

C-Card Parents / Carers Information

The C-Card is a card that gives people quick and easy access to free condoms. In Staffordshire, Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin, this service is available to anyone aged 13-24, and in Stoke-on-Trent anyone aged 13 or over can sign up for a C-Card.

It is a confidential service which also gives access to information and advice about sexual health and relationships; as well as an opportunity for young people to disclose any concerns they have and access support if they are experiencing risky or exploitative situations.

Young people can use their C-Card to get free condoms from a range of places, including schools, colleges, pharmacies and sexual health clinics. This allows them to visit the site they feel most comfortable, and increases the likelihood of them accessing condoms when they need to.

We understand that some parents and carers may have questions about the C-Card scheme, below our team answers some of the most common ones they are asked:

Is it legal to give condoms to under 16s without parents/carers consent?

Yes, the way that C-Card condoms are provided to under 16's is legal. When a young person is registered for a C-Card, the registration conversation will be carried out by someone trained to assess the young person's understanding and competence; they will do this using the Fraser guidelines.

To be deemed "Fraser competent" a young person must be capable of understanding all of the information and any risks, and then using this knowledge to make a choice. The Fraser Guidelines were developed specifically around the provision of sexual health and contraception services to under 16's, and so they cover all of the legal aspects in full.

If the person who is registering the young person is concerned for their health or safety, a referral will be made to make sure that the young person receives whatever support is needed. Part of this referral process may include a professional contacting you to make you aware of the steps being taken to keep the young person safe, and involve you in the process.

Why do you give condoms to young people under the age of consent?

Although the legal age of consent in the UK is 16, we know that some young people will have sex or be considering sex for the first time at a younger age. The person completing the registration will always discuss the age of consent and what this means. As long as the young person is deemed Fraser competent (using the framework above), they will get access to C-Card to help them keep themselves as safe and healthy as possible.

Are you encouraging young people to have sex?

No, giving young people the opportunity to access condoms and have a C-Card registration conversation, enables them to seek high quality, accurate sexual health information and advice; and supports them to make an informed decision about whether they feel ready to have sex.

If a young person then does decide to have sex, they have access to condoms to reduce the risk of unintended pregnancy and STIs, know how to use condoms properly, and are aware of where and how to seek support should they need to.

C-Card is also often delivered alongside an education session, where young people learn about and have chance to discuss topics such as healthy relationships and delay, as well as the potential consequences of sex (pregnancy and STIs).

What should I do if I find a C-Card in my home?

You don't need to do anything if you find a C-Card at home. If you feel comfortable talking openly about sex and relationships, it's great to make sure that your children, or the young people you care for, know that they can speak to you; but it's important that they feel comfortable too.

Just tell them that if they want to speak about anything you will always listen to them and never judge them. Keep your conversation comfortable by not sharing your own personal experiences; and if you're ever asked a question you don't know the answer to, look it up together using a reputable website, like ours!

Will I be told if the school they attend is part of the C-Card scheme?

Some schools will choose to make parents aware if they begin to offer C-Card services, but some won't. As school C-Card points are only accessible to their students you won't find a list of schools providing C-Card listed on our website, but you can enquire with the school yourself.

Other services such as school nursing teams may also offer C-Card as part of their offer within schools too, so C-Card is available in most education venues.

