

PRESS RELEASE

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THE MORNING-AFTER PILL FOR UNDER-16s: A STICKING PLASTER SOLUTION TO A SERIOUS PROBLEM

LIFE, the national pro-life charity, has reacted strongly against proposals to make the morning after pill available to under-16s in pharmacies. The proposal would make it possible for young teenage girls to get hold of the morning after pill over the counter without parental consent.

A LIFE spokeswoman, Anne Scanlan, said: "The family planning gurus in their ivory towers tell girls that the morning after pill is liberating, but in the real world it adds to the pressures on them, because it adds to a sexualised culture where early sexual activity is normalised and expected, and it removes one of the girls' reasons to say no to sex. Besides this, we simply do not know the consequences of repeated use of the morning after pill, or indeed its long term effects on young girls.

"What we are really seeing here is a sticking plaster on a gaping wound. Britain's STI rates remain extremely high because hormonal contraceptives do nothing to prevent STIs and, in our experience, give girls a false sense of security around their sexual activity. Indeed, indiscriminate promotion of hormonal contraception has been found by some researchers, such as David Paton, to actually increase teenage sexual activity, which carries risks to health and wellbeing. There is still no contraceptive that works against the regret, sadness and upset that are the consequences of premature sex for many young people.

Condoning risky sexual behaviour by providing an "easy" solution will not help us achieve our goals. We find that young people, especially girls, respond well to the LIFE Education programme, which stresses the importance of healthy mature relationships, trust and self-esteem, rather than simply throwing more contraception at young people in the vague hope that the problem will go away."

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For further media comment please call the LIFE Media Hotline on 07867 744502

LIFE is a pro-life charity that supports anyone facing a crisis pregnancy, pregnancy loss or after an abortion, and strives to engage, inspire and inform the next generation.