

12-Year-Olds Given the Morning-After Pill

Girls as young as 12 have been offered the morning-after pill by National Health Service (NHS) Tayside, a Freedom of Information request has discovered.

Scottish newspaper *The Courier* revealed that dozens of children under the age of 16 had been prescribed the “emergency contraceptive” pill over the last five years in the Dundee area.

The morning-after pill is an abortifacient, which can end a pregnancy by causing an early-stage abortion.

‘Reflection on Society’

Data released by NHS Tayside showed more than a dozen 14-year-olds and 27 15-year-olds had been given the morning-after pill by either a primary care giver or sexual health service in 2016-17.

Bill Bowman, MSP, said it was clear more needed to be done to combat underage sex and questioned if it was “a great reflection on our society” that so many 12- and 13-year-olds in Tayside were being given the morning-after pill.

He added: “If there are so many people sexually active at the age of 12, let alone 10 or 11, as these figures would appear to suggest, there is indeed a lot of work to be done.”

Harmful

In 2015, a morning-after pill known as ellaOne was made available in pharmacies across the U.K. to girls under 16 for the first time.

Norman Wells, Director of the Family Education Trust, said at

the time that the move would have harmful effects on young girls.

He said: "The availability of the morning-after pill is encouraging some adolescents to engage in casual sex when they might not otherwise have done so, and the supply of emergency birth control to young people is associated with an increase in sexually transmitted infections." {eo}

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