

Sexual Health and Relationships Policy (Updated for 2025)

REGULATIONS AND STANDARDS The Health and Well-being Standard

Regulation 10

Amendment

These chapters were updated in November 2025 and should be re-read throughout to ensure compliance with Ofsted's latest Inspection Framework and national safeguarding guidance.

1. Provision of Information and Advice

- The Home's manager must ensure that all children have timely, regular access to high-quality, evidence-based information, support, and advice on sexual health, relationships, and consent.
- This should be age-appropriate and tailored to the developmental and emotional needs of each child, with trauma-informed approaches embedded in delivery.
- The provision of information must be culturally sensitive and inclusive of children who identify as LGBTQ+ and/or neurodiverse.
- Adults must consult with the child's social worker and parents/those with parental responsibility where appropriate, before providing guidance.
- This information must be incorporated into the child's Safety or Wellbeing Plan.
- The use of the Brook Traffic Light Tool remains best practice and should be used in conjunction with any risk assessments or support planning.

2. Puberty and Sexual Identity

- All adults must approach the topic of puberty and sexual identity with sensitivity, compassion, and inclusivity, upholding the rights of all children to explore their identity in a safe and affirming environment.
- Children should have access to resources that reflect diverse gender identities, sexual orientations, and cultural perspectives.
- Emotional wellbeing linked to puberty and identity should be explored through individual and group sessions where appropriate and reflected in each child's plan.

3. Pornography

- The rise of easily accessible digital content requires proactive education around healthy relationships and the unrealistic nature of pornography.
- Adults should be trained to hold non-judgemental conversations about pornography, sexting, and digital sexual behaviours.
- Online safety tools and filters must be kept up to date and reviewed regularly.
- Guidance should be drawn from resources such as NSPCC's "Talk PANTS", Childline, and CEOP.

4. Sexual Activity

- As per legal guidance, children under 13 cannot legally consent to any sexual activity.
- Any such incidents must be reported under safeguarding procedures and logged accordingly.
- Matching assessments must include the potential for sexualised behaviour, and strategies must be developed to prevent peer-on-peer abuse.
- For children aged 13+, any suspected sexual activity must be approached with safeguarding principles, harm minimisation, and multidisciplinary communication.
- Records must be clear, factual, and indicate what action was taken.
- Where there is concern of exploitation, coercion, or harm, a safeguarding referral and strategy meeting must be convened.

5. Contraception

- Children must be supported to access confidential sexual health advice and services, including contraception.
- Relationships with local NHS and Brook services should be maintained to facilitate access.
- No child should be denied contraception nor coerced to disclose their sexual history in exchange for access.
- Any discussions or decisions must be documented, and relevant professionals informed.

6. Pregnancy and Termination

- If pregnancy is suspected, the manager must engage the child in a trauma-informed, confidential conversation.
- The social worker and health professionals must be notified, and collaborative planning undertaken.
- Confidentiality should be upheld unless there is a safeguarding concern.
- Children must be supported emotionally and physically whether they choose to continue with the pregnancy or seek termination.
- Clear links should be established with NHS maternity services, CAMHS, and other relevant agencies.

7. Sexual Exploitation

- Training in identifying and responding to CSE must be refreshed at least annually for all staff.
- All staff must understand grooming processes, online exploitation, county lines involvement, and trafficking.
- Indicators of risk must be assessed continuously and reflected in the child's plan.
- Safety mapping tools and contextual safeguarding approaches should be used.

- Managers must notify Ofsted and the Police of all known or suspected cases of CSE.

8. Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

- Referrals to sexual health services must be made when STI is suspected or confirmed.
- Information sharing should follow confidentiality protocols and only involve necessary staff.
- Staff must receive training in how to sensitively respond to disclosures or concerns around STIs.

8.1 Consent to Testing

- Gillick competence assessments should be carried out where a child under 16 consents to testing.
- Parental involvement should be encouraged, but not at the expense of the child's rights or medical best interest.
- Where legal advice is required (e.g. parental objection), this must be sought immediately and documented.

9. Masturbation

- Children must be supported to understand private versus public behaviour in a respectful, developmentally appropriate way.
- Educational materials should be aligned with SEND needs, neurodiversity, and trauma-awareness.

10. Child-on-Child Abuse

- Updated terminology from "peer-on-peer abuse" to "child-on-child abuse" must be used.
- All incidents must be carefully assessed, documented, and discussed with relevant professionals.
- Safety Plans should address known risks and include therapeutic support when needed.
- Allegations of abuse must be handled in accordance with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) and KCSIE (2024).

11. Further Information *Legislation and Guidance Updates:*

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) (2024)
- Promoting the Health and Well-being of Looked-After Children (DfE 2023)
- NICE Quality Standards: Sexual health (2023)

Useful Websites:

- NHS Sexual Health Services (<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/sexual-health/>)
- Brook.org.uk (Resources for professionals and young people)

- NSPCC (Healthy sexual development & online safety)
- CEOP (<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk>)

This updated policy should be reviewed no later than May 2026.