

***Let's Talk
About Sex
Bromley***



***Children and Young People's
Sexual Health and
Healthy Relationships
in the London Borough of Bromley***



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What is Healthwatch Bromley?

Healthwatch Bromley is one of 152 local Healthwatch organisations that were established throughout England in 2013, under the provisions of the Health and Social Care Act 2012. The dual role of local Healthwatch is to champion the rights of users of health and social care services and to hold the system to account for how well it engages with the public.

The remit of Healthwatch Bromley as an independent health and social care watchdog is to be the voice of local people and ensure that health and social care services are safe, effective and designed to meet the needs of patients, social care users and carers.

Healthwatch Bromley gives children, young people and adults in Bromley a stronger voice to influence and challenge how health and social care services are purchased, provided and reviewed within the borough.

Healthwatch Bromley's core functions are:

1. Gathering the views and experiences of service users, carers, and the wider community,
2. Making people's views known,
3. Involving locals in the commissioning process for health and social care services, and process for their continual scrutiny,
4. Referring providers of concern to Healthwatch England, or the CQC, to investigate,
5. Providing information about which services are available to access and signposting,
6. Collecting views and experiences and communicating them to Healthwatch England,
7. Working with the Health and Wellbeing board in Bromley on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Joint Health and Wellbeing strategy (which will influence the commissioning process).



Strategic Drivers

Healthwatch Bromley's role is to support the voices and views of the local community and to ensure their opinions are taken into account when services are commissioned.

Healthwatch Bromley (HWB) engaged with the local community and spoke to people of all ages and backgrounds to ask them what they believed should be the priorities for Children and Young people for HWB to investigate in the upcoming year. It was evident from feedback received that young people's Sexual Health services and understanding of healthy teenage relationships was a major contender for HWB to create a piece of work around.

Children and Young People's attitudes to sexual health and healthy teenage relationships have been at the forefront of the media for the last few years. From popular soaps to newspaper articles and reports, there has been a spotlight on issues such as sexting, underage sex and controlling relationships.

HWB was keen to gather the thoughts and views of the young people of Bromley around such subjects and also to raise awareness about issues such as sexting laws and sexual health. HWB were also interested in discovering young people's experiences with sexual health clinics in the borough.

Bromley has a population of 309,392 people, with children and young people under the age of 20 years making up 24.2% of the population.¹

Although the rate of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) overall is lower in Bromley than nationally, young people, between the ages of 15 and 24 years, in Bromley continue to have the highest rates of new STIs.²

Regarding sexual health, there are seven sexual health clinics across the borough, currently only one offers a dedicated service to under 25s, this is Bromley Y which is situated in central Bromley.

HWB set out to speak to as many young people as possible in a bid to identify the gaps in sexual health services, knowledge and raise awareness.

This engagement was undertaken to gain a wider understanding and appreciation of the young people of Bromley's attitudes and experiences toward sexual health and healthy relationships, in the hope that it would raise awareness around the services that are available, the laws around sex and healthy teenage relationships. To do this we focused on:

- Understanding the laws around sex, sexting and pornography.
- Identifying who young people go to when seeking relationship advice.
- Getting feedback on sexual health services in the borough, including staff attitudes.
- Identifying the percentage of young people who have sent or received explicit pictures/messages.

This report presents the findings that emerged through our engagement. The recommendations that are provided, were led by the young people themselves and are included to support decision making and commissioning of services for them.

This report will be shared with the Bromley Health and Wellbeing Board, the schools and organisations that participated, the Bromley Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), the Care Quality Commission (CQC), Public Health Bromley, NHS England and Healthwatch England, The London Borough of Bromley's Children and Young People Senior Commissioning Manager and the Voluntary and Community Sector.

¹ Public Health England Child Health Profile-Bromley 2016

² Bromley JSNA 2016



Methodology

This report documents the findings of the research, which took place from December 2016 to February 2017. Every secondary school in Bromley was invited to take part in the study which comprised of a workshop entitled Teenage Kicks. HWB also created an online survey collecting information and opinions about sexual health services. Furthermore, Healthwatch engaged with under 25's in local sexual health clinics. This report aims to identify areas of success in the current system and suggest areas where services could improve. Also, it aims to recognise what young people understand about the laws around consent, sexting and pornography.

This report will be split into three main sections incorporating the findings from the following: Teenage Kicks workshops, an online survey and sexual health clinic engagement.

The first section contains the findings from the Teenage Kicks workshops. These were between 50 minutes to an hour long. The workshops were split into six sections which consisted of the following:

- 1) **Society's Views on Men and Women:** This section involved a word game that asked the young people to shout out the first thing that came into their head when they heard the words "man" and "woman".
- 2) **The Right Time:** The age of consent was explored, including if the young people believed that the legal age should be raised or lowered.
- 3) **Biggest Concerns:** This area looked at what young people felt their peers were most concerned about. Depending on the size of the group, the young people either had an open discussion or placed stickers on posters depicting issues such as Peer Pressure, Friendship, Relationships and Sex and Body Image

- 4) **Sexting:** This section looked at the definition of sexting, what the legalities are, revenge porn and the long-term impact of sharing explicit images.
- 5) **Control and Abuse:** Depending on the size of the group, the participants either spoke about what they considered to be control and abuse in a relationship or wrote on flip charts which was then shared with the rest of the group.
- 6) **Pornography:** This part looked at who watches pornography, how it can affect people's lives and the laws around owning extreme pornography.

The second section explores the online survey. This comprised of various questions around sexual health and was available via Survey Monkey for three months. It was filled out by 40 individuals. The final part of the report includes the findings from the sexual health clinics engagement.



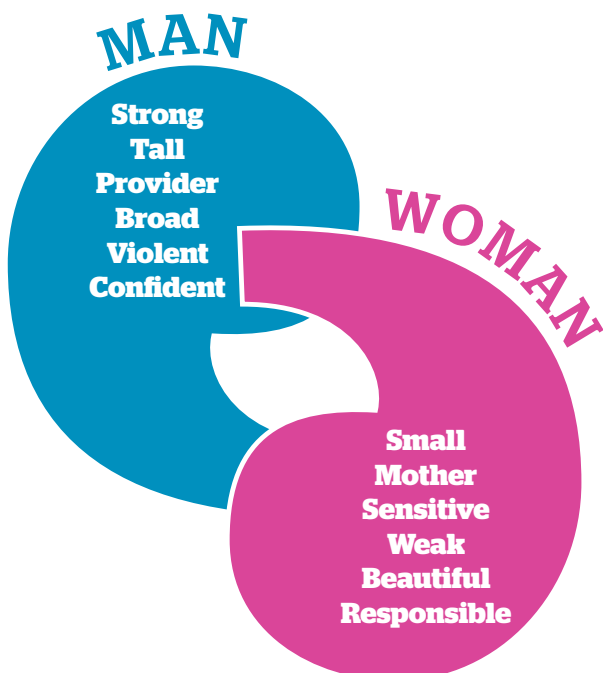
Summary of Findings

Teenage Kicks Workshops

300 responses were gathered during the course of the workshops.

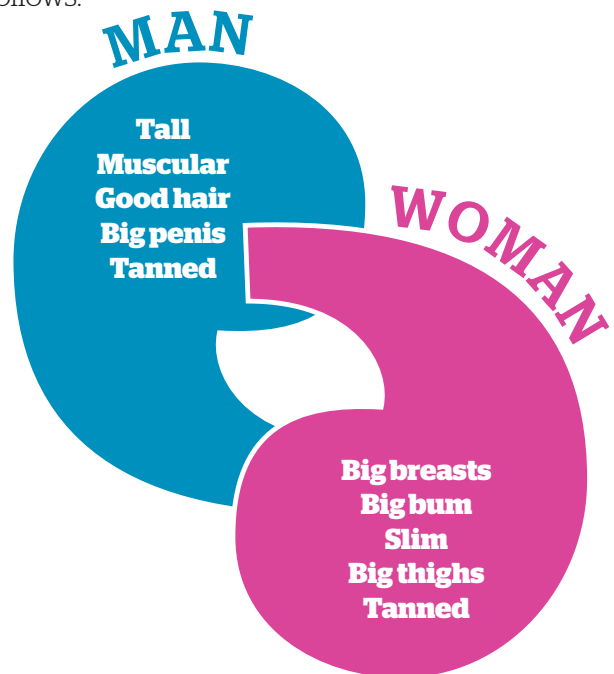
As previously mentioned, the workshops were split into six sections. We tried to make these as interactive and interesting as possible. A PowerPoint presentation was used throughout, flip chart paper was used in some sections and the young people were encouraged to share their views and opinions as much as possible. It was made clear at the start of the session that the students should not use names when discussing events and that we should respect each other's opinions.

The first section was entitled Society's Views on Men and Women: This asked the young people what kind of words came into their minds when they heard the words "man" and "woman". The participants conjured up such words as:



Although most of the young people agreed that the descriptions are stereotypical, they believed that this is the way that society views men and women.

The young people were also asked to describe what they consider the ideal man and woman look like, although many different variations were created, the most popular descriptions were as follows:

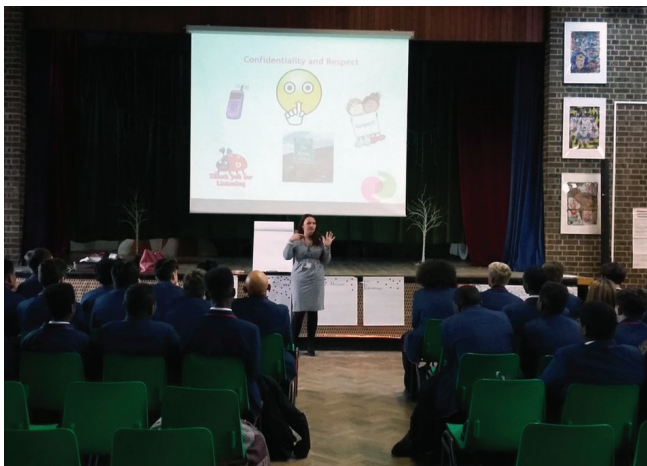


This followed a discussion on the media and how a lot of the celebrities who are in the spotlight are often airbrushed in photos or have had cosmetic work. In short, the young people were made aware that the perfect man or woman generally does not exist. The importance of personality was also discussed.

The second section explored the age of consent. When asked what the legal age of consent for sexual intercourse in the UK is, the majority of young people correctly stated 16, but there was also a number of young people who believed otherwise. Alternative suggestions included 18, 15 and "don't know".



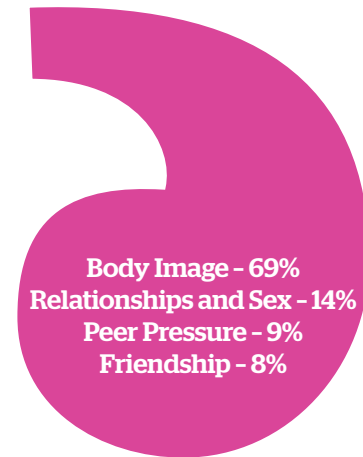
The young people then discussed if they agreed with this law. Some of the participants believed that the age should be raised. The reason they gave for this is that most young people are still in school at sixteen and run the risk of falling pregnant. However, the majority were happy with the age of consent being 16, whilst a minority suggested that the age should be lowered. Reasons given for this response were “they are going to do it anyway” and one participant proposed that young people would be more likely to seek contraceptive advice if they knew they weren’t breaking the law by having sex.



Teenage Kicks

The next part of the workshop looked at the biggest concerns of young people. The four topics that were chosen were **Friendship**, **Peer Pressure**, **Relationships and Sex** and **Body Image**. The young people were asked to pick which heading they believed was most concerning to their peers.

The results are as follows:



A discussion then followed aiming to understand why the young people had selected the topics.

Body Image - With the majority of votes (69%), Body Image was seen as the biggest concern for young people. A number of young female participants suggested that due to social media, there is a huge pressure on them to look a certain way. Big boobs, small waist and a big bottom were most mentioned. Young men also expressed that they were under pressure to look a certain way.

Relationships and Sex - This topic gained 14% of the vote, Relationships and Sex proved to be the second biggest concern. Many of the young people said that they chose this topic as it appears to be in the forefront of most young people’s minds.

Peer Pressure - Peer Pressure was the third biggest concern with 9% of the vote. One young person explained “I feel that peer pressure covers all four topics. We can be pressured into sex, into looking a certain way, as well as other things, that is why I chose peer pressure.”

Friendship - The least chosen category with 8% was friendship. Although the young people agreed that friendships are important, they didn’t really consider it as a concern.



Part four of the workshop explored “sexting”. This section involved asking the young people what they believed “sexting” is. The general consensus seemed to be that sexting is “sending nudes”. A definition published by the NSPCC was shared with the young people:



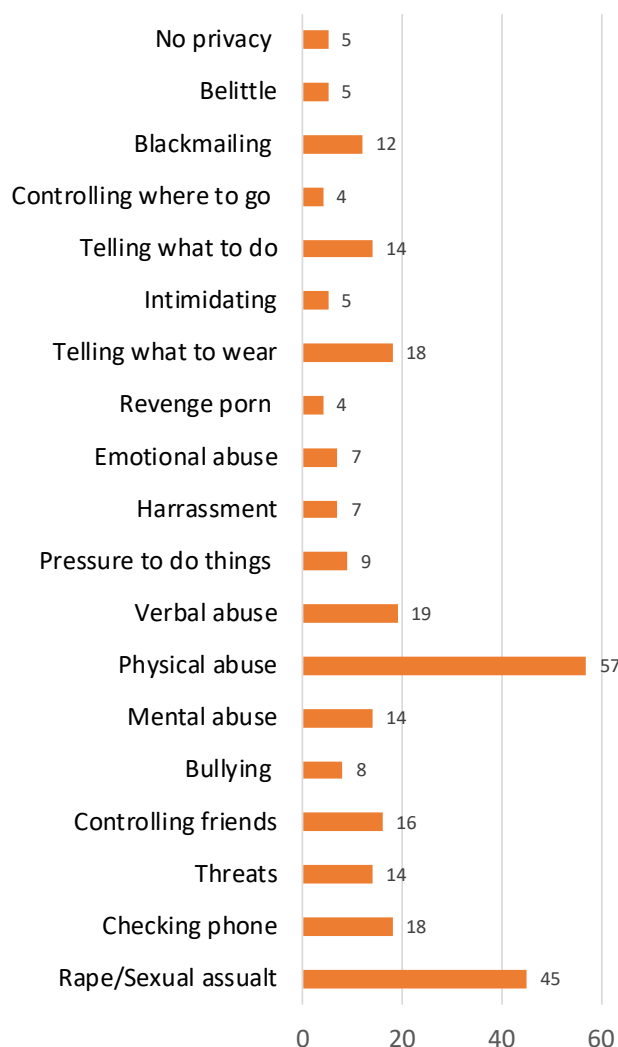
It was then discussed with the young people what the implications of sexting could be. This included exposure, future employers/universities being made aware of the pictures as well as friends and family members. Revenge porn was also discussed as was the accompanying new law that was passed in 2015 which states that: *sharing a sext without the subject's permission in order to cause them distress is illegal and the perpetrator can face legal action.*

It was also pointed out that sharing such images can result in third parties getting into trouble. The general laws around sexting were also covered, with many young people not being aware that in order to send a sext, they must be 18. Many young people asked why they were allowed to consent to sex at 16, but could not legally send a sext until they were 18. It was explained that sexting is classed

as pornography and that any involvement in pornography requires the subject to be 18 and over.

Control and Abuse was the fifth topic covered in the workshop. The participants were asked what they perceived as being unhealthy in relationships.

What are the warning signs of an unhealthy relationship?



As we can see from the results, the areas which yielded the most responses were physical abuse (57) and rape/sexual abuse (45). Although emotional abuse was named by only 7 people, it is important to note that various other titles can correspond with this such as belittling (5),

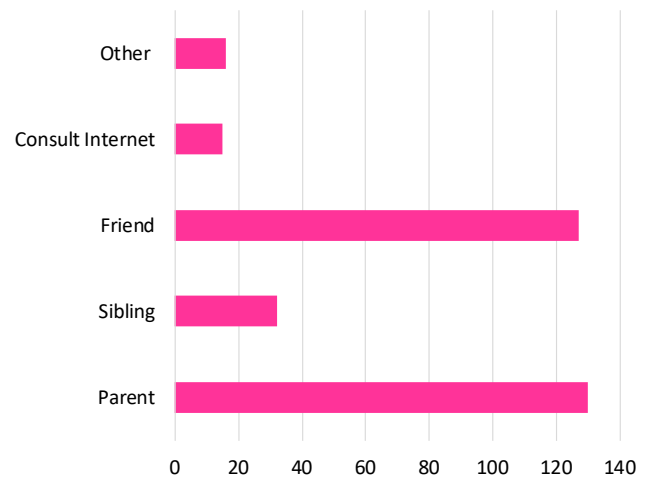


mental abuse (14) and various others. A discussion then followed looking at the signs of unhealthy relationships and knowing when there is a problem. For example, it was explained that it is perfectly acceptable to enquire where somebody is and if they got home safely, but there may be bigger issues if this evolves to harassment, with someone persistently asking their partner to prove where they are, who they are with and what they are doing. It was also pointed out that an abuser in a relationship can be either gender, with female-on-male domestic abuse on the rise. It was also discussed that men are twice as likely not to come forward if they are in an abusive relationship³. It was discussed why men are less likely to come forward if they are in an abusive relationship. The young people believe this is because men are expected to be tough and it could be embarrassing for them. It was made clear that men being abused is just as serious as a woman being abused and we should support anyone who is in a difficult situation.

The final part of the workshop focused on the subject of pornography. This included the laws around owning extreme pornography including bestiality, necrophilia and child pornography, what to do if such images or videos are shared with the young people and how watching pornography can be addictive. It was discussed how some young people use pornography as their sex education and that this can lead to unrealistic expectations.

Every young person who took part in the Teenage Kicks workshop was asked to fill in an anonymous questionnaire which asked various questions relating to sexting, pornography and relationship advice. The charts below reveal the answers that were collected from 300 young people.

When you need to talk to somebody about sex or relationship advice, who are you likely to speak to?



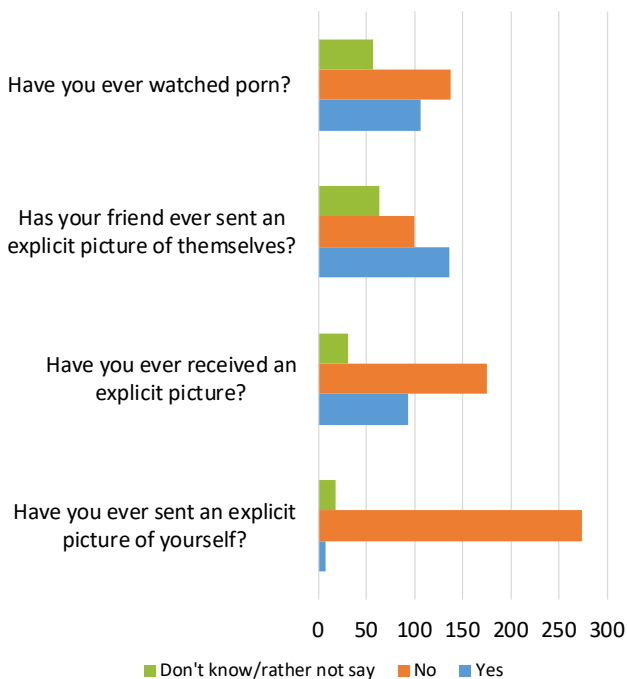
As we can see from the above chart, talking to their parents was the most popular option yielding 41% of the vote with “friend” coming a close second with 40%. Responses in the “other” option included “nobody” and various other relatives such as cousins, aunts and uncles.

The next three questions were related to sexting and pornography.

3 <http://new.mankind.org.uk>



Sexting and Pornography

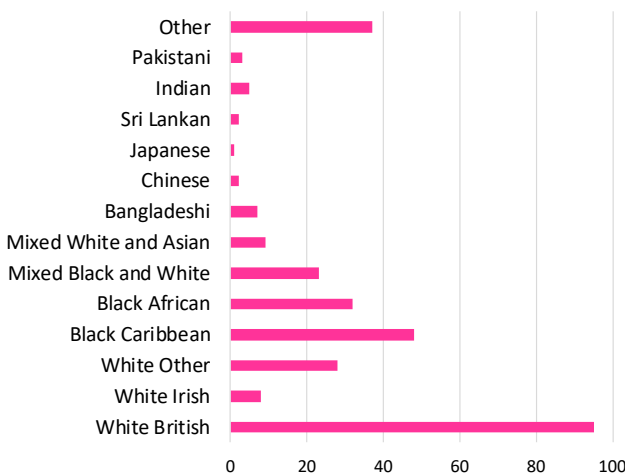


It is interesting to see that although a very small number of young people (8) admitted to sending sexts, 94 said they had received them and 136 claimed that their friends have sent them. This suggests that the number of young people sending sexts are more likely to be higher than recorded. We believe that many of the young people were loath to admit to sending and receiving sexts as they realise that it is illegal, but judging by the conversations that went on during the workshops, this is something that is regularly occurring.

Demographics of workshop participants

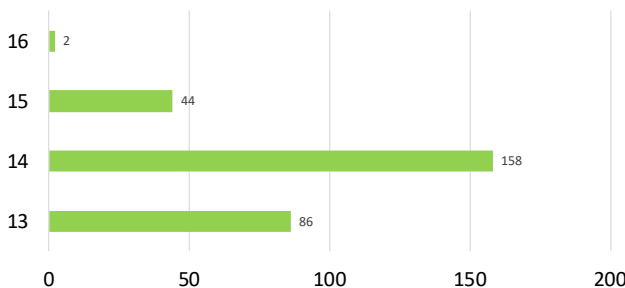
68% of the young people involved in the Teenage Kicks workshops identified as male with the remaining 32% identifying as female. In addition to this, 91% of young people classed themselves as heterosexual, 3% bisexual, 1% homosexual and 5% other. 94% said they had no disability with 6% considering themselves to have some form of disability. The chart below states the ages and ethnic origins of participants.

Please Describe Your Ethnic Origin



The top three most identified ethnic origins were White British (32%), Black Caribbean (16%) and “other” (12%).

Please State Your Age



54% of participants were aged 14 with 30% aged 13, a further 15% were 15 years old with the remaining 1% aged 16.



Online Survey Results

The Survey Monkey was live for three months and was publicised via our e-Bulletins, website and social media. Various questions were asked and comments about sexual health clinics were collected. You can see from the responses below that the data suggests mixed sentiments regarding local sexual health clinics.



***I think that they dealt with me very well.
I didn't feel that they were judging me.***

Staff were rude, the waiting area made me feel uncomfortable and no clear information was given prior to arriving.

They were helpful and gave good information. However I was still unsure of the options.

I felt like the staff were judging me for going on the contraceptive pill.

The staff were welcoming and they didn't judge me.

They made me feel at ease.

Usually a very helpful, friendly service. Sometimes can be a bit cold/ feel judged

Waiting area not young people friendly and incorrect information given, ended up going out of borough.

Sensitive staff who helped my situation.

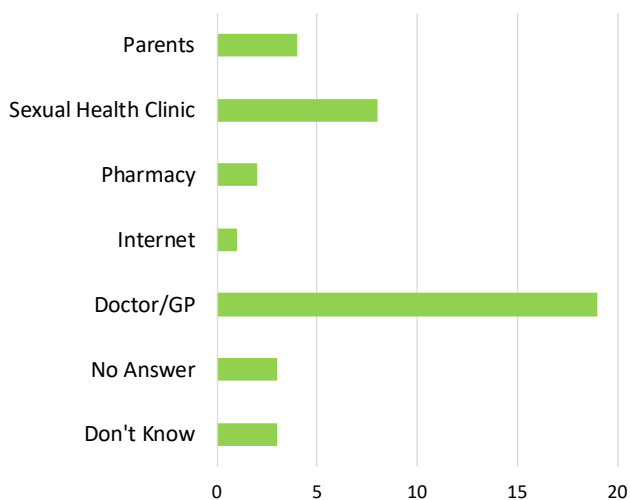




The respondents were asked that if in the future, if they needed to seek help regarding contraceptives, pregnancy or STIs, where would they go. The answers are as follows:

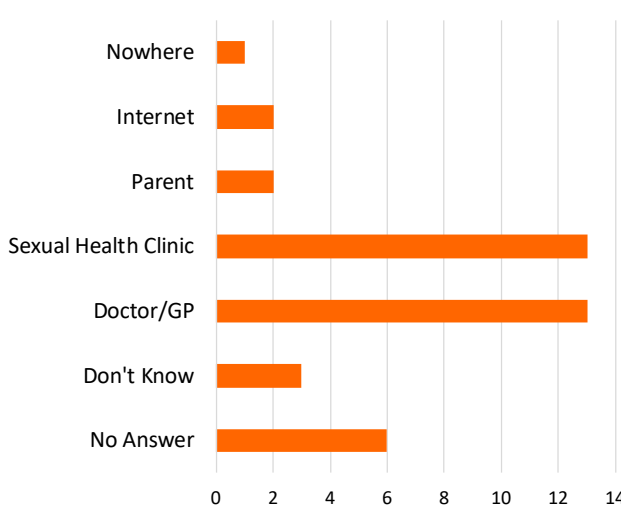
In this section concerning sexually transmitted infections, it is interesting to note that there is a large surge of young people who say they would use a sexual health clinic as opposed to visiting the GP for contraceptives and pregnancy advice.

Where are you likely to go to for help or advice on contraceptives?



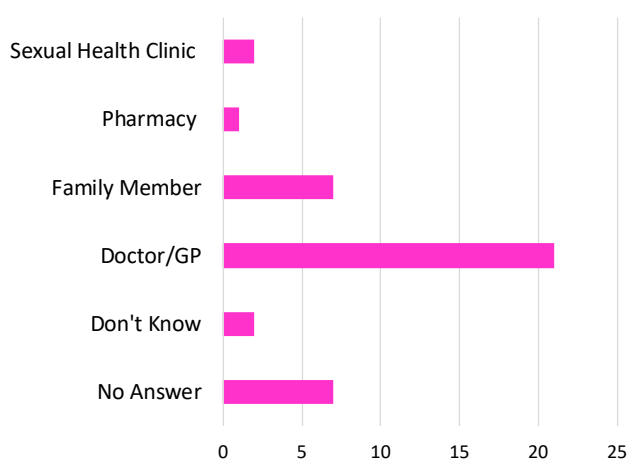
As we can see from the above chart, the GP surgery was the most popular with the sexual health clinic coming second.

Where are you likely to go for help or advice on STIs?



In regards to pregnancy help and support, once again the GP was most popular, with talking to a family member being the second most popular.

Where are you likely to go to for help or advice on pregnancy?

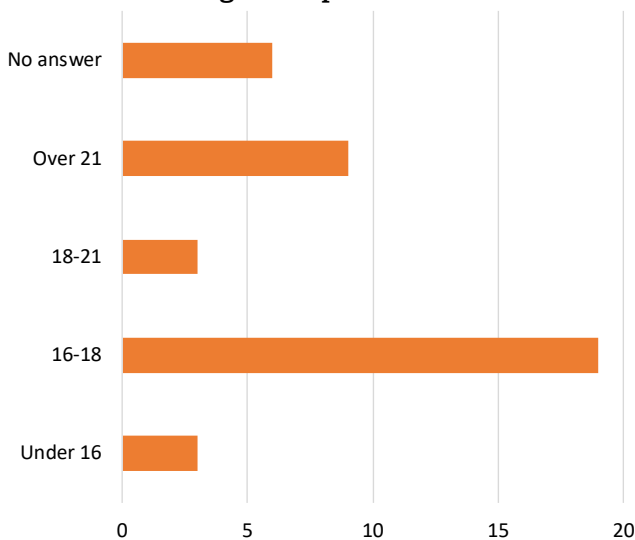




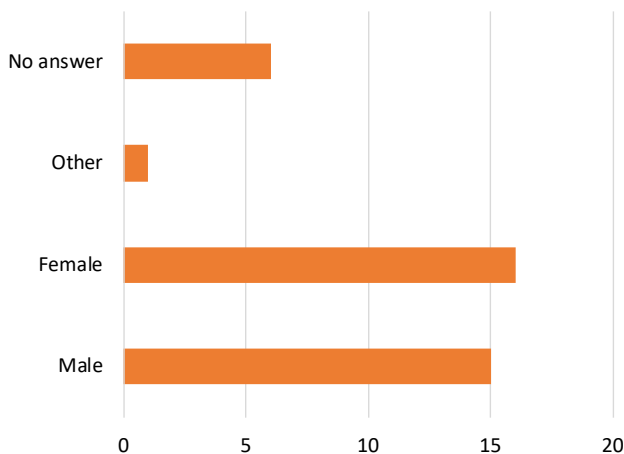
Demographics of online respondents

The online results were largely made up from 16-18 year olds (47%) with a nearly equal split of genders.

Age of respondents



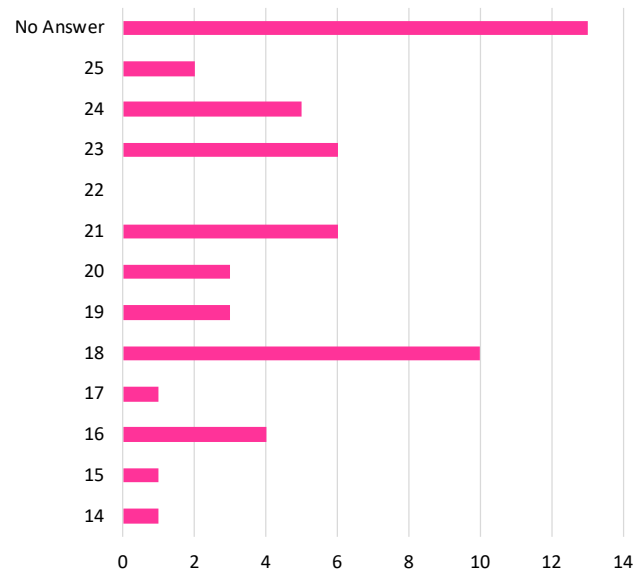
Gender of Respondents



Sexual Health Clinic Engagement

In February 2017, Healthwatch placed questionnaires and comment boxes in two sexual health clinics in Bromley for two weeks. The clinics we chose were Bromley Y, as this is a sexual health clinic dedicated to under 25's and The Beckenham Beacon, as this clinic is open two days a week. Across both clinics, 55 under 25's filled out the survey. The chart below provides a breakdown of ages.

Age of respondents



71% of the participants were female, 5% were male, 2% identified as non-binary and 22% chose not to answer. In addition to this, 75% of the young people surveyed classed themselves as heterosexual, 4% were bisexual with the remaining 22% choosing not to answer.

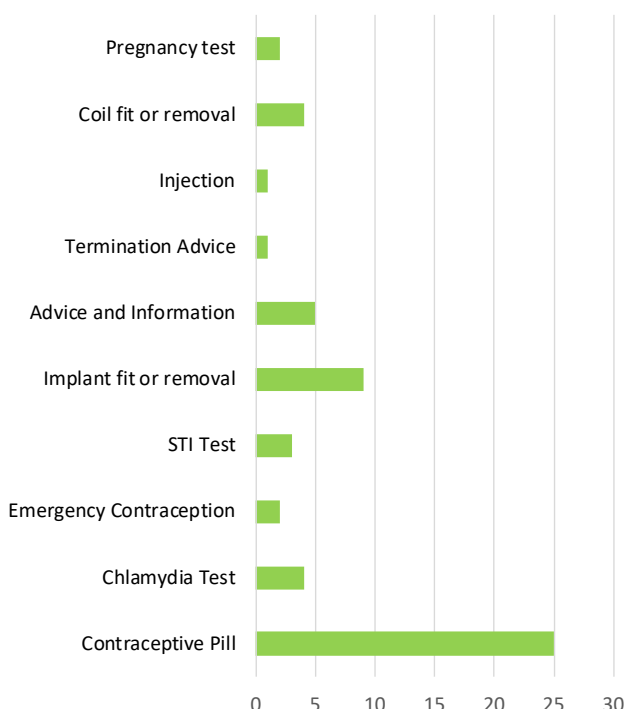
51% of the young people surveyed at the clinics identified as White British, with 11% identifying as Mixed Race, 7% White other, 5% as Black British, 2% as White Irish and 2% as Asian. The remaining 22% chose to not answer.



Feedback

The 55 young people that answered the survey disclosed that they had visited the clinic for various reasons. For 48% of them, they were attending the clinic for the first time. The chart indicates the reason for their visit.

Why have you visited the clinic today?



The above chart indicates that the majority of young people were visiting the clinics in order to obtain contraception.

Most feedback was positive, with the only issues being waiting times, lack of signage and one young person (aged 14) who said that she felt judged when she visited the clinic for a pregnancy test.

Waiting rooms were seen as clean and welcoming and it was commented on that this made the patients feel comfortable. Staff attitudes were considered excellent with nurses being described

as “informative”, “friendly”, “trustworthy”, “helpful”, “professional” and “reassuring”. Furthermore, 54 out of 55 respondents scored nurses as ‘very helpful’. The young people were asked to score their overall visit to the clinic on a scale of 1-10. Aside from three people who did not answer, all other results were scored at eight and above, with 65% of young people giving top marks.



Conclusions and Recommendations

It has become clear of late that sexting, pornography and healthy relationships are a big focus in the media. A recent article published by the BBC reported that Plan International UK claims 75% of people think the impact of porn should be a compulsory part of the curriculum, while 7% oppose the move. Furthermore, 71% of people wanted pupils to get lessons on sexting⁴. With this in mind and looking at the feedback forms and comments from the local young people, Healthwatch Bromley are in agreement that such subjects should be taught to young people - and not necessarily just to the older age groups. It is important to educate young people about the repercussions of sexting, pornography and healthy relationships before they reach the age where they are likely to be sexually active.

Lots of young people complimented the fact that Bromley has a dedicated sexual health clinic for under 25's at Bromley Y. However, this is only one clinic that caters specifically for young people in the whole of Bromley. In light of this, it may be useful to have more of these specialised clinics around the borough.

Although the majority of feedback uncovered from the sexual health clinics was positive, there was one young person who said she felt "judged". It is prudent that staff are fully trained in knowing how to treat young people, as they are often the first point of contact.

The large majority of young people that we spoke to were also unaware of the C-Card scheme (which provides free condoms to 13 to 24 year olds) In accordance with the above, Healthwatch

Bromley provides the following recommendations:

- **Healthy teenage relationships, including information, laws and consequences around sexting and pornography should be taught to all school age children. This is something that should be compulsory and not just a "one-off" lesson.**
- **Specialised under 25's sexual health service should be available borough wide.**
- **Young people to have a choice in who delivers their sex education.**
- **All staff at sexual health clinics should be trained in signposting and how to give respectful advice. This is especially important for receptionists who are often the first point of contact.**
- **School staff to be trained on how to deliver sessions around sensitive issues and trained on how to spot students in unhealthy relationships and offer the appropriate signposting.**
- **The C-Card scheme to be advertised more widely so that young people know that it is available and how to access it.**

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Bromley would like to thank all the people that took part in this project including the students and staff from Harris Academy Beckenham. We would also like to thank the staff from the Bromley Y and Beckenham Beacon Sexual Health Clinics.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-39096100>



Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Teenage Kicks Survey

This survey is anonymous. The information given will be used by HWBL in order to obtain an understanding of young people's experiences, views and thoughts

Q1) When you need to talk about sex or need relationship advice, who are you most likely to speak to?

Parent	<input type="text"/>
Sibling	<input type="text"/>
Friend	<input type="text"/>
Consult Internet	<input type="text"/>
Other (Please State)	<input type="text"/>

Q2) Have you ever sent an "explicit" picture of yourself via social media or text/email?

YES	<input type="text"/>
NO	<input type="text"/>
RATHER NOT SAY	<input type="text"/>

Q3) Have you ever received an "explicit" picture?

YES	<input type="text"/>
NO	<input type="text"/>
RATHER NOT SAY	<input type="text"/>

Q4) Do you know if a friend of yours has ever sent an "explicit" picture to somebody?

YES	<input type="text"/>
NO	<input type="text"/>
DON'T KNOW	<input type="text"/>

Q5) Have you ever watched porn?

YES	<input type="text"/>
NO	<input type="text"/>
RATHER NOT SAY	<input type="text"/>

Q6) Do you have any views or ideas that you would like to express regarding what we have talked about today?

Q7) How did you find the session today?

Very useful. I learned/ contributed a lot.	<input type="text"/>
Somewhat useful. I learned/ contributed some things.	<input type="text"/>
Not at all useful. I didn't learn or contribute anything.	<input type="text"/>



Monitoring Information

I would describe my ethnic origin as:

WHITE

White British White Irish
White other

BLACK OR BLACK BRITISH

Black Caribbean Black African

MIXED

White and Black Caribbean
White and Black African
White and Asian

ASIAN

Indian Pakistani
Bangladeshi Chinese
Sri Lankan Japanese
Other (Please state)

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

Yes No

PLEASE STATE YOUR AGE:

GENDER:

Female
Male
Other

How would you describe your sexuality:

Heterosexual (straight)
Homosexual (Gay/Lesbian)
Bisexual
Asexual
Other (Please State)

Please state which borough you live in

Many Thanks for completing this survey!

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