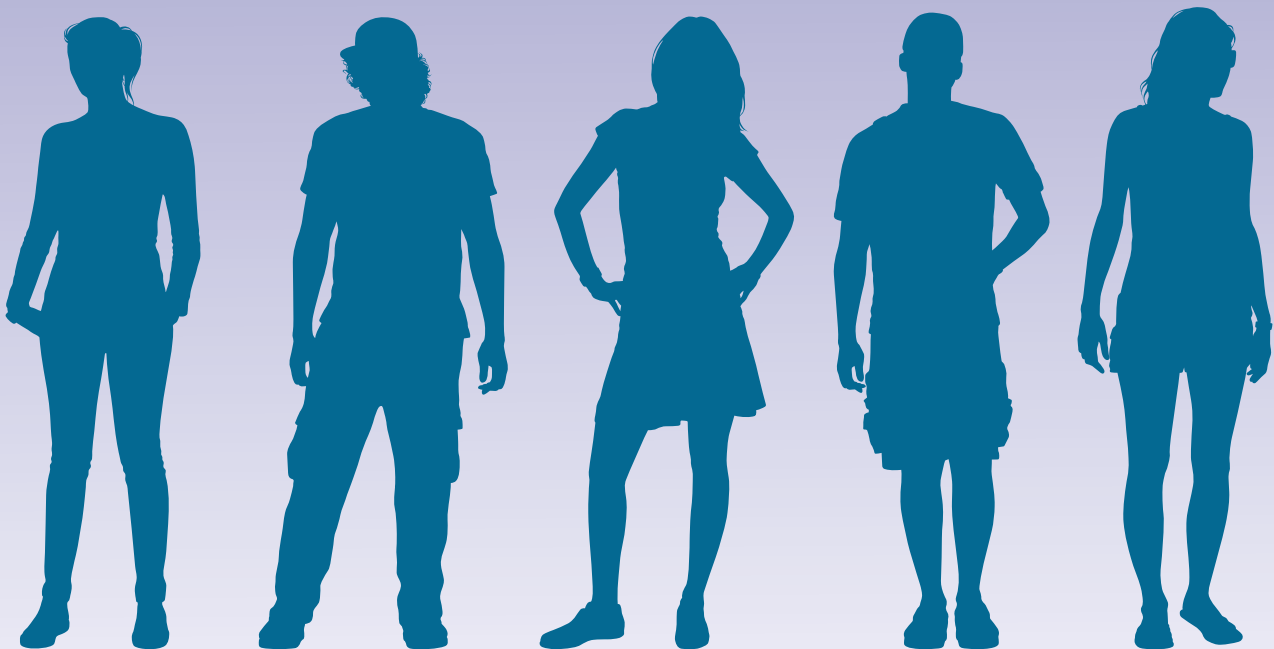


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# Young People's Views

on Sexual Health and Relationship Education  
in Non-Denominational Schools in Glasgow



A report conducted by **TASC (Scotland) Ltd**



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# Who was this work conducted with and for what reason?

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In 2007 a new approach to delivering SHRE was piloted and, following a successful evaluation at the pilot stage, subsequently rolled out across all non-denominational primary and secondary schools in Glasgow City. This programme involved developing a comprehensive curriculum spanning primary 1 to secondary 6, a programme of teacher training, methods to enhance parental engagement which is designed to facilitate discussion between parents and young people and also provision of age appropriate information to compliment learning. With the programme now embedded in the majority of these schools across the City, it was decided to ask young people their views on the programme to assess the impact of the programme on young people.

**A consultation with young people in S3, S4 and S5 was conducted in 10 Glasgow secondary schools nominated by Glasgow City Council.** This was an age group that were likely to have experienced up to 7 years of the programme. A target number of young people was engaged from each school depending on the length of time the school has delivered the SHRE programme, and the school roll. Across participating schools 229 young people from 10 schools took part in facilitated discussion (meeting in 3s) and 495 young people (from 9 schools; one school did not meet the deadline to return surveys) completed a comprehensive survey seeking detailed views on their SHRE learning experience



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# What are the key findings of this report?

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## Recall on content

Young people reported high levels of recognition of the approach in the survey, along with clear recollections of learning reported in the small group discussion, evidence that the SHRE themes and topics are being covered in delivery of the SHRE programme.

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## Topics were discussed under 3 themes:-

**Growing up and puberty theme:** over 95% of participating young people recalled lessons around the physical differences between males and females, body parts etc. While over 80% of young people remember learning about these topics: Pressures on boys/men and girls/women to behave or look in certain ways (gender stereotypes); Understanding self-esteem and how it influences relationships.

**Relationships:** over 90% of young people remember learning about the following topics: Talking about friendships; My rights and other people's rights; Pressure to have sex and saying no to sex; Domestic violence; Treating people equally who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT). While over 80% of young people remember learning about these topics: Thinking about my own values or beliefs when it comes to relationships; Being attracted to someone; The emotional side/feelings in relationships; Being assertive and caring in a relationship; Identifying where to get help if I have a worry; Understanding sexual harm and exploitation; What consent means in a sexual relationship. And over 70% of young people remember learning about these topics: What I want from a relationship; What the law says about relationships; Thinking about being a parent.

**Keeping healthy and safer sexual behaviour:** over 85% of young people remember learning about these topics: Contraception; Condoms; Pregnancy and how to avoid an unplanned pregnancy; Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) what they are and where to get help; Safer sex. While over 70% of young people remember learning about these topics: Self-examination of breasts and testicles; Finding a sexual health clinic; Safer sex and how to negotiate it; HIV/AIDS what it is and how it has affected people across the world.



Young people report that SHRE learning has impacted on the idea of delay in sexual activity. **76% of those surveyed agreed that their SHRE lessons helped them to feel that it is ok not to be in a relationship at their age. They also report that lessons help them understand that they can say no if they don't want to have sex (85%)**

82% of young people surveyed agreed that SHRE lessons have helped them think that LGBT people should be treated well by them.

78% of young people reported that SHRE lessons have helped them to know where to go if they have a question or a worry about growing up and puberty, relationships, keeping healthy or safer sexual behaviour.

A majority of young people report talking a lot or talking sometimes to parents and carers about sexual health or relationships but a significant minority do not.

Young people report that they like that SHRE is delivered in mixed sex groups (78%) and that doing so helps them learn about each other's point of view (86%)

Low levels of recall were reported for 'The Wee Books of Life Love and Living' information booklets provided to schools to distribute. This would indicate that a refresh is required or that the books are not being distributed in class.

Home activity tasks are only given to a minority of pupils with a very low expectation from teachers of them being completed.



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# What are the implications of the findings?

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**School is the place where young people learn most about sexual health and relationships;** this was reported by 63% of young people in Glasgow. Schools based delivery therefore remains a crucial aspect of preparing young people for adulthood.

Young people confirmed the importance of the role of the teacher in the SHRE class. They confirm the centrality of the teacher-learner relationship and that trust, confidence and teacher preparedness matter. **They want a consistent and confident member of staff and value their relationship with their teacher. They want SHRE classes to be well prepared, delivered in full and not rushed. This indicates that ongoing training to address staff confidence and competence is a fundamental requirement.**

Young people value participative teaching styles using 'real life' scenarios as they provide opportunities to ask questions in or out of class. More focus should be given to participative methodologies over worksheets.

Young people identified gaps in the programme they felt could be better met including social media, the impact of pornography and 'how boys and girls treat each other'. They wanted to encourage teachers to 'get into the detail' and to be aware of the risk of overly focusing on the negative or worries

Most young people report they are confident learning in their SHRE classes but the confidence of 1 in 3 could be greater. This needs to be considered in both single and mixed sex groupings.

There were differences between what is reported by boys and girls including:-

**Boys** prefer some of the approaches used in delivery of SHRE and they report higher levels of confidence to take part and ask questions. Boys want to learn more about the impact of pornography and they are more likely to report that parents are embarrassed talking about SHRE issues.



**Girls** are more likely to agree that a learner should never be put on the spot to answer a question. They want to learn more about how boys and girls treat each other and are more likely to have considered how they treat people who are LGBT. They report that lessons have helped them understand that they can say no if they do not want to have sex and they are more likely to speak to parents about growing up and puberty.

A broader aim of the programme is to enhance the role of parents/carers as co-educators. **The evaluation has highlighted that, while many young people report discussions with parents/carers, for some further support work is required.** It also echoes findings reported in other studies that, when it comes to young people, 'talking' about SHRE can be unwanted. Home activity tasks are the one aspect of the SHRE programme delivery that is not working as intended. Class teachers have low expectations of them being completed when they are given out but large numbers of pupils reported not even being asked to complete the exercises at home. These are better used at primary stage but tail off at secondary.

Young people appear to be missing out on consistent delivery of the written information resources produced to be complimenting the approach.