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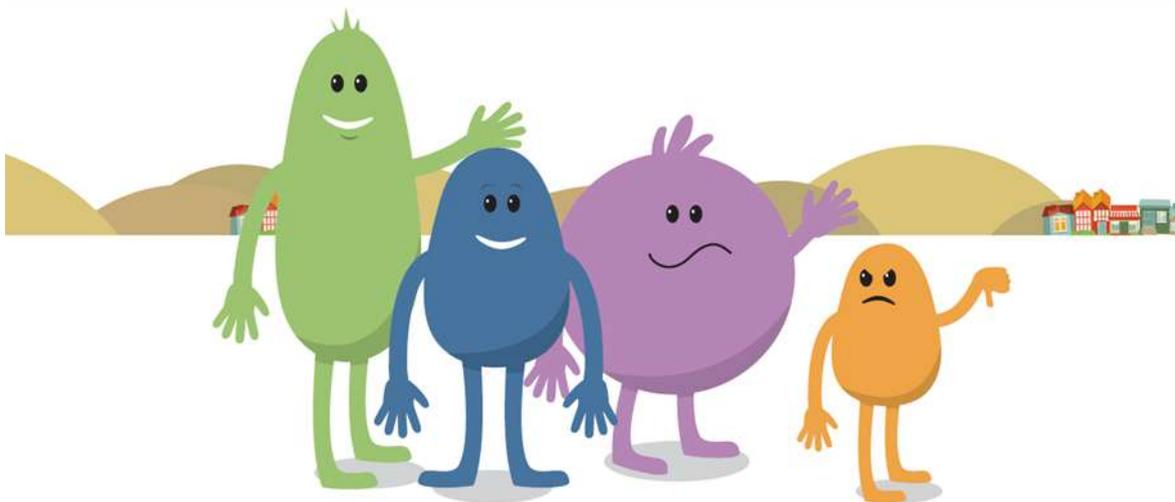
With

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Sexual risks and capacities

Developing a peer-led educational resource to
address sexual risks among young people

Final Report



November 2014

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Acknowledgements

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Executive Summary

Introduction

This report summarises the findings and output of a project funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) through their Knowledge Exchange (KE) grant scheme. The project was undertaken by ARK - a joint initiative of Queen's University and the University of Ulster (www.ark.ac.uk) - and Brook NI from April to December 2013. The purpose of ESRC-funded KE projects is, to translate academic research into relevant policy practice.

The 2010 and 2011 Young Life and Times (YLT) surveys of 16-year olds undertaken by ARK provided the academic background for this project. The 2010 YLT survey collected baseline data on experiences of sexual grooming, risks and exploitation, whilst the 2011 YLT survey asked about sexual experiences more generally. The two surveys had shown that especially vulnerable young people, e.g. those from poorer family-financial background and same-sex attracted young people were more likely to have experienced sexual exploitative situations and were also more likely to engage in behaviour which is adverse for their sexual health.

The main aim of this KE project was to engage with young people through interactive group discussion methods with the findings of the YLT surveys. The anticipated outcome of this engagement was the production of an educational training resource and an information campaign for further work with young people – especially those who are at particular risk, addressing sexual risks that they may face and to build their capacity to make health informed choices with regard to their sexuality.

This project was designed as a mixed methods participatory project involving young people as peer educators in the qualitative aspects of this KE project. We undertook a secondary analysis of the 2010 and 2011 YLT data to inform this KE project. We collected a booster sample to the YLT surveys among Brook NI service users. We trained a small number of peer educators to help us deliver and facilitate interactive workshops/focus groups with young people. Seven interactive group discussions were held to disseminate the survey findings in a young person-friendly manner and to discuss with young people what format an education resource should take to address these issues among young people.

Survey Results

620 respondents took part in the Brook NI booster survey. The average age of respondents was 17.5 years. Nearly two thirds of respondents (63%) were in school or college full-time and the vast majority still lived at home.

Sexual experiences

Nearly nine in ten respondents (87%) said that they had had sex. Males were a little less likely to have had sex (83%) than females (88%). The most likely age for respondents to have had sex for the first time was 16 years. Nine percent of all respondents – but 15 percent of male respondents said they had had sex for the first time before they were 14 years of age. This figure was even higher among same-sex attracted males (25%), and almost as high among same-sex attracted females (21%). Respondents from not well-off backgrounds were more than twice as likely (21%) to

have had sex before they were 14 years of age as those from average well-off backgrounds (9%) and well-off backgrounds (8%). Ten percent of males and eight percent of females said they had had sex at least once with someone of the same sex.

Survey respondents were most likely to say that their first sexual encounter happened on the spur of the moment. Overall about one in three respondents said this in both the Brook and YLT survey. Identical proportions in the YLT and Brook survey said that they were forced to have sex against their wishes (1%), and similar proportions said that they didn't feel ready to have sex, but went along with what their partner wanted (6% in YLT and 4% in Brook). Same-sex attracted respondents in both the YLT survey (12%) and the Brook NI survey (7%) were disproportionately more likely to say that they did not really want to have sex, but felt they should. The same applies to respondents from not well-off backgrounds in both surveys (10% in 2011 YLT and 7% in Brook NI).

Forty percent of Brook NI respondents said that their first sex came too early. Being content with the timing of first sex is strongly related to the age at which this happened, with those who were under 14 years of age when they first had sex being particularly likely to say that this was too early.

The most likely reason given by both males and females in both surveys for having sex for the first time was curiosity, with over half of males and females in both surveys saying this. Nine percent of respondents in the Brook NI survey said that they *'didn't feel ready to have sex, but went along with what the other person wanted'*, and two percent said they had sex against their wishes. Approximately one in five same-sex attracted young people said they *'didn't feel ready to have sex, but went along with what the other person wanted'* when they first had sex compared to fewer than one in ten opposite-sex attracted young people. Twenty percent of respondents who first had sex before they were aged 14 said they *did not feel ready* for sex compared with ten percent of those who were 16 years old and just three percent who were older than 16 when they first had sex. Furthermore, four times as many respondents who first had sex before they were aged 14 said they had sex against their wishes as respondents who first had sex when they were 16 years or older.

Eighty-one percent of sexually active 2011 YLT respondents and 74 percent of Brook NI respondents said that they or their sexual partner had used a condom the first time they had sex. Generally, the older the age at first sex respondents, the more likely a condom was used at first sex. This relationship was much clearer among YLT respondents. Same-sex attracted respondents were significantly less likely than their opposite-sex attracted counterparts to have used a condom when they first had sex. Condom use was lowest among respondents who said the reason they first had sex was that they were drunk or had taken some drugs. Condom use was also very low among those who said they went along with the other person when they first had sex, but did not feel ready themselves. Nearly four in ten (37%) of Brook respondents and over one quarter of YLT respondents (28%) who said they had not used any other contraceptive method had also failed to use condoms.

Sexual risks and exploitation

Overall nearly one in five Brook respondents (18%) and more than one in ten (11%) YLT respondents reported that they had been sexually groomed by an adult at least once. The proportion of same-sex attracted young people who reported sexual grooming was significantly higher than among opposite-sex attracted young people. Respondents from well-off family financial backgrounds were much less likely to say that they had been sexually groomed than those from not well-off backgrounds.

Respondents were asked when they first experienced sexual grooming. As Figure 10 shows, there is very little difference between the experiences of Brook NI and YLT respondents, with the exception that YLT respondents were all 16 years old per se could not have experienced grooming

after they were 16. Three quarters (75%) of YLT respondents and nearly two thirds (65%) of Brook NI respondents first experienced sexual grooming by an adult before they were 16 years of age, that is before they had reached the age of sexual consent. In the majority of cases, first contact was made face-to face, for example at parties or through friends or relatives. YLT respondents were more likely than Brook NI respondents to say that the contact stopped before anything sexual was even suggested (38% and 28% respectively). Brook respondents, on the other hand were more likely to say that they refused to do something sexual, once this was suggested (42% and 33% respectively). One fifth of both YLT and Brook respondents sent or received sexual images and or emails/texts, whilst 16 percent of Brook respondents and ten percent of YLT respondents had face-to-face sexual contact. Six percent of respondents in both surveys said they started a romantic relationship with the adult that groomed them. Same-sex attracted young people and those from not well-off backgrounds were less likely to stop the contact before anything sexual was even suggested.

A significantly larger proportion of Brook (16%) than YLT (7%) respondents reported that they had been taken advantage of sexually by someone when they were under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Importantly, this was likely to be someone of the same age rather than a much older adult. Around two thirds (65%) of YLT respondents to whom this happened experienced this before they were 16 years of age, compared to four in ten Brook respondents (43%) to whom this had happened. Same-sex attracted respondents and those from not well-off backgrounds were significantly more likely to say that they had been taken advantage of sexually. Eight percent of YLT respondents and one in ten Brook respondents had been offered something in return for sex with alcohol and drugs being the most likely items to be offered. Same-sex attracted respondents were much more likely to have been offered something in return for sex than opposite-sex attracted respondents in both surveys. The Brook NI data also showed that nearly one third (30%) of not well-off respondents had been offered alcohol or drugs in return for sex – five times the proportion of average well-off respondents (6%) and more than seven times the proportion of well-off respondents (4%) who said this. Eighty percent of YLT respondents who had been offered something in return for sex were under the age of sexual consent when this first happened, among Brook respondents this figure was 49 percent. The first contact with this person was likely to be made through friends or siblings or house parties.

Sixty-two percent of YLT respondents, but only 43 percent of Brook NI respondents had failed to report to anyone that they had been offered something in return for sex. A higher proportion among YLT than Brook NI respondents had talked to their parents about this, however for both sets of survey respondents a friend or sibling was the most likely person they confided in when this happened.

Focus Groups

Seven focus groups were arranged with young people in established youth groups and with Brook clients. Particular efforts were made to speak to young people who, as the surveys showed, are especially vulnerable to sexual risks and sexual exploitation. The group discussions were jointly co-facilitated by Brook NI staff, peer educators and ARK/YLT staff.

In order to communicate the survey results in a lay and young-person friendly way, we produced simple and colourful A2-sized show cards.

Participants in the focus groups took part in three interactive scenarios-based tasks. In the first activity young people were asked to 'agree' or 'disagree' with statements or to respond 'yes' or 'no'

or 'don't know' to questions. The second activity introduced a 'grooming line' which presented young people with more complex scenarios in which they had to decide, in pairs or in small groups, whether they felt that given scenarios represented a *targeting situation*, *friendship*, a *loving relationship*, or an *exploitative situation*. Most scenarios were ambiguous and could be interpreted in different ways. In the last stage of the focus group, we invited participants' views on what type of resource they felt would be useful to address sexual exploitation. When all focus groups were completed, the peer educators and the project team met with the Brook NI information workers to discuss the outcome of the project and to make a decision about the resource. It was decided that an electronic interactive resource based on the idea of the grooming line activity would be produced. The resource would be made available nationally through the Brook website, as well as the ARK website.

Discussion and Conclusion

The evidence that emerges out of this KE project showed clearly that sexual exploitation is not always a very clear-cut black-and-white issue but has different shades of grey. Whilst there are cases where young people are pressurised into having sex against their will, or are threatened that they will be harmed if they do not comply with the perpetrator's wishes, a small, but not insignificant proportion of young people report that they '*go along*' with their partner's wishes to have sex, even if they do not feel ready for this themselves. An even larger proportion has sex because they are drunk or under the influence of drugs. Peer pressure also plays a role, especially among young men and same-sex attracted young people. These cases are not clear-cut sexual exploitation cases, nor are they '*stranger-danger*' cases. Rather these cases highlight that sexual risks and exploitative practices are diverse, no often easy to identify and more commonplace than is perhaps suggested.

Our data clearly show the need for more general educational and confidence-building programmes that enable young people, in particular those most at risk, to negotiate their sexual decision making better in order to enable them to make healthy and informed choices. The ultimate aim should be the reduction of the proportion of young people who look back at the first time they had sex and regret the way and/or the timing it happened.

Overall, this KE project was a very timely. It fed into an important debate, a debate which is unlikely to 'go away' in the near future. The evidence collected will inform Brook NI's clinical practice. It has increased awareness and helped to build capacity not just among young people involved, but also among staff. Importantly, this project also shows that young people can be proactively involved in the development of educational resources addressing sensitive issues.



Introduction

This report summarises the findings and output of a project funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) through their Knowledge Exchange (KE) grant scheme. The project was undertaken by ARK - a joint initiative of Queen's University and the University of Ulster (www.ark.ac.uk) - and Brook NI from April to December 2013.

The purpose of ESRC-funded KE projects is, broadly speaking, to translate academic research into relevant policy practice. The set-up of these projects allows an academic research institution to team up with a voluntary sector organisation to work on the implementation of some research findings into policy practice to the benefit of this organisation and the wider public. Funding will be provided by the ESRC, and matching funding by the partner organisation. This can be in the form of in-kind contributions.

For the present project on sexual risks and exploitation of young people, ARK teamed up with Brook NI. Brook is the UK's leading sexual health charity for young people.

Academic background data for this project

Two datasets were collected through ARK's YLT survey of 16-year olds, which has been undertaken annually in Northern Ireland since 2003 (for more information, publications and results of the YLT surveys, see: www.ark.ac.uk/ylt).

Firstly, in 2010 Barnardo's Northern Ireland undertook a research project on the sexual grooming and exploitation of young people in Northern Ireland (Beckett, 2011). Whilst this research had a special focus on young people in, or missing from, care, Barnardo's negotiated with ARK that a set of questions would be included in the 2010 YLT survey in order to collect baseline information about experiences of sexual grooming, risks and exploitation among a general population of young people in Northern Ireland.

Headline findings from this YLT survey were that one in nine respondents said that an adult had tried to groom them. Forty-five percent of these respondents had been groomed by an adult more than once. Three quarters of respondents who had been sexually groomed by an adult said that it happened when they were under the age of consent (16 years). YLT found that same-sex attracted respondents were more likely to be groomed than their opposite-sex attracted counterparts. Respondents from not well-off families were also more likely to report sexual grooming by an adult than those from well-off families.

In terms of other sexual risks, one in 15 respondents reported that they had been taken advantage of sexually after they had been given alcohol or drugs. Two thirds of these respondents were under 16 years of age when this first happened. One in 20 YLT respondents had been offered something in exchange for a sexual activity. Again, this figure was significantly higher among same-sex attracted respondents and respondents from not well-off backgrounds. The survey found that 62% of YLT respondents did not report when this happened to them.

Secondly, to address the ongoing paucity in sexual health research in Northern Ireland generally, the 2011 YLT survey included a module on sexual experiences that repeated some questions asked in the National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles (NATSAL) in Britain and by the *Towards*

Better Sexual Health research project undertaken in Northern Ireland from 2000-2002 (Schubotz et al. 2002, Schubotz 2012). Namely, the 2011 YLT survey asked:

- Whether respondents had had sex, at what age they first had sex, and whether they had sex with females, males or both;
- Whether they had used contraception when they had sex – and if so, what type of contraception they used;
- The reasons why they had sex and how they felt retrospectively about the timing of their first sex and if there was anything they would have liked to know more about when they first had sex;
- How long the relationship with their first sexual partner continued and how many sexual partners they had had;
- Regardless of whether they had sex or not, respondents were also asked about their experiences of sex education.

The survey found that 26 percent of respondents reported that they had had sex. Around one half (46%) of these respondents were 16 years of age when they first had sex, 31 percent were 15 years old whilst the remaining 22 percent were younger. 30 percent said that this had happened on the spur of the moment, whilst 29 percent said they had planned this together with their partners.

Sixty-two percent of respondents felt that the first time they had sex came at the right time; however, 34 percent felt it happened too early. The older respondents were when they first had sex, the more likely they were to say that the timing was right.

Curiosity and the feeling that sex seemed like a natural follow-on to the relationship were the two main reasons why they first had sex, for both males and females. Females were much more likely than males to say that they had sex because they were in love. About one in three had planned their first sexual encounter together with their partner, and three in ten were still in a relationship with their first sexual partner.

Respondents from less well-off backgrounds and those who were same-sex attracted were much more likely to say that they had sex before they were 16 years old. These young people were more likely to regret the first sex and were also more likely to say that they just went along with what their partner wanted. The earlier respondents had sex, the less likely they were to have used contraception.

Early sexual health and failure to use contraception were linked to poor mental health (GHQ12).

The YLT survey data showed clearly that young people from not well-off backgrounds and those who are same-sex attracted were more likely to engage in early sexual intercourse that they then regret and that these young people were also more likely to experience sexual grooming and are at risk of being taken advantage of sexually by adults or peers.

Aims and Objectives of this KE project

Following the YLT survey findings, an application was submitted to the ESRC for funding of an KE project.

The main aim of this KE project was to engage with young people through interactive group discussion methods with the findings of the YLT surveys. The anticipated outcome of this engagement was the production of an educational training resource and an information campaign for further work with young people – especially those who are at particular risk, addressing sexual

risks that they may face and to build their capacity to make health informed choices with regard to their sexuality.

Brook NI, the largest provider of sexual health information and services for young people in Northern Ireland, was seen to be the ideal partner for this work as they have daily contact with a large number of young people through their sexual health clinic and furthermore run educational and information programmes with groups of young people. Importantly, Brook NI not only caters for more vulnerable young people from less well-off backgrounds than statutory sexual health clinics do, but also has a significantly higher proportion of young male clients than statutory sector providers have. This made Brook NI the ideal partner for this project.

The objectives of this project were:

- To aid sexual capacity and confidence building especially among young people who are at the start of their sexual careers, i.e. young people who have not been sexually active or have only been sexually active for a short period of time and among same-sex attracted young people;
- To raise and increase awareness about sexual risks that young people may face and improve young people's resilience towards these risks;
- To enforce sexual health promotion messages (e.g. about contraceptive use) in the light of the YLT survey findings;
- To develop a young-people-led publicity campaign and educational resource about sexual safety. These resources will be developed using the YLT survey data and a booster sample for the YLT survey collected among Brook NI service users;
- To make this educational resource and information campaign available to other organisations and service providers working in the area of sexual health of young people.

Methodology

This project was designed as a mixed methods participatory project involving young people as peer educators in the qualitative aspects of this KE project.

1. We undertook a secondary analysis of the 2010 and 2011 YLT data to inform this KE project.
2. We collected a booster sample to the YLT surveys among Brook NI service users. A mixed-mode self-completion survey was designed which duplicated the 2010 and 2011 YLT survey questions. Brook NI clinic clients and young people participating in information sessions run by Brook or partner organisations affiliated with Brook were invited to complete a paper survey questionnaire. An online version of this questionnaire was made available for those who preferred this and promoted through Brook NI's Facebook page. This booster dataset allowed us to undertake a more detailed analysis of young people's experiences of sexual risks than the YLT survey data alone would have allowed us to do – focussing especially on the experiences of more vulnerable young people.
3. We trained a small number of peer educators to help us deliver and facilitate interactive workshops/focus groups with young people.
4. Seven interactive group discussions were held. These were jointly co-facilitated by Brook NI staff, peer educators and ARK/YLT staff. These focus groups had two aims: firstly to disseminate in a young person-friendly manner the survey findings in order to raise awareness among young people around the issue of sexual grooming and exploitation; and secondly, to discuss with young people what format they felt an education resource should take to address these issues among young people.
5. We held a final project group meeting where the findings from the surveys and focus groups were discussed and a decision was made about the education resource. The group decided that an interactive online resource as well as posters would be produced.
6. Several conferences and seminars were used to disseminate information about this KE project.

The target user community for these KE activities were young people, in particular those at the start of their sexual career, namely young people who had not yet, or had only recently, been sexually active. We also specifically targeted same-sex attracted young people and young people from less well-off financial family backgrounds which the YLT survey had shown to be more likely to be at risk from sexual exploitation.

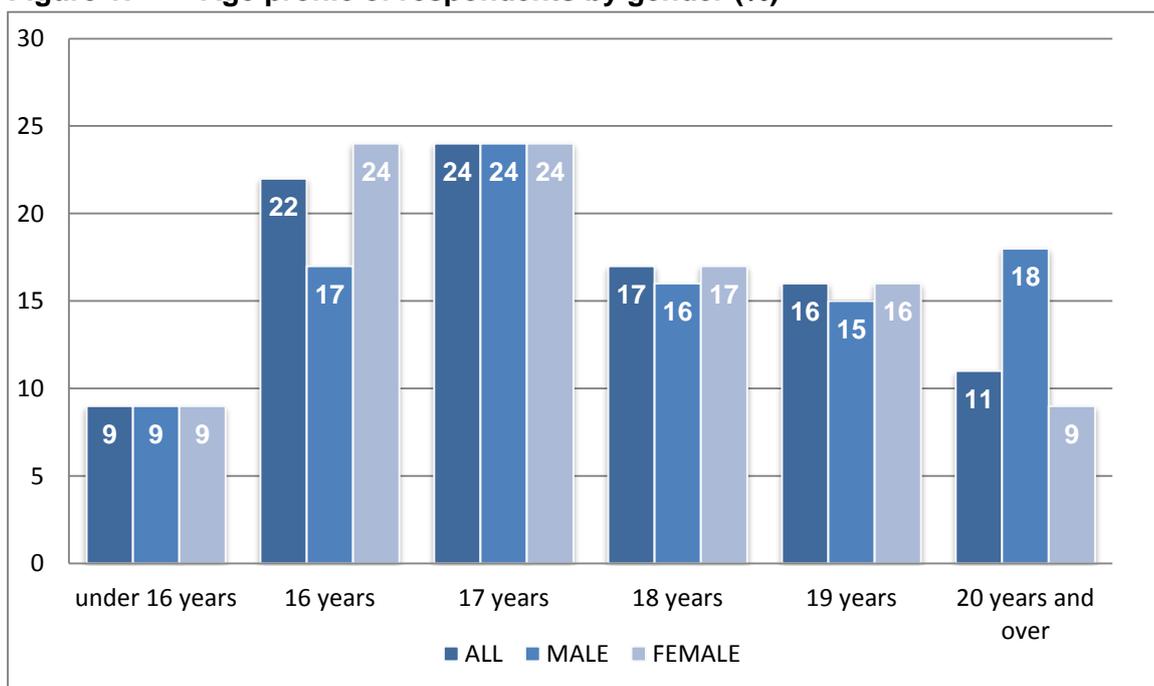
Survey results

Background

This section of this report summarises the key findings of the Brook NI booster survey (The survey questionnaire is available from the ARK website at: www.ark.ac.uk/ylt/results/Brook-YLT_KE_quest.pdf). If appropriate the survey findings are compared with the findings of the 2010 and 2011 YLT surveys. The target sample was 500 completed surveys, however, overall 620 responses were collected from Brook NI clients and young people who participated in sexual health information sessions with Brook NI or affiliated organisations.

Over three quarters of respondents were female (76%). Most respondents were between 16 and 19 years of age; both gender and age break down reflect the profile of Brook NI clients. The average age of respondents was 17.5 years and the median age was 17 years. Figure 1 shows a breakdown of the sample by age group. (All YLT respondents are 16 years of age.)

Figure 1: Age profile of respondents by gender (%)



Over half of Brook NI survey respondents (51%) said they lived in a large city or its outskirts. A further 35 percent said they lived in a small town. Only 12 percent said they came from rural areas. This reflects the location of the Brook NI clinics in Belfast and Coleraine and suggests that urban teenagers are much more likely to attend Brook clinic sessions than their rural counterparts.

Nearly two thirds of respondents (63%) were in school or college full-time. A further 15 percent were in college or school whilst also working part-time. Six percent were in full-time employment, and the same proportion said they were un-employed, whilst four percent were on a training scheme.

The vast majority of respondents still lived at home – most of them with both father and mother at the same time (56%), followed by over one quarter (27%) who lived with their mother only. Nine percent did not live with their parent(s). Amongst those, the majority said they lived on their own, in student housing, or with friends.

Respondents were asked how well-off they thought their families were financially. Over half thought (56%) that they were average well-off. Twelve percent said they were not well-off whilst 27% felt they came from well-off families. Five percent said they did not know.

Respondents were asked whether or not they had felt sexually attracted to anyone and whether this was always, more often, or equally often to males or females. Ten percent of males and eight percent of females said they had at least once been attracted to someone of the same sex. We call these young people ‘*same-sex attracted*’. The remaining respondents said they had only ever been sexually attracted to someone of the opposite sex, and we call these young people therefore ‘*opposite-sex attracted*’. We recognise that this classification of young people – many of whom are still in the process of coming to terms with their sexual and gender identity – is an over-simplification. It does not take account of the fact that sexuality and gender are fluid and not finally determined at this stage or any stage of people’s lives, nor do we claim that gender or sexual identity are just binary variables. However, previous analyses of health and other data suggests that a differentiation in this was is useful to illuminate some of the disadvantages that young people who have been sexually attracted to someone of the same sex have experienced (McNamee, H., Lloyd, K. and Schubotz, D. 2008; Schubotz, 2009, 2010; Schubotz and McNamee, 2009; Schubotz and O’Hara 2011).

Sexual experiences

Respondents were asked a range of questions about their sexual experiences. Nearly nine in ten respondents (87%) said that they had had sex. Since the surveys were predominantly completed by clients of the Brook NI sexual health clinics, this high proportion was to be expected and cannot be confused with the general proportion of young people who have been sexually active at that age. The 2011 YLT survey showed that around one quarter of 16-year olds (26%) have had sex when they are 16. Among 16-year old respondents to this Brook NI booster survey this figure was more than three times higher, namely 83 percent.

Males were a little less likely to have had sex (83%) than females (88%).

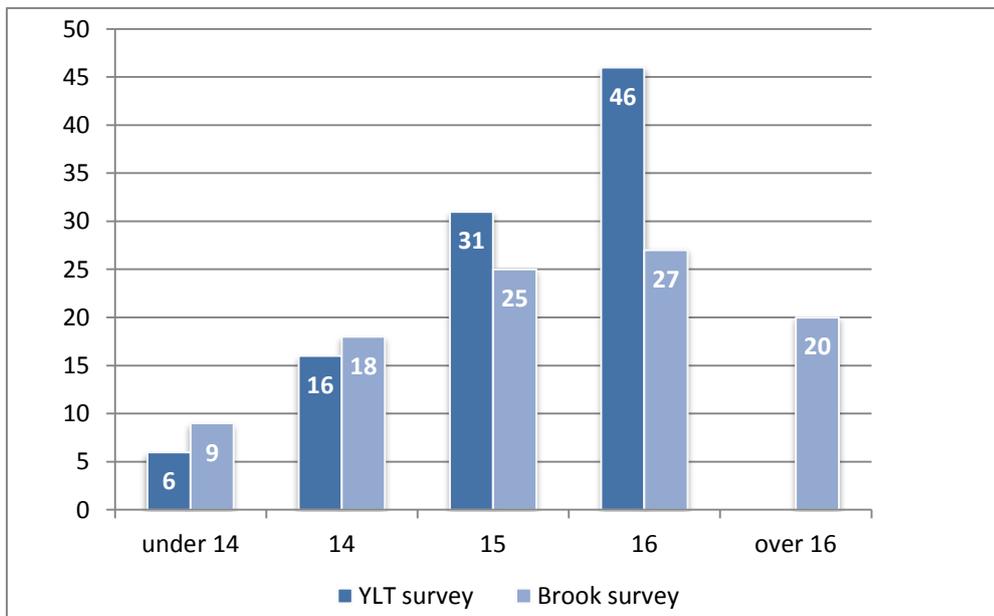
Table 1: At what age did you first have sex? (Brook NI survey)

	%		
	Males	Females	All
Under 14 years	15	8	9
14 years	21	18	18
15 years	25	25	25
16 years	18	30	27
Over 16 years	21	21	20

The most likely age for respondents to have had sex for the first time was 16 years, as Table 1 shows. Nine percent of all respondents – but 15 percent of male respondents said they had had sex for the first time before they were 14 years of age. This figure was even higher among same-sex attracted males (25%), and almost as high among same-sex attracted females (21%). Twenty-two percent of all same-sex attracted respondents said they had sex for the first time before they were 14 years of age, compared to just eight percent of opposite-sex attracted respondents. This

corresponds with the 2011 YLT survey findings which showed that five percent of opposite-sex attracted 16-year olds, but 12 percent of same-sex attracted 16-year olds had had sex for the first time before they were 14 years of age. Overall six percent of YLT respondents had had sex before they were 14 years of age, compared to nine percent of Brook clients, as Figure 2 shows.

Figure 2: Age at which respondents said they first had sex. 2011 YLT survey compared to Brook NI booster survey (%)



Respondents from not well-off backgrounds were more than twice as likely (21%) to have had sex before they were 14 years of age as those from average well-off backgrounds (9%) and well-off backgrounds (8%). Again this mirrors the YLT survey results where 12 percent of not-well-off respondents reported to have had sex before age 14 compared to less than five percent of average well-off and well-off respondents.

Ten percent of males and eight percent of females said they had had sex at least once with someone of the same sex. There was a very small number of respondents who said they had had sex with males, but were sexually attracted only to females and an equally small number who said they had only been attracted sexually to females, but had had sex with both males and females. Our findings would suggest that especially among young women, sexual attraction does not always translate into sexual experience.

Respondents were asked to reflect on the experience when they first had sex. We wanted to know what they thought the reasons were they first had sex and how they reflected on the timing of their first sexual encounter.

Table 2 compares the reasons given by Brook NI survey respondents and YLT2011 respondents for first having sex. The Table shows that both sets of survey respondents were most likely to say that their first sexual encounter happened on the spur of the moment. Overall about one in three respondents said this in both surveys. However, a similar proportion among YLT respondents said that they had planned their first sex together with their partner, and this was a significantly higher proportion than in the Brook NI sample, where only 17 percent said they had planned their first sex with their partner. Identical proportions in the YLT and Brook survey said that they were forced to have sex against their wishes (1%), and similar proportions said that they didn't feel ready to have sex, but went along with what their partner wanted (6% in YLT and 4% in Brook).

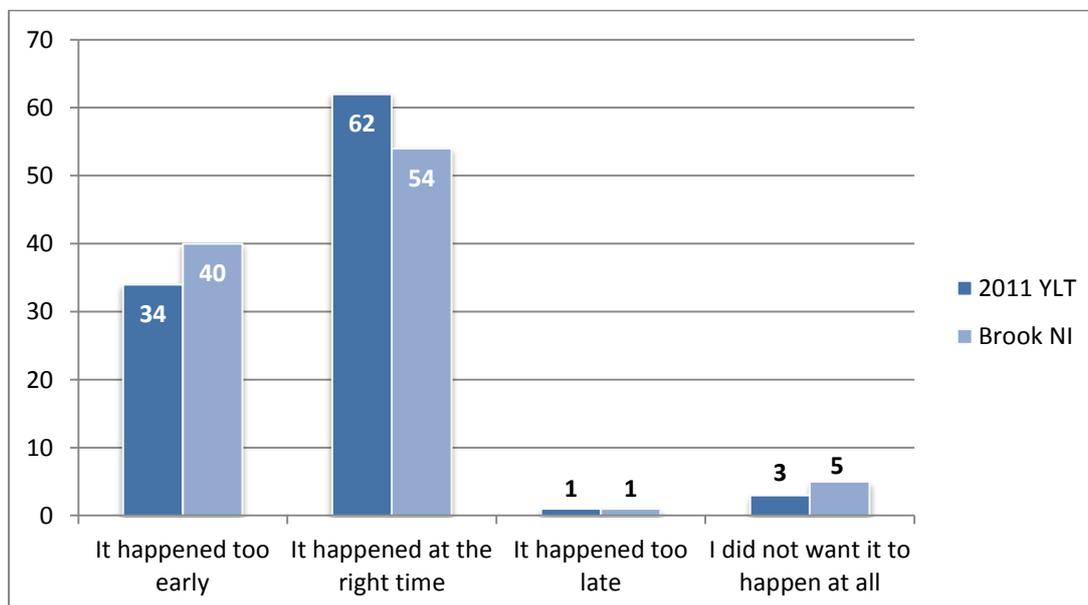
Same-sex attracted respondents in both the YLT survey (12%) and the Brook NI booster survey (7%) were disproportionately more likely to say that they did not really want to have sex, but felt they should. The same applies to females in the YLT survey (9%), but less so in the Brook NI survey (5%), and for respondents from not well-off backgrounds in both surveys (10% in 2011 YLT and 7% in Brook NI).

Table 2: Which of the following statements is closest to describing how that first time of having sex came about?

	%	
	2011 YLT survey	Brook NI survey
It just happened on the spur of the moment	30	34
I expected it to happen soon, but I wasn't sure when	19	16
I expected it to happen that time	10	18
I planned it to happen that time	2	6
We planned it together beforehand	29	17
I didn't really want to, but I felt I should	6	4
I was forced into having sex against my wishes	1	1
I can't remember	4	4

How content people are when they look back to the timing of their first sexual encounter is often seen as an indicator for their sexual competency at the time when this happened. The 2011 YLT survey showed that over six in ten (62%) of those in the YLT sample who had had sex said that they thought this happened at the right time. Whilst about one third (34%) felt this happened too early. Among Brook NI respondents the proportion of those who said that their first sex came too early was significantly higher (40%) (Figure 3).

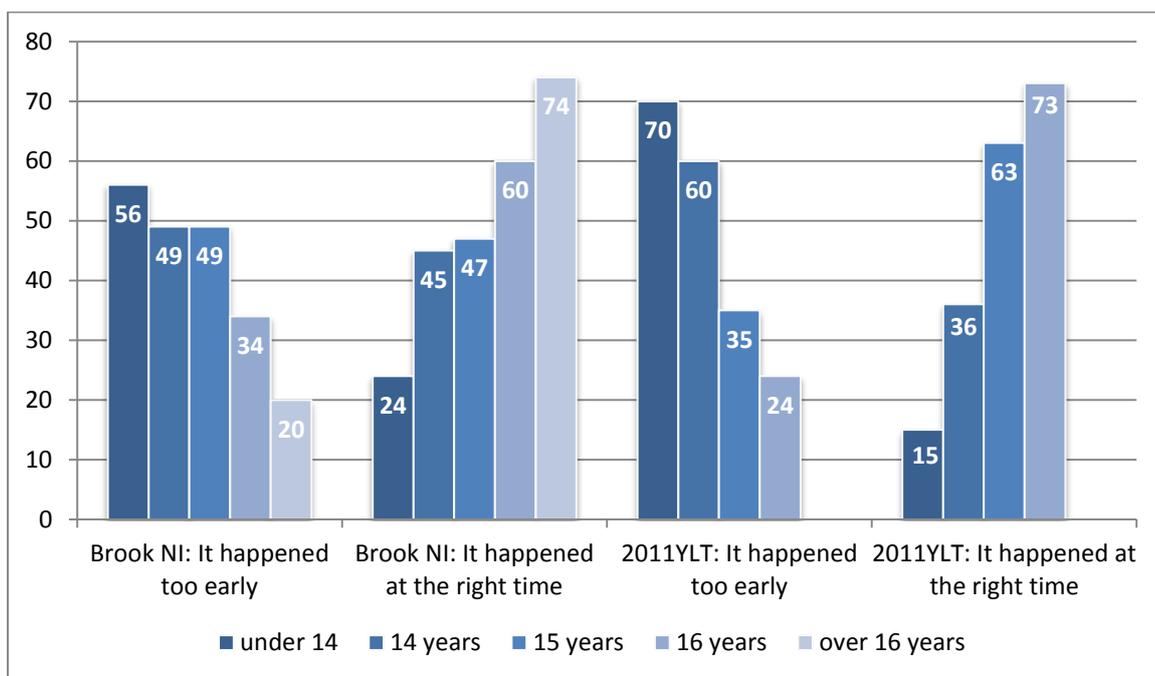
Figure 3: Looking back on it, which of the following describes best how you feel about the first time you had sex? 2011 YLT respondents versus Brook NI respondents (%)



There was a slightly higher proportion of Brook respondents who said “*I did not want it to happen at all*” (5% compared to 3%), this is perhaps indicative of the slightly earlier ages Brook respondents have had sex.

As Figure 4 shows, being content with the timing of first sex is strongly related to the age at which this happened, with those who were under 14 years of age when they first had sex being particularly likely to say that this was too early. Figure 4 shows that 16 years or above appears to be the age when a large majority of young people have no regrets about having sex for the first time and are happy with the timing. This was true for both the YLT respondents and Brook NI booster survey respondents.

Figure 4: Proportion of respondents who said they had sex too early or at the right time. By the age they were at first sex (%) Brook NI and 2011 YLT respondents



The final question, relating to the timing of the first sexual encounter, asked respondents more specifically about the reasons why they had sex. Table 3 provides a breakdown of responses to this question by gender and survey. The Table shows that the most likely reason given by both males and females in both surveys for having sex for the first time was curiosity, with over half of males and females in both surveys saying this. The second most likely reason given by females in both surveys was that sex was a natural follow-on to the relationship they were having. This was also the second most likely reason among YLT males, but Brook males’ second most likely given reason was that they wanted to lose their virginity. The desire to lose their virginity was much more likely to be given as a reason by males than females – in fact males in both surveys were twice as likely as their female counterparts to say this. On the other hand, females were significantly more likely to state that being in love was one of the reasons why they had sex. Around one in five respondents in both surveys said that being drunk was one of the reasons for having sex for the first time. The Brook NI survey shows that respondents who were not in full-time education (31%) when they completed the questionnaire were much more likely than those in full-time education (21%) to say that being a bit drunk was the reason they first had sex.

Significantly for this KE project, nine percent of respondents in the Brook survey said that they ‘*didn’t feel ready to have sex, but went along with what the other person wanted*’, and two percent

said they had sex against their wishes. The respective YLT figures were ten percent and one percent. It is therefore important to note that pressure to have sex, either from the partner or from peers, is definitely a motivating factor for some young people.

There was no conclusive evidence for a relationship between family-financial wellbeing and pressure to engage in sex. In the Brook NI sample, a higher proportion of not well-off respondents (20%) than well-off respondents (8%) said they had sex although they felt not ready for it. However, among YLT respondents the reverse was the case with more well-off respondents (16%) saying this than not well-off respondents (10%). This is perhaps an indication that there is no direct link between the two variables, and that young people of all backgrounds can be coerced into having sex although they are not ready for this. Overall, the Brook and YLT data suggest that around one in ten young people experienced this.

Table 3: Reasons given by respondents why they first had sex. By gender and survey (%) Multiple response table.

	%			
	MALES		FEMALES	
	BROOK NI	2011 YLT	BROOK	2011 YLT
I was curious about what it would be like	54	58	53	51
I got carried away by my feelings	12	19	18	17
Most people my age seemed to be doing it	19	29	22	28
It seemed like a natural follow-on in the relationship	28	43	37	48
I was a bit drunk at the time	22	23	26	19
I had taken some drugs at the time	8	3	1	1
I wanted to lose my virginity	31	32	16	16
I was in love	19	29	32	43
I didn't feel ready to have sex, but went along with what the other person wanted	8	7	8	12
It happened against my wishes	3	0	1	2
Another reason	7	1	3	3

However, the relationship between same-sex attraction and pressure to engage in sexual activities before they feel ready for this is very clear. Approximately one in five same-sex attracted young people said they didn't feel ready to have sex, but went along with what the other person wanted when they first had sex compared to fewer than one in ten opposite-sex attracted young people.

Among Brook NI respondents 20 percent of respondents who first had sex before they were aged 14 said they *did not feel ready* for sex compared with ten percent of those who were 16 years old and just three percent who were older than 16 when they first had sex. Furthermore, four times as many respondents who first had sex before they were aged 14 said they had sex against their wishes as respondents who first had sex when they were 16 years or older. This is confirmed in the findings from the 2011 YLT survey. Here, nearly one in four respondents (24%) who first had sex when they were under 14 years of age, and 27 percent of those who were 14 years old, said that

they did not feel ready for sex but went along with their partner’s wishes. Among those who were 16 years of age when they first had sex, this figure was just two percent.

The proportion of those who said they had sex against their wishes was very small and cannot be broken down further statistically for this reason.

Contraceptive use

Contraceptive use was not the focus of this KE project *per se*, however the failure to use contraception is directly related to sexual health risks, so in that sense this was relevant for this project. Eighty-one percent of sexually active 2011 YLT respondents and 74 percent of Brook NI respondents said that they or their sexual partner had used a condom the first time they had sex, as Figure 5 shows.

Figure 5: Did you or your partner use a condom when you first had sex? By survey type (%)

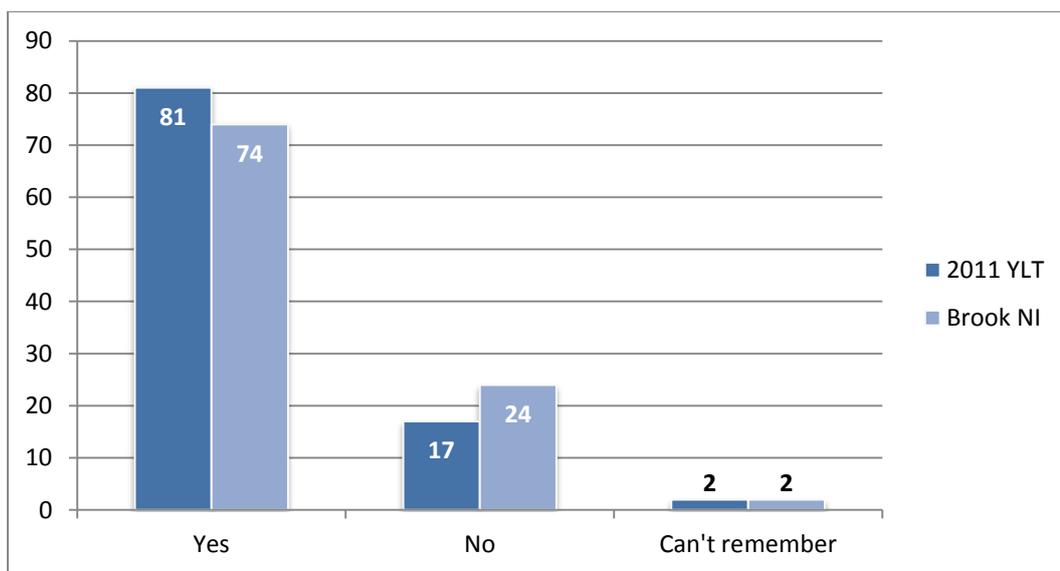
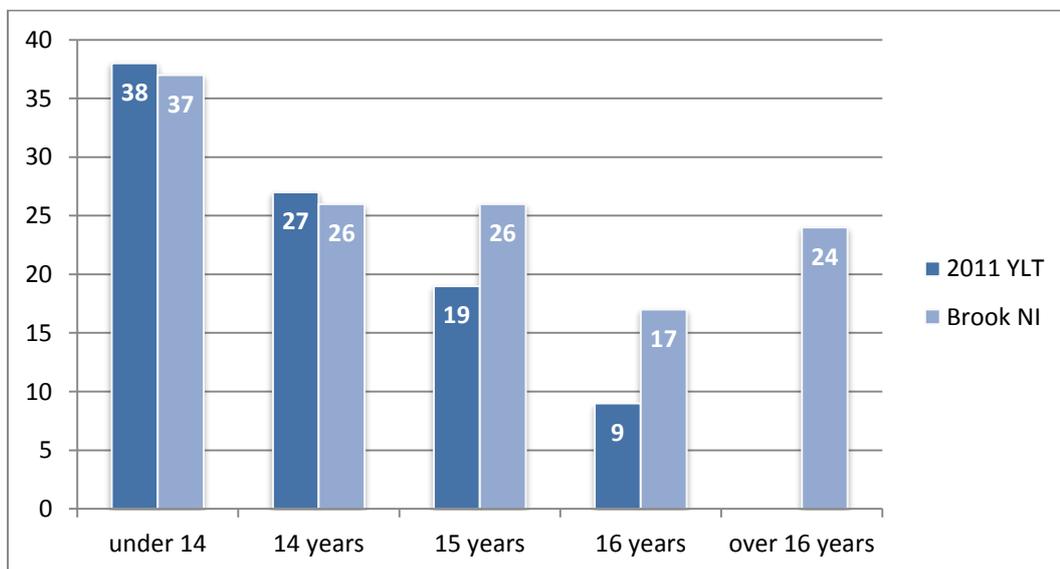


Figure 6: Proportion of respondents who did not use a condom when they first had sex. By age at first sex and survey type (%)



Generally, the older the age at first sex respondents, the more likely a condom was used at first sex. This relationship was much clearer among YLT respondents (Figure 6).

Same-sex attracted respondents were significantly less likely than their opposite-sex attracted counterparts to have used a condom when they first had sex. Among YLT respondents the respective figures were 24 percent compared to 16 percent, in the Brook NI survey these figures were 36 percent and 24 percent.

Condom use was lowest among respondents who said the reason they first had sex was that they were drunk or had taken some drugs. Only half of those who said they had taken drugs, and only six in ten of those who said they were drunk when they first had sex had used a condom on that occasion. Among YLT respondents, condom use was also very low (56%) among those who said they went along with the other person when they first had sex, but did not feel ready themselves.

Respondents were asked whether they had used any other type of contraception when they first had sex. Figures 7 and 8 show that the contraceptive pill was the most likely used other form of contraception, with around one in three respondents saying this is what they used although the most likely response to the question was that no other form of contraception was used (42% among Brook NI respondents and 32% among YLT respondents).

Figure 7: Other forms of contraception used at first sex by Brook NI respondents (%)

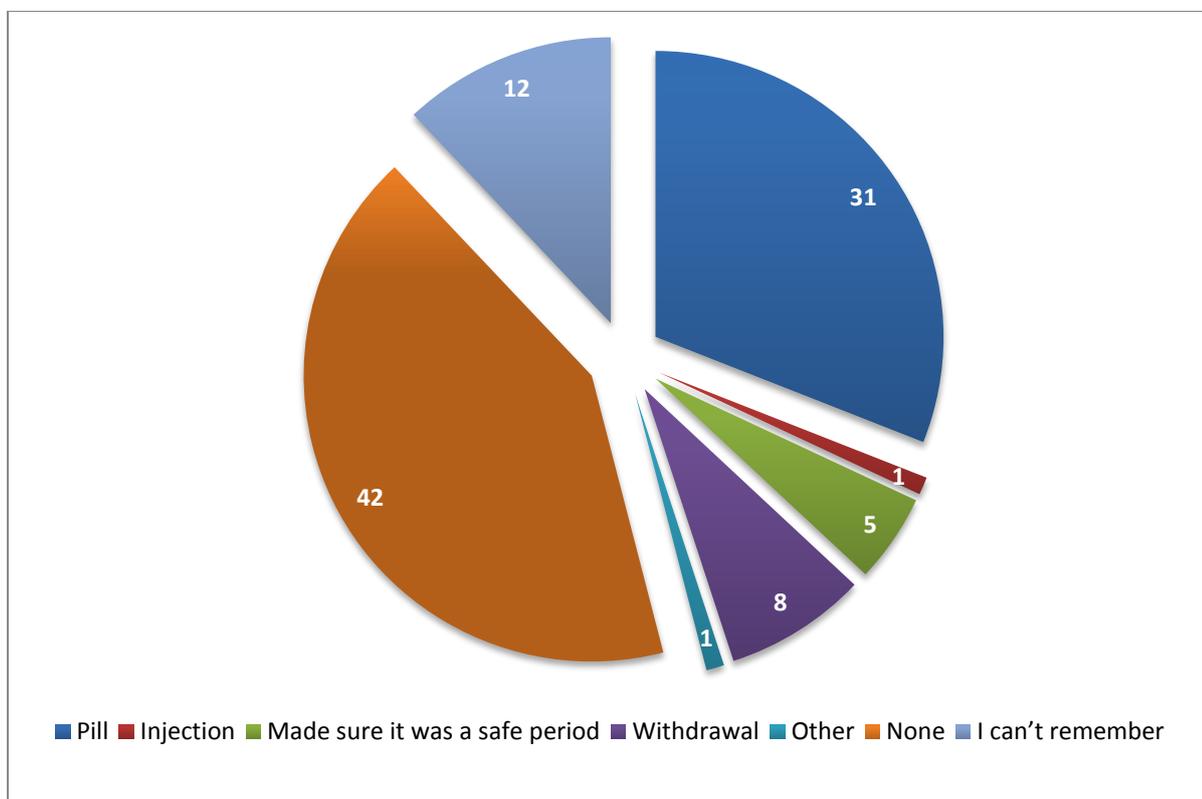
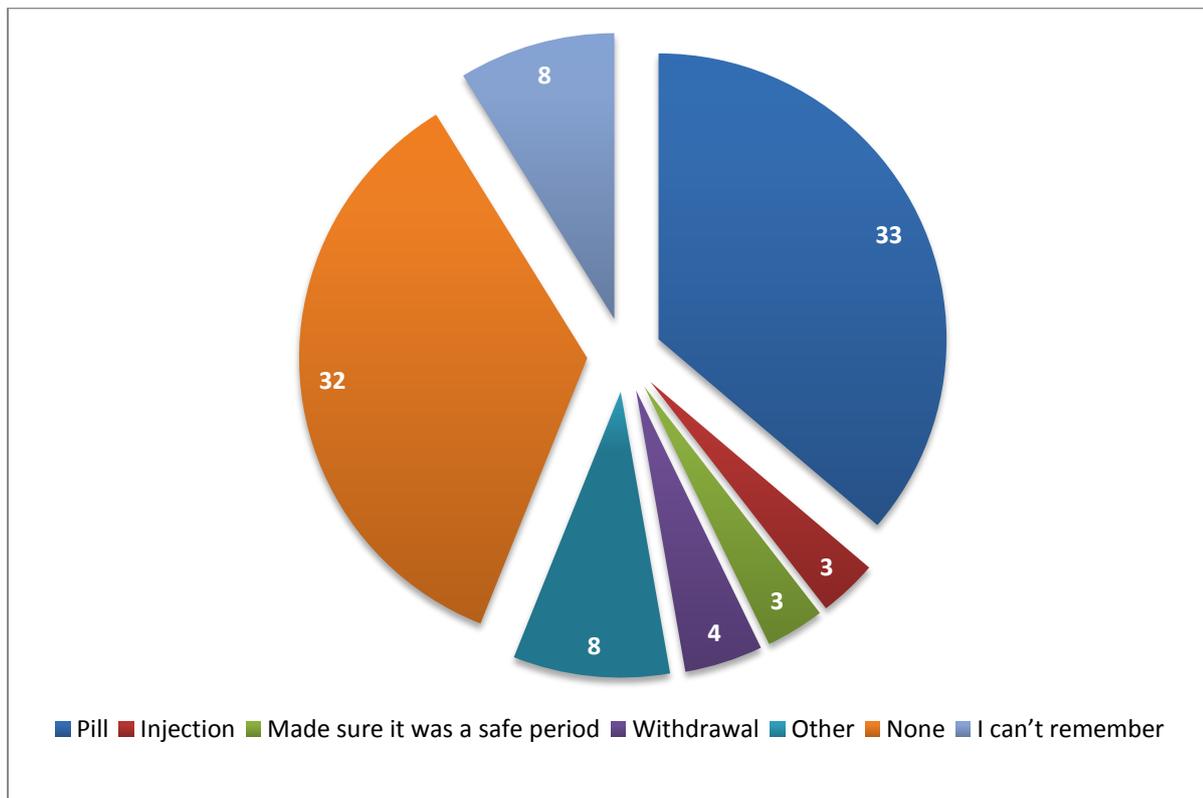


Figure 8: Other forms of contraception used at first sex by YLT respondents (%)



Cross-tabulating condom other contraceptive use shows that a significant proportion of those respondents who did use not use reliable contraceptive methods (such as the pill or injection) also failed to use a condom when they first had sex. For example, over half of Brook NI respondents and one in three YLT respondents who had used ‘withdrawal’ as a contraceptive method had also not used a condom. Nearly four in ten (37%) of Brook respondents and over one quarter of YLT respondents (28%) who said they had not used any other contraceptive method had also failed to use condoms.

Table 4: Proportion of respondents who did not use condoms among those using unreliable or no other contraceptive method. By survey type. (%)

	%	
	Brook NI	2011 YLT
Made sure it was a safe period	22	18
Withdrawal	53	30
No contraception by me, don't know about partner	17	12
No contraception by either partner	37	28
I can't remember	15	18

Sexual grooming

In 2010, YLT survey respondents were asked questions on sexual grooming and exploitation. These questions were repeated in the Brook NI survey for this project. Overall nearly one in five Brook respondents (18%) and more than one in ten (11%) YLT respondents reported that they had been sexually groomed by an adult at least once. Table 5 compares the experiences of grooming by 16-year olds in the YLT survey with those of Brook NI respondents by gender. The table shows that Brook respondents were more likely to say that they had experienced grooming.

Table 5: Do you think an adult has ever tried to groom you? By gender and survey type (%)

	%					
	2010 YLT			Brook NI		
	Males	Females	All	Males	Females	All
Yes, once	3	8	6	7	10	9
Yes, 2-5 times	<1	6	4	6	5	5
Yes, more than 5 times	<1	1	1	3	3	3
I don't know	3	4	4	6	5	5
No	92	81	85	77	77	77

It is particularly noticeable that in the YLT sample, males were much more likely than females to say that they had not been sexually groomed, whereas in the Brook sample the experiences of males and females were very similar. One of the explanations could be the higher proportion of same-sex attracted men who completed the Brook survey. The proportion of same-sex attracted young people who reported sexual grooming was significantly higher than among opposite-sex attracted young people. In fact, among Brook respondents, only 54 percent of same-sex attracted respondents said that they had not been sexually groomed by an adult, compared to 80 percent of opposite-sex attracted respondents. The equivalent figures from the 2010YLT survey were 72 percent and 86 percent.

Table 6: Do you think an adult has ever tried to groom you? By family-financial background and survey type (%)

	%					
	2010 YLT			Brook NI		
	Well-off	Average	Not well-off	Well-off	Average	Not well-off
Yes, once	3	6	7	8	10	12
Yes, 2-5 times	<1	4	7	4	5	18
Yes, more than 5 times	1	<1	2	2	3	6
I don't know	3	4	4	6	5	0
No	92	84	79	80	77	65

Respondents from well-off family financial backgrounds were much less likely to say that they had been sexually groomed than those from not well-off backgrounds, as Table 6 shows. This was true for both surveys although the results again reflect the higher rate of sexual grooming experienced by Brook respondents.

In almost all of the cases females were sexually groomed by a male (94% Brook, 97% in YLT), however, nearly one third of males (31%) in the Brook survey and half of males in the YLT survey who had experienced sexual grooming said that they were groomed by another male.

Grooming experience varied little by the location where respondents lived, as Figure 9 shows. Higher proportions of Brook NI respondents generally reported sexual grooming than YLT respondents. Interestingly, whilst respondents from rural areas in the Brook survey were most likely to report grooming, the opposite was the case for YLT respondents. Overall the evidence of the two surveys suggest that sexual grooming is probably as common in rural areas as it is in urban and suburban settings.

Figure 9: Proportion of respondents reporting sexual grooming experience. By location where respondents live and survey type (%)

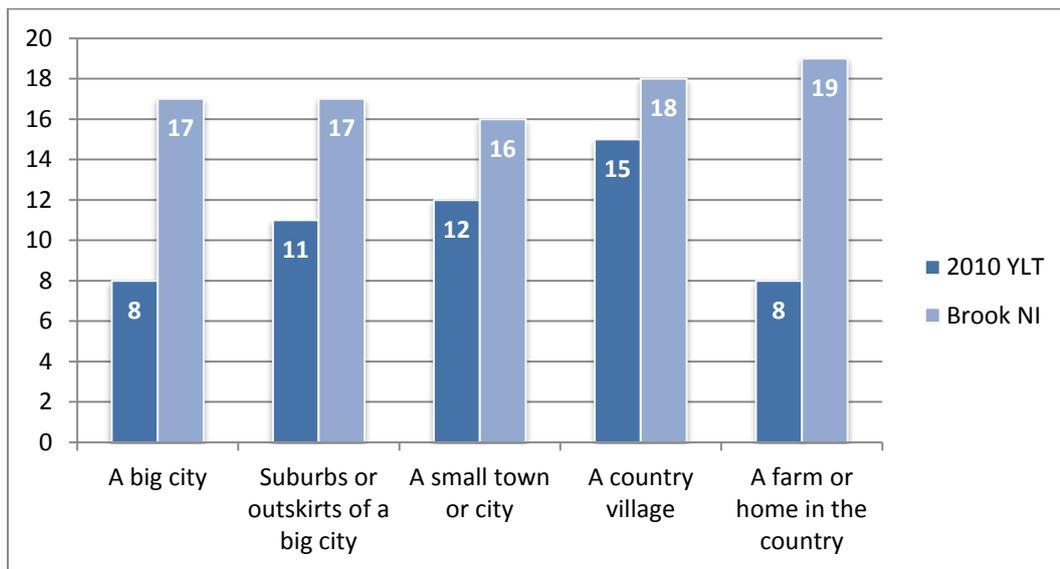
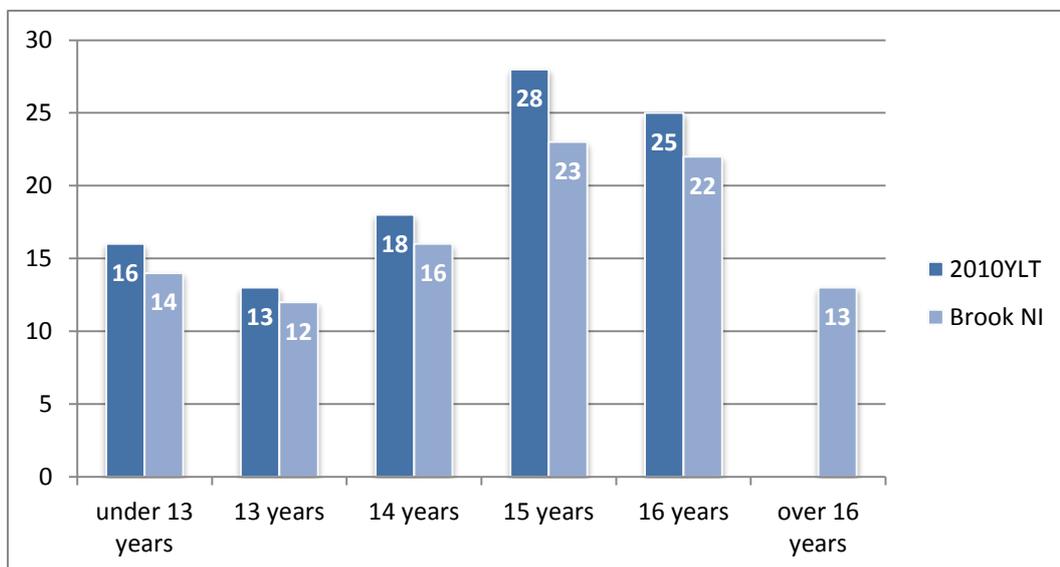


Figure 10: Age respondents were when they were first sexually groomed by an adult. By survey type (%)



Respondents were asked when they first experienced sexual grooming. As Figure 10 shows, there is very little difference between the experiences of Brook NI and YLT respondents, with the exception that YLT respondents were all 16 years old per se could not have experienced grooming after they were 16. Three quarters (75%) of YLT respondents and nearly two thirds (65%) of Brook NI respondents first experienced sexual grooming by an adult before they were 16 years of age, that is before they had reached the age of sexual consent.

Figure 11 shows that YLT and Brook NI respondents also share very similar experiences in terms of the age the perpetrator was when they were first sexually groomed. Fifty-four percent of YLT respondents and 60 percent of Brook respondents said that the person who first tried to groom them was at least five years older than they were at the time with around one third in both surveys saying that this person was more than ten years older.

Figure 11: Age of perpetrator when respondent was first sexually groomed. By survey type (%)

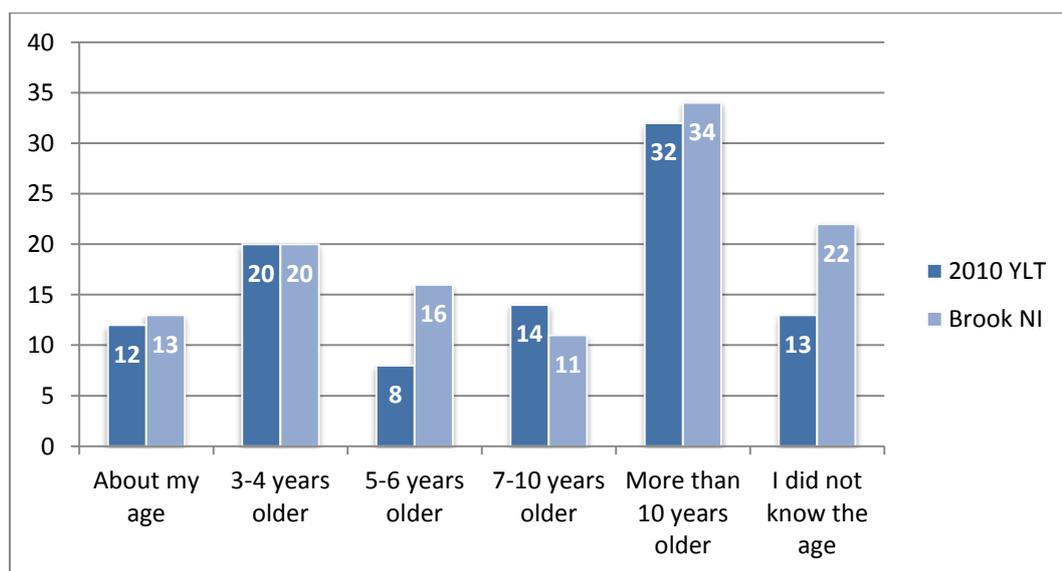


Table 7: How did the person grooming you make first contact with you? By survey type.

	%	
	2010 YLT	Brook NI
Through a friend or sibling	17	17
Through an adult relative	4	9
At a house party	7	13
At a pub/club	17	13
Through a hobby/activity/organisation	6	3
On the street (hanging around in town or in your local community etc.)	18	15
Online - through a chat room, social networking site etc.	28	15
Other	5	15

Respondents were asked how the adult grooming them made first contact. A common perception is that this often happens online through social networking sites and therefore through networks that responsible adults have no access to. The 2010 YLT survey showed that, whilst the most likely answer given by respondents was indeed that the groomer made first contact online (28% saying this), in fact in the majority of cases, first contact was made face-to face, for example at parties or through friends or relatives. Among Brook respondents the proportion of those groomed online was even smaller (15%) (Table 7).

Respondents were asked what happened when they were groomed. Table 8 shows that around seven in ten young people from both sets of survey respondents did not have any sexual contact after the incident of grooming occurred. YLT respondents were more likely than Brook respondents to say that the contact stopped before anything sexual was even suggested (38% and 28% respectively). Brook respondents, on the other hand were more likely to say that they refused to do something sexual, once this was suggested (42% and 33% respectively).

However, this also means that 40 percent of Brook respondents and 36 percent of YLT respondents did actually engage in some kind of sexual exchange. One fifths of both YLT and Brook respondents sent or received sexual images and or emails/texts, whilst 16 percent of Brook respondents and ten percent of YLT respondents had face-to-face sexual contact. Six percent of respondents in both surveys said they started a romantic relationship.

Table 8: Which of these statements describe what happened? By survey type.

	%	
	Brook NI	2010 YLT
I stopped contact with the person before they suggested anything sexual	28	38
The person asked me to do something sexual but I refused	42	33
I exchanged sexual texts/emails/ conversations with the person	14	12
I sent them sexual images of myself or received sexual images from them	6	8
I met them and we had face to face sexual contact (sexual touching, oral sex, intercourse, etc.) on one occasion	8	6
I met them and we had face to face sexual contact (sexual touching, oral sex, intercourse, etc.) on more than one occasion	8	4
We started a romantic relationship	6	6
Other	8	14

Due to the small sample size, the data cannot be analysed in much more detail statistically, however, the data suggest some interesting trends. Same-sex attracted young people and those from not well-off backgrounds were less likely to stop the contact before anything sexual was even suggested. This was true for both YLT and Brook respondents. The Brook NI survey revealed that only one quarter (26%) of young people in full-time education engaged with the groomer sexually, whilst this proportion was twice as high among those who were not in full-time education (52%).

Other experiences of sexual exploitation

Whilst sexual grooming was the main issue we were concerned with, we also asked a range of questions focussing on other types of sexual exploitation, namely whether:

- young people had been taken advantage of sexually when under the influence of alcohol or drugs;
- they had ever been offered something in exchange for a sexual activity; and
- they had been threatened if they did not engage in a sexual activity.

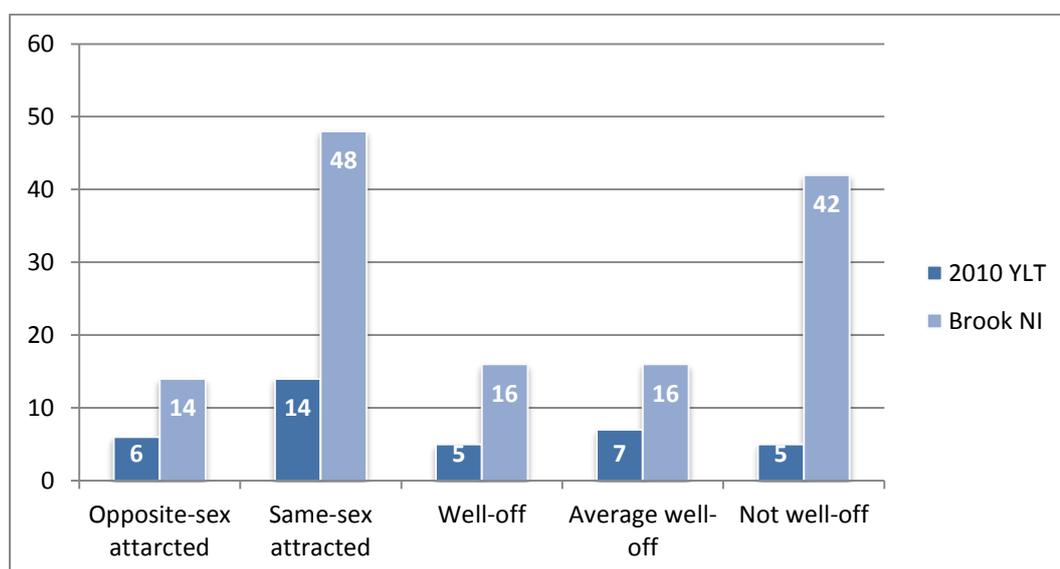
Finally we asked about reporting of such experiences of sexual exploitation.

The first question dealt with experiences of being taken advantage of sexually when under the influence of alcohol or drugs. As Table 9 shows, a significantly larger proportion of Brook (16%) than YLT (7%) respondents reported that they had been taken advantage of sexually by someone when they were under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Importantly, the Table shows that this was likely to be someone of the same age rather than a much older adult. Around two thirds (65%) of YLT respondents to whom this happened experienced this before they were 16 years of age, compared to four in ten Brook respondents (43%) to whom this had happened.

Table 9: Has anyone ever given you alcohol, solvents, or drugs and then taken advantage of you sexually? By survey type

	%	
	Brook NI	2010 YLT
Yes, someone of a similar age to me	11	5
Yes, someone 3-4 years older	2	1
Yes, someone 5-6 years older	1	<1
Yes, someone 7-10 years older	1	<1
Yes, someone more than 10 years older	1	0
I think so, but I'm not sure what happened or who did it	<1	<1
I don't know	3	1
No	80	92

Figure 12: Proportion of respondents saying they had been taken advantage of sexually when under the influence of alcohol or drugs. By sexual attraction, family-financial background and survey type (%)



Same-sex attracted respondents and those from not well-off backgrounds were significantly more likely to say that they had been taken advantage of sexually. This was true for both YLT and Brook respondents with regard to sexual attraction, and to Brook respondents only with regard to the family-financial background, as Figure 12 shows. Almost half of same-sex attracted Brook NI respondents and over four in ten Brook respondents from not well-off background reported having been taken advantage of sexually.

The next question asked respondents whether they had ever been offered something in return for sex. Table 10 illustrates that eight percent of YLT respondents and one in ten Brook respondents had been offered something in return for sex with alcohol and drugs being the most likely items to be offered. Same-sex attracted respondents were much more likely to have been offered something in return for sex with only three quarters (75%) of same-sex attracted YLT respondents and under two thirds of same-sex attracted Brook respondents saying they had never been offered something in return for sex. This compares with over nine in ten opposite-sex attracted respondents in both surveys. The Brook NI data also showed that nearly one third (30%) of not well-off respondents had been offered alcohol or drugs in return for sex – five times the proportion of average well-off respondents (6%) and more than seven times the proportion of well-off respondents (4%) who said this. In the Brook survey, 71 percent of not well-off respondents said they had never been offered anything in return for sex compared with 92 percent of well-off respondents.

Table 10: Has anyone ever offered you something in return for having sex or taking part in any other type of sexual activity? By survey type. Multiple response table.

	%	
	Brook NI	2010 YLT
Drugs, alcohol or solvents	6	3
Money or gifts (mobile phones, clothes, computer games etc.)	3	2
Somewhere to stay/hang out	3	2
Something else	2	<1
No	90	92

Again 80 percent of YLT respondents who had been offered something in return for sex were under the age of sexual consent when this first happened, i.e. 15 years of age or younger. Among Brook respondents this figure was 49 percent. Thirty-eight percent of Brook respondents who had been affected by this said that the person offering something for sex was around about their own age. Nearly six in ten Brook NI respondents (58%) said that this person was at least three years older than they were at the time. This confirmed the YLT results which were similar with 46 percent of YLT respondents saying that the person offering something in return for sex was around their own age and 53 percent saying this person was at least three years older than they were at the time.

Seventy-one percent of Brook NI respondents said that the person offering something for sex was male. This figure might have been expected to be higher – it was 85 percent in the YLT survey.

Table 11 shows that the first contact with this person was likely to be made through friends or siblings or house parties. YLT respondents were more than twice as likely as Brook NI respondents (18% and 8% respectively) to say that the contact was made online, however, this was still only the case for fewer than one in five YLT respondents.

Table 11: How did you first get in contact with the person offering you something in return for sex? By survey type.

	%	
	2010 YLT	Brook NI
Through a friend or sibling	30	37
Through an adult relative	0	2
At a house party	24	14
At a pub/club	9	16
Through a hobby/activity/organisation	3	4
On the street (hanging around in town or in your local community etc.)	9	10
Online - through a chat room, social networking site etc.	18	8
Other	6	8

The last question in the survey addressed reporting of sexual exploitation. Table 12 shows that 62 percent of YLT respondents, but only 43 percent of Brook NI respondents had failed to report to anyone that they had been offered something in return for sex. A higher proportion among YLT than Brook NI respondents had talked to their parents about this, however for both sets of survey respondents a friend or sibling was the most likely person they confided in when this happened.

Table 12: Did you ever tell anyone that this had happened? By survey type.

	%	
	Brook NI	2010 YLT
Yes- I told a parent/other adult relative	10	15
Yes- I told the police	<1	6
Yes- I told a teacher, youth worker or social worker	6	3
Yes- I told someone else	29	21
Don't know	4	4
No, I did not	43	61

Interestingly, in both surveys the proportion of females saying that they told no-one when this had happened was higher than the proportion of males giving this answer. The Brook NI survey showed that those still in full-time education were less likely to tell anyone when they had been offered something in return for sex than those who had left education (43% and 58% respectively).

Finally, one percent of YLT respondents and four percent of Brook NI respondents said they had taken part in a sexual exchange because someone threatened to harm them or someone else they cared about.

One percent of YLT respondents and four percent of Brook NI respondents said that this had happened to them. Crucially, among Brook respondents, again same-sex attracted respondents (14%) and those from financially not well-off backgrounds (18%) were much more likely to say that

they had experienced this. No further analysis is possible with YLT data due to the small number of respondents who had experienced this.

Summarising findings on sexual risk

In this part of this report we were looking at the results of the 2010 and 2011 YLT survey findings. We related these to the findings of the Brook NI booster survey. The results of the booster survey mainly confirmed the YLT survey results on sexual experiences and sexual risk. Due to the wider age range among Brook NI respondents compared to the narrow sample of just 16-year olds in the YLT surveys, the Brook NI survey revealed a greater extent of experienced risks. This was to be expected. Prior to the project we also hypothesised that a larger proportion of Brook respondents would be at risk. The very nature of the Brook NI sexual health services meant that the organisation would see, and look after, clients who engage in sexual activities earlier than many of their counterparts. For this project this meant that we would get a better sense of the risks experienced by particularly vulnerable young people.

The last two tables in this section of this report - Tables 13 and 14 - provide a summary of the findings on sexual risks for both the YLT surveys and the Brook NI survey. These tables combine indicators for sexual risk and sexual capacity and provide a breakdown by characteristics that throughout this section of the report were shown to adversely influence sexual experiences. It has become clear that, in particular, young people from financially disadvantaged backgrounds and those who are sexually attracted to someone of the same sex are two predominantly vulnerable groups with regard to sexual exploitation and sexual experiences that may adversely affect their sexual health. The reasons for this may vary. Social deprivation is often linked to poor education and subsequently a lack of employment opportunities and poor self-esteem. This can result in a greater vulnerability with regard to sexual health experiences.

Those who do not identify as hetero-sexual are often stigmatised in heteronormative societies like ours. Homophobic bullying and exclusion are often the result of non-heterosexual feelings and orientations. Like social deprivation, hetero-normative stigmatisation has potentially adverse effects on the sexual identity formation of young people, their self-esteem and their health in general. This can make these young people vulnerable to exploitation when they negotiate their first sexual encounters.

Gender also remains an important factor with regard to sexual health and sexual exploitation. The pressures experienced by males and females to engage in sexual activities are very different as the results in this section show. Thus, Tables 13 and 14 include gender as a variable. In both the Brook and YLT surveys, male respondents were significantly more likely than their female counterparts to have had sex early, to engage in a sexual activity with the adults who sexually groomed them, but less likely to have regrets about the timing of their first sexual intercourse and, interestingly, more likely to report sexual exploitation if they had experienced any.

However, differences by family-financial wellbeing and sexual attraction by far exceed gender differences, with those who are same-sex attracted and those from financially poorer background being clearly most at risk to experience adverse sexual health outcomes and being at risk of sexual exploitation as Tables 13 and 14 show. This was particularly obvious in the Brook NI survey where these young people have poorer outcomes across most indicators.

Table 13: Sexual risk and sexual exploitation indicators. By gender, family financial background and sexual attraction. Source: Brook NI survey.

	%							All
	Gender		Family financial background			Sexual attraction		
			£	££	£££	Same sex	Opposite sex	
Had first sex before age 16*	61	50	50	54	46	62	52	52
Regrets timing of first sex	23	51	47	42	34	54	44	45
No condom use	24	25	27	24	24	36	24	24
Drunk at first sex	22	26	33	25	20	30	24	25
Had taken drugs at first sex	8	1	13	2	3	5	3	3
Didn't feel ready for sex, but went along with other person	8	9	20	9	8	21	7	9
Had sex against own wishes	3	1	13	1	1	5	2	2
Was sexually groomed	16	18	36	18	14	38	16	18
Engaged in sexual activity with person who groomed them	50	23	60	33	21	43	31	41
Taken advantage of sexually	13	18	41	16	16	49	13	17
Threatened into having sex	4	5	8	4	6	21	4	4
Did not report sexual exploitation	39	46	20	52	40	50	42	46

£=Not well-off; ££= Average well-off; £££=well-off

*These figures relate to the respondents who had had sex, i.e. 61 percent of males who had had sex did so before age 16.

Table 14: Sexual risk and sexual exploitation indicators. By gender, family financial background and sexual attraction. Source: 2010 and 2011 YLT surveys.

	%							
	Gender		Family financial background			Sexual attraction		All
			£	££	£££	Same sex	Opposite sex	
Had first sex before age 16*	62	49	63	51	48	61	52	53
Regrets timing of first sex	34	39	46	3	32	54	35	37
No condom use	16	18	23	15	16	24	16	17
Drunk at first sex	23	19	22	19	27	27	20	20
Had taken drugs at first sex	3	1	2	2	2	5	2	2
Didn't feel ready for sex, but went along with other person	7	12	10	9	16	17	9	10
Had sex against own wishes	0	2	0	2	2	0	1	1
Was sexually groomed	4	15	17	11	5	23	11	11
Engaged in sexual activity with person who groomed them	64	21	30	24	33	38	35	41
Taken advantage of sexually	4	8	5	8	5	13	4	6
Threatened into having sex	0	1	1	1	0	1	2	2
Did not report sexual exploitation	50	64	30	77	71	58	64	62

£=Not well-off; ££= Average well-off; £££=well-off

*These figures relate to the respondents who had had sex, i.e. 62 percent of males who had had sex did so before age 16.

Focus groups

Seven focus groups were arranged with young people in established youth groups and with Brook clients. Four of these group discussions took place in Belfast, but three were held in different areas in Northern Ireland, namely Ballymena, Portstewart and Newry. Recruitment for focus groups followed a purposive approach. Particular efforts were made to speak to young people who, as our two surveys, Brook NI's clinical work, and Barnardo's research on child sexual exploitation (Beckett, 2010) showed, are especially vulnerable to sexual risks and sexual exploitation. So, we included groups of same-sex attracted/LGBT young people; young people with poor educational records; and young people with care experiences in our group discussions.

As stated in the **Methodology** section above, these focus groups had the aim to disseminate the survey findings in a young person-friendly manner in order to raise awareness around the issue of sexual grooming and exploitation; and, on the basis of this, discuss with young people what format they felt an education resource should take to address these issues amongst young people. The group discussions were jointly co-facilitated by Brook NI staff, peer educators and ARK/YLT staff. At least two members of the project team facilitated each discussion and at least one peer educator was present at these.

The focus groups followed the following format:

1. Introductions and ground rules
2. Background to the project
3. Dissemination of survey findings
4. Interactive activities
5. Brainstorming on resource
6. Closure and debriefing.

Participants received a gift voucher for their contribution to this project.

Dissemination of survey findings at focus groups

It was clear that the information about the survey results had to be communicated in a lay and young-person friendly way. Some young people in our target audience would find it too difficult to comprehend long statistical tables and charts with too much information. We therefore opted to produce simple and colourful A2-sized show cards on the basis of our statistics, concentrating on key findings only and highlighting only key differences, for example differences in experiences that males and females would have.

Figures 13 to 16 below are examples for such show cards. The show card in Figure 13 exemplifies the difference between males and females in terms of the importance that 'curiosity' played in their decision to have sex for the first time. The coloured symbols for males and females show that males were a little more likely to say that they had sex because they were '*curious what it would be like*', but the show cards also illustrate that a high proportion of females said this too, and that is that the gender difference is therefore not that big.

Figure 13: Show card used to exemplify the difference curiosity played in males' and females' decision to have sex. Source: 2011 YLT survey

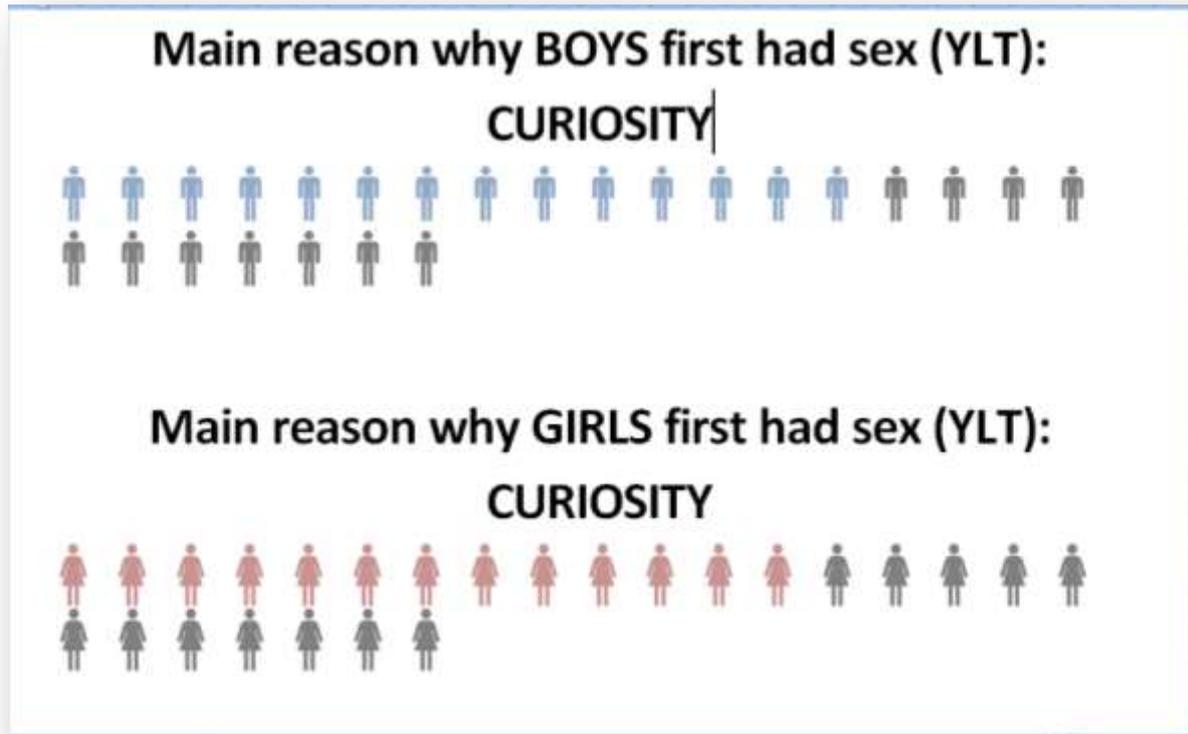


Figure 14 Show card used to exemplify the difference in reporting of sexual grooming by males in the 2010 YLT survey and the Brook NI booster survey

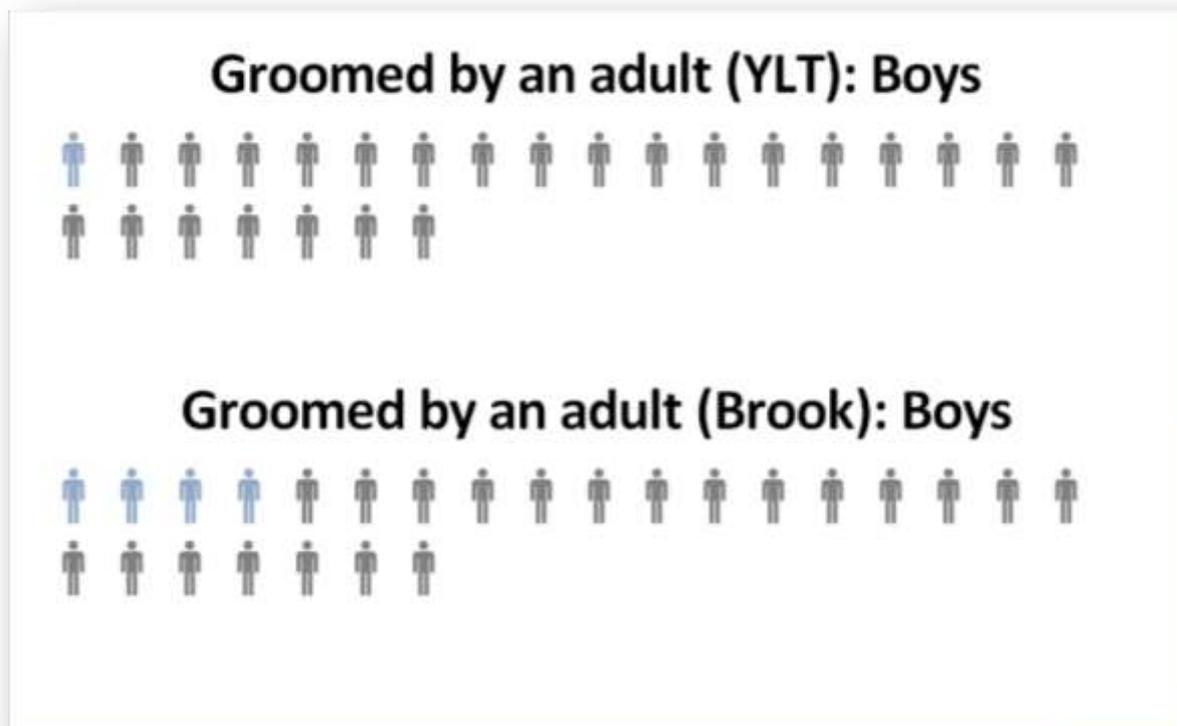
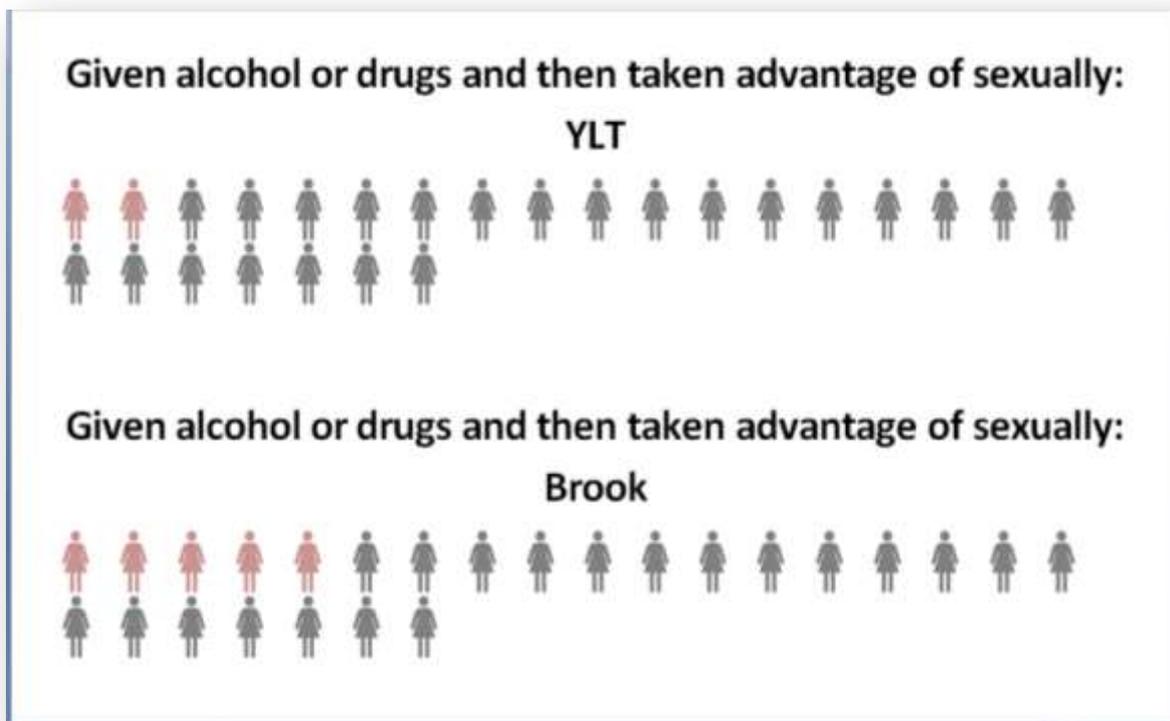


Figure 14 compares the Brook NI booster survey results and the YLT survey results in terms of the proportion of males who had reported that they had been sexually groomed by an adult. This show card exemplifies visually that four times the proportion of males in the Brook NI booster survey reported sexual grooming than in the YLT survey.

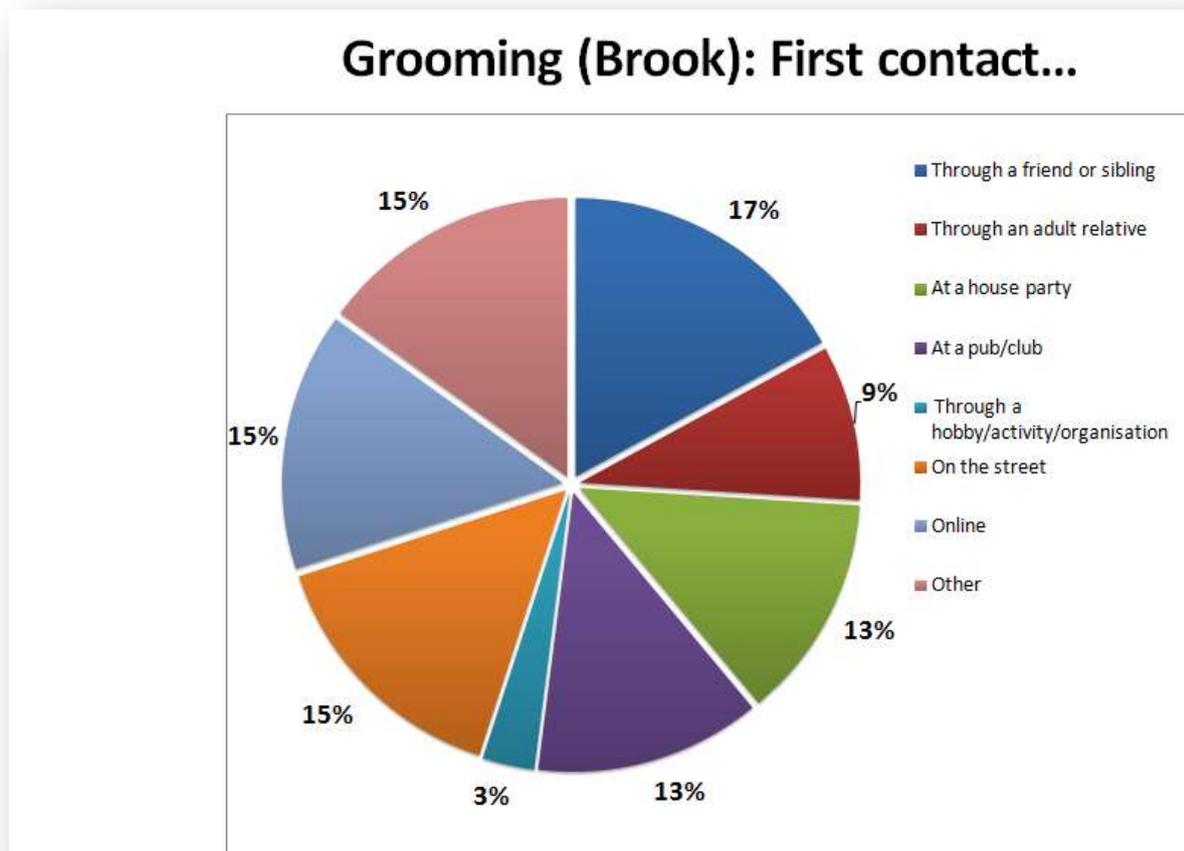
Figure 15 shows a similar comparison, this time of responses by females in the YLT and Brook NI survey to the question of whether they had ever been taken advantage of sexually under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Similar to the males in the previous Figure, this show card illustrates that females in the Brook NI survey were more likely to report that they had experienced this than females in the 2010 YLT survey.

Figure 15: Show card used to exemplify the difference in reporting of sexual exploitation by females in the 2010 YLT survey and the Brook NI booster survey



The last show card (Figure 16) is an example for a simple pie chart used in the focus groups to communicate survey results to young people. This pie chart shows how adults made contact with young people when they sexually groomed them. Again, we had produced one pie chart each for the 2010 YLT survey and for the Brook NI booster survey, but we only show one chart here as for illustration purposes.

Figure 16: Show card used to exemplify how adults made contact with young people when they sexually groomed them.



Activities 1 and 2

Following the reports of the survey results, participants were asked to contribute in three interactive tasks. These essentially introduced some scenarios and young people were asked to relate to these. For the first activity, small colour-coded response cards were handed out. These allowed young people to 'agree' or 'disagree' with a statement or to respond 'yes' or 'no' or 'don't know' to a question. In essence, this activity tested young people's views and perceptions about sexual practices and experiences as well as their understanding of consent– for example by asking whether only females were affected by sexual grooming or whether someone says 'yes' to sex when he or she accepts an invitation for a meal or a lift home.

The second activity introduced a 'grooming line'. This activity was adapted from Barnardo's *Bwise2 Sexual Exploitation* resource on sexual risks (Kork et al. 2007). The activity presented young people with more complex scenarios in which they had to decide, in pairs or in small groups, whether they felt that these scenarios represented a *targeting situation*, *friendship*, a *loving relationship*, or an *exploitative situation*. Most scenarios were ambiguous and could be interpreted in different ways. We made clear from the start that there was no right or wrong answer and that we wanted to foster discussion and debate.

In the last stage of the focus group, we invited participants' views on what type of resource they felt would be useful to address sexual exploitation.

When all focus groups were completed, the peer educators and the project team met with the Brook NI information workers to discuss the outcome of the project and to make a decision about the resource. It was decided that an electronic interactive resource based on the idea of the grooming line activity would be suitable in combination with a poster campaign which would advertise this resource (see Figure 17 for a screen shot of the resource). The interactive electronic resource would bring together some of the scenarios discussed in the group discussions alongside some of the key survey results and helpline numbers. The resource would be made available nationally through the Brook website, as well as the ARK website. Placing this resource on the Brook website nationally would especially increase the audience to a national audience of young people.

Figure 17: Poster advertising the electronic resource on sexual risks



The Belfast-based company 'Elucidate' was contracted to produce the resource and early drafts of the resource were changed after the feedback from young people, including the projects' peer educators, raised concerns about the age-appropriateness of the initial cartoon characters used for the resource. We had quite lengthy debates about the balance between targeting young people at the age when our research showed they were first targeted by adults for sexual exploitation or grooming and the age when they are likely to be receiving education about sexual health. We wanted to make sure that children at late primary school age would be happy to use the resources as well as young people in early post-primary education.

Dissemination of project results and activities

The original aim was to disseminate the results and activities of this KE project in one launch event. However, due to the timeliness of this project, fostered by the high volume of high profile cases of sexual exploitation in the UK and in Ireland and the subsequent awareness due to high intensity media coverage, several opportunities arose for publicity of this project and subsequently we chose the strategy of several smaller dissemination events rather than one large event. Project findings and activities were publicised at the following events:

- Northern Ireland Sexual Health conference, November 2013, Armagh
- ARK seminar, January 2014, Belfast (available to view online at www.ark.ac.uk/Seminars/)
- Launch of Sexual Health Week, February 2014, Stormont, Belfast
- Presentation to Brook NI clinic staff, December 2013, Belfast
- Presentation to RSE teachers in the Northern Education and Library Board, April 2014, Newtownabbey
- ESRC Festival of Social Science event, November 2014, Belfast.

Several other workshops and training events were facilitated.

All documents, including datasets and results of this project are shared on the ARK YLT website (www.ark.ac.uk/ylt/results/YLT-Brook-KE-project.html). The YLT and Brook NI survey datasets were also archived with the UK Data Archive and are available freely for secondary analysis.

Posters have been distributed to participating organisations and via the Brook NI clinics. The electronic resource is available via the ARK and Brook websites.

Importantly, this KE project also provided important evidence which we submitted to the *Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Northern Ireland* conducted by the *Regulations and Quality Improvement Authority* (RQIA) in 2013/14. In total just over 40 submissions were received by the RQIA during this Review, and our submission, based on the YLT surveys and the survey and qualitative data collected within the KE project, provided robust statistical data as well as more in-depth insights from our discussions with young people that will hopefully inform further policy making in this field.

Discussion and Conclusion

This KE project arose out of the need to address an important issue in Northern Ireland, namely that of child sexual exploitation (CSE) and sexual risks that young people experience. When the original data was collected using the vehicle of the 2010 YLT survey, many of the historic and contemporary high profile sexual abuse cases that have recently made headline news had not yet come to light or were still covered up. Asking questions about sexual grooming and sexual exploitation among young people in a Northern Ireland context where discussions about sexuality are still often framed by moral and quasi-religious notions of how things *should* be, was brave. We are therefore grateful to Barnardo's for their vision to fund this original research to give the '*Not a World Away*' report (Beckett, 2010) a wider outlook and relevance beyond the issues faced by the actual group of vulnerable victims of sexual abuse and exploitation. Prior to this research, Barnardo's alongside other organisations such as *Nexus* had of course for many years worked directly with victims of sexual exploitation and abuse, but what was needed was a widening of the remit in order to raise awareness that sexual risks and exploitation are issues of relevance to a much larger proportion of young people. We are also grateful to OFMDFM for funding the 2011 YLT module on sexual experiences which allowed us address ask question on young people's sexual experiences including experiences of regret and non-consensual sex.

The evidence that emerges out of this KE project showed clearly that sexual exploitation is not always a very clear-cut black-and-white issue but has different shades of grey. Whilst there are cases where young people are pressurised into having sex against their will, or are threatened that they will be harmed if they do not comply with the perpetrator's wishes, a small, but not insignificant proportion of young people report that they '*go along*' with their partner's wishes to have sex, even if they do not feel ready for this themselves. An even larger proportion has sex because they are drunk or under the influence of drugs. Peer pressure also plays a role, especially among young men and same-sex attracted young people. These cases are not clear-cut sexual exploitation cases, nor are they '*stranger-danger*' cases. Rather these cases highlight that sexual risks and exploitative practices are diverse, no often easy to identify and more commonplace than is perhaps suggested.

Our data clearly show the need for more general educational and confidence-building programmes that enable young people, in particular those most at risk, to negotiate their sexual decision making better in order to enable them to make healthy and informed choices. The ultimate aim should be the reduction of the proportion of young people who look back at the first time they had sex and regret the way and/or the timing it happened. Of course this does not mean that the issue of CSE is neglected, quite the contrary, it should be embedded in a broader discussion about sexual choices, risks and pressures, but with the aim to foster informed and confident choices.

This need to address sexual decision making and competencies more broadly made Brook NI the perfect partner in the KE project. Brook is the largest and most experienced sexual health service provider for young people in Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The non-judgemental and young-people friendly clinical set-up, as well as Brook's educational outreach programme means that the organisation is in the perfect position to address issues around sexual decision making with a large number of young people, including those from 'at risk' groups. Hundreds of young people frequent Brook's clinics every week looking for advice, contraception or testing for sexually transmitted infections (STIs). The partnership approach and outreach programme that Brook NI operates in its in Northern Ireland work meant that we were able to access and speak to groups of young people in other organisations for this project.

Whilst we had initially hoped to include more young people as peer researchers/educators in the running of the focus groups, with hindsight the involvement of two very active peer educators meant

that they provided stability and consistence to the project that perhaps made it easier in the end to make decision on the resources and the output we produced. The input from young people was taken very seriously, and as outlined in the original funding application, it was young people themselves who decided what shape and format the educational output would take.

Many young people we talked to felt that school-based education programmes and resources would be very important, but we are also aware that some schools are constraint in the Relationship and Sexuality Education they deliver by their school ethos or school governance when it comes to addressing sexual health issues. In practice, in many schools in Northern Ireland sex education practice is framed by normative traditional Christian perceptions of what sexual relationships 'should' be like, ignoring the fact that the sexual lifestyle that many young people have does not resemble this model – whether this is by choice or not. This practice also ignores the evidence that abstinence-based sex education programmes have been shown in large international studies to be ineffective at best and counterproductive at worst.

The choice of young people who took part in this project to opt against a school-based intervention or education resource was informed by their experiences that gatekeepers in some schools may actually prevent the material to reach the young people for whom the resource would be intended. It was therefore felt the resource should be targeted at young people in general, but not exclude schools from using the material if they so wish. A cartoon-based online resource, supported by an advertising poster was seen as a best choice, that this idea was implemented as reported in the Focus Group section of this report. This recourse is made accessible on the national Brook website, which means that it will be accessed by a UK-wide audience – a much wider audience than a Northern Ireland-focused resource could have hoped to achieve.

Overall, this KE project was a very timely. It fed into an important debate, a debate which is unlikely to 'go away' in the near future. The evidence collected will inform Brook NI's clinical practice. It has increased awareness and helped to build capacity not just among young people involved, but also among staff. Importantly, this project also shows that young people can be proactively involved in the development of educational resources addressing sensitive issues.

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