

# **A Comparative Exploration of Social Policy Relating to Teenage Pregnancy in Finland and Scotland:**

## **Key Findings and Policy Implications**

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# Key Finding

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✦ Any approach attempting to improve:

- ◆ the sexual health of young people,

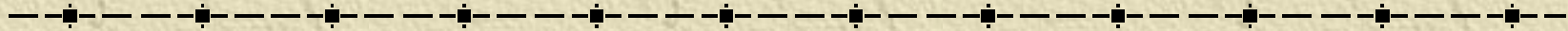
- ◆ reduce the rate of unintended teenage pregnancy and

- ◆ The rate of STIs

✦ **Must look beyond any one area of policy**



# Choice of Countries



✦ Scotland – path of least resistance

✦ Finland - opportunity

# Important constants

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- ✦ Both countries have the same legal age of heterosexual consent.
- ✦ Both countries have similar rates of teenage sexual activity



# Sexual experiences of Scottish (15-16) and Finnish (15) young people (%) in 1992

	Scot (m)	Fin (m)	Scot (f)	Fin (f)
Sexual Experience	%	%	%	%
Kissing	73.3	69	84.2	78
Light petting	66.3	62	70.8	67
Heavy petting	48.6	41	53	52
<b>Sexual intercourse</b>	<b>25.8</b>	<b>19</b>	<b><u>31.2</u></b>	<b><u>31</u></b>

Sources: Currie & Todd 1993; Papp 1997.

# Use of Contraception at First Intercourse Aged 15 (15-16 in Scotland) in 1992 (%)

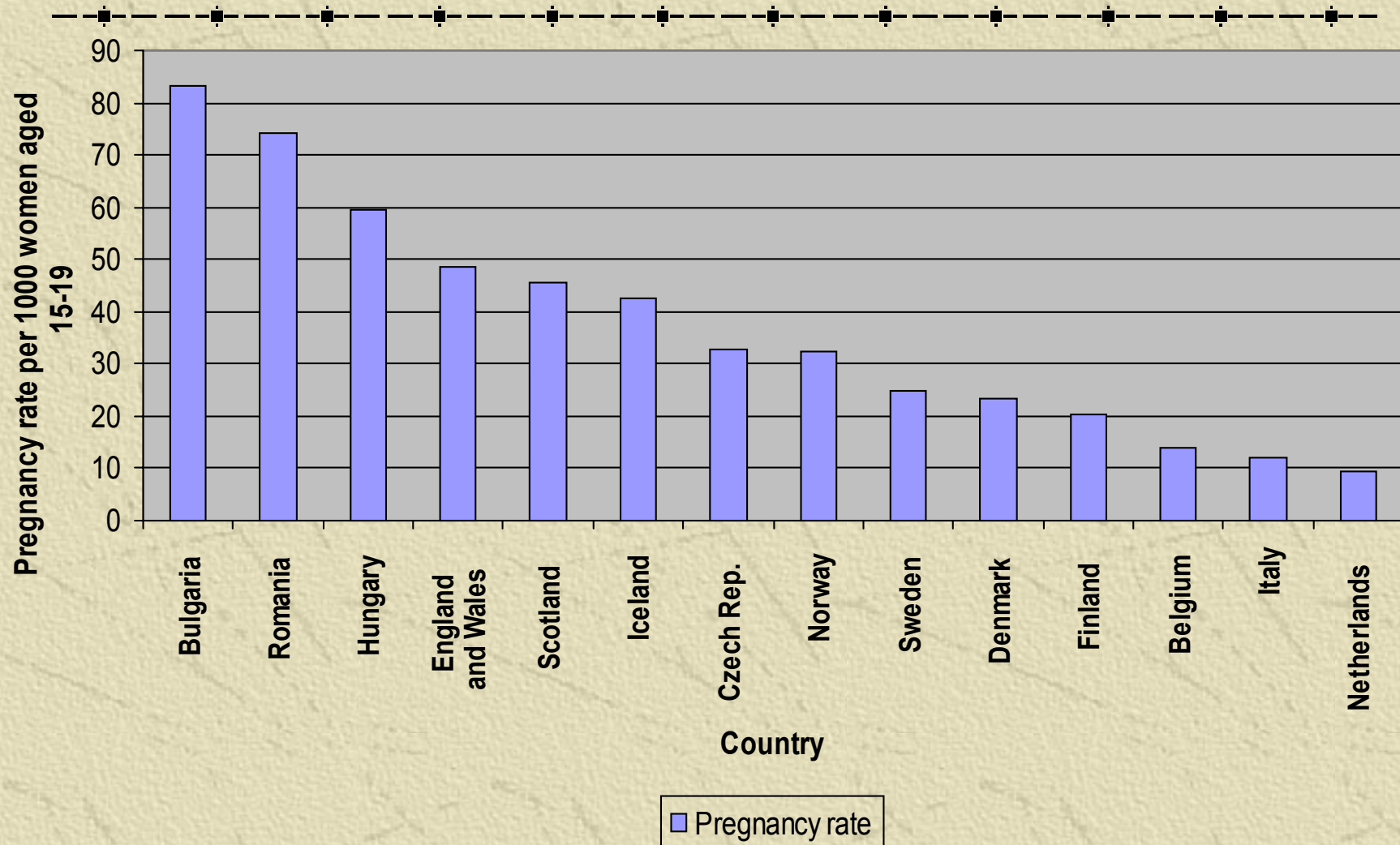
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<b>Contraceptive use</b>	<b>Scottish (m)</b>	<b>Finnish (m)</b>	<b>Scottish (f)</b>	<b>Finnish (f)</b>
<b>Reliable method used</b>	45%	87%	52%	80%
<b>Non reliable method or No method used</b>	55%	13%	48%	20%

Sources: McIlwaine 1994; Papp 1997.



# Pregnancy Rate Per 1000 Women Aged 15-19 in a Selection of European Countries – 1996 or Latest Available Year



# Three Pre-requisites

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## ✦ Knowledge

- ◆ About sex and sexuality in general
- ◆ Contraception – how it works, why it might fail, where to get it...,
- ◆ That it **can** ‘happen to me’
- ◆ And what to do if it just has – emergency contraception - how it works, why it might fail, where to get it...,



# Three Pre-requisites

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## ✦ Access to sexual health services

- ◆ Geographical location & Equality of access
- ◆ Suitable opening times
- ◆ Confidentiality
- ◆ Informal & User Friendly
- ◆ Positive professional attitudes to young people and their sexual activity
- ◆ 'Sex-speak' - youthful linguistics
- ◆ Inclusive access for and recognition of the needs of young men.

# Three Pre-requisites

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## ✦ Motivation

- ✦ To apply their knowledge,
- ✦ To access the services,
- ✦ To use the contraception
- ✦ And to have a desire to prevent pregnancy and parenthood at a young age.



# Policy areas

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## ✦ Sex Education policy

- ◆ knowledge

## ✦ Sexual Health policy

- ◆ ‘real’ access to sexual health services

## ✦ Education policy

- ◆ one means of aspiration/ motivation to avoid pregnancy/parenthood at a young age.

# Policy Levels and data collection

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✦ **policy developed and implemented at both the national and local level**

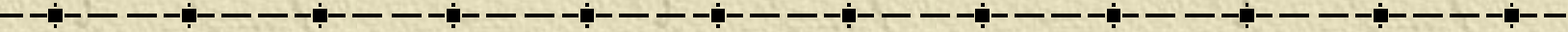
✦ though in-depth interviews with:

- ◆ Government officials
- ◆ Local authority/municipality officials from 3 areas
- ◆ Head teachers and School (sex education) teachers from 4 schools (1 from each are + 1 pilot)
- ◆ School nurses from the 4 Finnish schools

✦ And collecting relevant policy documentation, school curricula and action plans.



# Key similarities in sex education policy in Finland and Scotland



- ✦ In neither Finland nor Scotland does a law exist stating that sex education must be taught,
- ✦ At the school level, in all schools studied in both countries, some degree of sex education was provided for young people,
- ✦ At the national and school level,
  - both countries provided sex education in mixed-sex classes,
  - teachers in both countries had the opportunity to undertake in-service training on sex education,

# Key similarities in sex education policy in Finland and Scotland

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## ✦ At the school level,

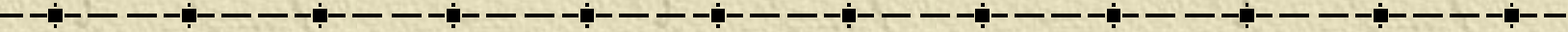
- teachers in both countries used a combination of didactic and small-group based learning methods,
- sex education provisions had central aims to increase knowledge and impact upon attitudes and behaviour of young people,
- 'experts' in sexual health providing sex education were perceived as a valued resource for both teachers and pupils,

## ✦ At the national and school level in both countries,

- the provision of sex education was perceived by teachers of sex education, Finnish school nurses and government and local authority/ municipality officials as an important duty of the school.



# Key differences in sex education policy in Finland and Scotland



- ✦ **Guarantee of provision**
- ✦ **Location of provision**
- ✦ **Status of biology**
- ✦ **Time allocations for sex education provision**
- ✦ **Class set-up**
- ✦ **Teaching methods**
- ✦ **Content of sex education**
- ✦ **Main aims of sex education**
- ✦ **Use of 'Experts' in sex education provision**
- ✦ **Overall status of sex education in schools**

# Key similarities in sexual health policy in Finland and Scotland

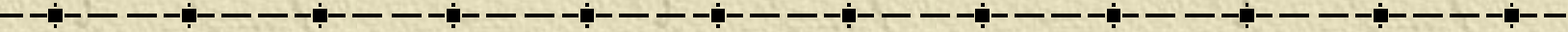
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✦ In both countries,

- ✦ primary health care facilities and family planning clinics provide sexual health services where young people can access advice and contraception.
- ✦ these services are free (or low cost).
- ✦ there are limited but growing numbers of clinics set up for the exclusive use of young people.



# Key similarities in sexual health policy in Finland and Scotland



✦ In both countries:

- ✦ abortion is available to young women under certain conditions but in neither country is abortion available 'on request'.
- ✦ (in Scotland's case supposedly), consultations with medical professionals remain confidential regardless of age as long as there are no explicit concerns of child abuse.

# Key differences in sexual health policy in Finland and Scotland

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✦ **Strength of political commitment to the promotion of young people's sexual health.**

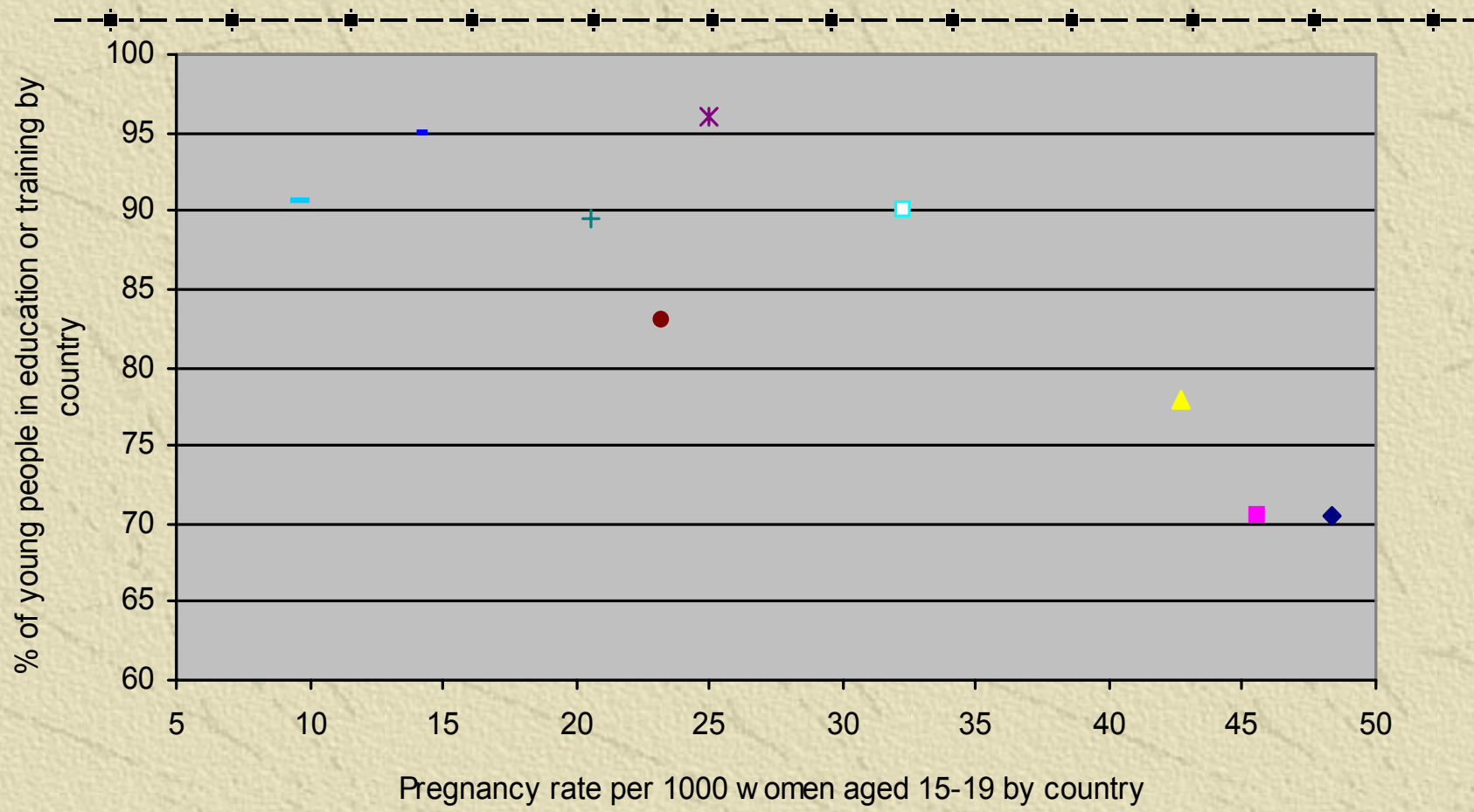
✦ **The provision of school health services.**

- ◆ Role of the school nurse

✦ **Access to abortion by young women**



# 15-19 year old pregnancy rate and percentage of those aged 16-18 in education or training, by country in 1996 (or latest year). (Rs = 0.73)



◆ England and Wales    ■ Scotland    ▲ Iceland    □ Norway    ✖ Sweden    ● Denmark    + Finland    - Belgium    - Netherlands

## Education policy – Finland & Scotland

### School level stay-on rates 1996-7

	<u>KP</u>	<u>TP</u>	<u>VP</u>	<u>AP</u>	<u>Finland</u>
% 9 <sup>th</sup> grade- HS/ VS	98%	95%	99%	99%	95%
% 9 <sup>th</sup> – 10 <sup>th</sup> grade	2%	5%	1%	1%	5%
% progressing in ed. as proportion of 9 <sup>th</sup> grade	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	<u>LSS</u>	<u>GA</u>	<u>SS</u>	<u>AH</u>	<u>Scotland</u>
% S4 – S5	85%	86%	68%	85%	64%
% S5 – S6	80%	75%	78%	60%	80%
S6 pupils as a % of S4 Cohort	68%	64%	53%	51%	51%



# Key similarities in education policy in Finland and Scotland

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## ✦ Young people in both countries

- ✦ are legally obliged to be educated up to the age of 16
- ✦ this educational provision is provided by the state free of charge.
- ✦ are expected to sit certified examinations of equivalent level in their final year of compulsory schooling.
- ✦ pupils receive careers guidance (student counselling) at some point during their upper comprehensive level.

# Key differences in education policy in Finland and Scotland

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- ✦ **Age at which compulsory schooling begins.**
  - ✦ **Structure of careers guidance (Student counselling).**
  - ✦ **Aims and Focus of careers guidance (Student counselling).**
  - ✦ **The structure of post-16 education.**
  - ✦ **Focus of post-16 education.**
  - ✦ **Status of vocation education.**
  - ✦ **Normalised progression route for post-16**
  - ✦ **Welfare incentives**



# Key changes in Finland

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✦ Cutbacks in sexual health services

✦ Cutbacks in sex education

- ◆ Health Education and Family Education no longer compulsory – so schools removed 1 or both.

# Key changes in Scotland

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- ✦ 5-14 programme in 1993.
- ✦ School receiving 1<sup>st</sup> *useful* advice from local authority and government.
- ✦ Pre-service training for teachers across Scotland
- ✦ Acute awareness that in developing sexual health services and sex education
  - Need to *listen* to young people
- ✦ School nurse idea – under investigation
- ✦ The Scottish executive are focusing on improving *Teenage Sexual Health* – not just pregnancy.
- ✦ Local authorities developing local projects based on local young people's needs.



# Key changes in Scotland

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## ✦ 5-14 programme – continuity link between primary and secondary education

- Schools already noticing more equality of educational level in S1 – reducing risk of disengagement though boredom or inability to catch up.

## ✦ More vocational choice at school level

- Teachers noting as reason for increased stay-on rates.
- GSVQs providing young people, women in particular, with increased confidence and self-esteem.

## ✦ Academic exams, now more work based.