



Royal College  
of Nursing



Royal College of  
General Practitioners



# Getting it right

for young people in your practice



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**Making sure that your practice is young people-friendly can help encourage young people to seek early advice about health issues, including sexual health, skin and musculo-skeletal problems, weight difficulties, bullying, self harm, suicidal feelings, smoking, alcohol and drugs issues.**

**Making the practice more young people friendly means:**

- enabling young people to feel at ease
- ensuring young people feel accepted and heard
- creating a welcoming environment
- respecting confidentiality unless there is a safeguarding concern
- involving young people in patient participation activities.

**How young people friendly is your practice?**

Find out by doing the quiz -  
*How does your practice score with young people?*



# How young people friendly is your practice?

## Ensure confidentiality

Advertise the practice's confidentiality policy. Use the practice website, posters and leaflets to advertise the policy. Reassure young people about confidentiality in consultations.

## Organise a practice meeting with the whole team to discuss how you can all make your practice more young people-friendly

Get each member of the team to imagine that they are a young person coming into the surgery with a problem, or wanting contraception, and to say how they think they would feel.

Confirm it is practice policy that any young person can be seen on their own (or with a friend) if they choose.

## Train members of the practice in young people's health issues

Make sure that all the team members are skilled in communicating effectively with young people and include young people in patient feedback questionnaires. Organise appropriate training for all practice members. Contact your local teenage pregnancy co-ordinator where available, health promotion unit or local education training board/local education provider to find out what local training is available.

## Audit 10-18 year olds in your practice

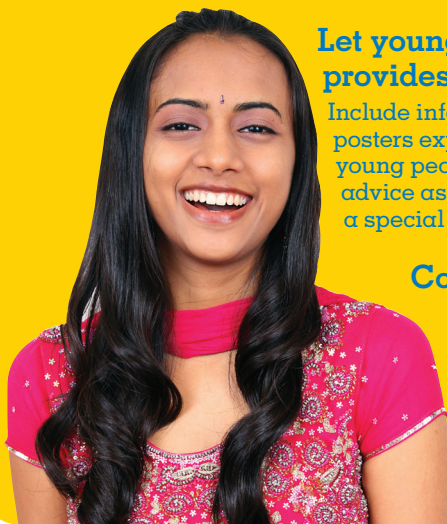
Find out: the total number and gender breakdown; the percentage seen in the last year; how many smoke and drink alcohol; the number seeking contraceptive advice and emergency contraception; and the number of teenage pregnancies and terminations; and ask young people for their ideas about services to meet the particular needs of the local population.

## Let young people know what your practice provides

Include information on the practice website and display posters explaining what services your practice provides for young people so they know that they can get contraceptive advice as well as confidential support on other issues. Have a special practice information booklet for young people.

## Consider running a young persons' clinic in your practice or with other practices

A school nurse, health visitor or youth worker might be able to help you with ideas for setting up the clinic. Involve young people in the planning stages too. Make sure you run the clinic at convenient times for young people.



## **Involve parents**

Talk to parents about the support and advice your practice offers to young people. In your practice leaflet and website, explain your practice policy about providing confidential advice to under 16s. You may also want to mention this opportunistically when a parent comes for a consultation.

Explain the limits – for example it means that receptionists will not tell parents whether their son or daughter has an appointment. Discuss capacity, consent and safety as relating to a young person in keeping with their developmental stage.

Encourage parents to talk to their children about relationships and contraception. Help parents to access information about a range of health topics so that they can be a source of information for their children.

Encourage young people to involve their parents in any health-related decisions.

## **Make sure that the practice advice is directed to boys and young men as well as girls and young women**

Let young men know they are welcome too. Display posters and information leaflets that are aimed directly at boys and young men.

## **Make sexual health and contraceptive advice in your practice young people-friendly**

Clearly advertise the fact that young people can get confidential advice even if they are under 16. Provide at minimum a 'starter' pack of condoms to promote safer sex. Publicise emergency contraception and how to get an early appointment.

If a practice doctor is unwilling to give contraceptive advice or emergency contraception, make sure that alternative options are easily and quickly available.

## **Offer advice and support for young women who get pregnant**

If a young person does get pregnant, make sure that they are given support and impartial advice on the options of continuing the pregnancy or having an abortion. Encourage young people to inform and involve their parents/supportive family members as soon as possible.

Put them in touch with relevant local and national support services.

If a young person asks for an abortion, facilitate access to appropriate services according to local pathways. If you have a conscientious objection to abortion, make sure the young person is referred immediately to a service which will enable direct patient access.



# How does your practice score with young people?

## Tick Yes or No

Yes = 1 No = 0

		Yes	No
1	Do you have written practice confidentiality and safeguarding policies which mentions how to consult with young people, respecting their privacy?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Do you publicise how to obtain emergency appointments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Do you display magazines and information leaflets specifically for young people in your waiting rooms?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Do you see under 16 year olds without a parent?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Do you offer a practice information leaflet for young people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Do you train your staff to be young people-friendly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	Do you have emergency appointments with the doctor or nurse for immediate issues?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	Do you provide contraception to under 16 year olds?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## How many questions did you answer yes to?

### Scores

**0 to 4** - Should be able to do much better. Your practice needs to become more young people-friendly.

**5 or 6** - Still room for improvement.

**7 or 8** - You are getting it right for young people. They probably feel welcome when they come to your practice.

# Useful resources

BMA Children and young people toolkit

Available at: <http://bma.org.uk/practical-support-at-work/ethics/children/children-and-young-people-tool-kit>

Department of Health *Quality criteria for young people friendly health services*

Available at: [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

e-Learning for healthcare *Adolescent health*

Available at: [www.e-lfh.org.uk/projects/adolescent-health](http://www.e-lfh.org.uk/projects/adolescent-health)

Family Planning Association *Under-16s: consent and confidentiality in sexual health services factsheet*

Available at: [www.fpa.org.uk](http://www.fpa.org.uk)

GMC Consent guidance *Involving children and young people in making decisions*

Available at: [www.gmc-uk.org](http://www.gmc-uk.org)

GMC's *0-18 years: guidance for all doctors*

Available at: [www.gmc-uk.org](http://www.gmc-uk.org)

NMC *Consent guidance*

Available at: [www.nmc-uk.org](http://www.nmc-uk.org)

Royal College of General Practitioners *The confidentiality and young people toolkit.*

*Improving teenagers' uptake of sexual and other health advice.* Available at [www.youngpeopleshealth.org.uk](http://www.youngpeopleshealth.org.uk)

Royal College of Nursing *Caring for young people: guidance for nursing staff*

Available at: [www.rcn.org.uk/publications](http://www.rcn.org.uk/publications) (publication code: 001 824)

Royal College of Nursing and Royal College of General Practitioners *Getting it right*

*for children and young people: A self-assessment tool for practice nurses*  
Available at: [www.rcn.org.uk/publications](http://www.rcn.org.uk/publications) (publication code: 002 777)

Brook *Pregnant: What now? – choosing what's best for you*

Available at: [www.brook.org.uk](http://www.brook.org.uk)

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Royal College  
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Royal College of Nursing  
20 Cavendish Square  
London W1G 0RN  
[www.rcn.org.uk](http://www.rcn.org.uk)



Royal College of  
General Practitioners

Royal College of General Practitioners  
30 Euston Square,  
London, NW1 2FB  
[www.rcgp.org.uk](http://www.rcgp.org.uk)