



Education Secretary Justine Greening sets out plans for Relationships Education in Primary Schools and Relationships and Sex Education in Secondary Schools.

The Government on March 1st this year tabled amendments to the Children and Social Work Bill which will make it a requirement that all Secondary Schools in England teach Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)



Sexual Health time bomb



Chair of the LGA's (Local Government Association) community wellbeing board Izzi Seccombe said 'Sex education should be compulsory in all state secondary schools and the matter is a major health protection issue'.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 introduces new legislation on relationships and sex education in schools.

The Secretary of State for Education confirms the Government's ambition to support all young people to stay safe and prepare for life in modern Britain by making Relationships Education (Primary), Relationships and Sex Education (RSE - Secondary) and, subject to the outcome of a thorough consideration of the subject, Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE - both) statutory in all schools. The government laid an amendment to the Children and Social Work Bill on 1 March 2017 which we intend to come into effect from September 2019.

What does RSE look like at present?

Not consistent throughout a young person's schooling

Delivered in PSHE Personal, Social, Health, Education

Many students find lessons about sex and relationships negative, moralistic and too scientific to help them deal with the feelings and situations they are encountering

School nurses delivering Puberty and Transition sessions to primary school students (using out of date resources)

The right to withdraw your child from RSE lessons

Schools seem to have difficulty accepting [that] some people are sexually active

teachers themselves often admit to 'discomfort' at teaching RSE

Many pupils find it uncomfortable and unhelpful that teachers they have for other subjects also teach them SRE

What are my memories of sex
education

What will Primary Schools be teaching?

All children from the age of four will now be taught about 'safe and healthy relationships'. The main focus for children aged four to 10 years old will be on building healthy relationships and staying safe.

This means 'Relationship Education' will be distinct from the sex education programme for older pupils.

Justine Greening said, in a statement: 'These subjects form part of the building blocks young people need to thrive in modern Britain. At the moment, too many young people feel they don't have the relationships and sex education they need to stay safe and navigate becoming an adult.'

Do I have a say in what my child learns?

Yes, despite the law making this new curriculum compulsory in all schools, parents will still have a right to withdraw children from sex education after viewing the school policy on what is going to be taught – a requirement under the new legislation.

Does the School have any say in what my child learns?

Schools will have flexibility over how they deliver these subjects, so they can develop an approach that is integrated (and sensitive to) the needs of local communities and, in the case of faith schools, in accordance with their faith.

How will the Government choose what to teach?

The DfE has stated that the government will work with teachers, parents and safeguarding experts to develop age-appropriate subject content for all key stages, which includes a focus on protecting children from harm and staying safe online.

Will the curriculum include LGBT relationships?

As of yet there has been no official announcement about what the curriculum will include - although it is expected there will be lessons on pornography, grooming and online exploitation for some age groups. So it is not yet clear whether LGBT relationships will be covered, but sexual health charity the Terrence Higgins Trust is supportive of the move and said it could be set to change the lives of generations to come. Chief executive Ian Green said: 'Until now, there has been nothing in place to ensure we are safeguarding all young people by discussing issues such as consent, abuse and what a healthy relationship looks like from a young age, in a safe environment and with trained professionals. Only then can we ensure that all young people - wherever they go to school, and whatever their sexuality - are empowered to make positive and informed decisions and to have healthy relationships, which they are ready for, and want.'

How has this changed the current law?

The statement said that current legislation, which was put in place in 2000, is becoming 'increasingly outdated' as it fails to address risks that have grown in recent years, such as sexting. Currently only pupils attending local authority run secondary schools – which represent around a third of secondary schools – are guaranteed to be offered current sex and relationships education.

What young people tell us of their experience!!!

'Our SRE at primary school was next to non existent and included solely periods and names for genitals. Needed at secondary age is consent, sexuality, relationships, abuse, pleasure etc. as well as the science'

'Sex was still regarded as a taboo subject and the teachers seemed uncomfortable talking about it. The whole concept was approached purely biologically with no regards to relationships at all and was pushed into a few lessons at the end of term alongside drugs education'

'We were lucky to have great sex-positive teachers who fostered healthy discussion but the curriculum was still heteronormative and focused on reproductive biology'

'In the past years in school I have never had SRE'

'Regarding FGM a 15 year old girl said I' in year 10 and I don't even know what that is'

[I would have liked to have learnt] to know if a relationship was unhealthy- I ended up in an abusive relationship at 15 and did not know how to get out of it or even why I didn't feel comfortable."

Most young people think pornography is a poor model for consent or safe sex and want better sex education, covering the impact of pornography.

All quotes taken from SEF (Sex Education Forum publications)

Young People Need More Sex and Relationship Education



Teenage Pregnancy Strategy

In 1999, the UK Labour Government launched a 10-year Teenage Pregnancy Strategy for England to address the country's historically high rates and reduce social exclusion. The goal was to reduce under 18's conception by halve (the final result by 2014 showed that it had been reduced by 51%, proving that through improved sex and relationships education and access to effective contraception the strategy was a success)

According to WHO (World Health Organisation), very few other programmes worldwide have had such success.

Alison Hadley who led the implementation and remains the government's teenage pregnancy adviser, said: 'The WHO made it clear that the UK strategy is unique in both its extraordinary success and its impact on families from deprived backgrounds and has many features that are transferable to low- and middle-income countries'.

High-quality relationships and sex education was introduced, with welcoming health services – in the right place, open at the right time – and friendly non judgmental staff to help young people delay having sex until they were ready, at which point they knew how to use contraception effectively.

Alison Hadley stated in a recent interview in the Guardian ‘Our strategy demonstrated that effective education programmes and easier access to contraception equips young people to make choices and brings down rates even in deprived areas. Key to success was government commitment, strong coordination between agencies and sufficient time to effect change.

We still lag behind our western European neighbours and there is considerable variation in rates across England. If we do not continue our work on prevention, the figures will rise again.’

| Borough | Residents accessing HIV related care | HIV prevalence per 1,000 |
|-----------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| Brent | 904 | 4.31 |
| Ealing | 756 | 3.47 |
| Hammersmith and Fulham | 1,041 | 8.36 |
| Harrow | 356 | 2.37 |
| Hillingdon | 490 | 2.63 |
| Hounslow | 667 | 3.85 |
| Kensington and Chelsea | 935 | 9.07 |
| Westminster | 1,488 | 8.89 |

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