to tell us how they would like to find out information. 438 young people gave us an answer which were then categorised into different topics. Based on this analysis, 35% told us they would not like to receive any information.

“*I don’t want to learn about it*” - Male, age 15

26% told us they would like to receive information from their parents and family:

“*...My parents, as they are the people I can trust the most. However, I also think it is good to learn it at school*”

- Female, age 12

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