



Title: Accessing and improving sexual health and relationships services in North Lincolnshire  
Date: November 2022

# Contents

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1	Introduction.....	3
1.1	What is Healthwatch North Lincolnshire? .....	3
1.2	What is Youth Healthwatch North Lincolnshire? .....	3
1.3	Why this Subject? .....	4
2	Background .....	5
2.1	Approach.....	5
3.	Limitations of the Study.....	6
4	Findings .....	6
4.1	Online Survey.....	6
5	Conclusion .....	12
6	Next Steps/Recommendations .....	12
7	Acknowledgements .....	122
8	References.....	13
9	Feedback on the Report (North Lincolnshire Council) .....	14

**Please note:** This report is based upon feedback provided to Youth Healthwatch North Lincolnshire from members of the public. The findings are based upon individuals' perceptions, which are not verified for factual accuracy. Quotes in the report are written as received, to ensure opinions are kept in context, as such there may be grammatical errors within quotes.

# 1 Introduction

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## 1.1 What is Healthwatch North Lincolnshire?

Healthwatch North Lincolnshire (HWNL) is the independent champion for people who use health and social care services. We exist to make sure that people are at the heart of care. We listen to what people like about services and what could be improved. We share their views with those with the power to make change happen. We also help people find the information they need about services in their area.

We have the power to make sure that people's voices are heard by the government and those running services. As well as seeking the public's views ourselves, we also encourage services to involve people in decisions that affect them. Our sole purpose is to help make care better for people.

In summary Healthwatch is here to:

- Help people find out about local care
- Listen to what people think of services
- Help improve the quality of services by letting those running services and the government know what people want from care
- Encourage people running services to involve people in changes to care

## 1.2 What is Youth Healthwatch North Lincolnshire?

The overarching aims of Youth Healthwatch North Lincolnshire are to promote a culture where young people's opinions and experiences are listened to and valued, and to provide a platform through which the participants can work together to implement real change to both current and future health and social care services.

The aims of the Youth Healthwatch North Lincolnshire group are to;

- Encourage Young people to share their opinions about local health and social care services
- Educate Young people on relevant health and social care subjects
- Provide effective information and signposting to young people's services
- Involve young people in service decision-making processes
- Support young people to plan and execute their own research projects and campaigns

To achieve these aims, we work with young volunteers who frequently share their opinions and experiences of local services, and encourage their peers to do the same.

## 1.3 Why this Subject?

In North Lincolnshire, the views of children and young people are valued. There are opportunities for children and young people to share their views and experiences and get involved in making a difference and implementing change through groups such as the North Lincolnshire Youth Council (NLYC), the Children and Young People's Partnership and frequent lifestyle surveys issued through secondary schools. The North Lincolnshire Children's Strategy (2020) sets out the challenges that Young People in North Lincolnshire face and how partners and stakeholders across the County can commit to working together to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of children and young people and support them to reach their potential.

The North Lincolnshire Children and Young People's Lives: Secondary School Survey is issued to secondary schools every three years. The last survey took place in 2019/2020 and looked at different topics such as safety, physical and emotional wellbeing and staying healthy. The most recent report highlighted that sexual health and behaviour of young people is a priority topic in adolescent public health. The report identifies that young people get most of their information around sexual health and relationships from school and that it is their preferred method to receive information. Three key pieces of information on this topic in the report are:

***“50% of Year 7s, and 71% of Year 8s said they had received lessons on sexual health. This rose to 76% of 13-15 year olds.”***

***“Of those that had lessons, more than 80% said they had found these lessons useful, and 61% said that these lessons had answered most of their questions.”***

***“Overall, 31% 11-12 year olds and 25% of 13-15 year olds said they would like more information on sexual health in their PSHE lessons.” (North Lincolnshire Council. 2020. p.40).***

Although most young people say they get enough information about sexual health and relationships in school, there is still a small percentage that would like more information, but the report does not state how or where they would like to receive additional information.

As Youth Healthwatch focusses on young people up to the age of 25, In January 2021, HWNL released an online survey for 14 to 25 year olds living in North Lincolnshire, to find out their views and experiences of health and care services and what is important to them. The survey was shared with local colleges, North Lincolnshire Council Youth Council, young volunteers, young carers and through the Healthwatch eNews. Questions covered: feedback on local services, preferred methods of communication, the different ways people received information and some demographic questions. The survey ran from January 2021 until 31st March 2021 and received 22 replies.

When asked about what topics were important to young people, the three top answers were:

1. Mental health
2. Education and healthy diet (joint second) and
3. Sexual health and relationships.

(HWNL. 2021)

When asked how young people got their information on health and care services, pre pandemic, most stated information in schools, but during the pandemic, young people also looked for information online through websites and on social media platforms.

Youth Healthwatch shared our own experiences of what subjects were important to young people. Talking to students at college, the topic of sexual health seemed to be discussed more and more particularly in relation to the sexual health and relationship talks and their limitations. There is a big push in schools and colleges for information to be made accessible.

In North Lincolnshire, young people can access sexual health and relationship services through school nursing teams or The Ironstone Centre, Scunthorpe. Since the pandemic, services at GP practices in Brigg and Barton are no longer operating (NHS. 2021).

Drawing a conclusion from all the information available, we chose to look at the topic of sexual health and relationships in more detail. We wanted to find out more information on young people's views of sexual health information and services in order to help direct and create content which is more targeted and suited to the requirements of people aged fourteen to twenty five in North Lincolnshire.

## 2 Background

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### 2.1 Approach

In order to explore the topic we created an online survey using Survey Monkey. We choose this method as it allowed us to reach a large amount of the target population of fourteen to twenty five year olds. This is beneficial to the research and the amount of data we were able to collect. While the survey was hosted online, posters were produced with a QR code link in order to quickly promote and distribute the survey in schools and at events. The survey was promoted in/on:

- John Leggott College
- Engineering UTC Northern Lincolnshire
- Children & Young People's Partnership
- Instagram
- Twitter

- Facebook

The original survey ran from 13th September to 12th November 2021. However, due to issues regarding survey responses the survey was re-ran between 1st March to 31st March.

## 3 Limitations of the Study

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The survey was available online and included a prize draw people could enter once they completed the survey. However, we believe that the prize element attracted fraudulent responses. Overall, 323 were not completed within the UK, or had addresses and names which either didn't add up, or had included telephone numbers which were registered outside of the UK.

After the first instance of this happening, we contacted Survey Monkey Customer Care Centre and they advised that we implement the following;

- Separate the survey over multiple pages
- Ask respondents to create a unique code using their birth month and the first 3 letters of their surname.
- Although we implemented these recommendations, we continued to receive fake responses, which we had to manually filter out.

Due to the additional fake responses found when analysing the data we decided to repeat the survey. We continued to follow the advice above and in addition removed the competition associated with completing the survey. Although we received fewer responses we now have more trustworthy and detailed answers. However, it still must be noted that the limited responses lowers the generalisability of the data collected which is a limitation of the study.

## 4 Findings

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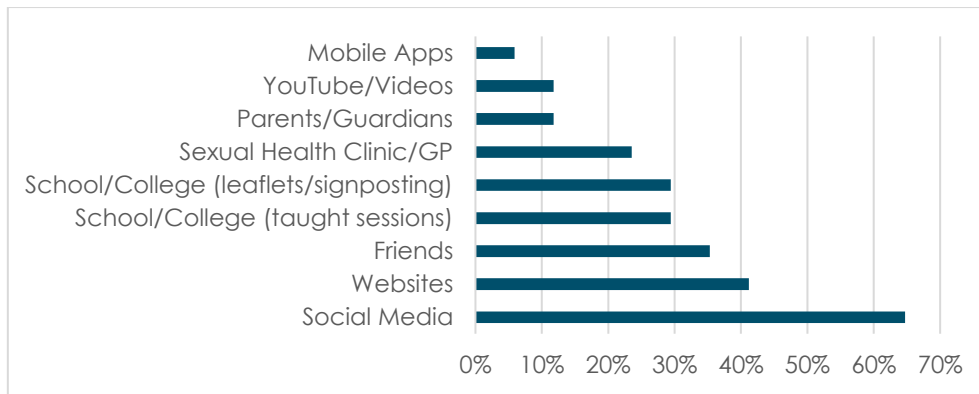
### 4.1 Online Survey

This section of the report focuses on the findings to each question asked in the survey.

#### **Question 1: What area are you from?**

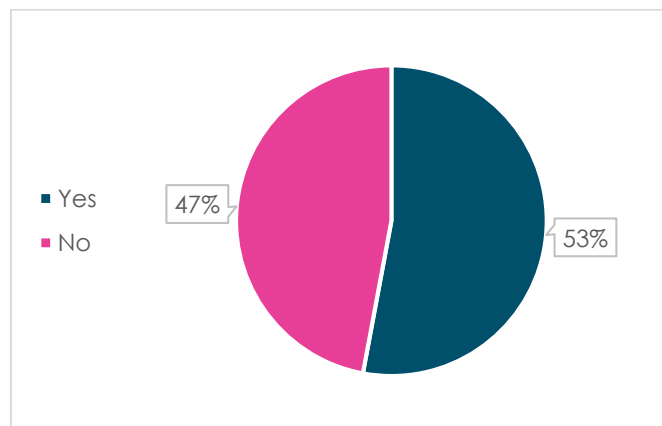
We tailored the questionnaire towards North Lincolnshire and as such the majority of responses were from this area.

**Question 2: In the last year, where have you received information regarding sexual health from? This includes information about contraception, STI's, etc. Please tick all that apply.**



The data tells us that in the last year, the majority of people got their information from social media and websites (online platforms) rather than in person. Almost 65% of respondents stated that social media was the go to place to find information with 41% of respondents saying they looked on websites. In person methods were slightly behind that with friends receiving 35% and taught sessions in colleges 29%.

**Question 3: Did you feel the information you received on this topic was enough?**



Just over half the people surveyed stated that they received enough information, which shows there is still a large amount of people who did not. From the data we collected one respondent answered the question with both Yes and No and one respondent did not answer the question at all.

**Question 4: Please explain your answer**

We asked people to explain their answer and these are some of the comments people made:

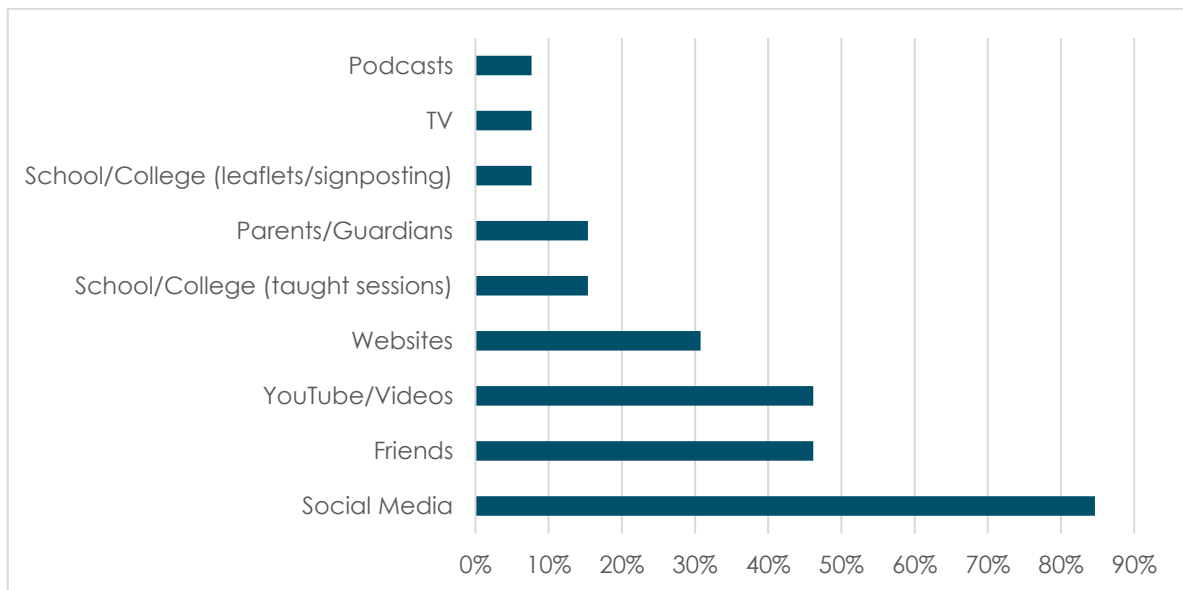
**“Although there is information out there, I feel that my GP is only telling me information from their perspective. E.g. I explain that certain types of contraception make me gain weight/ make me depressed. Although they acknowledge these as potential side effects, they still try and push you into it. Often feel not taken seriously.”**

**“I think sex education is usually based on straight relationships and not about queer ones.”**

**“I know a brief overview of how to stay clear of STIs and pregnancy, as well as puberty and hormones.”**

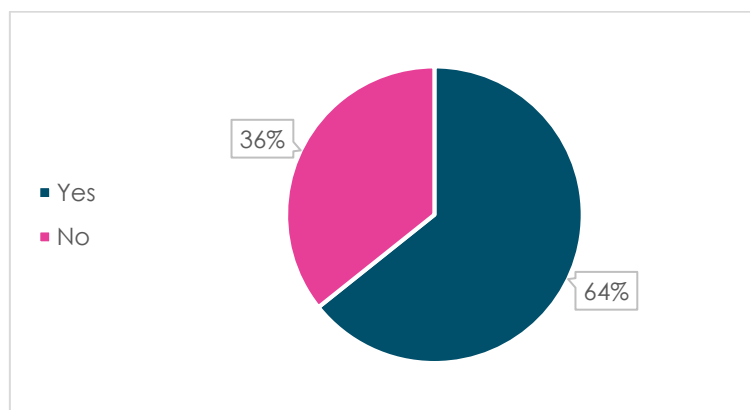
**“Colleges assume we know everything about sex.”**

**Question 5: In the last year, where have you received information regarding relationships (including recognising unhealthy relationships, abuse and consent)?**



In the last year, social media was the main way that survey respondents received information regarding relationships. Friends and YouTube videos were other popular ways people got information, whilst podcasts and TV were the least popular.

**Question 6: Did you feel the information you received on this topic was enough?**



The responses to this question indicate that just under 40% of people felt as if they had not received enough information regarding relationships.



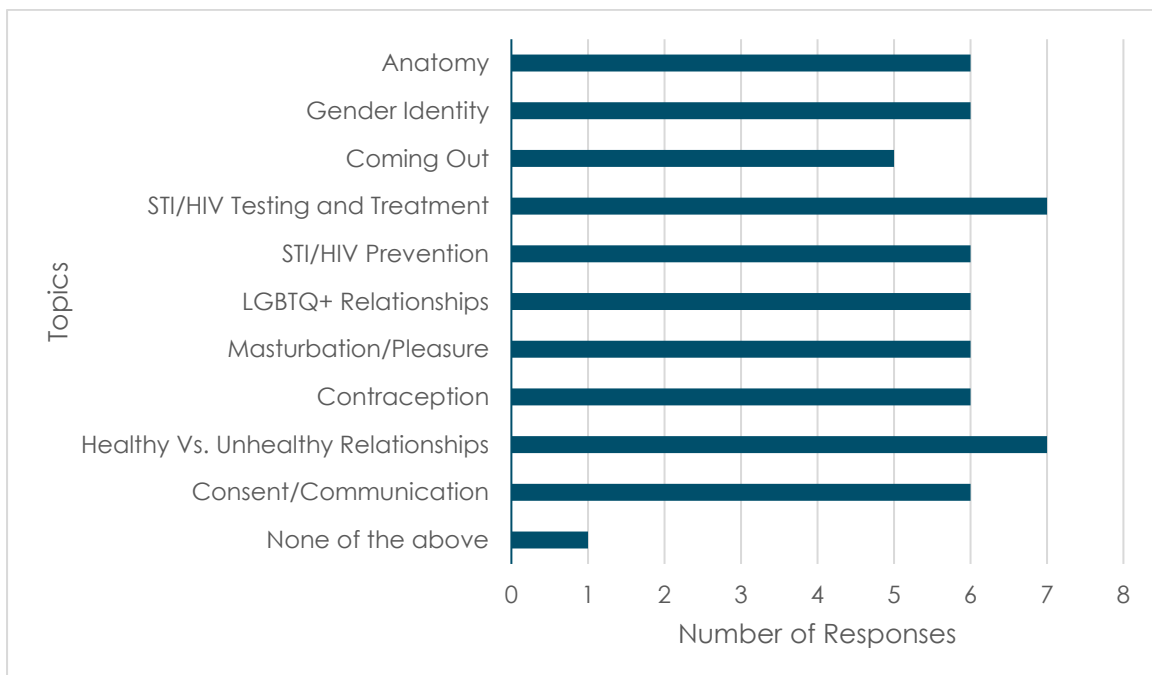
**Question 7: Please explain your answer.**

We asked people to explain their answer and these are some of the comments made:

**“There is more advice on platforms like TikTok regarding this than I have ever received from teachers or my parents. If I was struggling with this I would most likely Google it than ask anyone in my real life.”**

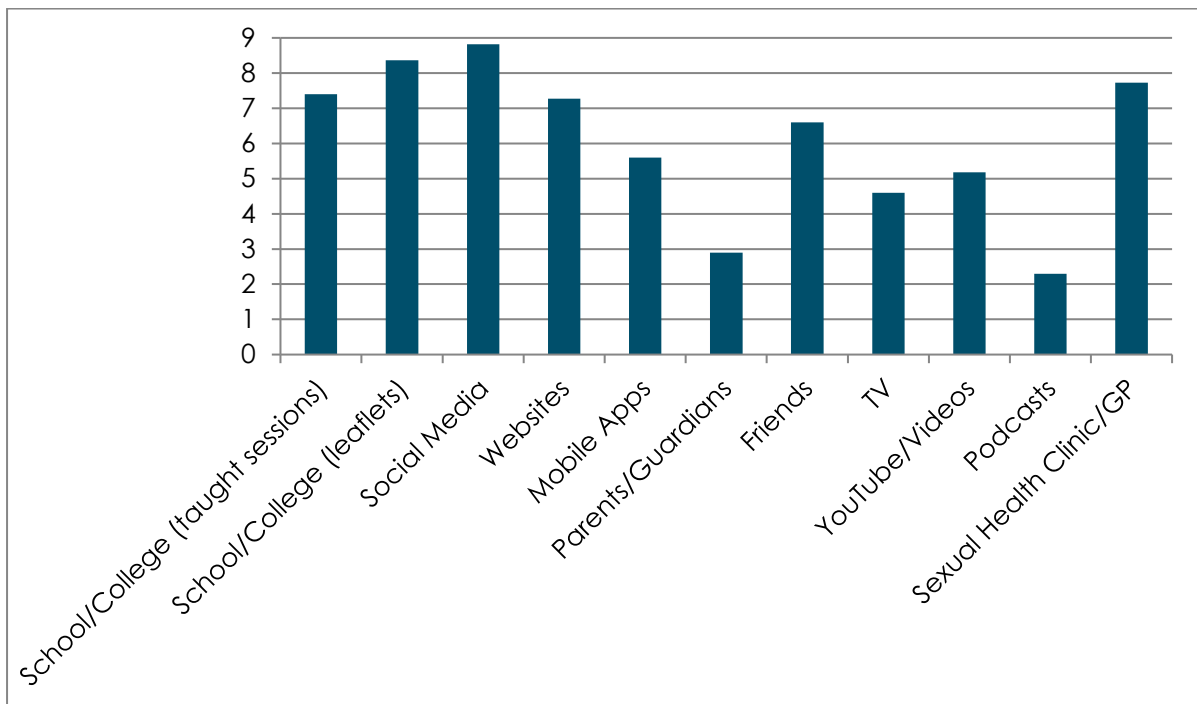
**“We are taught about things that are irrelevant and not about important things such as relationships and domestic abuse.”**

**Question 8: Which of the topics below would you like to see more information on?**



The feedback evidences that respondents would like more information on a range of topics. Over half of people feel that there needs to be more information on: consent, healthy relationships, contraception, masturbation/pleasure, LGBTQ+ relationships, STI/HIV prevention, STI/HIV Testing, Gender Identity and anatomy. The only answer to receive less than 6 responses was coming out.

**Question 9: How would you most like to receive this information? (Please rank the below answers from 1 being the way you'd MOST like to receive information, to 11 being the way you'd LEAST like to receive information.)**



The chart summarises the ways survey respondents would like to receive information. The top three choices (in order of preference) are:

- Social media
- School and college leaflets
- Sexual health clinics/GP practices

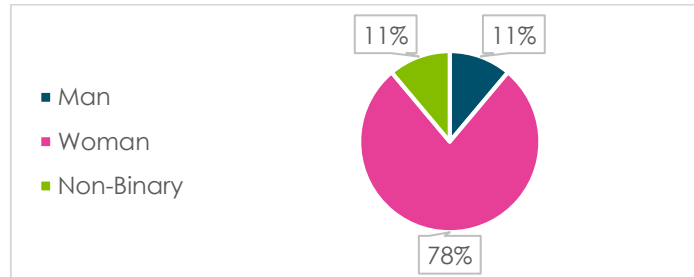
**Question 10: Is there any other way you'd prefer to receive information/advice about sexual health and relationships which isn't mentioned above?**

No one wanted to receive information in a different format to the ones listed in question 9.

Questions 11 to 14 were about diversity. Nine respondents answered questions 11 to 14.

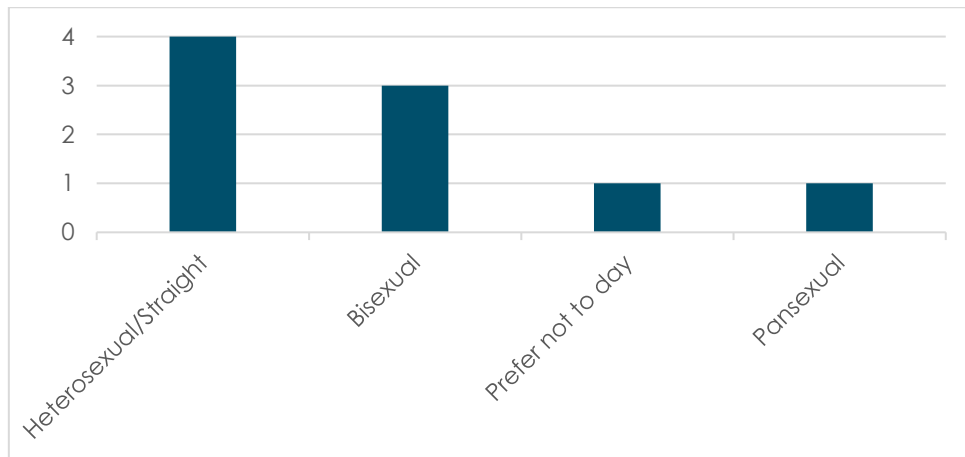
**Question 11: What gender do you most identify with?**

78% identified as female, 11% male and 11% non-binary.



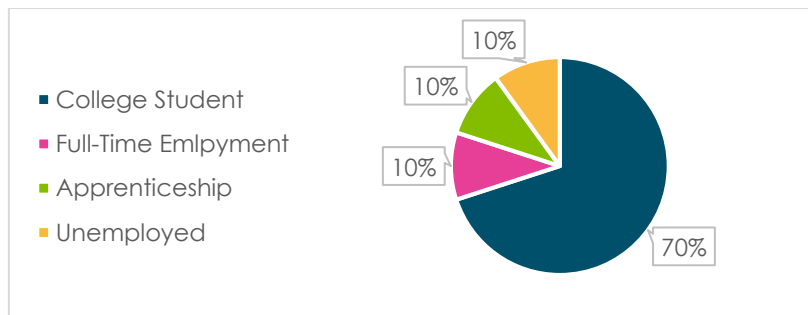
**Question 12: How would you best describe your sexual orientation?**

4 people described their sexual orientation as straight/ heterosexual, 3 as bisexual, 1 preferred not to say and 1 preferred to self-describe.



**Question 13: What is your occupation?**

70% were college students, 10% in full time employment, 10% undertaking an apprenticeship and 10% unemployed.



**Question 14: Do you consider yourself to have a disability?**

All respondents answered no to having a disability.

## 5 Conclusion

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In conclusion, online methods of communicating resources are currently used the most and are preferred. Education in schools also scores highly which shows this is still necessary and wanted by young people. Our results show that young people would like to see more information in health settings such as GP practices and sexual health clinics.

## 6 Next Steps/Recommendations

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Based on the findings of this project, Youth Healthwatch would like to make the following recommendations:

1. School nursing and student wellbeing teams to work with marketing and communications teams within school and college settings, to incorporate how they share information about sexual health and relationships into their social media and communication plans and strategies. Ensure information is shared online via internal communications and social media platforms.
2. School nurses and college student wellbeing teams in North Lincolnshire to signpost students and young people to local and national online resources about sexual health and relationships.
3. When designing the curriculum around sexual health and relationships, schools and colleges should ask students what topics are important to them and the format in which they would prefer to receive information e.g. online, face to face, printed materials etc.
4. Schools and colleges to consider using Youth Healthwatch to read and review information to assess whether the format and language used is appropriate for a young audience.

## 7 Acknowledgements

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Thank you to the following places for allowing the survey to be shared:

- John Leggott College
- Engineering UTC Northern Lincolnshire
- Children & Young People's Partnership

Also, to the sexual health hub in North Lincolnshire for their support.

## 8 References

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## 9 Feedback on the Report

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The following response to the report has been received:

Thank you for the Youth Healthwatch Report.

This Report is extremely timely; we are just about to start the re-commissioning of the Sexual Health Service provision in North Lincolnshire.

I welcome the recommendations and will feed this into the Health Needs Assessment which is currently being developed.

*Kay Aisthorpe, Senior Public Health Manager, North Lincolnshire Council*