



# **Policy and Practice in Finland and Scotland: the lessons for England**

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# Effective sex education?

- **Positive socio-sexual attitudes and positive public climate towards sex education**
- **Pragmatic approach to teenage sexual activity**
- **Curriculum location and subject status**
- **Positive Teaching Environment**
- **Content based on young people's needs**
- **Awareness of young men's needs**
- **Inter-agency collaboration**

# **Sex education: Finland –pre1994**

- **First introduced in 1944**
- **Officially part of the school curriculum in 1976**
- **No statutory regulations regarding 'sex education'**
- **No separate subject called 'sex education'**



# Sex education: Finland –pre1994

<u>Curriculum Subject</u>	<u>Location of sex education</u>	<u>Hours of teaching</u>	<u>Teaching environment</u>
<b>Biology</b>	<b>Biological reproduction</b>	<b>Average- 7 hrs grades 7-9 (12-16)</b>	<b>Mixed-sex</b>
<b>Physical Education</b>	<b>Health Education</b>	<b>1 hr/week 8<sup>th</sup> grade (13-15)</b>	<b>Single-sex</b>
<b>Home Economics</b>	<b>Family Education</b>	<b>1 hr/week 9<sup>th</sup> grade (14-16)</b>	<b>Mixed-sex</b>
<b>Every school: on-site school nurse clinic</b>			



# Sex education: Finland –pre1994

- **Content - “promotion of healthy sex and sexuality”**
- **Biology**
  - Biological perspective
- **Family Education**
  - A legal, social and ethical perspective
- **Health Education**
  - Sexual health perspective
  - Gender issues & young people’s agenda

# **Sex education: Finland –pre1994**

- **Teacher training: pre-service 'in-subject' training**
- **Wide use of active-learning based methods**
- **School nurse: in-house sexual health expert**

## **Sex education: Scotland pre-1993**

- **No statutory obligation for schools to provide sex education**
- **No national guidelines on the provision of sex education**
- **No official policy requiring the teaching of HIV and AIDS education**
- **No 'parental right to remove' from any provision that did exist**

## **Sex education: Scotland pre-1993**

- **Scottish Syllabus (national curriculum) provision: S1 biological reproduction**
- **Non-curriculum sex education provision varies considerably**
- **Separate' from main Syllabus: PSE, SE, PSD or Health education**

## **Sex education: Scotland pre-1993**

- **All sex education: mixed-sex arena**
- **Teacher training: in-service – not high priority or uptake**
- **Teaching methods:**
  - Biology: primarily didactic
  - PSE: some active teaching methods are encouraged

# Sex education: Scotland pre-1993

- **Content:**
  - 1<sup>st</sup> year Biology: biological reproduction
  - PSE: negative outcomes of sexual behaviour: unwanted pregnancy, abortion, STIs and HIV and AIDS, before progressing to discuss prevention and then in some cases relationships.
- **Sexual health experts:**
  - Use encouraged but in practice often limited due to the time constraints of experts and the financial constraints of schools

# Changes in Finland post-1994

- **In 1994, cut-backs in school health service**
- **In 1994, a new curriculum was introduced by the NBE, devolved more curriculum decision making powers to the school level**

# Changes in Finland post-1994

- **Fewer school nurses, covering more schools or nursing areas**
- **Two of the hours per week that were removed from the compulsory list were:**
  - one hour per week of Home Economics
  - one hour per week of and Physical Education
  - the subjects within which Family Education and Health Education are taught.

# Changes in Finland post-1994

- **In practice this meant that:**
  - Less school nurse time for 1-2-1
  - Majority of schools have removed 1 or both subjects from the compulsory curriculum
  - Only guaranteed provision: Biology
  - Focus: negative outcomes of teenage sexual behaviour
  - No guaranteed single-sex environment

# Changes in Finland post-1994

- **Recent research findings of national school health study indicate:**
  - Average level of knowledge about sex and sexuality amongst young people in Finland has decreased
  - The proportion of those reporting sexual activity has increased but condom use has reportedly decreased

# Changes in Scotland post 1993

- **Introduction of the 5-14 programme:**
  - structural guidelines for schools on sex education
- **Programme review (late 1990s):**
  - 2001: Revised programme: Health Education as a subject in its own right
  - Important role of self-esteem and the attitudes of respect and responsibility in sexual health promotion
  - Need to present health and all health-related behaviours from a positive, holistic perspective, rather than being negative in tone and content.

# Changes in Scotland post 1993

- **3-year pilot study: pre-service teacher training in PSE education**
- **Pilot teacher led sex education project, SHARE**
- **March 2000, HEBS/Scottish Executive Deliberative Seminar:**
  - ‘how can young people in Scotland be further supported in making healthy choices about their sexuality and sexual health’
- **June 2000, repeal of Section 28 in Scotland**

# Changes in Scotland post 1993

- **Working Group on Sex Education in Scottish Schools report, June 2000:**
  - Guidance for government, local authority and schools for the development of the future of sex education in Scottish schools.
  - Recognition of the need to base sex education on the actual needs of young people and to focus on improving trends in Teenage Sexual Health not just Teenage Pregnancy
  - Publication of new materials on sex education, including, Sex Education in Scottish Schools: Summary of National Advice.

# Changes in Scotland post 1993

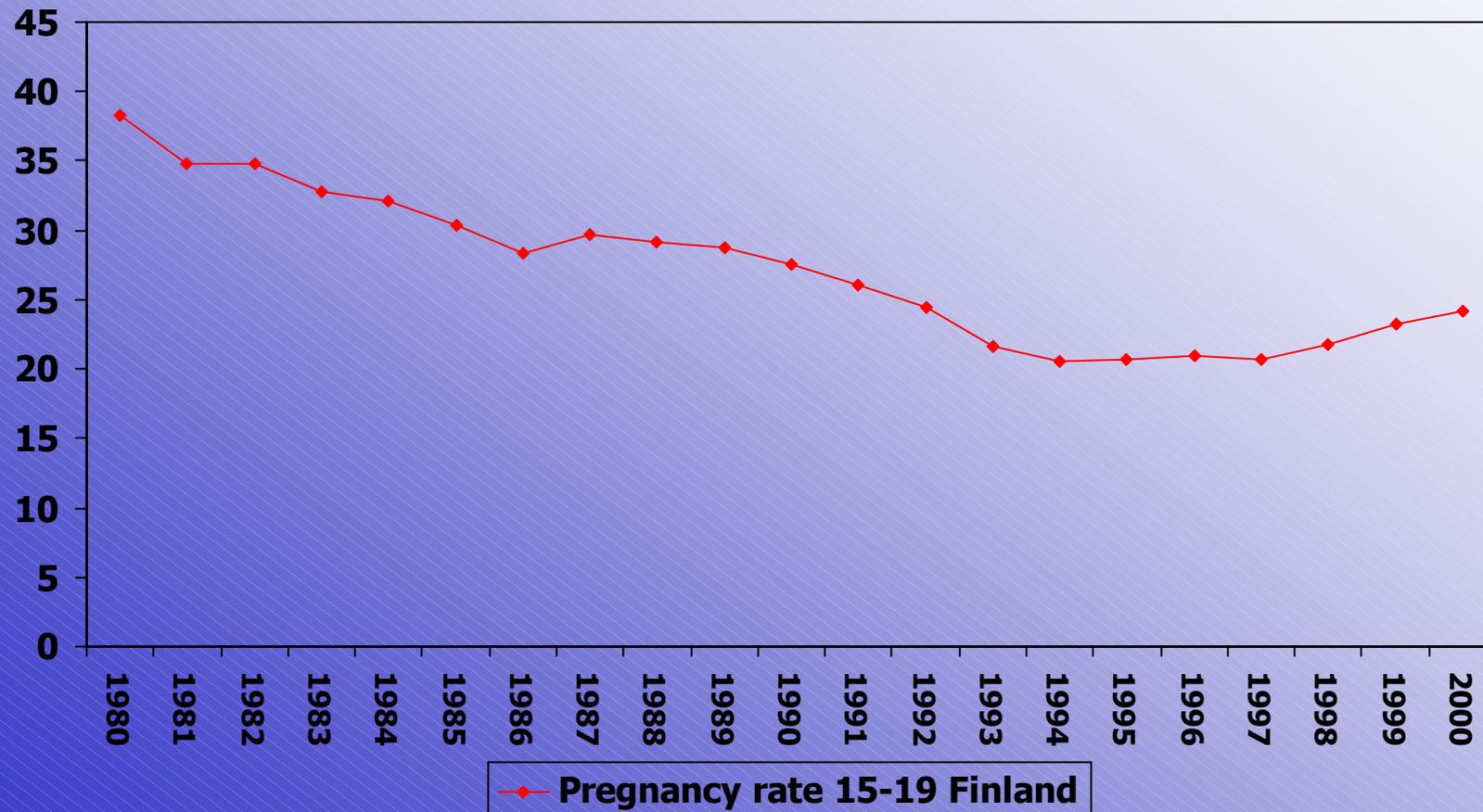
- **Schools' response:**
- **5-14 programme: 1<sup>st</sup> useful advice from local authority and government**
- **Feeling of support in developing sex education at the school level**
- **Greater awareness of the importance of young people's sex educational needs**
- **Concern voiced at school and LA level over the continuation of current funding and concern about teenage sexual health at government level**



# Lessons for England

- **Pre-1994 Finnish model of sex education combined with an on-site school nurse system**
  - Example of good practice
  - Located in curriculum subjects – equal status
  - Different view points
  - Dual teaching environment
  - Acute awareness of young men's needs
- **Complacency & economic recession**
  - resulted in changes and cutbacks within school health services and sex education

# Pregnancy rate per 1000 women aged 15-19 Finland



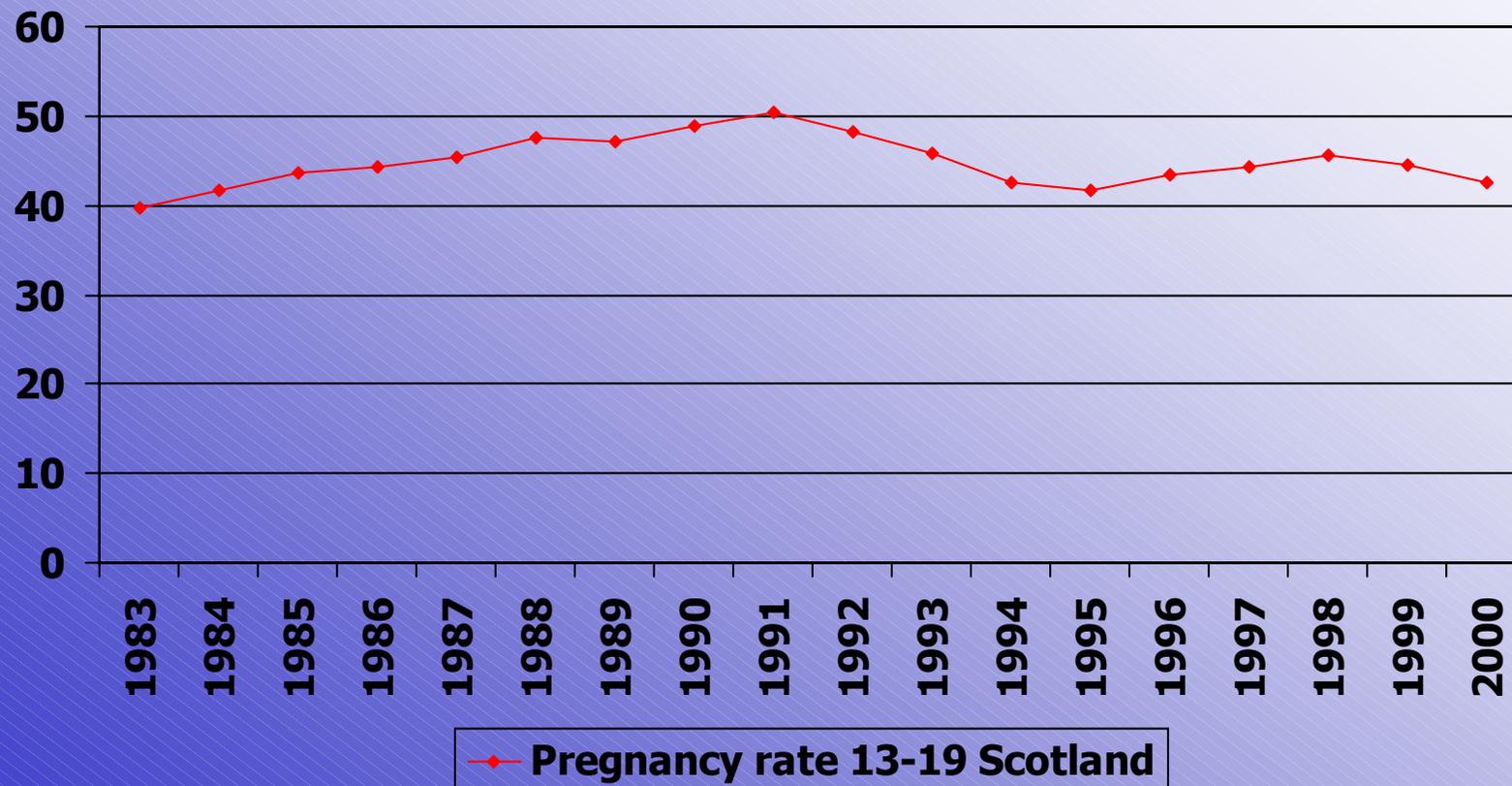
# Lessons for England

- **Pre-1993 Scotland policy picture was one of:**
  - relatively limited access to sex education beyond biological reproduction and a focus on negative outcomes of teenage sexual behaviour
  - Failed to meet the needs of young people

# Lessons for England

- **Mid-1990s (post-devolution)**
  - More holistic understanding of sexual health for young people
  - Shift in both Scottish policy and attitude in general towards teenage sexual health
  - Move beyond focus on teenage pregnancy
  - Policy change acting as a catalyst for cultural change and cultural change for acceptance of policy and policy effectiveness

# Pregnancy rate per 1000 women aged 13-19 Scotland



# Lessons for England

- **Accepting teenage sexual activity does not mean you are promoting it**
- **Future policy development:**
  - based on how to help young people to respect and look after their own and others sexual health
  - Sex education must be based on young people's agendas, not adults
- **Holistic approach to teenage sexual health is paramount**
  - especially for engaging young men