

**The history preceding the introduction of  
compulsory school sex education in England (I)  
— Public and private sex education projects  
in England in 1960s—**

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Hirose has been clarifying the process of the formation of compulsory school sex education in England in her previous papers. Her contention is that this sex education system may show the characteristics of the education reform of the 1980s and 1990s which was often severely criticised for its reactionary tastes but has been, in a sense, reinforced by the subsequent Labour government.

Although compulsory school sex education was established under the Conservative education reform initiated in the 1980s by the Thatcher government, the issue of school sex education had been contentions since the 1970s when a liberal organisation, the FPA, announced its new policy to promote school sex education.

The aim of this paper is to provide an overview of the perspectives of sex education preceding the work of the FPA, focusing particularly on the policies and activities of both public and private sectors. Another paper is planned to examine ideological perspectives.

Sex education in the 1960s can be summarised as follows. The main concern was to discuss and understand effective ways for the provision of sex education. The discussion covered three fields: building organisations, preparing staff training programmes and setting up curricula.

Establishing both individual institutions and networks was an issue for building organisations. As schools had not yet appeared in the main arena, other institutions were playing important roles in sex education. Accordingly,

the leading government players for the development of sex education were Health Departments, at both central and local government levels. Local centres were often planned to support activities and networks, providing teaching methods and materials, giving staff training courses, etc. Considering programme designs for schools, including the patterns of relationship between teachers and parents, was also an involved issue.

Good sex education necessitated skilled and knowledgeable staff. Some experienced organisations and teacher training colleges were trying to form staff training courses and programmes. At school, it was an unavoidable question whether every teacher should be trained to be qualified to teach sex education or only some particular members of the staff.

Two tones can be observed in sex education curricula, the overall basic tone and a minor but new persuading tone. The overall tone in sex education in 1960s was to try to give children scientific and factual knowledge instead of moral advice. The main purpose here was to prepare children for adulthood and to adopt them into society, especially into marriage and family life. The minor but persuasive new tone was to realise the changing society and to try to help young people using contraception, an issue that was still controversial even for married couples.

The content of this paper is as follows.

- I Introduction – Linkage between Thatcher and Callaghan
  - 1 Where to locate the Thatcher period
  - 2 Issues raised by Callaghan – The speech at Ruskin College
  - 3 Understanding Callaghan's speech
- II Central and local government policies on sex education in 1960s
  - 1 Central government policy documents
    - (1) Ministry of Education "*Health Education*"
    - (2) The Crowther Report
    - (3) Royal Commission on Marriage and Divorce
    - (4) The Albermarle Report

- (5) The Newsom Report
- (6) The Plowdon Report
- (7) The Cohon Report
- (8) The Latey Report

## 2 Local government policies

- (1) Gloucestershire
- (2) Wiltshire
- (3) London Borough of Croydon
- (4) City of Oxford
- (5) City of Birmingham
- (6) City of Newcastle-on-Tyne
- (7) Lancashire

## 3 Activities by non governmental organisations other than FPA

- (1) Association of Headmistresses
- (2) Royal College of Practitioners
- (3) Royal College of Midwives
- (4) Quakers
- (5) Church of England
- (6) Catholic Marriage Advisor Council
- (7) National Childbirth Trust
- (8) National Marriage Guidance Council
- (9) Marie Stopes Family Planning Clinic
- (10) Youth advisory centres
- (11) Others

## III Conclusion