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“This country has seen enormous cultural and social changes since 1930, but the work of fpa remains as vital as ever.”

Rt Hon Tony Blair, Prime Minister
I am pleased and proud to welcome you to this special commemorative publication, which launches and celebrates fpa’s 75th anniversary year in 2005. Our organisation has such a remarkable and fantastic heritage that it has proved a massive task – as well as a privilege – to carry out the necessary research required to do justice to the phenomenal achievements to date. This project has brought together so many people, all excited and highly motivated by the prospect of sharing their unique and individual experiences during different eras of the organisation’s evolution.

When our courageous fpa pioneers set out to take on what became known as the ‘fight for family planning’, they cannot have ever predicted quite how significant their contribution would be to the following generations and, indeed, society at large. Over time the ‘fights’ have changed to tackle some of the most emotive, controversial and live-changing issues imaginable, and each person who has been involved with fpa at a national or regional level can be justifiably proud of their part in our extraordinary history.

As we move forward into the twenty-first century, the ‘fight’ is on to achieve sexual health for everyone, for life. This will take time, vision, passion and commitment to achieve, but as anyone who has experienced the indomitable spirit which prevails at fpa, that is no problem! However, as ever, we cannot forge ahead with our work – campaigning, lobbying, informing, educating and training – without vital funding and donations.

So I hope that 75 will provide such an inspiring read, that you will understand the critical nature and need for monetary support, and then dig as deep as you can during our anniversary year.

Thank you for your support.

Karen Brewer
fpa Director of Communications

A very special thank you...

This publication was produced with the assistance of many individuals who work or have worked in the past for fpa, as well as some key influencers who have been a part of our celebrated past as well as the present, including Audrey Leathard, Alastair Service, Cynthia Watson and David Aaronovitch.

fpa also thanks the Communications International Group, publishers of leading retail pharmacy, beauty and health titles, for its generous support.
B eing Chief Executive of fpa is for me the perfect job. It combines two great passions, women's liberation and promoting health. Control over fertility, I believe, is the single most important factor in enabling women to make their own decisions about their lives and to achieve social and economic equality. And health, especially sexual health, is central not only to individual wellbeing but also to the health of society as a whole.

A powerful impact on public health
The free provision of contraception by the NHS and the legalisation of abortion are two of the greatest public health advances of the last century. The magnificent women who pioneered these changes are rarely hailed as giants of public health, but they should be. As our research illustrates, their achievements have laid the basis for sweeping improvements in the lives of ordinary people; they confronted ignorance and prejudice with commitment and courage.

So great were their triumphs that many people today believe that the battle has been won. But while the challenges may not be of the same magnitude, there are still many that confront us, as both the statistics and the reality of everyday life confirm: high teenage pregnancy rates, rising sexually transmitted infection (STI) rates and unequal access to contraceptive, abortion and STI services. And few schools are yet providing the comprehensive programmes of sex and relationships education that young people want, and that it should be their right to have. Thus, the need for fpa to champion sexual health is as great today as it has ever been.

A major turning point
When I became Chief Executive of fpa in 1996, the organisation's work was almost entirely focused on contraception and sex education. The need to cover the whole of sexual health was immediately apparent. People seeking our information wanted a holistic response, and there was already a movement by service providers towards a more integrated approach. We put in place a successful programme to extend our knowledge to encompass STIs and abortion, as well as our traditional areas of expertise.

fpa soon started to campaign in both of these areas. The report of our ground breaking seminar on medical abortion which brought together professionals from Europe, the USA and Britain was a powerful weapon for improving access to this method of abortion.

Early on, we recognised the significance of chlamydia as a much more common STI than was realised and ran the first public campaign raising awareness of its existence, highlighting the fact that it is widespread and very often symptom free.

In 1998, our new tagline - putting sexual health on the agenda - reflected our deep concern that sexual health was marginalised and neglected by policy makers, at both national and local level.

We still battle against our critics who would rather that people are kept in ignorance than enabled to make informed choices for themselves.

Pioneering strategies for the future
We played a key role in campaigning for the Government to develop sexual health policy and have been central to developments across the UK. Wales led the way with the Welsh Assembly publishing its strategy in 2000. In England, the National Strategy for Sexual Health and HIV was launched in 2001 and in Scotland in 2005. And the Northern Ireland Strategy is expected soon. Most recently, we have seen sexual health being a major part of the Public Health White Paper, Choosing Health.

A new departure for fpa has been our activities in the Courts. In 2000, we intervened in the judicial review against the provision of emergency contraception in pharmacies. Our evidence was quoted in the judgement that dismissed the action. And we instigated a successful judicial review in Northern Ireland which will lead to guidance for women and professionals about the provision of abortion in Northern Ireland, which is not covered by the 1967 Abortion Act.

Fighting for choice, for life
At the same time, contraception remains a priority for us and will continue to be so. Current anxiety about the rise in STIs naturally leads to an emphasis on the use of condoms to help prevent their spread. It is crucial that this concern is balanced by access to the full range of 14 methods of contraception so that individuals can choose the method that is best for them.

As we celebrate our 75th anniversary, fpa is firmly established as the UK's leading sexual health organisation. We are regarded as an authoritative source of information and advice by policy makers, service providers, professionals and the public. We still battle against our critics who would rather that people are kept in ignorance than enabled to make informed choices for themselves.

I am proud to lead this wonderful organisation and to work with a superb team of dedicated people in an area that is sensitive, stimulating and rewarding. Together we look forward to the challenges ahead, and each day getting closer to our goal of achieving sexual health for everyone, for life.
For the past 75 years, FPA has fought for the fundamental right of men and women to good sexual health. In the 1930s, this meant the ability to limit family size, but in the decades since has come to encompass sexually transmitted infections, abortion and sexual wellbeing, reports Melissa Dear.

From the very beginning, FPA has led the way in confronting, challenging and changing the social and legal fabric of society and continues to do so today, with allies in Parliament, health, education and the media.

On 17th July 1930, FPA’s parent organisation, the National Birth Control Council, was formed “so that married people may space or limit their families and thus mitigate the evils of ill-health and poverty”. The early pioneers faced vigorous opposition from many in the medical profession, the Church, Government and general public who believed the separation of sex from reproduction threatened the security of marriage and the foundations of society itself. Volunteers and workers were abused both in public and in print, and eggs, apples and bricks were thrown at clinic premises by protesters.

An urgent need for planning ‘permission’
A Royal Commission Report showed that in the 1930s around a third of married women questioned had used an ‘appliance’ method of birth control such as the condom or cap. Another third used techniques such as withdrawal or abstinence, and of these, nearly two out of three said they lacked knowledge about contraception or didn’t like the idea of experimenting with it.

It was precisely these attitudes that the champions of contraception working within the re-named Family Planning Association were determined to change.

Across the country there was concern over high rates of maternal mortality and many women resorted to desperate measures to avoid a pregnancy. One clinic case note of 1935 records:

“Mother, aged 22, is asthmatic. Has had 5 pregnancies in 4 years, 3 babies born alive, one died at 6 weeks. Has had 2 self-induced abortions, one with drugs and the other using scissors”.

In 1939 a Government committee reported that one in six maternal deaths was a direct result of abortion, the vast majority of which were criminally induced.

Fighting STIs in the war years
During the war years, sexual attitudes changed. With many living for the moment, free condoms were provided to the armed forces in an effort to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted infections. The first national campaign about ‘VD’ was run in 1943-44 aimed at servicemen to raise awareness of the health risks of ‘easy girlfriends’, and diagnoses of syphilis peaked sharply towards the end of the war.

However, when the NHS was formed in 1948, no provision was made for contraception. Access to methods remained fraught with embarrassment and it took the first ever visit of a Minister of Health to FPA headquarters to break the silence around sexual health and create a positive change in post-war attitudes to contraception. Also in this decade, FPA entered the field of pre-marital advice, and clinics began to supply contraception to engaged couples up to eight weeks before their wedding day. Many clinics requested proof, such as a receipt for a wedding dress, or letter from a vicar or family doctor, before providing advice and supplies, and sex before marriage remained taboo.

Sexual liberation of women
In 1961, the Pill changed the face of sexual health forever as it was reliable, woman-controlled and didn’t interfere with sex. Within 10 years, it was the method of choice of over a million women. Along with new legislation in 1967 that legalised homosexuality and abortion and in 1969 liberalised the law on divorce, the decade was characterised by a new sense of freedom about sex and sexual health.

The flip side of the new benefits included a rise in diagnoses of syphilis and gonorrhoea as the condom became less used. The age at which young people first had
On the handing over of fpa’s 1,000 clinics to the NHS...

This was a most important turning point. Now that fpa had been successful in achieving free family planning, there was a new world opening up and a new generation preparing to take on sex education and the provision of information. At the same time, with GPs coming into the scene to provide family planning services, we had a tremendous job battling to save some of the clinics after the handover. A lot of health authorities didn’t want to fund both, and I’m sorry to say that a large number disappeared. However, we all knew that the important thing was that services were reaching the women they aimed to support.

During the eighties, controversy raged over confidential advice and contraceptive treatment for under-16s and in 1983 an attempt was made through the courts to outlaw this practice. The case eventually ended in the House of Lords in 1985 with guidance that reaffirmed the rights of under-16s to treatment without parental consent. Also in this decade, sexual health issues came out of the closet and onto national television with the arrival of HIV/AIDS, and there was a revival of interest in the condom as protection for safer sex. Gay sex was finally legalised in Scotland and Northern Ireland with the age of consent set at 21, and fpa finally compelled all clinics to supply advice and treatment irrespective of marital status, so depriving stores of a thriving trade in fake wedding rings.

After much lobbying and campaigning, fpa’s aim of free contraception for all was finally achieved on 1st April 1974, when family planning was incorporated into the health service under the NHS Reorganisation Act and fpa began to hand over a network of over 1,000 clinics to the NHS. The handover was completed by 1976.

Throughout its existence, fpa had acknowledged that good sexual health depends on more than just contraception and focused instead on placing its education and training work at the heart of its activities.

Wide-ranging controversies

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Cynthia Watson: fpa 1951-1990; various posts including Regional Manager, fpa Midlands

On public pressure for more fpa clinics in the 1940s...

By the (Birmingham) Centre’s 21st year, it had five sessions a week. The total number attending in one year was 10,493. It was illuminating that a third of patients came from outside the city and that the Centre was serving many villages and towns around Birmingham. One patient said that she lived in a neighbouring town and would continue to bring pressure on town councillors until a clinic was set up there, because “Centres like yours are the only places where women can get the knowledge they need without feeling they are creeping in to do something shameful”.

On sex education in the 1970s...

An important area of the work we did was sex education in schools, which was always challenging and demanding. We were often faced with very large groups, far too large, sometimes as many as 200. The problem was whatever age you geared a talk to, it was not right; for some it was too late and others too early. The number you caught at the right moment was rather small, but it was important to keep trying.
by launching the National Strategy for Sexual Health and HIV. In the same year, emergency hormonal contraception became available in pharmacies, provoking a judicial review of provision which ruled in favour of continued access on the high street.

Also in 2001, fpa in Northern Ireland applied for a Judicial Review into the medical practices relating to abortion and the provision of abortion services in the region. The 1967 Abortion Act does not apply to Northern Ireland, but existing law is unclear and few abortions are carried out by the NHS. Instead, nearly 2,000 women a year travel to private clinics in England for the procedure, but some cannot afford the cost and since 1967 five women have died from illegal abortions.

Sexual health has changed out of all recognition since 1930. At that time there were only 20 family planning clinics, contraception was limited to the cap or the condom, information and discussion about sexual health was non-existent and abortion accounted for 450 registered deaths a year in England and Wales alone.

Choices but still challenges
Today there are over 1,779 clinics offering 14 different contraceptive choices, and fpa distributes over 5 million leaflets on contraception every year. Legal and safe abortion has been available in Britain for nearly four decades and many taboos and fears have been banished through a liberalisation of attitudes towards sexual behaviour.

Yet there are still plenty of challenges ahead. Lack of knowledge about sexual health continues to cause real damage to individual lives, and good sex and relationships education remains patchy in schools. Rates of unplanned pregnancy remain high, especially amongst teenagers, and diagnoses of sexually transmitted infections continue to increase. All sexual health services still require more investment to improve access, reduce waiting times and provide consistent standards of care.

In the coming years, fpa will continue to campaign for the introduction of compulsory sex and relationships education in primary and secondary schools as the single most important step to improving the nation’s sexual health. Our work with parents will continue in tandem, providing the knowledge and skills they need to talk to their children about sex.

A holistic future for sexual health
Much remains to be done to shatter the stigma surrounding sexual health, and the development of a more holistic model that integrates services for contraception, sexually transmitted infections and abortion would do much to tackle this problem. Progress towards reducing health inequalities in specific communities will continue to be driven by fpa’s community projects and we will forge ahead with our campaign for easier access to early abortion services across the UK.

Over the past 75 years, fpa has contributed to a social and sexual revolution which has changed the lives of millions. We look forward to a future that builds on our proud past and realises our vision of a society where sexual health is enjoyed by all.

David Aaronovitch: journalist and broadcaster
On the enormity of providing free family planning...
Cast yourself back to the situation in the 1930s when, for many people, family planning was either taboo or was a kind of desperate search to try and find something to keep their family small. For fpa, at that stage a relatively small organisation, to maintain and run a large string of family planning clinics under those circumstances was a huge achievement.

It’s a bit like imagining now, I suppose, that a smallish charity could now take over, let’s say, all the genitourinary medicine clinics in Britain and run those. It’s something of that scale, a phenomenal achievement.

Had it not been for the founders of fpa, how much longer would we have lived with a situation in which women were terrified of the possibility that their husbands would want to have sex with them in case it meant yet another pregnancy? In those days, so many women felt completely outside their control, and that their fertility was completely beyond their control.

On the post–World War II opposition to ‘birth control’...
After the Second World War quite a lot of countries believed that they had to get their birth rates up. A lot of people had been killed in the War and there was an attempt in this country, as in some other European countries, to try and tell women it was their duty to have large numbers of children they didn’t want. It was kind of an exercise in social engineering and Winston Churchill went round telling people it was their duty to have large families.

The French Government did the same, and it was very important under those circumstances that somebody stood up and said, “Actually, you can’t just force large families upon people. It’s a completely unnecessary and an absurd intrusion into their lives and we’re not going back to the situation as it was 40 or 50 years ago”.

The early pioneers faced vigorous opposition from many in the medical profession, the Church, Government and general public who believed the separation of sex from reproduction threatened the security of marriage and the foundations of society itself.
The place of sex education in schools had been largely ignored over the years when the battleground was dominated by clinic provision. Only by 1986 was legal recognition given, through the Education (No. 2) Act, when school governors were left to decide on provision, and if so, on content. At this stage such issues were very contentious.

By 1988, the Education Reform Act led to the introduction of a national curriculum with statutory orders for science subjects which required teaching some limited aspects of sex education. Even by 1988, the curriculum evidence, which set out detailed guidance for health education, was not mandatory. However, the picture was moving forward more positively when the 1993 Education Act made sex education in secondary schools compulsory, but parents were given the right to waive their children’s attendance in sex education classes.

On the more recent calls to action...

More particularly from the 1980s onwards, fpa has increasingly sought to further the work of sex education across the country through training courses, publications, conferences and fpa membership, as well as help and advice given to secondary school teachers.

Meanwhile, government ministers have set a goal to halve the teenage pregnancy rate among the 15-17 year olds between 1998 and 2010. Overall, policies to improve teenagers’ access to sex education appeared to be improving by the end of the 20th century as the conception rate had fallen, but the rate has started to creep up again slightly. Controlling teenage pregnancy remains a challenge for the 21st century.

On the battles of today, and tomorrow...

In contrast to the earlier fight for family planning in 20th century Britain, the more recent developments, concerning sexual health amongst young people and HIV/AIDS, represent both national and major global challenges for the 21st century.

However, as fpa marks its 75th anniversary in 2005, there is much to celebrate: particularly as a pioneering body overcoming the opposition to birth control, then furthering sex education.
The work of fpa’s pioneers is well-documented, but its success in reaching, influencing and supporting the public is undoubtedly attributable, to a great degree, to the work of fpa volunteers. To celebrate their remarkable contribution over seven decades, Rebecca Findlay talked to just a few who recall their precious memories for you to share.

Mrs Beryl Branson: Volunteer, Southampton, 1960s
“As volunteers we wore white coats, took payment for contraceptives, and had to be discreet. In those days if I spotted a patient in the supermarket I would have dashed to the nearest aisle in case she was embarrassed to see me.”

Dr Enid Harrison: Mansfield, 1960s
“After being asked “what do you do?” concerning her occupation, a client embarked on a graphic description of sexual activities and was quickly hushed by other people waiting (separated by a small screen) for too much.”

“A requirement for IUD fitting was that the room should have running water. In our limited accommodation this meant having a jug, a bowl and a bucket.”

Buxton Branch Family Planning Association, 1968
“Very bravely (we thought) fpa held its first leaflet stall, (constructed from three kitchen tables, three clothes props and calico) at Buxton Pop Festival. Anyone ‘middle’ looking either in age or class was suspect, although to protect his identity one youth snatched a VD leaflet, covering all his face except his eyes.”

Dr Joan Pillow, Dorset, 1960
“Back then, clinics operated in church halls and secretaries were often vicars’ wives. When fpa’s policy changed to offering treatment to unmarried women, my husband – a Baptist minister wanted me to resign as a locum doctor. However he accepted that Christians also had a moral obligation to protect children, and agreed to my continuing with my work.”

Mavis Snowdon: Volunteer, Accrington, 1950s
“An unmarried woman came into the clinic. The woman replied “yes” when the receptionist asked if the doctor had already provided her with contraception. The receptionist put her hat and coat on and left, never to return.”

Joan Boorman: Nurse, Southampton, 1955
“As a nurse, I tried to fit caps for our council estate ladies after yet another baby, but by bedtime they were far too exhausted to think about using it. Husbands wouldn’t use a condom because they said it felt like eating toffee with the paper on.”

Mrs Joyce Denby: Secretary, Newquay fpa, 1968–1993
“Sessions were held in four hospital cellar rooms accessed by a very dark path. Eventually an outside light was installed but rain regularly poured down the steps and paths. We had to paddle through deep puddles to get to the clinic.”

Margaret Nicholson: Receptionist, Cornwall, 1974
“The clinic queues were huge on the night that free family planning was announced. The telephone was in a different room to reception which kept the appointment book. My colleague and I spent the night running between two rooms just to make appointments.”

Local heroes

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fpa campaigns: a retrospective

Frequently controversial and always challenging, fpa’s dynamic campaigns have frequently been ahead of their time and have always driven awareness of key issues in sexual health, says Melissa Dear

Taking a quantum leap back in terms of the media to 1959, it was here that fpa broke taboos with its first-ever film called Birthright. This groundbreaking event was masterminded by Sir Russell Brain, fpa’s President at that time, and promoted the organisation’s work on contraception, sub-fertility and ‘marital difficulties’.

Birthright showed the daily work of our clinics and featured the kind of problems that affect the lives of ordinary men and women, making a real connection with all those who saw it. It proved a powerful advocacy tool for fpa’s work and, a mere three years after its premiere, it had been shown in such diverse and far-flung destinations as Australia (at the Melbourne Film Festival), Barbados and Korea, as well as at the House of Commons. More than 145 fpa branches and 138 other organisations also saw the film. This helped spread the word about the direct benefits of contraception at a time when such matters were rarely discussed in the so-called privacy of a person’s own home, let alone in the public domain.

Anger over airtime
Ever alert to the Zeitgeist, fpa capitalised on the opportunity presented by the film to make its first broadcast appeal for funds on the BBC’s Good Cause series, also in 1959. News of the broadcast leaked out and led to angry questions in the House of Commons about the merits of giving airtime to an organisation which ‘advised that married women should go in for contraception and birth control without the knowledge or permission of their husbands’.

Nevertheless, the appeal went ahead, made by the Bishop of Southwark, Dr Mervyn Stockwood. A masterpiece of subtlety, it raised over £2,500 for fpa without ever mentioning the words ‘birth control’ or ‘contraception’.

Ban brings massive publicity
Its emotive use of words was to cause the organisation further problems the following year. In July 1960, fpa placed its first ever advertisement on London Underground trains. A simple poster advising that it could provide family planning advice to those who were married, getting...
Leading the way in the use of celebrities to address such issues, fpa used sports personalities and performers to attract the media’s attention, which included television programming aimed at teenage boys and public service announcements. New training courses were held for receptionists at family planning clinics to help men feel more welcome and special posters and stickers proclaiming ‘Men Too’ were designed for use in the waiting room. In addition, a 25-minute video called Danny’s Big Night was produced for work with young men taking place in projects up and down the country. The campaign climaxed with a national conference, Men, Sex and Relationships, in March 1985, attended by 400 people. In 1969, one of the most powerful campaign slogans associated with fpa was created. “Every child a wanted child” became the watchword of the day and encapsulated the mood of the time perfectly. It was followed in 1970 by one of the most iconic advertising campaigns ever, when the now famous Pregnant Man poster was devised by Cramer Saatchi for the Health Education Council. Still regularly reproduced today, its bold visual concept remains simple yet powerfully provocative, and was a stunning success for Charles Saatchi, whose agency produced the ad. Aimed at persuading people to use contraception and contact fpa for advice, it created a worldwide demand for posters and provided a field day for cartoonists.

Withdrawing the ads saying they had proved ‘religiously controversial’...led to protest demonstrations by staff and supporters resulting in widespread publicity that the Association couldn’t possibly have afforded to buy.
Today’s campaigns would have been unthinkable back in 1959, yet fpa’s campaigning work was just as pioneering then as it is today.

including actor John Alderton and then GLC member, Paul Boateng. Following the campaign, there was a 40% increase in 18-19 year old men attending family planning clinics in 1984.

Cutting edge campaigns

Moving into the 1990s, fpa initiated Contraceptive Awareness Week and Sexual Health Week, which have become an essential and integral part of the sexual health calendar. These campaigns rely on a strong research basis to provide key news angles for the media, as well as vibrant, innovative creative work which leads the way in communicating with young people and adults about sexual health, designed by fpa’s agency, Feel. These annual awareness weeks use diverse ways of grabbing attention such as posters and postcards in bars and clubs, billboards, stickers, beermats, mobile media and cinema advertisements.

During Sexual Health Week 1999, fpa was the first organisation to publicise the risks of chlamydia, now the most common sexually transmitted infection in the UK. The campaign used the provocative image of a man’s jeans with the caption ‘Chlamydia: now available in easy to open packets’ on posters and postcards and special ‘graffiti’ stickers for toilets and won the Innovation section of the Communique Awards for PR that year.

fpa really is ‘out there’

Other highly successful campaigns with real impact have included the use of heat sensitive postcards which reveal messages about safer sex when kissed, the debut of fpa’s first cinema advertisement about chlamydia with TV star Lisa Faulkner, and covering the modesty of the Cerne Abbas Giant in Dorset with a giant condom. In 2003, the Mr Stiffy campaign, fpa’s contribution to Men’s Health Week, hit the streets of Soho, London. Based on the concept of the better known Mr Whippy ice-cream van, mopeds trailed campaign images around the bars and nightclubs of London playing typical ice-cream van music whilst the drivers handed out condoms and leaflets to party revellers in the streets.

Such activity would have been unthinkable back in 1959, yet fpa’s campaigning work was just as pioneering then as it is today. The difference in approach shows just how far we have come in our ability - and freedom - to use words and images about sex. This opening up of language and dialogue to enable better communication about sexual health has always been a key part of fpa’s aims. Echoes from the bold campaigns of the past and present will be heard long into the future.
the agony and the ecstasy

Tackling the sexual health issues raised by readers of all ages is a serious and often complex task, even for the media experts. The passing years have only served to strengthen the relationship between 'agony aunts' and fpa, working together to ensure that information and advice is clear, accurate and actionable.

through its experienced and pro-active press office, highly sought-after information service and helpline team plus its extensive library, fpa is seen as 'the' expert resource on matters relating to sexual health.

To give you an insight into the real-life issues and experiences that people are facing, we invited some of the UK's leading writers in this sector of the media to discuss the most emotive subjects of today.

Their responses, including a very personal revelation, underline their absolute commitment to speaking clearly and frankly about sex and sexual health.

young people and sex
Tina Radziszewicz, Bliss

Bliss has four agony aunts, each with their own subject area. My page tackles sex and relationships, and I get around 120 letters a month.

Young people are baffled by the laws surrounding under-age sex. Very few readers worry that they’d be breaking the law by having sex under-16.

However, a sizeable number believe that it’s illegal to get contraception, including condoms, if they are under 16 years of age, and that they might be prosecuted if they try to do so.

Many under-16s are also convinced that they’re not entitled to confidentiality, and that the doctor they see for contraception will tell their parents. In addition, readers of all ages believe that contraception in general, e.g. the Pill, protects against STIs as well as pregnancy - and don’t understand that the barrier provided by a condom is the only way to help prevent the spread of disease.

As necessary, I direct readers to fpa’s helpline, STI clinics and their GP.

sex in a sexualised society
Sue Frost, Woman

Sexual relationships have changed beyond all recognition over the past 75 years, or rather, public perception of them has. From being an essentially private activity, alluded to only in euphemisms, sex has become one of the big talking points of modern life. The quality, frequency, longevity and exclusivity of sex, not to mention the effects on health, family life, self-esteem and partners’ expectations of each other are all legitimate topics for seminars, research projects and television programmes.

The net effect is good, but the flipside has been a down-grading of non-sexual relationships and celibate lifestyles. Many readers today want to know about the problems and pitfalls of sex, but also about building lasting relationships based on trust, mutual respect, shared interests and affection. A counter revolution may be on the way! >
talking to children about sex and relationships
Deidre Sanders, The Sun

Parents today are only too well aware that life and teenage attitudes seem to have moved on enormously since they were young. I still hear regularly from parents of under-12s asking me to help them explain the facts of life to their children. However, once these children become teenagers, their parents - sometimes dangerously - now seem either to assume their offspring know it all, or they feel that what still needs discussing is too hard to talk about.

Parents find it very embarrassing to talk about masturbation or oral sex, for example... They write to me far more commonly wanting to know how to limit their offspring's behaviour rather than wanting to know how to inform them.

Meanwhile, I'm hearing from hundreds of teenagers every week - far more than I ever used to. Notably, with the advent of the internet, they can now e-mail me and I find that they are frequently asking for all sorts of basic information and reassurance.

men's sexual problems
Susan Quilliam, AOL

It’s impossible to say how many letters I’ve received over the years, but as men have got more aware of sexual issues, the proportion of male to female letters has definitely risen.

Men’s problems break down into two kinds of problems raised: performance - penis size, erectile difficulty, premature ejaculation; and partnership - how to please, arouse, and how to ensure the woman’s climax.

The two most common misconceptions are first that size matters (largely it doesn’t - if it does, women need width rather than length) and secondly that intercourse alone leads inevitably to orgasm (it typically does for men and doesn’t for women, who tend to need clitoral stimulation).

My aim when responding is not to give advice but to alter the viewpoint - not just for the original letter writer but also for all the other readers.

I believe that agony aunts have a responsibility to shift cultural awareness, so I offer sexual information where it’s lacking, debunking myths, challenging perceptions where appropriate and also offering reassurance where it’s needed.

I often recommend that men see a sex therapist, and offer relevant contact numbers for the major counselling organisations.

sexually transmitted infections
Jane Butterworth, News of the World

There are usually at least half a dozen letters each week in my postbag concerning sexually transmitted infections (STIs), although just after the holiday season this can increase considerably. I am afraid that a lot of people go on holiday and leave their caution and common sense behind them at the airport!

The fact that the majority of letters I receive about STIs list symptoms and ask me to give the writers a diagnosis because they are too ashamed to go to their GPs, suggests to me that nothing much has changed over the last forty years.

It’s depressing that most people still see STIs as having a stigma attached to them, that they still don’t seem to be aware of the existence of GUM clinics, or realise that they treat people non-judgmentally and in confidence. A common question is ‘can I get treated without telling my partner?’ Many want to know if they can buy something over the counter to treat it without going to a doctor. A popular misconception seems to be that they don’t realise you can contract STIs by methods other than penetrative sex.

I always tell my readers that they MUST get checked out by a clinic or their own GP, and it goes without saying that they shouldn’t have sex with anyone until they are given the all clear... I think it might help if STI clinics had an instantly recognisable name - GUM just doesn’t do it!

unplanned pregnancy
Virginia Ironside, The Independent

An unwanted pregnancy is one thing but an unwanted child is another. And that’s where fpa is so marvellous... not only educating people about the risks of unprotected sex, but being there with practical advice to protect against unwanted pregnancy, and sensible options if, sadly, it occurs.

Our society is at present highly sexualised and it is vital that, in any discussion on sex, information about contraceptives plays a prominent part. 

accessible advice
fpa offers confidential advice and information to the public on all aspects of sexual health from its trained advisers via the fpa helpline, tel: 0845 310 1334; as well as producing a wide range of leaflets and literature and training healthcare professionals.
In January 1973, The fpa News announced that a new telephone service would begin in order to answer queries from the public about fpa’s services.

It was the first large-scale automatic telephone information service on family planning. At that time, the helpline consisted of a two-minute recording detailing the services provided. Today fpa helplines in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland ensure access to confidential information and advice across the UK. The trained helpline staff personally answer over 100,000 calls a year on a range of topics that has expanded over the years.

This was my first experience with fpa. It was a breath of fresh air after my usual encounters with the health service.

Now callers can obtain information and advice on contraception, sexually transmitted infections, planning a pregnancy, pregnancy choices, including abortion and general sexual wellbeing, as well as contraceptive and sexual health services throughout the UK.

fpa’s early work as a provider of contraceptive and pregnancy planning information, advice and services established its reputation as an expert in the field. This expertise is still acknowledged and drawn on by both professionals and the public, with over 80% of calls to our helplines on these subjects.

The questions over the years have continued to reflect the availability and popularity of contraceptive methods as well as providing an insight into the difficulties individuals face in obtaining help with abortion, relationships and their general sexual health.

As the early years of fpa, it is still women who predominantly seek help but gradually we are seeing a greater proportion of men actively seeking information about their sexual health.

The aim of our helpline services is to enable individuals to make informed choices about their sexual health and to support professionals in providing contraceptive and sexual health services of excellence. To do this staff undergo extensive training and have access to a variety of up-to-date information and resources on all topics.

Many of our callers are vulnerable, ill informed and have difficulty in navigating the healthcare system. This requires the staff to listen well, be sensitive to the issues that arise and have an extensive knowledge of the range of help that is currently available.

The dramatic expansion in the use of helplines by the public in the last few years has led to technology being available to us that has improved the planning, delivery and evaluation of our services. However, it is of course ultimately to our callers that we need to turn to find out the true value of our service. The feedback that we have received graphically illustrates the worth of our service to those that use it. This is something which we continue to take into account when reviewing this acclaimed service, and fpa plans to build on in the coming years.

Training Matters

Training has always been an integral part of fpa’s work, with dedicated training managers throughout the UK.

For the past 75 years, fpa’s training expertise has been much sought-after by professionals. Originally, fpa clinics were the only places that provided instruction on contraception. Even by 1950 only four out of the 27 medical schools in Britain provided special lectures on contraception and between 1954–1969 just over 10,000 doctors and nurses attended fpa training courses.

Gradually, as contraception became more accepted, this training was absorbed by the professional organisations and fpa re-focused to provide courses to all those working in sexual health, sex and relationships education and sexuality. Its new-look training was unique, pioneering a participative, experiential style in the seventies that has since been much replicated.

Today, we adhere to the same principles and work with a wide variety of staff, from youth workers to school nurses, prison staff to teachers, and sexual health clinic staff to residential care workers.

Underlying all our training is a commitment to addressing equality and diversity issues, and much of our work involves developing communication skills and enabling individual participants to understand their own values and attitudes. This provides them with a sound foundation for working with others whilst respecting the multiplicity of views that exist within any group.

We constantly strive to improve our training techniques and our newly created training department for England, Scotland and Wales will provide the basis for developing our proud heritage into another 75 years of success.
the way we were

Sex before marriage was considered wrong, abortion was illegal and using contraception to help couples to plan for 'wanted children' was suppressed at every opportunity. Until the enlightened 60s and the arrival of the contraceptive pill, fpa had to fight - and fight hard - to overcome stigma, emphasise choice, and encourage women to talk about this most intimate and important aspect of their lives. This was brought to life by an emotive 1980s Channel 4 television documentary, enabled by the insightful collaboration of fpa pioneers.

Today we live in an age where free contraception is accepted as a basic right and expert advice is available via all forms of communication - not just on family planning but on every single aspect of sexual health. So it's relatively difficult for younger adults to look back and truly imagine what life was like for ordinary women before the arrival of fpa. However, thanks to the making of a 1988 Channel 4 documentary series, our archives boast remarkable real-life film footage on this very subject. The three-part series, The History of Contraception, includes interviews with many of fpa's pioneers as well as the views of men and women who grew up during the first half of the last century, providing a unique insight into society and the way we were before the era of sexual liberation.

no sex please
75 years ago, sex was a subject shrouded in secrecy and simply not talked about. Women were expected to marry as virgins and abstain from sex until their wedding night. As one older man, Vic Parnell, who was interviewed in this powerful television series recalls: "We never had sex till we were married. There was awful temptation but the teaching was so strong it overrode all natural feeling."

Even within the respectability of marriage, sex could still be viewed as something shameful. Ruth Granville, who had her first child in 1916, remembers her husband never wanted anyone to know when she was pregnant, her face impassive. "He never wanted me to go out and meet people, or for anyone to see me like that."

In this atmosphere of silence, it was common for young women to marry and immediately embark on a life of almost continual pregnancy and childbirth having not the slightest idea of how to prevent unplanned pregnancies or limit the size of their families. Married women became tired, ill and eventually quite desperate. "I live now in fear of my husband's embrace," wrote one such wife. "Each addition to our family makes us poorer, draws us further apart and lessens my bodily strength. I am at my wits end to know what to do, and the doctors here won't give any information."

matching disapproval with determination
This lack of information was exactly what the early pioneers of fpa were...
The sex problems which troubled her married life. Problems which made her ‘so ill and tired that she almost didn’t care if the marriage broke up.’

As psycho-sexual doctor, Prudence Tunnadine stressed: “People often revealed their true anxieties and shynesses when they were on the couch for examination with their pants down. We thought this just applied to women, because their parts were hidden and not called private for nothing, but when men did start to come forward for vasectomy counselling, we found that they too very often revealed their real anxiety at this intimate and embarrassing moment - the dropping of the trousers.”

finding freedom from despair

While fpa’s scientific contraception and sexual health education were indeed bringing hope and choice to many women, the spectre of the final desperate option - the back-street abortionist - stillhovered. During the 1920s and 1930s, one in every 250 women died in childbirth, many from criminally induced abortions. In 1967 the Abortion Act legalised abortions in Britain bringing this period to an end. Ann Rossiter, who fell pregnant in her late teens and needed someone who could ‘help’ with an abortion, recalled what it was like before the Act came into effect.

“It was a difficult quest,” she revealed on camera, visibly troubled by her memories. “It meant going into the underworld and it was a friend, of a friend, of a friend, who worked in a casino who finally found me a woman. This woman turned out to live in an almost Dickensian situation in a dark basement. The type of thing you see in the movies. I smile about it now but it was a very cheerless situation. I was totally desperate.”

She concluded: “It should be remembered that young women were so desperate they were prepared to go to these awful lengths, and that such desperation existed not so very long ago.”
looking back at a lifetime of literature

Although our lives are so different today compared with those of the early twentieth century, FPA’s many millions of distributed leaflets, booklets and publications have remarkably stood the many tests of time as a real lifeline - providing expert, accurate and accessible information on sexual health.
Although society has witnessed phenomenal changes since 1930, many of the key sexual health issues raised then remain the same today. fpa’s approach to education and the provision of information has retained its relevance over time. Leaflets from as long as 50 years ago would hold good today as clear, accurate and easily-understood information – quite a feat in today’s jargon-driven society.

Always ahead of its time
In reviewing the fascinating archives of literature produced by fpa over seven decades, it’s immediately evident that just as the content has stood the test of time, so too has the visionary stance of fpa in the aims of its communications.

The organisation’s mission has always been not just to provide advice but also to counter the misinformation that can have a devastating effect on individual lives.

Another strong link with the past is the consistent message that sexual health does not simply cover reproductive wellbeing or illness, but also encompasses preventive care and informed decision making about our sexual lives.

Reaching out to the community
Until the 1950s, reports and scientific findings by medical practitioners and others formed the main core of publications produced by fpa. Reports on conferences and the general state of family planning followed through the 1960s and 1970s and still feature today.

From the 1950s, publications promoting family planning began to be published in an effort to reach a broader audience with more detailed information central to fpa’s mission of promoting good sexual health. A number of these were produced specifically to clear up common misunderstandings, such as For Childless Wives: a Doctor Advises (1950, 1952, and 1954), which clearly communicated the fact that women are not the sole cause of infertility.

In 1953 a publication providing general information on fpa clinics called The Clinic Handbook was published, which subsequently became the organisation’s ‘bible’. Like others in fpa’s series, these handbooks were repeatedly revised in an effort to keep ever-changing and practical information up-to-date, such as contact information, lists of services provided and methods of contraception. In addition, regular publications about contraception became a vital source of information for professionals in the community.

Promoting pertinent choices
Regardless of the changing titles and increased choices over the years, fpa leaflets on contraception promote knowledge and choice by the very nature of their thoroughly researched content. They embrace current data on efficacy and acceptability, the benefits and disadvantages of each method, how lifestyle can affect their use, and answer common questions about the way each method works.

An important part of fpa’s aim to promote pregnancy choices is to provide information and advice on the subject of abortion. Currently the organisation provides information for women via the leaflet Abortion: Your Questions Answered. Early Abortion: Promoting Real Choice for Women promotes fpa’s key views about how services can be improved to policymakers.

Shortly after HIV and AIDS was identified in the 1980s, fpa began publishing aimed at young people has been of central importance to fpa from the 1950s and its main objective has always been to provide accurate answers to the kind of questions young people ask. Beginning with simple titles such as How Was I Born? and the quaintly-named Change of Life, they >
This issue of fpa's busy sister magazine, Moving into the nineties, shows the mis-match between media opprobrium and public need crystallised as fpa's series of booklets for young people such as 4Boys, 4Girls and Is Everybody Doing It? came under heavy fire from the conservative press but sold faster than they could be printed. The most recent example of this phenomenon is fpa's booklet on puberty for 9-11 year olds 4You. Despite the fact that the tone and content was informed by children, teachers and parents, it was greeted with angry headlines and yet once again demand outstripped supply.

Publications produced for education professionals are models of their kind; carefully researched at grassroots level, they lead the way in developing best practice. However, because they challenge accepted norms and prejudice they often come under fire from media critics and right-wing groups.

Pioneering manuals such as The Primary School Workbook of the early 1990s caused great controversy which echoes today in the reception of recent resources such as How Much? How Soon? This video and leaflet for staff about teaching sex and relationships education in primary school was criticised by one paper for advising that ‘pupils have the right to receive information that is balanced, non-judgemental and respectful of the diversity of values that are reflected in society'. Girls Out Loud, a recent resource based directly on the views of young women and aimed at raising their confidence and self-esteem, also came under fire and caused questions to be raised in Parliament.

Making messages effective

In sharp contrast to previous generations, today's teenagers are constantly bombarded with many messages about lifestyle. Although they are more 'savvy' and sophisticated in their tastes and expectations, the provision of basic information about sex, relationships and STIs is still absolutely essential. The pressing need for information remains paramount to their development into confident, happy and healthy adults. fpa's goal is clear: to help them overcome fear and ignorance about their bodies, to raise their self-esteem and their ability to forge positive, intimate relationships for life.

Regardless of the differences in context over the last 75 years, fpa's publications, then and now, are a vital resource for adults, healthcare professionals, community workers and particularly the public at large - consistently answering in a clear, accessible manner those questions that many of us are still afraid to ask.

fpa's Pamela Sheridan Award: celebrating the best in SRE

This award recognises good practice in Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) within a wide range of settings such as primary, secondary, special needs schools, youth and community projects.

Pamela Sheridan (1911–1994) had a lifelong involvement in family planning and was an early sex education pioneer. She started as a volunteer in a clinic in London in the 1930s and her interest in sex education developed through working in women's health. She believed that a lack of knowledge and information impacted on women's enjoyment of sexuality and their ability to use contraception effectively. Her family established this award in her memory.

In recent years, the award has received increasing numbers of applications from a variety of settings, suggesting that more young people are getting good quality SRE through schools and other youth settings.

Winning applications typically have well-constructed programmes, involve and consult with young people, make useful links with other professionals including school nurses, youth workers and have well-trained and supported staff, who are working to an up-to-date SRE policy. Many use active learning approaches with opportunities to develop practical skills which have included visiting a clinic and going to a store to research the cost of items required for a new born baby. Most importantly, they are backed by a positive approach towards young people and sexuality.

Winners receive £1,000 top prize and there is £100 of fpa resources for two highly commended projects. In addition winners of the Pamela Sheridan Award consistently say how fantastic it is for them and the young people they work with to have their hard work recognised, valued and celebrated.
In 2005, fpa marks its 75th anniversary. As part of the reflection on our development and achievements since 1930, we commissioned some new qualitative and quantitative research to explore how people today perceive the changes that have occurred in the nature of families, relationships and sex over the course of our history. The findings have been illuminating, says report author Caroline Davey, not only reflecting back on how far we have come in the last 75 years but also highlighting the challenges still ahead for the next 75 years.
Executive summary

There is consensus across the generations that there have been a number of very significant and positive changes since the 1930s: there is now much greater equality between men and women, and more freedom and opportunity for young people to make their own choices in life. The moral and societal restrictions of 75 years ago have been replaced by an acceptance of a much wider range of relationships, family structures and behaviour.

The family remains important, but there is now a more fluid concept of what constitutes ‘the family’. Relationships between parents and children have become more open and equal, with greater discussion within the family about issues relating to sex and relationships. Overall there is strong support for the fact that there is now much more information available for young people about sex and relationships, which has helped to remove much of the fear of puberty and sexual relations which was so prevalent 75 years ago.

There is now much greater openness and tolerance around all aspects of sex, and people of all ages voice overwhelming support for the developments that have helped to promote greater equality between men and women in terms of sex. In particular, the availability of contraception and abortion are seen as important steps in enabling women to make their own choices about their lives. Overall, sex is perceived to have become more fun, and there is far greater emphasis on sexual pleasure and fulfilment. This is seen to have been particularly beneficial for women, who have become much more confident and in control of their sex lives.

However, there is still a need for further changes to ensure that everyone enjoys sexual health. People need to have better preparation at an early stage in order to develop successful relationships in later life; this includes better and more comprehensive sex and relationships education in schools, covering emotions, the realities of relationships, and the promotion of confidence and self-esteem. People must then learn to take greater responsibility for their own and their partners’ sexual and emotional health, both in terms of contraception and protection against sexually transmitted infections, and in terms of respecting and valuing their sexual partners.

Overall there is a strong belief that the changes and developments we have seen in family life, relationships and sex over the last 75 years have been overwhelmingly positive, but there is also recognition that there are areas which could - and should - be improved further to ensure that everyone is able to benefit from sexual health, for life.

Introduction

fpa (Family Planning Association) celebrates its 75th anniversary in 2005. Over the course of its history there have been significant changes in society, not least in the nature of families, sex and relationships, and fpa has been closely involved with many of these changes.

In order to mark our anniversary we were keen to reflect on how society has changed over the last 75 years, and on the new challenges it faces over the next 75 years. We have come a long way in sexual health since 1930, but what more do we need to do? We wanted to hear both from people who have lived through the dramatic changes of the 20th century, and from young people who have grown up already accustomed to many of the freedoms for which their parents and grandparents fought.

We therefore commissioned an initial stage of qualitative research, followed up by quantitative research, to explore these issues, understand society’s attitudes towards these changes, and consider people’s hopes and fears for the future.

Research methodology

In August 2004, fpa commissioned research consultancy Opinion Leader Research (OLR) to carry out qualitative research to explore perceptions of the changing nature of families, sex and relationships, in particular the similarities and differences between younger and older age groups. OLR carried out a series of in-depth interviews and small discussion groups with participants in two distinct age groups: 16-24 year olds - divided into 16-18 year olds and 19-24 year olds - and the over-55s - divided into 55-69 year olds and those...
over 70. Research participants were stratified by gender and socio-economic group, and were interviewed in three locations across England.

Following the qualitative research, OLR carried out a quantitative survey to test the hypotheses identified during the first stage of research. The quantitative survey was carried out in October 2004 amongst a sample of 1,008 adults across Great Britain, broadly representative of the population as a whole.

Key findings: Family

THEN...

Older research participants recall growing up in a family environment very different from the one experienced by their children and grandchildren. In the 1930s, society was still dominated by Victorian and Edwardian moral codes about family, relationships and sex, and children were subject to much stricter rules from their parents and family.

“You were brought up to fit in with the family life and you were living a life which was really being run by your parents and you were fitting into that life. You didn’t have your own life - you just fitted into the family.”

Male, 55-69, BC1C2, Manchester

“I don’t know, the times were different then so the relationships between parents was different, my mum for example...she left school at 14, got a job and was working and she’d come home and give most of her salary to her parents.”

Male, 19-24, DE, London

However, despite the control exercised over young people’s lives, families were perceived to be much closer 75 years ago, both geographically and emotionally. Strong family ties were maintained across generations and across the extended family group.

“In those days...families were very close - much closer than they are today, you know? Every Friday the family came to dinner - the whole family - and it was bonding, you know?”

Male, 70+, BC1C2, London

AND NOW...

It is clear that family continues to be important to people today - 87% of those surveyed agree that ‘my relationship with my family is the most important relationship in my life’. Many young people stress how important their family is to them, and outline aspirations to have a family like their own in the future.

“My own personal experience of family is quite a close unit, sticks together.”

Male, 16-18, BC1C2, Manchester

Moreover, there is a strong sense that parents and children now have more open and equal relationships, and are more likely to talk honestly with each other. 76% agree that ‘a parent needs to earn their child’s trust and respect’, and 41% agree that ‘children and parents have much better relationships with one another now than they did 75 years ago’.

“My daughter and my wife particularly can talk about anything...I think it’s a good thing.”

Male, 55-69, BC1C2, Manchester

“My children are my friends, we talk to each other about anything and everything.”

Female, 55-69, DE, Manchester

People also perceive that definitions of what constitutes a family have changed over the years. There is no single definition of what is an ‘acceptable’ family unit; rather, it is normal for there to be a much wider range of relationships and family structures, including unmarried couples, lesbian and...
gay couples, lone parents, and stepfamilies. In addition, there is a strong sense that friends can now form part of an individual’s ‘family’ circle - 65% agree that ‘I regard my closest friends as my family’.

“I think your friends become more of your family now. There’s a few people in your family who you’ll be close to but I think your friends become your family now.”
Female, 16-18, DE, Birmingham

Key findings: Relationships

THEN...
All generations agree that there were very specific expectations of men and women 75 years ago. Young women were expected to be demure and chaste, and young men were expected to behave honourably towards women. For both men and women, sex was only seen as an element of married life.

“You couldn’t go to bed with a man. Oh murder that would be! No! I was very good.”
Female, 70+, DE, London

“In my day, to go out with a girl you’d have to go through a lot of preparation. It was like you had to walk her to the door. She had to be home early, do you know what I mean? And you’d have to give it your best show, and you’d got to go and see her parents, and all that jazz.”
Male, 70+, DE Manchester

Both men and women were also expected to behave in a certain way, and to follow their parents’ wishes in terms of getting and staying married. Older research participants, in particular, emphasised that this situation caused great unhappiness to those pressured into an unwanted marriage, or those compelled to stay with an abusive or violent spouse.

“It was a forced marriage...I wasn’t happy about it. He had a lot of money and yeah I was a good looking girl at the time and he fancied me, he said so, and they introduced him to one of my sisters and he said ‘If I’m going to marry somebody, I’d like to marry [name]’, which was me, and I married him.”
Female, 70+, DE, London

“Even if the couple didn’t get on...they stayed together. They stayed tight, through thick and thin. I remember couples that are friends of mine, the women and their fellows had different lives, you know, but he always came home at night.”
Male, 70+, BC1C2, London

AND NOW...
There is a strong sense that there is now much greater equality between men and women in all aspects of life, including relationships, and this is seen as an enormously positive development. In particular, this means that young women have more opportunities and are able to make their own free choices about their relationships, as well as about their lives more broadly.

“Because they’re not sort of tied down with kids at an early age, they’ve got their life, they’re having a bit more life and then when they’ve seen a bit of something, travelled round, then they’re more ready to settle down.”
Female, 55-69, DE, Manchester

They’ve got more opportunity now, yes I do feel that. There’s more on offer for them as regards education and the help available.”
Female, 70+, BC1C2, Birmingham

“And yeah they’re more independent, they can say, ‘I don’t want to be with this man’, whereas before it was like the man took you, you were his wife, so it was his choice whether he left you or not.”
Male, 19-24, DE, London

There are now considered to be far fewer societal codes about what is and is not deemed to be an acceptable relationship, just as there is much greater acceptance of a wide diversity of family structures. Marriage is no longer seen as a necessity for couples, particularly among younger age groups - although overall 46% agree that ‘marriage is just as relevant now as it was 75 years ago’, among 18-24 year olds more disagree (40%) than agree (35%) with this statement.

Similarly, there is far greater acceptance of homosexual relationships now, and again this is particularly the case for younger age groups. Overall there is a balance between those in favour of and against lesbians and gay men being allowed to marry - 38% agree, 38% disagree - but this is closely correlated with age. 60% of 18-24 year olds and 52% of 25-34 year olds agree that ‘lesbians and gay men should be allowed to marry’, compared with 20% of 65-74 year olds and 22% of the over-75s.

Key findings: Sex

THEN...
It is clear that sex was a strictly taboo subject 75 years ago - none of the older participants in the
qualitative research could recall their parents ever openly discussing sex or sexual health with them. There was also no formal sex education at school, and young people had to rely on playground gossip for information. In the absence of any reliable or accurate information, many older people recount how frightening it was for them when they started going through puberty, and later when they had their first sexual experience.

“It was just never mentioned at all. And if it was on the telly it was always turned off.”
Female, 55-69, DE, Manchester

“I can remember starting my periods when I was 11, not being told a thing about it... I had to like come downstairs in the morning in my pyjamas covered in blood... I was sent out of the room when my dad came home from work and he’d be eating his evening meal and my mum would say ‘she’s a woman now’, and my dad didn’t look at me, no eye contact, ‘mmm keep yourself clean, keep away from boys’, that was it. Nothing else was ever discussed about anything.”
Female, 55-69, DE, Manchester

“We never had sex education at school or anything like that so all that you learnt you learnt from your mates round you really. Or reading books.”
Female, 70+, BC1C2, Birmingham

There were also much stricter moral codes around sexual behaviour; sex outside marriage and infidelity within marriage were both considered to be shameful and sinful. Gay sex was still illegal, and gay men risked jail if they were known to be having sex. Those who did transgress in any aspect of sexual behaviour were strongly vilified, and ‘inappropriate’ behaviour was thought to bring shame on the whole family. This feeling of shame manifested itself most strongly in families where a daughter had a child outside marriage - in many cases, daughters were sent away and children were adopted or raised by relatives.

“When I worked in the psychiatric unit there were a lot of women there that were put in a home because they’d had children and they were forgotten about and they [were aged] 40 and 50 in there.”
Female, 55-69, DE, Manchester

There is a sense that there was little or no concept of female sexual pleasure 75 years ago - rather, women were expected to ‘lie back and think of England!’ This tied in closely with the subordination of women across all spheres of life: in the bedroom, at home, and in the workplace.

“I don’t know, I think [older] women in relationships were a lot more repressed so they felt they had to be in the relationships, they didn’t have a choice, it might not have been out of love.”
Male, 19-24, DE, London

AND NOW...

There is strong agreement across the generations that modern-day society is much more open and tolerant about sex - people are more knowledgeable about sex, there is more and better information available, and there tends to be much greater dialogue within families about sex and sexual health. This climate of increased openness around sex and sexuality is perceived to have diminished the fear around puberty and first sexual experience, although some young people still admit to finding both of these experiences scary.

“I talk to my son, we’re very open. I discussed it with them, that didn’t bother me at all because they had sex education at school anyway so that didn’t bother me talking to them about it.”
Female, 70+, BC1C2, Birmingham

People are overwhelmingly positive about the technological developments which have helped to promote greater equality between men and women in terms of sex, in particular the revolution in the availability of contraception which has happened between 1930 and the present day. 73% agree that ‘oral contraception [the pill] has liberated women’, and this percentage is even higher among older age groups who remember what life was like before contraception was freely available: 82% of 55-64 year olds, 80% of 45-54 year olds, and 75% of 75-74 year olds agree with this statement, compared with 61% of 18-24 year olds. Similarly, 71% agree that ‘emergency contraception is a real benefit for women’, and again, agreement is highest among older age groups, with 77% of the over-75s agreeing with this statement compared with 63% of 18-24 year olds.

“Well I think a lot of it altered when the pill became available so women were free sort of thing weren’t they to go round, like the men were so to speak.”
Female, 70+, BC1C2, Birmingham

There is also widespread agreement that the legalisation of abortion has been an important step in enabling women, in particular, to determine their own lives, and there is clear recognition that abortion is a valid choice to which all women are entitled - 71% of those surveyed agree that ‘women should have the right to choose whether or not to continue with their pregnancy’.

Overall, sex is perceived to have become more fun for both men and women, and there is a far greater emphasis on sexual
pleasure and fulfilment - 66% agree that ‘people have more fun sexually now than they did 75 years ago’. Women, in particular, are seen to have benefited from changing societal attitudes towards sexual relations, and have far greater sexual freedom and enjoyment than they did 75 years ago.

“I’m sure men have always enjoyed sex through the years. Women specifically I think enjoy sex a lot more now than the older generation did.”
Male, 16-18, BC1C2, Manchester

Key findings: Sex in the media

Greater equality in all aspects of life is perceived to have extended into the bedroom. Indeed, some people perceive that a more sexually explicit media - from the days of Cosmopolitan and She magazines in the 1970s right through to 21st century television programmes such as Sex and the City and Footballers’ Wives - has meant that women have become increasingly confident and in control of their sex lives. 69% of those surveyed agree that ‘the media is encouraging women to be more sexually confident and in control’, and almost a third (31%) agree that ‘women have the upper hand in sexual relationships nowadays’. Interestingly, this perception is highest among 25-34 year olds (37%) - the age group at which the most explicit magazines and TV programmes are aimed - and is lowest among 65-74 (25%) and over-75 (22%) year olds.

“I think the girls control the situation now personally. It’s like the Spice Girls, isn’t it? The media and girl power. They’re taken more seriously because of equality and stuff.”
Male, 16-18, BC1C2, Manchester

In this context, there is a sense that the spotlight is now on men to see if they are up to the challenge of satisfying women’s needs and demands - 52% agree that ‘men are under more pressure to perform sexually now than they were 75 years ago’. >
Looking forward to the next 75 years:
fresh challenges, fresh solutions

The research shows that there is a consensus across the generations that there have been a lot of positive developments in sex, relationships and the family over the last 75 years. However, there is still a need for further changes to ensure that everyone benefits from good sexual health throughout their lives.

Doing the groundwork: preparing strong foundations

It is clear from the research that there is a real need for people to have better preparation at an early stage for developing strong and successful relationships in later life.

Putting the 'R' into SRE

This preparation should start with comprehensive sex and relationships education (SRE), covering the emotional as well as the physical side of sex and relationships. There is growing demand for this to start earlier in order to meet young people’s needs: 56% agree that ‘primary school children should receive appropriate education on sex and relationships in school’, and agreement is highest (59%) among those age groups most likely to have primary school age children, the 35-44 and 45-54 year olds.

Promoting confidence and self-esteem

It is also vitally important that SRE - within the broader framework of Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) - addresses issues of confidence and self-esteem. Young people, in particular, are vulnerable to the effects of peer pressure and high expectations, which can be overwhelming if they are not confident enough in themselves and their own judgement to resist this pressure.

“If you don’t have sex with him then you’re seen as weak and if all your friends have done it as well they’re going to think there’s something wrong with you. You feel pressured into doing it so you have to do it to be in with the crowd.”

Female, 16–18, DE, Birmingham

“Well a lot of men they say in the papers are not so confident now women have become more confident...and that’s a sad state of affairs really because there’s been more men under the age of 28 I think it was that have committed suicide because they haven’t felt confident in themselves or there’s been something lacking.”

Female, 70+, BC1C2, Birmingham

Exploring the realities of relationships

In order to prepare people effectively for future relationships, there is a need for greater discussion of the realities of relationships, both within SRE and in wider discussions and media comment about sex and relationships. Currently, 58% agree that ‘sexual relationships are more likely to break down now than they were 75 years ago as young people have unrealistic expectations of them’.

The research clearly shows that young people aspire to have long-lasting relationships, but that expectations about behaviour have changed. In this context, there needs to be a move towards balancing out people’s expectations of the realities of long-term relationships.

Taking responsibility

It is important that people are equipped with the knowledge, skills and values to prepare them for the complexities of sex and relationships in the modern world. Once thus equipped, there is a need for people to take responsibility for their own
and others’ sexual and emotional wellbeing.

Responsibility for yourself and for your sexual partner

It is encouraging to see that 91% of those surveyed agree that ‘men have the same responsibility as women to use contraception during sex’. As we have seen, there is now much greater equality between men and women in all aspects of life, including sex and relationships. There is clearly now a consensus that contraceptive use is a shared responsibility between sexual partners.

However, beyond contraception, there is some concern that other aspects of sexual health are more likely to be neglected. Currently, 46% agree that ‘sexually explicit TV shows (like Sex and the City and Footballers’ Wives) encourage people to be less responsible about their sexual health’ - although this falls to only 35% of 18-24 year olds compared with 56% of 55-64 year olds. Nonetheless, an increasingly explicit media inevitably has an impact on people’s perceptions of sex and relationships, and it is important to develop a societal climate which encourages people to be responsible about every aspect of their sexual health.

There is also concern that people are more likely to cheat on their sexual partners because new technology has given access to multiple means of doing so. 61% agree that new technology (such as e-mail, text messaging and chatrooms) makes it easier for people to cheat on their sexual partners. Although it is difficult to know whether this perception is borne out by reality, it is clear that people do need to take responsibility for their own use of modern technology within the broader context of their sexual relationships.

STIs and HIV

There is clear concern about the rising rates of sexually transmitted infections - including HIV - in the UK. Some older research participants recalled a time when syphilis was considered a death sentence, and are horrified that there is an equivalent threat nowadays in HIV. 70% agree that ‘HIV presents more of a threat to the heterosexual population in the UK today than it did a decade ago’.

“There’s loads more diseases now.”
Female, 16-18, DE, Birmingham

“But when it boils down to it, you can have had sex with a few people or sex with one person but [if] that person has had sex with a hundred people and you’re both just as likely to get, you know? You have sex with one person, you’re not careful, you can get AIDS....It’s all so risky, whatever way you look at it.”
Female, 19-24, BC1C2, London

In this context, all generations are keen to see people take greater responsibility for their sexual health, and for the scourge of STIs, especially HIV, to be eradicated globally.

Conclusions

There is a strong consensus across all age groups that the changes and developments that we have seen in family life, relationships and sex over the last 75 years have been overwhelmingly positive. People welcome the fact that there is now greater equality and opportunity for all, and that people are allowed to make their own choices in life rather than being forced into conforming to family and societal expectations.

“So times have changed really haven’t they, radically. I don’t think they were the good old days, don’t get me wrong, I think you’ve got far more now than ever you had before, you’ve got far more opportunity.”
Female, 70+, BC1C2, Birmingham

However, people also recognise that there are areas within the arena of family, sex and relationships that could be improved further. In particular, people are keen to see better preparation given for the realities of sex and relationships, and for people then to take real responsibility for their own and their sexual partners’ health and wellbeing. We’ve come a long way in 75 years, and there is a strong will for us to go further to ensure that all people are able to benefit from sexual health, for life.

fpa (Family Planning Association) is the UK’s leading sexual health charity working to improve the sexual health and reproductive rights of all people throughout the UK. fpa wants to see a society with open and positive attitudes to sex, in which everybody enjoys sexual health and where sexual and reproductive rights are respected.
For more than seven decades, fpa has been at the heart of the media debate about sexual health, providing balanced, objective and authoritative opinion. A quick look at past coverage shows that whilst there have been significant changes in sexual health over the past 75 years, many of the debates of the past still resonate today as Karen Brewer reveals.
shouted ‘Free Love’ and called the measure ‘sensible and humane’ in its leader column, *The Sun* advised the health service would be overrun with eager applicants: ‘Love on the NHS; ‘chaos warning’ (April 1st 1974). *The Daily Telegraph* chocked ‘Fury at free contraceptive pill plans’, calling the move ‘the first, appropriately sterile, fruit of socialism…just another State-subsidised amenity like a stroll around the Tate Gallery’ in a leader entitled ‘Sex on the State’.

Confidential advice and treatment for under-16 year olds has been a bone of contention for over 30 years. In 1971 the BMA advised doctors to maintain the confidentiality of young patients, and in 1974 the Department of Health issued guidance for doctors clarifying the legality of provision of contraception without parental consent. When this guidance was brought before the courts in the eighties, headlines such as ‘Mother in contraceptive pill challenge’ (*The Times*, July 19th 1983) and ‘Giving the contraceptive pill to under-age girls nearly a crime, QC says’ (*The Times*, also July 19th 1983) led to fear and confusion amongst young people and the confidentiality of services remains their chief concern today. More recent headlines such as ‘School fixes abortion for girl of just 14…and parents didn’t know’ (*The Sun, May 13th 2004*) and ‘The State can never replace a loving mother’ (*Daily Mail*, May 14th 2004) have spurred action leading to the re-opening of this debate and a judicial review of the existing guidelines on confidentiality. As ever, fpa’s comment has concentrated on the right of individuals to make their own decisions with appropriate advice and support.

Let’s talk about sex — please! Sex and relationships education has always been at the heart of fpa’s work. The Minister needs to take a strong line, following the example of Sweden and Denmark, and make full teaching of sex compulsory in all schools…Sex education needs to be a continuous process from the nursery to the sixth form.’ This comment comes not from fpa in 2005 but the *London Evening News* (8th February 1967) and was part of a feature called ‘Do schools face the facts of life?’ The previous year *The Sun’s* front page had castigated parents for not talking to their children about sex and relationships in ‘What Britain’s youngsters must be told in 1966’ (January 4th 1966), suggesting that if parents ‘in the main will not take on this vital chore’ that ‘Britain’s doctors could perhaps best cope with the outside-the-home job of giving boys and girls the facts of life’.

fpa’s own experience shows that resources produced for sex education outside the home often generate a strong knee-jerk reaction from the conservative media and in 1969 it was the turn of the BBC to come under fire. The news that the corporation had produced sex education programmes for eight year olds was greeted with much sound and fury. *The Sunday Telegraph*’s correspondent bravely viewed the programmes that had caused such outrage in the media and concluded ‘they could shock or distress only those adults who are themselves unlikely to be good instructors in the facts of life - the prurient, the embarrassed or the ashamed’ and remarked ‘many parents are happy to shirk the issue’ (November 2nd 1969).

Such comment is not often heard today, and fpa itself is more familiar with the criticisms that appeared in ‘The family under pressure’ (*The Times*, Friday March 16th 1973), which referred to ‘the fanatics of the Family Planning Association’ and asserted ‘an important element of the fpa would like to go into the abortion business, and also take over sex education…Its approach to sex education is modishly in a value-free style - which itself implies a value judgement.’

**Daily dialogue with today’s media**

Today, fpa’s press office remains as busy as ever, and contraception, teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, abortion and sex and relationships education remain at the heart of its dialogue with the media. The office receives around 2,000 calls a year, around half of which are from the national news media. The work fpa does is inherently controversial because it confronts the different views society has about sex and attempts to change the status quo to achieve sexual health for all — so fpa can expect to be making the news for many years to come.

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**Recognition for writers**

fpa’s Rosemary Goodchild Award is an annual competition for journalists writing on any subject in sexual health. It was created in memory of fpa’s former press officer, who sadly died of ovarian cancer in March 1988. The award, which recognises the important role that the media has in educating and informing the public about sexual health, is open to all national and regional press, consumer magazines, trade press and professional journalists.

More entries are received every year as the award’s popularity and status grows. The judging panel includes senior fpa staff and Trevor Goodchild (Rosemary’s husband). A top journalist from a different national newspaper is also invited onto the panel every year. This ensures that the entries are not only judged on their style and quality of information, but also on journalistic competence.

The entry criteria is fairly broad. Participants can submit articles on any aspect of sexual health. These can include sex and relationships education, sexual health services, sexually transmitted infections, sexuality and gender, sex and the law, pregnancy, abortion or contraception. It must of course be factually correct and medically sound.

Articles arrive from across the broad spectrum of the British media. Previous winners include Jenny Wood of Company magazine for ‘What’s your chance of having an STI?’ John Ilman’s ‘Not Tonight’ from the *Sunday Telegraph*. Becky Moran of *Fash* magazine for ‘Young people and sex’, and Katherine Kalamis’s ‘HIV positive mother of three screens/HIV dispels myths about having children’ from *the Guardian*. Heavily awarded for ‘What Britain’s young people need to know’ from the *Newcastle Evening Chronicle*.

*Don’t let infection leave you red faced*, was described by the judges as “very well-written, informative, struck an appropriate tone with the audience and was ground-breaking in its approach.”
Speakeasy: educating and inspiring parents

fpa's remarkable Speakeasy project has been chosen as the focus for the organisation's 75th anniversary, and it is easy to see why. Here, Speakeasy Manager, David Kesterton gives a fascinating overview of the important achievements to date and hopes for the future.

Speakeasy is a community-based education programme run by fpa, and one that has captured the hearts and minds of many since it was launched in 2002. Through its imaginative and insightful approach and with the support of a highly talented team from fpa, the programme has been entirely successful in achieving its overall aim of encouraging parental involvement in the sex and relationships education of children in many communities across England especially areas of social and economic disadvantage.

Making a direct difference
The programme began early in 2002, and the direct work with parents was funded by the Big Lottery Fund for a three year period which ended in January 2005.

The main work undertaken by the Speakeasy team consists of directly facilitating community-based Speakeasy groups with parents, usually consisting of seven weekly sessions plus an initial “taster” session. Packages of training and support for local health and other relevant professionals have also been provided in different regions of the UK, equipping them to deliver Speakeasy to groups of parents in their area and spread their learning to more professionals.

In this way, Speakeasy has developed into a second and third tier programme - facilitating groups with parents in schools; supporting parents who take on the role of peer educators following their Speakeasy training; and contributing to other parenting work as opportunities allow.

Parents participating in the Speakeasy training have the opportunity to obtain accreditation. This was developed through the Open College Network, an awards body that specialises in adult learning programmes.

A pioneering learning curve
The Speakeasy parents’ course was the first major output of the three-year programme. There is considerable emphasis on the groups being needs-led and on catering for parents who have little or no experience of adult education.

Each session of the course covers a different topic and lasts about two hours. There are a number of different tasks and approaches within each topic,
to maintain interest and aid learning and discussion. The exact content of each session varies, depending on the facilitators and the group itself. Key activities within these sessions include: work in groups with a poster sized picture of a girl and boy, writing or drawing the changes at puberty on the relevant part of the body; learning opportunities and what children need to know and at what age; the creation of a collage poster of messages and stereotypes of sex and relationships; and listing all types of contraception, how they work, advantages and disadvantages. STIs are discussed using a quiz, jigsaw and colour photographs. There is also a session on keeping safe from harm.

At the start of the course, parents discuss what they hope to gain from Speakeasy and any concerns they may have. They also agree the ground rules and the words that they will use during the course, including those referring to the male and female genitalia. Ground rules always include confidentiality, broken only in relation to child protection issues, and listening to each other. Participants are encouraged to use the correct words when referring to different body parts. Some groups agree to use alternative or slang terms, but the facilitator still uses the correct terms and encourages participants to be comfortable with using them.

In addition to the full, seven-week course, Speakeasy has developed a number of adaptations or tailored courses, generally shorter than the full course and for parent/carer groups in specific settings, including those attending an Asian women’s centre and those at a young offender’s institute.

Resounding results! Speakeasy can feel justifiably proud of the speed with which the programme got underway within the three-year funding programme. The Speakeasy Manager was in post in January 2002 and the comprehensive Speakeasy course was successfully developed and accredited in time for the first courses to run in April 2002. Given that the accreditation process itself normally takes three months, this is a considerable achievement. The course for professionals was also developed effectively some 12 months later.

The continued development of second and third tier work, cascading learning via professionals is exciting and an excellent example of a voluntary sector programme increasing its sustainability through income generation. It also increases the numbers of parents for whom Speakeasy has become available and will become available in future years, by training trainers outside fpa.

A qualified success All the professionals completing evaluation forms in the third year said that the aims of the course had been met “well” or “very well”. The average score was a highly rewarding 4.8 out of 5.

what the parents say...

“It helped me feel at ease whilst talking or explaining topics that otherwise could have been embarrassing.”

“Really, really good; I thoroughly enjoyed it, bonding with other group members and picking up ideas, understanding each other... a group learning process.”

“I enjoyed all of the learning across the different areas, especially the development of children. I also learnt about the myths which I had in the back of my mind and those myths have been cleared now that I have learnt the facts.”

“It was nice to hear different views and talk openly about our experiences.”

“Fabulous! The group was good for batting around and picking up new ideas, and so was the fpa trainer at letting us talk and correcting us when we got the information wrong.”

“I wanted to learn what is the current way to approach subjects that are not talked about openly and seriously even among my friends. I needed reassurance of how to approach issues related to sexuality and teenage development.”
Apart from “crisps and cake”, none of those completing monitoring forms in Year 3 thought that there was anything missing from the course!

The Speakeasy course for parents and its delivery are almost universally appreciated and enjoyed and described as high quality. Enjoyment, discussion and a safe space appear to be particularly important for parents and the Speakeasy course scores highly on all counts.

Independent evaluation shows that excellent progress has been made towards achieving the four main aims of Speakeasy with parents. Overall, 93% of parents interviewed said they had benefited from the course. 100% of parents interviewed said that they were more confident about talking to their children than they had been before the course. It was always hoped that increased confidence in talking about sexual matters would have a knock-on effect in parents talking to their children generally, including other issues. There is evidence from the evaluation that this has been the case.

Although virtually all parents started Speakeasy wanting to be able to talk to their children about sex, sexuality and relationships would have a knock-on effect in parents talking to their children generally, including other issues. There is evidence from the evaluation that this has been the case.

Growing by public demand

As Anne Weyman, fpa CEO emphasises, although Lottery funding will give the project a valuable boost, further significant funds will be required to achieve the aim of Speakeasy operating at a national level.

“Parents play a very important part in forming young people’s views and attitudes and we know that young people want their parents to talk to them about sex. Parents want to talk to their children too, but somehow it doesn’t happen. There’s all the embarrassment, a lack of familiarity with the lack of knowledge – and that’s why we think Speakeasy is so important.

“It’s the most wonderful project in that it enables parents to talk to their children, to be able to communicate about sex and relationships. But it also, of course, affects their communication more generally as well, effectively improving the whole relationship within the family. And the accreditation opens the door for many parents to further learning and future development.

“The more we do, the more demand there is. There are large areas of the country that we simply haven’t been able to get to because we haven’t got the resources – yet. So, with more money, we will be able to reach all those people who say to us, ‘please come and let us have Speakeasy too.’”

75th Anniversary Appeal

That’s why we’ve chosen Speakeasy for our 75th Appeal. What better way to celebrate our anniversary than by reaching out to more parents and children? We need £500,000 so that we can extend Speakeasy by training more professionals to work with parents across the UK, thereby reaching more children.

Just £10 a month will help six children every year. The more donations we receive, the more parents and children we can reach with Speakeasy training courses.

indicating that the outcome underestimates the powerful impact that the course can have on people’s lives, particularly those without prior experience of successful learning or of professional development. In fact, so successful has Speakeasy been, that it has not only encouraged parents to invest time in their own adult learning but also motivated them to explore other further education.

All fpa Speakeasy staff working as facilitators recounted with energy and animation the changes they witnessed and facilitated among the people they met. One said: “… they are strangers when we meet them, and eight weeks is a very short time, yet [participating in Speakeasy] can change people’s lives so much.”

In ten years’ time and as a result of our Speakeasy work, we will undoubtedly see more happy, healthy adults who are comfortable and confident both in their dialogue about sex and relationships and enjoying sexual health as a direct result. And, as today’s children become parents, we will see this being passed down to future generations - which must be the greatest outcome of them all.

Further funding

Funding has been secured for the next three years totalling £700,000. This is made up from strategic grants from the Big Lottery Fund and the Government’s Parenting Fund that seeks to strengthen the parenting sector in England.

“I particularly welcome the Speakeasy initiative because I know so many parents who really do want to be the person who gives their child sex education and who talks to them about relationships as well as all the other sexual health issues. I think courses like this are just going to be so valuable in empowering parents to strengthen their relationship with their children, today and for many years to come.”

Deirdre Sanders: agony aunt
body of evidence
Forget the facts of life. How much do you really know about how you and your partner’s bodies work, or about their sexual functions? See if you’re a ‘natural’, or whether maybe you need to know more with fpa’s insightful quick-fire quiz

1. How much blood is lost during the average period?
   a) 3-5 tablespoons
   b) 8-10 tablespoons
   c) 14-16 tablespoons

2. When does the menstrual cycle start?
   a) Once you have stopped bleeding
   b) When you start bleeding
   c) Once you have released an egg

3. How long is the average menstrual cycle?
   a) 21 days
   b) 28 days
   c) 30 days

4. At what stage is an egg released during the menstrual cycle?
   a) Just before a period
   b) Always on day 14
   c) Around 12-16 days before your next period

5. How long does the egg live in the body?
   a) A day
   b) A week
   c) The whole month

6. What’s the longest time sperm can live inside a woman’s body?
   a) 1 day
   b) 3-5 days
   c) 7 days

7. How long does it take the average couple to achieve a pregnancy?
   a) Three months
   b) Six months
   c) Nine months

8. How long does it take for sperm to develop inside a man’s body?
   a) 30 days
   b) 50 days
   c) 70 days

9. How many sperm are there in the average ejaculation?
   a) up to 200 million
   b) up to 300 million
   c) up to 500 million

10. After ejaculation, how long does it take sperm to swim into the womb?
    a) 2 minutes
    b) 15 minutes
    c) 1 hour

add up your answers
1. a) 10 points
   Many women worry about the level of bleeding they experience but the majority lose up to 3-5 tablespoons each month.
2. b) 10 points
   The menstrual cycle begins on the first day of your period - this is day 1 of your new cycle.
3. b) 10 points
   The average cycle lasts 28 days but some can be as short as 21 days or as long as 40 days.
4. c) 15 points
   Ovulation always occurs 12-16 days before your next period. It’s the time from the first day of your period to releasing an egg that can vary.
5. a) 20 points
   The egg lives between 12-24 hours in a woman’s body.
6. c) 25 points
   This means a woman can get pregnant up to a week after having sex if she releases an egg during that time.
7. b) 15 points
   The average is approximately six months, and around 80% of couples will conceive within one year of trying.
8. c) 20 points
   The sperm you see today started its journey two-and-a-half months ago, and its quality is affected by illness and the level of alcohol, smoking or drugs taken then.
9. b) 20 points
   When a man’s penis becomes erect, it leaks a few drops of semen and just one drop the size of a ‘full stop’ on this page contains about 1,500 sperm. That’s why it’s so important to use a condom before any genital contact takes place.
10. a) 25 points
    The best swim at 1.5mm per minute and get to the womb fast, so there’s no need to do handstands after sex to help you get pregnant!

how did you score?
Under 50: You need to brush up on some basics - fpa’s Bodyworks leaflet can help you find out more.
55-125: Well done, you’ve got good general knowledge on sexual health... keep it up!!
130 or more: Congratulations! You’re a fully qualified s-expert.
it takes two: men and contraception

As we move forward in time, sexual health issues are becoming ever more pertinent to men - with rises in STIs, unplanned pregnancy and erectile dysfunction. But where do men stand on contraception and what do they really want? Toni Belfield, Director of Information, explores the challenges and opportunities ahead.

Having sex and becoming pregnant takes two, it’s not just a ‘woman thing’. Men are involved. Women have always carried the responsibility for reproductive health, morbidity and mortality. However, decisions around the use of contraception for centuries relied entirely on men - withdrawal, periodic abstinence and use of condoms - and their precursors cannot be used without the co-operation of men.

With the advent of modern methods of contraception in the mid 20th century, women gained an opportunity to take control over their method of contraception - effectively absolving men from such decisions. At the same time, contraception became independent of intercourse. These factors altered the balance of male-female involvement in contraception and contributed significantly to women’s reproductive emancipation, while decreasing men’s visibility in contraception and reproductive health.

What men want

However, times are changing. There is increasing awareness that men should and need to be properly involved in sexual and reproductive health. Not just as a support to women’s needs, but also with regard to their own needs. Indeed, fpa’s ‘Men Too’ campaign in the mid-1980s was born out of the recognition that men received less support and encouragement than women.

Although women had fought long and hard to have control over their own fertility and decide on the number of children they wanted, it was realised that conception, parenthood and childrearing were areas in which men wanted more involvement.

This view has been strengthened by the increasingly high rates of unplanned pregnancy and STIs, including HIV, where men are expected to be involved in ‘safer sex’ and have a role in reproductive health and childrearing decision making. The imminent introduction of hormonal contraception for men means that they can no longer be left out of the contraceptive equation.

Time for the ‘male pill’?

Any mention of male hormonal contraception however still brings out the sceptics: ‘it will never happen’, ‘men won’t want to use it’ and ‘women won’t trust a man to use it’. Shame on you if you hold such views!

We can have some sympathy with the first point - as media headlines have been suggesting the “imminent availability” of the ‘male pill’ for the last 35 years! However, finding a method that effectively blocks the production of sperm, is easily reversible and safe and has no major side effects, was always going to take time. The human male has a highly organised ‘conveyor belt’ production of sperm that is more complex to interrupt than a woman’s cyclical pattern of ovulation. However, over 30 years of research has resulted in three hormonal contraceptive methods for men: a pill, implants and an injection.

Contraceptive choice is vital

Human trials using progestogens and testosterone have been shown to be highly effective with few side effects. Why three different methods? Just as women have a number of different choices, so it is vital that men do too. ‘Do men want to use it?’ The answer is yes.

Research shows clearly that many men would like to take some contraceptive responsibility and would use a hormonal method if it were available. The myth about women ‘not trusting a man to use it’ is just that - a myth, not fact. Contraceptive decision making and use though are complex. The introduction of new male contraceptive methods that extend choice, are reversible and non-intercourse-related raise the same questions and issues about safety, effectiveness and adherence that experts have been addressing for women, for many years.

A very real opportunity

Hormonal contraception for men will be a reality within the next 10 years. Professionals providing contraceptive services therefore need to address what is required now to include and support men making contraceptive choices. It will be a great challenge but also a major opportunity for providers to really engage with men. This could certainly bring about many other sexual health benefits for both sexes over time, not least in tackling STIs, but also in providing a more holistic approach to men’s needs.

Men are definitely on the agenda - and even the women’s magazine, Cosmopolitan, intrinsically linked with women’s sexual liberation, is featuring more male contributors. Why? To give female readers an insight into “what they’re thinking, what they want”. So if Cosmopolitan can do it, so can we!

Reproduced with kind permission from an article written by Toni Belfield for the Journal of Family Planning and Reproductive Health Care 2005: 31.
emergency contraception: morals, myths and misinformation

In the last four years, pharmacy provision of emergency hormonal contraception has given more women greater control over their fertility, but its future lies in its accessibility as Melissa Dear reports.

Emergency contraception has been a hot topic since its inception over 40 years ago. Frequently the subject of sensationalist media reports, it is the only method that can be used to prevent pregnancy after contraceptive failure or unprotected sex, and has benefited millions of women around the world by preventing unintended and unwanted pregnancies.

In the UK, fpa has campaigned tirelessly over the decades to raise awareness of emergency contraception as an integral part of contraceptive choice, and has been at the forefront of all the major changes and debate that have taken place.

Emergency hormonal contraception was first used in the 1960s, consisting of high doses of oestrogen. In the 1970s, a combination of oestrogen and progestogen was used, and during this decade copper IUDs also began to be inserted after sex as an emergency method (an IUD can be fitted within five days of ovulation). The first licensed hormonal product, Schering PC4, was finally launched in 1984. This was superceded in 2000 by the first progestogen-only product called Levonelle-2, which has itself been adapted and is available as a single tablet via pharmacies. (Levonelle-2 is available through NHS as two tablets until November 2005, when it too will be available as a single tablet.)

72 hours-after is the reality

Surveys show that today, about 95% of women aged 16-49 have heard of emergency hormonal contraception, commonly known as the ‘morning-after pill’. Unfortunately, this snappy misnomer means that many women don’t know it can be effective up to 72 hours after unprotected sex (although it is more effective the sooner it is taken), and fewer than half are aware an emergency IUD can be fitted up to five days afterwards.

Emergency contraception remains a moral battleground, surrounded by myths and misinformation. Anti-choice groups frequently claim its use is widespread and its very existence encourages unprotected sex, yet in 2003 emergency contraception was used by just 6% of women aged 16-49, and over 85% used it because their method of contraception had failed. Wild claims are also made about its safety and efficacy, which cause a great deal of unnecessary concern. Currently all the national and international regulatory agencies, such as the UK’s Medicines and Healthcare...
Products Regulatory Agency and the World Health Organisation, state that emergency pills are very safe and effective.

Greater access is vital
Fast access to emergency contraception is a must, but getting to a GP or family planning clinic is not always easy. In the late 1990s, fpa campaigned to widen access to emergency pills by lobbying for them to be made available through pharmacies without prescription. After a change in the product classification, emergency pills went on sale in January 2001, making instant access a reality on the high street.

Supply through pharmacies has proved highly successful, with over a quarter of women choosing to obtain emergency contraception this way. At the same time, increased NHS supply through outlets such as NHS Walk-in Centres and minor injuries units has meant the percentage of women experiencing problems obtaining emergency pills has fallen to just 4%.

Emergency pills work by preventing or delaying ovulation, or by stopping a fertilised egg implanting in the lining of the womb. However, the supply of emergency pills in pharmacies was challenged by a Judicial Review in 2001 brought by the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child, which claimed the pills were an abortifacient. This claim has been made numerous times over many years, and was again rejected in the judgement handed down in 2002, which confirmed that emergency pills act prior to implantation and could continue to be lawfully supplied in pharmacies.

What women really want
The future of emergency contraception lies in making it as widely and freely available as possible. For Contraceptive Awareness Week 2004, fpa launched a campaign to make emergency pills available in advance of need to women who want them. This ‘access through the bathroom cabinet’ will help women who can’t get to a health professional easily, and studies show women are more likely to use emergency pills after unprotected sex if they have them in advance, rather than having to visit a health professional.

Research also shows advance supply is safe, effective and does not increase the incidence of unprotected sex. In a survey for the week, 75% of women calling fpa’s helpline said they would like to have emergency pills in advance, but less than half of family planning clinics provided them on this basis.

Even in such a relatively short time, it is clear that emergency contraception has had a profound impact on today’s family planning. It continues to be an effective prevention measure that helps avert the financial, social and individual costs of unintended pregnancy, in turn directly benefitting public health. And, most importantly, it gives women the ability to make informed choices and access to the means of helping them to control their fertility - the most fundamental of all of fpa’s aims since its inception.
learning disability projects
Claire Fanstone: fpa Project Manager and Trainer - Learning Disabilities

fpa’s learning disability projects focus on training health and social care professionals who work with people with learning disabilities. We promote the sexual rights of people with learning disabilities whilst discussing the issues and concerns of staff in this sensitive area of people’s lives.

There is an exceptional history of learning disability training within fpa which has spanned decades. Times are changing and more than highlighting this area of work to staff, we are tailoring training appropriate to their needs. This year has seen the introduction of two important new training courses, one aimed at staff working with people with severe learning disabilities and the other looking at the new 3D resources which have been made specifically for this area of work.

This year also sees the publication of Learning disabilities, sex and the law – a practical guide, which is an accessible guide to the law as it relates to sexual activity and people with learning disabilities. Also, Talking together...about contraception is a new resource for people with learning disabilities and those who work with or care for them.

project Jiwsi
Mel Gadd: fpa Project Co-ordinator - Jiwsi
Project Jiwsi is a community education project from fpa which delivers sexual health and relationships education to groups of vulnerable young people in community settings throughout North Wales.

Our objectives are to: carry out programmes of sex and relationships education (SRE) in community-based settings; familiarise the young people with local sexual health and contraceptive services when appropriate; and provide accredited training in ‘Sex Education and Relationships Work in Practice’ for youth and community workers and other professionals.

Our successes are that: we have worked with diverse groups of vulnerable young people eg young people with learning difficulties, homeless young people, looked after children, young offenders to name but a few; we have also trained professionals in delivering high quality SRE; we have set up and maintained the Jiwsi Network, a popular and effective SRE network in North Wales for a diverse group of professionals; and we have successfully disseminated information about the needs of our most vulnerable young people to key decision making and commissioning groups in North Wales.

primary care settings
Pat Grey: fpa Project Manager
The purpose of Pat’s work in primary care is to develop improved staff attitudes, knowledge and skills and to encourage a whole team approach to delivering services in line with the National Strategy for Sexual Health and HIV.

We achieve this by providing support and training for practice nurses and others working in sexual health, in key topics such as emergency contraception, confidentiality, working with the new best practice guidance; offering a consultancy service for the development of team protocols, standards and audit measures; and facilitating collaboration between services at a local level.

young people’s projects
Angie Brown-Simpson: fpa Project Manager - Young People

fpa has an active programme of developing new resources for young people and professionals. Currently we are developing a new young people’s booklet on sexuality and relationships as well as resources aimed at young people aged 16+.

We also develop and deliver training to professionals on working with young people through Generation Sex, Beyond Barbie, Training the Trainers, Straight Talking and Delivering SRE in the classroom.

For several years we have run the Pamela Sheridan Award for good practice in Sex and Relationships Education (SRE).

project Aw’right
Andrew Reid: fpa Project Officer - Aw’right
Historically, information about sexuality and sexual health has not always been readily available or accessible to young men.

The Aw’right project is a community-based personal development and sexual health project for boys and young men under 25. It is located in areas of multiple deprivation in Glasgow, Ayrshire, Lanarkshire and Renfrewshire.

Two project workers work directly with the target group, delivering programmes of eight weekly participative workshops lasting about two hours each. They offer the young men a safe and enjoyable opportunity to explore relationships, sexual health and sexuality in an informal group setting.

Why the need for this project? Because the sexual health of men is at risk simply as a result of being men. The current models of masculinity dictate that men should not take care of their health, should not ask for help and should take sexual risks.

Scotland has one of the highest rates of unplanned pregnancy in Europe and each year the instance of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) among young people rises. All sexually active young men are at risk of becoming a parent and contracting STIs and this is most likely to be the case in socio-economically deprived areas.

The underlying theme of our training is to help young men challenge traditional images and roles within masculinity. By training other professionals, fpa Scotland is ensuring that boys and young...
men in Scotland will continue to benefit from the project in the future.

**project Choices**

Arlene McLaren: fpa Project Officer - Choices

Choices is a community-based personal development sexual health programme for young women; funded by the Northern and Eastern Health and Social Service Boards.

The overall aim of Choices is to empower young women to make informed choices about their personal and sexual relationships, their health and their lives in general. The Choices programme is aware that young women are often concerned about self-image, how their bodies work, relationships, contraception, sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy. Therefore, the Choices programme is an opportunity for young women to develop positive self-esteem and skills in communication, assertiveness and decision making.

Choices caters for young women aged 25 and under living within the Northern and Eastern Board area. The programme consists of six to eight weekly participative workshops lasting up to two hours. The workshops are designed to meet the needs of each specific group within a safe and comfortable environment.

Choices is based on a community development approach. This encourages young women to become independent thinkers taking responsibility for their actions by enabling them to become more skilled and knowledgeable in decision making in terms of their own personal and social development. This approach also ensures that the young women feel they have ownership of the project.

Response from young women who have participated in the Choices programme has been very positive, such as: "Choices has given me an opportunity to learn more things about my body and how it works" (16 year old young woman), and "Learning new things about the developments of life and doing this course improved my confidence" (15 year old young woman).

**project Checkitout**

Joe Harris: fpa Project Officer - Checkitout

Checkitout is a pilot sexual health and personal development project targeting the needs of young people who are currently living in hostel accommodation throughout Northern Ireland.

fpaNI, with support from the Northern Ireland Executive's Children's Fund, is working in partnership with the Simon Community in developing and implementing a three year pilot personal development and sexual health project for young people who are homeless and under 25 years of age.

The aim of the project is to enable young people who are homeless to make informed and responsible choices about their personal and sexual lives and relationships, and it has been running for just over one year (from September 2003).

During this time, young people living in Simon Community Hostels throughout Northern Ireland have participated in programmes looking at issues they identified as relevant such as: how to deal with relationships while living in a hostel; sexually transmitted infection awareness; contraception; unintended fatherhood; sex and the law; gender and sexuality; sexual consent and decision making; and personal development.

The programmes are designed not only to provide information but also to develop a greater self-awareness and enhancement of the skills that are needed to develop and maintain positive sexual health and personal relationships.

**'bout ye**

Katrina Heaney and Darren Fowler: fpa Project Officers - 'Bout Ye

'Bout ye is a young men's sexual health programme and it has been running for the last 10 years. The project runs throughout Northern Ireland in areas characterised by social deprivation as the government has repeatedly stated that sexual ill health is a cause and consequence of socio-economic disadvantage.

The 'Bout ye project is essentially a personal development programme for young men to promote positive sexual health and personal relationships. The programme content is designed to equip young men with the necessary skills, knowledge and confidence to make informed decisions and to help them communicate and negotiate more assertively. We support our young men through extremely high risk developmental periods such as adolescence where the role of becoming a man and the accompanying tensions can be overwhelming.

These aims are met through a series of objectives in an environment where young men feel safe and comfortable to discuss and explore the issues affecting them. Since the programme was funded in 2001 by The Community Fund, approximately 2,700 young men have attended the 'Bout ye project in Northern Ireland.

**south Asian women's project**

Fatheena Mubarek: fpa Project Officer - South Asian women's project

In October 2001, fpa commenced a research project - funded by Lloyds TSB Foundation - on the relationship between mental health problems and sexual health issues among South Asian women aged 16-24. The women were mainly from Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities. One of the key findings of this research was the undeniable need for accurate sexual health information among South Asian communities, not just in terms of having necessary sexual health information to hand out to people who may want it but also by accessing the communities through organisations which cater for their needs. fpa worked in partnership with six different sexual health organisations to promote and sexual health. Workers were also provided with information, resources and training on sexual health.

**refugees and asylum seekers sexual health project**

Terri Ryland: fpa Practice Development Director

fpa is working in partnership with Tandem Communications and Research and the Centre for HIV and Sexual Health on this project. Funded by the Department of Health, it was established to respond to the many sexual health and HIV issues that asylum seekers and refugees face.

Our aim is to raise awareness of these issues, encourage the development of initiatives to address them, and to share good practice. The project recruited and trained a group of refugee community researchers. These researchers then carried out a small scale study among refugees and asylum seekers in South and West Yorkshire, gathering information about their sexual health needs and concerns. Wider research was undertaken and information collated to identify key issues and examples of relevant sexual health initiatives, networks and resources.

The results of this research will be published in a practical handbook for those who work with refugees and asylum seekers and sexual health providers in Spring 2005.

**want to know more?**

To find out more about these projects call: 020 7837 5432 or email: 75@fpa.org.uk.
toad test for pregnancy

fpa's 50th Anniversary booklet from 1979 records that 500 South African female toads were shipped to the organisation in 1948, to be used for human pregnancy tests. In the early 60s, however, chemical methods of testing for pregnancy were developed and the day came when fpa no longer needed their tiny amphibian friends. What were they to do with the 200 toads that remained? Finally, they opted for giving the creatures homes in schools and universities, no doubt providing their own insight into reproduction in pairs!

in the beginning

It's still unknown to many that Marie Stopes was one of the pioneers behind fpa's toad test for pregnancy in its earliest form. In fact, it was she who opened the first birth control clinic in London in 1921. Then, on 17th July 1930, Dr Stopes and Mr Ernest Thurtle proposed at a meeting of interested and influential people that the National Birth Control Council should be brought into being.

long-haired lovers!

In 1973, an fpa volunteer co-ordinator wrote of recent volunteer help: "The patients have accepted these charming, long-haired helpers with equanimity, and we are very pleased indeed to have them with us."

what's in a name?

On July 17, 1930, the National Birth Control Council was formed after a resolution to synchronize the work of the five then existing birth control societies. The council's name was changed to the National Birth Control Association in 1931, and shortly thereafter in lieu of fears that the association was about depopulation, to the Family Planning Association (fpa).

dark disapproval

In the early years, disapproving health officials took to removing electric light-bulbs from clinic premises before birth control sessions, in a bid to thwart the activity. Ever-resilient and resourceful, fpa volunteers simply journeyed to work armed with their own light bulbs in addition to their regular supplies of contraceptives.

did you know?

There's also a whole host of fascinating facts and interesting information about fpa that you may very well never have heard. Here, we reveal just some of the more unusual connections, including those with HG Wells, Oscar Wilde, pubs and... toads!

a true who's who!

HG Wells

Author of such titles as The Invisible Man and War of the Worlds, Wells was one of the first vice-presidents of the new National Birth Control Association in 1931. The one-time member of the socialist Fabian Society in London, Wells was an outspoken critic of Victorian social order.

Bertrand Russell

Also linked to the earliest family planning group, Russell was vice-president of the new National Birth Control Association in 1931. His interests in the association were primarily to do with his concerns regarding population growth. He wrote in his essay, An Outline of Intellectual Rubbish, that "the commonest objection to birth control is that it is against nature. (For some reason we are not allowed to say that celibacy is against nature; the only reason I can think of is that it is not new.)"

Mrs Holland

A niece of Oscar Wilde, Mrs Holland played her part helping the organisation to develop during the early 1930s, at fpa's headquarters in London.

it's my cap, darn it!

In the 1940s, one well-remembered woman visited an fpa clinic asking for a new cap. When she handed in her old one which she confirmed that she had indeed been using for quite a number of years, the volunteer was aghast to discover that it had a huge hole in it which had been neatly darned.

where's my rubber, Johnny?

During the Second World War, several London fpa clinics were temporarily put out of action by flying bombs. But the greatest battle was the shortage of contraceptives caused by the controlled production of rubber for war purposes. Apparently, at one point the only rubber available was a rainbow striped batch which resulted in rather jaunty looking multi-coloured caps and condoms.

an awful warning

Possibly inspired by fpa's campaign for 'wanted children', Beatrice James' poem on the potential fate for 'unwanted children' originally appeared in a letter to The Guardian:

Six unwanted babies, unaborted and alive;
One was battered by his Mum, and then there were five.
Five unwanted babies at the County Council's door;
One was institutionalised and then there were four.
Four unwanted children thought they'd try out LSD:
One had a disastrous trip and then there were three.
Three unwanted children wondering what to do;
One bashed up an OAP (old age pensioner) and then there were two.
Two unwanted children thought that life was not much fun;
One took an overdose and then there was one.
One unwanted girl seeking love from loveless sex;
Had a string of babies.... and then there were six.
People in the public eye have the power to reach and influence people with their views, especially on sexual health. This is why we’re pleased to present so many messages of congratulations from those who we are proud to call fpa supporters, compiled by Rebecca Findlay.

“Congratulations to fpa on 75 years of service to the cause of sexual health. fpa is exciting, challenging, innovative, it’s doing the business. Let’s listen. Let’s support fpa!”
Rt Hon Paul Boateng MP, Chief Secretary to the Treasury

“Young people and their families may find it difficult to talk about sex and relationships, but learning about it is a very special part of growing up. Well done fpa in supporting parents to do this and best wishes for your future work.”
Janet Ellis, TV presenter

“fpa’s campaigning for improved sexual and reproductive health is focused and effective. It works. This, together with its excellent literature and support for individual members of the public, makes a significant contribution to involvement in sexual health in the UK.”
Dr Alison Bigrigg, President, FFPHC (Faculty of Family Planning and Reproductive Health Care)

“fpa has fulfilled an important and responsible role in the emancipation of women from the anxiety of unplanned pregnancy and in general has contributed enormously to the open and frank discussion of sexual health.”
Anna Ford, TV presenter
“The past 75 years have witnessed enormous changes in social and health provision. FPA has presided over the many developments that have arisen in the field of sexual health and this agenda will continue to take on a high profile as emerging issues demand fresh challenges. I welcome FPA’s role as an active facilitator in engaging young people with the information and awareness they need to take responsible decisions. I wish FPA every success in maintaining its dynamic work as it responds to the diverse expectations of the 21st century.”

Rt Hon Charles Clarke MP, Home Secretary

“Improving sex and relationship education, sexual health advice and supporting parents to talk to their children about sex and relationships without embarrassment is vital. FPA’s sexual health direct helpline and enquiry service performs a key role in providing a confidential advice service for the public. And while parents have a crucial role in helping young people to make safe, responsible choices about their relationships, FPA provides an excellent range of support to parents and carers including Speakeasy groups, community projects and publications such as FPA’s Parents’ Pack.”

Rt Hon Patricia Hewitt, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry

“I am delighted to send my best wishes to FPA on your 75th anniversary. As society changes, so the role of FPA will inevitably evolve, but I am certain that just as you have responded to these changes over the last 75 years, you will continue to do the same during the next 75 years.”

Rt Hon Charles Kennedy MP, Ross Skye and Inverness West, Leader of the Liberal Democrats Party

“The human, social and economic cost of failing to promote good sexual health is serious. I congratulate FPA for its efforts over the last 75 years in tackling the growing incidence of sexually transmitted infection, and for its work in providing information to promote good sexual health. In doing so FPA has contributed greatly to the wellbeing of the nation and has helped many individuals take responsibility for their health.”

Andrew Lansley CBE MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Health

“FPA has done fantastic work to improve the quality and accessibility of appropriate relationships and sex education for children and adults. Both its campaigning and its resources and training have contributed to this. Quality sex and relationship education helps people build healthy relationships and make healthy choices.”

Angela Sibson, Chief Executive, Relate

“Women especially have much to thank FPA for. In campaigns - both public and behind the scenes - it has fought for free contraception for all, sex education in schools, information and help to be available on sexually transmitted infections. It joined in the fight for easier access to abortion. The whole gamut of reproductive health has benefited from FPA’s authoritative voice.”

Gill Cox, Bella

“FPA remains dynamic and vibrant in responding to many of the challenges of present day society. Since it was established the demand for sexual health and contraceptive services has risen significantly and and I am proud to be involved with such an important organisation. Good information and access to contraception and advice is still very hard to find.”

Beverly Turner, TV presenter and FPA patron

“FPA’s role and contribution in the family planning movement is all the more remarkable for the fact that it is intricately interwoven with the history of the International Planned Parenthood Federation. Through the collaborative efforts of distinguished pioneers FPA has initiated contacts with like-minded individuals and groups from countries in other parts of the world, with especially a keen interest in Asia.”

Dr Raj Karim, Regional Director IPPF ESEAO

“FPA’s wisdom, support and comfort have helped thousands over the years. I continually refer people to them for advice and assistance, and believe we should support them in whatever we can.”

Jenni Trent Hughes, Red magazine

“FPA has done vital work in the past, and is just as necessary today in spite of the many technological and societal changes in our world. It is a fact that many women, including young women, still need the sensitive help and practical support it provides. The organisation has carried on this important work in spite of much opposition. FPA should be congratulated on its decisions and its commitment to some of the most vulnerable people in our society.”

Eileen Bell MLA, Northern Ireland Assembly, Alliance Party

“FPA continues to do invaluable work and to make a huge difference to the quality of people’s lives.”

Sinead Cusack, actress

“Today, championing sexual and reproductive health and rights, especially for the poor, underserved and marginalised, is becoming an increasingly challenging task. As with veterans like FPA by our side and the many years of experience they bring to the table, we will definitely keep making an impact on the lives of millions of people worldwide.”

Madhu Bala Nath, Regional Director, South Asia Regional Office, IPPF

“Access to independent, expert advice is really important for my readers. To be able to get advice that is not judgmental from people who haven’t got an axe to grind - and advice that is accurate – is vital for their health.”

Jane Butterworth, News of the World

“FPA Cymru has been a key partner organisation in the development and delivery of our sexual health strategy to meet these challenges in Wales. It has been at the forefront of delivering training for sexual health and providing innovative community education projects for vulnerable young people in South and North Wales. In addition, FPA Cymru has played a central role in facilitating the sharing of best practice in Wales.”

Jane Hutt AM Welsh Assembly
"We live in a sophisticated society where every manner of sexual issue is discussed or displayed openly. Yet we have the highest rates of sexually transmitted illnesses, falling fertility rates and more divorce than ever. The only answer is to keep informing people of the facts, the facts of life and the dangers of ignoring those facts." Maureen Lipman, actress

"We only have the freedom to make choices about our sexual lives if they are based on quality information and advice. Providing this information and making it easily accessible is a fundamental part of fpa’s work and long may it continue." Tony Robinson, TV presenter

"I’ve always been a great supporter of fpa and its work in breaking down the barriers surrounding sexual health. There’s still a huge need for its services which are essential in providing men and women with the information they need. As a doctor and broadcaster, I have referred countless people to fpa over the years for its excellent, high quality advice." Dr Miriam Stoppard

"It is just as important that men seek advice about their sexual health as women. So fpa’s helpline is a very easy way for men to get the information that they need. Congratulations on your work, fpa." Mark Moraghan, actor

"Today we take for granted the wide availability of contraception, which has transformed the lives of so many men and women. fpa has made a major contribution to this and has played an inspiring role in advocating high quality contraceptive and sexual health services for all. However, despite the awesome advances made during fpa’s life-time we still have a number of new challenges to address if we are to continue to secure improvements in sexual health, fpa has been a valuable partner to the Department of Health and others in meeting these challenges, and I look forward to continuing our positive relationship with fpa over the coming years." Rt Hon John Reid, Secretary of State for Health

"Many congratulations on achieving your 75th anniversary. Your work over these years has been invaluable to women." Maggie Elliott, President, Royal College of Midwives

"fpa encourages young people to take a responsible attitude towards sex. While recognising that sex is best within a loving relationship, fpa is a leader in providing young people with essential sex education. It also offers vital confidential contraceptive advice for young people and help on all aspects of sexual relationships."

Zelda West Meads, You Magazine, Mail on Sunday

"The importance of contraception and sexual health in a happy life has to be learned afresh by each new generation. fpa with its 75 years of experience has deservedly won the trust and respect of the public and professionals alike." Dr Roger Neighbour, President, Royal College of General Practitioners

"After the handover of clinics in 1974, fpa refocused its efforts and has since gone from strength to strength supporting men, women and health professionals with information and advice about a range of sexual health issues. Your work is as essential as ever and challenges still remain."

Dr Mike Smith, GP

"What would we all have done without fpa during the last 75 years? I dread to think. I am thrilled that it’s still going strong, offering essential advice and help to those who want not only to enjoy sexual health, but also to ensure that every child is wanted." Virginia Ironside, agony aunt, The Independent

"fpa has an important role to play in today’s ever changing society. By providing young people with education on wide ranging health issues we are better preparing them for the future. There has been a frightening rise in sexually transmitted infections among young people in recent years. By giving young people access to good advice and increasing their awareness of STIs, as well as having better and faster diagnoses, we can make progress in tackling this terrible problem."

Charles Hendry MP, Shadow Minister for Young People for Health and Social Services, Labour

"fpa is not afraid to tackle issues such as reducing teenage pregnancy and the spread of STIs and come up with real, workable solutions rather than relying on finger-pointing and wishful thinking, as perhaps do some sections of the media."

Tina Radziszewicz, Bliss magazine

"Sexual health services have changed enormously over the last eight decades. fpa’s campaigning work and pioneering clinics very much provided the robust foundation for today’s services provided by the NHS. The information services provided by fpa today are just as important as the clinics they set up in 1930. People need accurate and up-to-date information about contraceptive choices and preventing sexually transmitted infections, to assist in making informed sexual health choices."

Sir Liam Donaldson, Chief Medical Officer

"Congratulations to the voice of reason... long may your good work continue."

Marina Hyde, Deputy Diary Editor, The Guardian

"At a time when forces of ignorance and reaction on both sides of the Atlantic are mobilizing to stem the progress we have made towards increasing reproductive options and freedom of choice for women and youth - and even to turn back the clock - your work is more important than ever."

Carmen Barroso, Regional Director Western Hemisphere Region, IPPF

"In my job I hear from about a thousand people writing me letters and e-mails every week with lots of problems and many of these do involve issues concerned with contraception, fertility, pregnancies they are not happy about, and I just don’t know what I’d do without fpa being here." Deidre Sanders, The Sun

"fpa has evolved from a focus on women’s fertility control to become a standard bearer for sexual health in the 21st Century. It is a vibrant, forward-looking organisation, committed to partnership working across the UK. BASHH shares these ideals and is delighted to work with fpa. We send our congratulations for their 75th Anniversary year."

Dr Angela J Robinson, President, BASHH

"I think in all the years that Cosmo has been addressing sexual health issues for young women, fpa has been a really trusted partner. We can always rely on fpa to give us reliable advice our readers can trust."

Sam Baker, Editor, Cosmopolitan

"fpa’s progressive advocacy has changed policies and transformed the lives of women, men and young people. Freedom of choice can never be taken for granted, and for many in the developing world this is still a dream."

Steven W Sinding, Director–General IPPF

"When asked what developments were most significant in changing the lives of women for the better in the last century, fpa will be in the top five." Sue Frost, Woman Magazine
Vision for the Future

So much has been achieved in 75 years but, as is evident, there is increasingly more that must be achieved to promote and protect sexual health. Here, key influencers working for and with fpa share their hopes for the years ahead.

Holistic recognition for sexual health
As President of fpa and Chair of the Independent Advisory Group for Sexual Health and HIV, my vision is a society that encourages honest and open attitudes to sex and relationships, equips people with the knowledge to make informed choices and the communications skills to negotiate relationships throughout their lives. Sexual health must be recognised holistically as part of the public health agenda. I am delighted that sexual health was a central theme in the Public Health White Paper and a large injection of funding - £300 million - has been announced. This is an excellent step forward to improving people's sexual health and wellbeing.

Baroness Gould of Potternewton: fpa President

A 'model' of SRE in every school
One of my visions is of our leaflets being bought by government and going into every school in the UK. I would like to see a proper army of people talking to children about sex and relationships, providing a real opportunity for young people to explore their feelings - as well as the practicalities.

At the same time, I hope we can develop a strong fundraising arm of fpa that will raise money independently from government. With such complex and diverse aspects of sexual health, it is ever more vital that fpa has the optimum amount of money available to continue to make a real difference to people's lives.

Lady Goodhart: fpa Chair

Equality of access to pregnancy choices
2004 saw the successful historic conclusion of the Judicial Review process initiated by fpa in 2001. The courts have clearly stated that the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) is failing in its statutory duty in relation to the provision of termination of pregnancy services in Northern Ireland. However fpa recognises that although significant, it is only another small step in the process of securing equality of access for women who choose to terminate their pregnancy. The courts have ordered DHSSPS to carry out an investigation and fpa looks forward to playing an important part in this process. As the only organisation in Northern Ireland which works directly with women who when faced with a crisis pregnancy choose the option of abortion, fpa is uniquely placed to do so.

Audrey Simpson: Director, fpa Northern Ireland

A truly easy-speaking society
I want fpa to go on being an exciting organisation which is at the forefront of campaigning for sexual health. Sexual health is central to everybody's life and yet people often don't recognise that or don't talk about it. We make it a subject that people can talk about, something that they can approach in an open way. They need to be able to get information, to make choices and have access to services that are going to support them in those choices so that they can have the sorts of lives that they want. What started as the fight for family planning has now become the fight for sexual health for everyone, for life.

Anne Weyman: fpa Chief Executive
A cultural shift in attitudes to sex

When you reflect on fpa’s 75 years of history, you realise the enormity of the challenges that our early pioneers faced. I have been impressed and inspired by their indomitable spirit and by their commitment to delivering free contraception for all. Although that fight was fought and won, the battle for sexual health - among women and men of all ages - continues. I want to see a society where sexual health is as valued as good physical and mental health. For this to happen, a robust partnership must be forged between parents, young people and health and education services that provides the foundation for a cultural shift in our attitudes to sex.

Karen Brewer: fpa Director of Communications

Raising the status of sexual health

Looking back at fpa’s 75 years of campaigning, I hope that we continue to be an important, influential and respected voice across Westminster. As fpa’s Parliamentary Officer, I will carry on raising the importance of sexual health through our contribution to the parliamentary process, particularly by means of our regular briefings and work with the All-Party Parliamentary Pro-Choice and Sexual Health Group. We have developed good relationships with all the main political parties, which I hope we will further strengthen in the future. With a likely General Election in 2005, I look forward to putting sexual health on the agenda of new Members of Parliament.

Georgie Whitfield: fpa Parliamentary Officer

A society which tackles inequalities for all

I’d love to see the sexual health agenda progress so that mainstream Scottish society starts to tackle the inequalities that persist, so that issues such as gender inequality and homophobia aren’t left to be sorted out by those adversely affected by them. We all have so much to gain by ensuring that all people realise that they have sexual health that needs maintaining, responsibilities to live up to within relationships and a sexuality that should be a source of joy rather than something they can’t talk about. One way that fpa is contributing to this is by working with young men to improve their self-awareness and confidence around sexual health matters.

Tim Street: Director, fpa Scotland

Better informed communities through direct work

My vision is for a society where relevant, up-to-date sexual health information is available to all members of the community through fpa’s direct work. I hope we can work with a wide range of groups including young men and women, black and minority ethnic communities, refugees and asylum seekers, people with learning disabilities and also with professionals. I would like to see our Speakeasy programme expanded to include Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Exciting developments in the future we hope will include further collaborative work with voluntary and statutory agencies.

Terri Ryland: fpa Director of Practice Development

Saving lives through sexual health

It’s easy to think and I’m sure some people imagine that, in today’s kind of more liberal atmosphere, the need for organisations like fpa is somehow less. After all, contraception is relatively freely available, so you might ask: What’s the problem? But actually we still face a very large number of problems in the field of sexual health, and to a certain extent still with contraception.

I think that fpa is still an incredibly important organisation, right now and in the future, in terms of the counselling that it offers, the advice that it offers, and the information and sex education – without any kind of prejudice or frills.

Put simply, I think fpa saves lives.

David Aaronovitch: historian/social commentator and journalist

A financially successful anniversary

We have very generous support from many people, but we need more and more. It is critical that we get the message across about family planning, about sexually transmitted infections, and for that we need significant sums of money. We are, of course, extremely grateful for the money that we do receive. We get it from government and individuals but we certainly don’t have enough to fulfill our own aspirations or society’s sexual health needs. We require a good deal more money than is available to us for the new challenges which lie ahead, and we hope to raise a great deal during our 75th anniversary year.

Janet Langdon: Chair, fpa 75th committee
To reach 75 is a landmark for anyone...but for a pioneering, often controversial charity like fpa, it is an achievement that must be applauded and an opportunity that must be maximised. As a result, a special 75th Anniversary Committee has been working for over two years to develop a programme of activity that commemorates fpa’s significant campaigning events and reminds people about the very real sexual health issues we have faced since the 1930s. Here are just a chosen few highlights, to give you a flavour of a fantastic year in prospect!

Tackling inequality of provision
Free contraception and access to abortion services are taken for granted today but inequalities in relation to service provision and funding still exist. In conjunction with Newcastle University, fpa will be launching an Economics of Sexual Health report for Sexual Health Week between 1-7 August. It will focus on the provision and cost of providing abortion and contraception services today and present some modeling examples that show how the most can be made from available resources.

A spectacular night at the Guildhall
The 75th anniversary year closes with a flourish, as we host our most ambitious fundraising dinner to date, at the magnificent Great Hall, Guildhall, London. Seating 750 people, the gala banquet will be a night to remember for all of our friends and supporters and many of our funders whose financial assistance we rely on. Ticket prices are £175.00 for corporates (or £150 each for parties of ten people or more) and £125.00 for individuals.

Emotive research to motivate the media
During 2003, we commissioned our own family, sex and relationships research to highlight the changes that have occurred over the course of our history. The findings will be promoted during Contraceptive Awareness Week 2005, 14-20th February, and through our press work during 2005. Campaign materials reflecting life in the 1930s have been produced by fpa’s creative agency, FEEL for use throughout the year and these will be made available to a range of health professionals throughout the UK.

Speakeasy: a very special fpa project
As a charity, fpa funds are always limited and as an independent sexual health charity we find that sex is not ’sexy’. But sexual health is of paramount importance to all of us; it is essential to both our physical and mental wellbeing.

We believe that sexual health starts from good sex and relationships education. For our 75th anniversary year we plan to raise £500,000 to fund Speakeasy, our innovative training programme for parents and carers enabling them to talk to their children about sex and relationships.

With £500,000 fpa can directly help: 12,000 parents and carers, 25,000 children, and 1000 health professionals. Speakeasy already works with Barnardo’s, Sure Start and parent support groups in a range of settings from Kent to Northumberland.

With £500,000 we could expand Speakeasy to reach thousands more parents and carers and children across the UK. Help us to make a difference. To make a donation, please email: 75@fpa.org.uk. Our website has more information at: www.fpa.org.uk.

New venue for key reception
We are delighted to have the Foreign & Commonwealth Office as our prestigious venue for our major reception on 15 June. The event will be hosted by fpa’s indomitable president, Baroness Gould of Potternewton, with fpa patron Dr Miriam Stoppard as one of the key speakers.

Join the debate on sex!
A partnership with the Women’s Library will spark a lively and entertaining debate at the Barbican on 18 October.

Chaired by columnist of the year, David Aaronovitch, the debate entitled Fear of sex is essential for civilisation will include four guest speakers: two proposing and two opposing the motion. The line-up promises an evening that will be both stimulating and entertaining. Tickets will cost £5.00.

75th Anniversary Committee
Chair: Janet Langdon. Members: Anne Weyman OBE, fpa Chief Executive; David Aaronovitch, journalist; Daniel Caspi, Member of the Court of Common Council and Corporation of London; Chris Arnold, Creative Partner, The FEEL Agency; Elizabeth Wright, formerly with BBC World Service; Mhemooda Marek, NEC member; Karen Brewer, fpa Director of Communications; Terri Ryland, fpa Director of Practice Development and Darren Babidge, fpa Communications Administrator.
fpa financial review

Statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 March 2004

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

2004

Total

£

Incoming resources
Donations, legacies and similar income 104,257
Operating activities of the charity 3,367,505
- Furtherance of the charity’s objects 3,222,060
- Generating funds 15,612
Investment income 43,048
Total incoming resources 3,724,267

Resources expended
Charitable expenditure 3,222,060
- Furtherance of the charity’s objects 25,131
Costs of generating funds 1,313,454
- Resources expended on management 15,612
Total resources expended 3,699,136

Net incoming resources 25,131

Fund balances at 1 April 2003 1,313,454

Fund balances at 31 March 2004 1,338,585

All incoming resources and resources expended derive from continuing activities.
A copy of the Family Planning Association’s full audited accounts is available from the Registered Office.
The Family Planning Association is a registered charity, no 250187

thanks to you

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Baroness Gould of Potternewton
Vice Presidents
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Joan Ruddock MP
Jenny Tonge MP
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Treasurer
Ian Plaistowe

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Pam Donnellan
Shirley Fraser
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Eastern Health and Social Services Board

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Shaftsbury Square
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Pfizer Limited
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Treasurer
Ian Plaistowe

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