

Your sexual  
health matters.

**NHS**  
Maidstone and  
Tunbridge Wells  
NHS Trust

uasc  health

# Sexual Health – an introduction



More information can be  
found in our UASC Leaflet on  
contraception and Sexual Health.

# Sexual Health – an introduction

Sex and relationships can be thought of as a private and personal matter and some of us may find the subject embarrassing and difficult to talk about. However, it is a natural part of life and it's right for all of us to be able to enjoy a positive, happy and healthy relationship when we are ready to – and it is lawful to do so.

In the UK, young people, like you, learn about sex and relationships from their families and also from school. They learn about the prevention of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI's) and how unwanted pregnancies can be prevented with the use of contraception. The idea is that young people can learn about these things before they become sexually active. We have specialist doctors and nurses who can help look after your sexual health. This help is free and confidential, which means that the nurse or doctor will not tell anyone else about what you have talked about, as long as they do not think that you are at risk of harm, or hurting anyone else by your actions.

You can get free, confidential help and treatment at Sexual Health Clinics, and all areas of the UK have these. You can also talk to your GP or LAC (Looked After Child), doctor or nurse too. More information can be found at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

You can also use the National Sexual Health free helpline – **0300 123 7123** – where you can get advice about where to get help in your local area. As teenagers, it's natural that you might want to have a boyfriend or girlfriend and to form relationships. We understand that all people are different and can have different attitudes about when they feel it is okay to have sex. The important thing is not to feel pressured or to put pressure onto another person to have sex until it is right for both of you. It is also okay if you don't want a boyfriend or girlfriend.

# Consent

A person has to give consent to take part in any sexual activity. The minimum age of consent, in the UK for any sexual activity is 16.

To have sex with a person when they have not given consent, even if you are in a relationship with them or married, is against the law; it is a crime. Consent means that we agree to something; it is a choice. In UK law, consent cannot be given in a number of situations:

- ▶ If the person is under 13 years of age
- ▶ If the person is asleep or unconscious.
- ▶ If the person has been pressured or feels unable to say no.
- ▶ A person cannot give consent if their capacity has been impaired by drugs or alcohol.

Sexual activity with any person in the situations above is against the law and can result in a prison sentence for rape or sexual assault.

More information can be found at [www.disrespectnobody.co.uk](http://www.disrespectnobody.co.uk) [www.getit.org.uk](http://www.getit.org.uk) There is a translate button for many languages.

Although the age of consent for any sexual activity, in the UK, is 16, lots of people wait until they are over this age. The age of consent is the same for men and women in straight (heterosexual) or same-sex relationships.

