

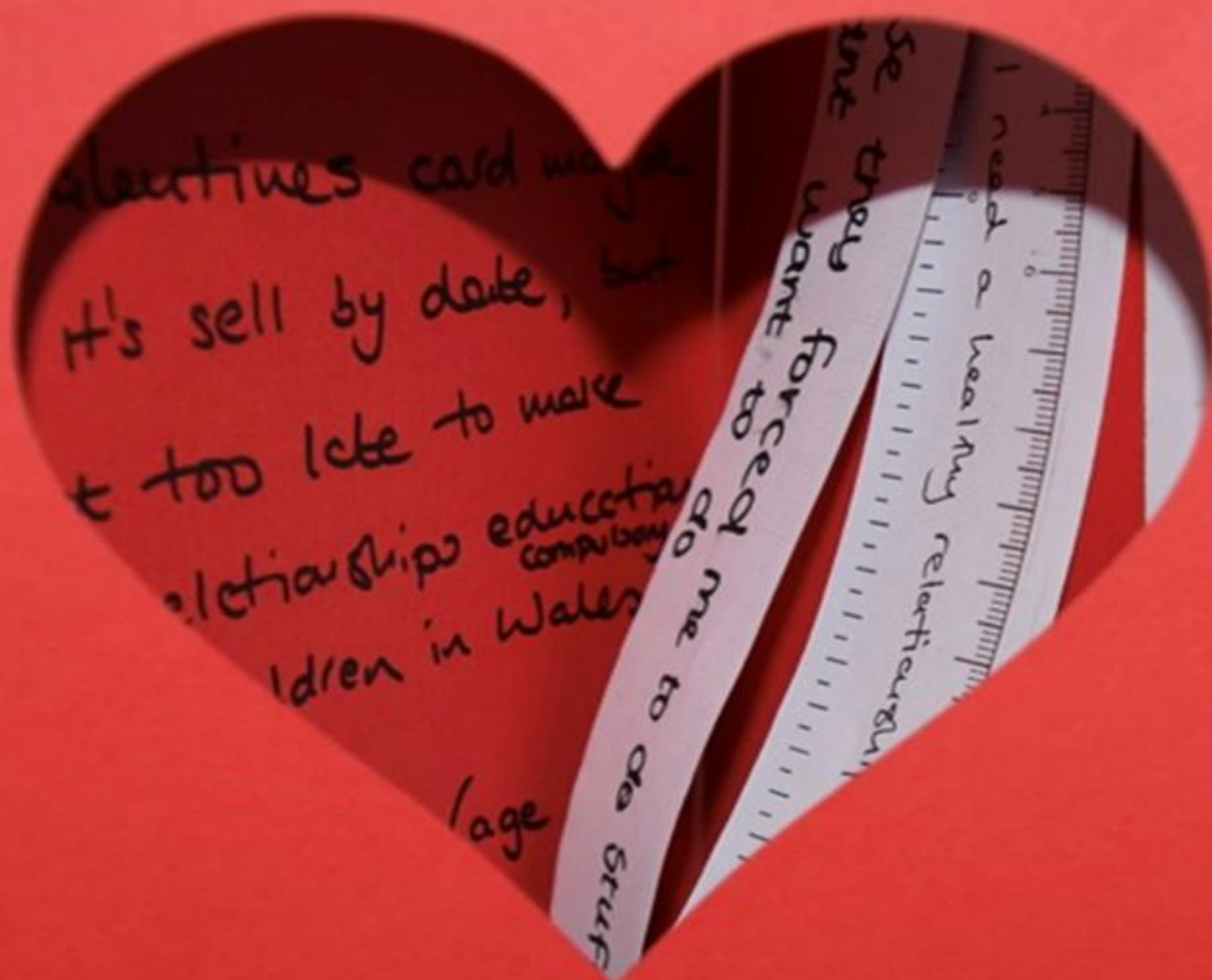


Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

The Future of the Sex and Relationships Education Curriculum in Wales

Recommendations of the Sex and Relationships Education Expert Panel

December 2017



The future of the Sex and Relationships Education Curriculum in Wales

Audience

Local authorities, nurseries, primary, secondary and special schools in Wales, school governing bodies.

Overview

This report outlines the key findings and recommendations of the Sex and Relationships Education Expert Panel. This panel was established by the Cabinet Secretary for Education to help inform the development of the future Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) curriculum in Wales.

Action required

This report contains recommendations for the Cabinet Secretary for Education and the Welsh Government.

Further information

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Related documents

Informing the Future Sex and Relationships Education Curriculum in Wales E Renold and E McGeeney (Cardiff University, 2017) pp.1–160
<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/research/explore/find-a-project/view/1026193-informing-the-future-of-the-sex-and-relationships-curriculum-in-wales>

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.



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Foreword from the chair

As chair, I would like to acknowledge and register my thanks to all those who shared their practice and expertise during the face to face panel meetings and in the virtual discussions leading to the publication of this report.

Special thanks go to Dr. Ester McGeeney, a leading scholar-practitioner in the field of sexuality and relationships education (SRE), who supported and co-authored key sections of the full report. Special thanks also go to David Sargent (Welsh Government) who provided extensive assistance throughout the entire panel process. Thanks also extends to Steven Price, Kerry Davies and Abigail Williams (Welsh Government) for their administrative support.

This was a truly collaborative process and the group's commitment, enthusiasm and collegiality was commendable. Indeed, the ways in which different sectors, groups and individuals worked together, across diverse yet inter-connected fields and sectors to exploit the potential of what SRE could become as the new curriculum takes shape, makes for a very promising future for SRE in Wales as the infrastructure for a whole school approach to SRE evolves.

Professor Emma Renold, Cardiff University

Chair of the Sex and Relationships Expert Panel



Introduction and context

Overview

This report examines the current and future status and development of the Sex and Relationships Education curriculum in Wales and provides a series of recommendations on:

- The impact of the narrow and non-statutory status of the current SRE curriculum on learning and experience;
- Core principles (see annex 5) and thematic areas (see annex 6) of the new SRE curriculum;
- Effective pedagogy and assessment for a rights and gender equity based, inclusive, holistic, creative, empowering and protective SRE curriculum; and
- The urgency of training, leadership, resources, support and a robust research base to ensure high quality SRE provision of learning and experience

If our recommendations are approved and implemented, we are confident that, over time, Wales can address the much-neglected area of SRE and begin to meet the learning and experience needs of all children and young people, their schools, and the wider community.

Remit of the expert panel

The expert panel was established in March 2017 by the Cabinet Secretary for Education, Kirsty Williams, to help inform the development of the future Sex and Relationships (SRE) curriculum as part of the Health and Wellbeing Area of Learning Experience (AoLE). The panel were asked to identify issues and opportunities which could inform decisions around supporting the teaching profession to deliver high quality SRE in schools more effectively.

Specifically, the group were tasked with:

- 1) providing recommendations to the Cabinet Secretary for Education on how current SRE practice might be improved before 2022 and the new curriculum being introduced.
- 2) providing recommendations for the Cabinet Secretary for Education and the pioneer schools on the future of Sex and Relationships Education in Wales as part of Health and Wellbeing AoLE.

The terms of reference set were ambitious (see Annex 1), but necessarily so given the overhaul that SRE in Wales and across the UK urgently requires. In the absence of a robust research base for mapping how current SRE practice might be improved before 2022, and in light of the rapid development of the health and well-being AoLE,

the group focused its attention on providing recommendations on the future of SRE in the context of the new curriculum. However, if supported, the recommendations on pedagogy, assessment, training, leadership, resources, research and support must be undertaken with immediate effect as Wales begins the progressive process of ensuring high quality SRE provision by 2022.

The group carried out its work in a series of face to face meetings between March and September 2017. The panel was not funded to undertake original research, consultation (e.g. with practitioners, parents/carers or young people) nor was the panel at the stage to conduct a more tightly prescribed task and finish exercise (e.g. SRE resources, SRE curriculum content). Nevertheless, the exploratory remit of the panel enabled the group to think big and engage with innovative and effective SRE practices in Wales and internationally, while simultaneously considering the very local, national and international affordances and challenges that beset the unique field of SRE, as a cross-disciplinary subject. Only a handful of school teachers across Wales are extensively trained and/or hold academic qualifications in SRE related areas. The panel therefore comprised of academic specialists in SRE, service providers in SRE, and teachers with SRE responsibilities (see Annex 2 and Annex 3)

As Welsh Government, working with pioneer schools, considers the future of SRE, the panel anticipate and expect that there will be a range of opportunities to safely and creatively involve children and young people, parents/carers, communities and service providers more widely to play a central part as the pioneer schools design the new SRE curriculum.



Main findings

Children learn about sex and relationships before they reach school

Children learn about sexuality and relationships long before they start school. As soon as they enter the social world they will be interacting with complex and often contradictory messages about gender, sexuality and relationships from, for example: advertising, books, music, social media and television and from family members, peers and communities. Even very young children will be negotiating a range of social and cultural norms on these issues that will shape their day to day lives and imagined futures. This knowledge, often termed as the 'hidden curriculum' can include misconceptions and misinformation. It can also challenge and exceed adult expectations of what children and young people are learning and experiencing.

Evidenced based SRE programmes play a vital role in working with children, young people, parents/carers and communities; exploring the information and values about sexuality and relationships that children are already exposed to and often struggling to navigate for themselves. By building upon children and young people's *own* informal learning and experience, offline and online, schools have the potential to create safe and empowering environments that enable children and young people to express their views and feelings on SRE issues. Indeed, schools are key sites for learning from and responding to children and young people's questions and needs (e.g. from sexism to sexual consent).

Working in partnership with specialist services and local communities, schools are also important sites for prevention, protection and change. They are places that can support children and young people to gradually develop their confidence to know where and how to seek advice and support in relation to, for example, prejudice, discrimination, abuse and violence.

The current law and guidance on Sex and Relationships Education is outdated

SRE in Wales, since devolution, has continued to embed policy and guidance in a social justice model of rights, equity and well-being. In 2010 Wales issued guidance on Sex and Relationships Education, which placed SRE firmly in the context of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This guidance emphasises children's rights to access comprehensive SRE enabling children and young people to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding to make informed choices that support positive life experiences; including sexual well-being and healthy relationships.

International research states that the most effective SRE programmes are those that have a rights and gender-equity based approach. From the outset, the panel were committed to further strengthening and sustaining Wales' rights and equity approach to SRE by firmly situating policy and practice in the UNCRC, the Equality Duty (2010) the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act (2015) and recent National Strategy (2016), and the Well-being of Future

Generations (Wales) Act (2015). Moreover, the Welsh Government's Strategic Equality Plan 2016-2021 contains a specific objective which relates to embedding SRE in a gender equalities framework (Objective 4).

However, while a rights and gender-equity based SRE may be reflected in the guidance, this guidance is not statutory, and this approach is not reflected in the relevant SRE legislation. Currently the only mandatory requirement relates to 'Sex Education' as outlined in Section 579 (1) of the Education Act 1996 and gives a definition of 'sex education' as including learning about:

(a) Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome and Human Immunodeficiency Virus,

and

(b) any other sexually transmitted disease.

Current status of Sex and Relationship Education in Wales

SRE is a compulsory part of the basic curriculum in secondary schools, under the Education Act 2002. Primary schools are also required to have a policy on SRE, outlining details of their SRE programme or explaining their decision not to provide SRE.

Personal and social education (PSE) became a compulsory part of the basic curriculum in both primary and secondary schools in September 2003. Schools are expected to use the PSE framework for planning and delivering SRE and to follow Welsh Government guidance. The most recent non-statutory guidance was published in 2010. Parents have the right to withdraw their child from SRE. Schools have responsibility for the SRE professional development needs of staff, although all staff in Welsh schools are required to complete basic safeguarding training and level 1 training on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

As SRE is part of the basic curriculum, the design and implementation of a school's SRE programme is determined by the school in line with their SRE policy. The 2010 school guidance, while comprehensive in its scope is non-statutory. Consequently, this has led to wide variation in the quantity and quality of SRE that children and young people receive. As the headline findings of SRE provision highlight below, the success of SRE too often rests on the interests and enthusiasm of individual teachers or school leaders with SRE/PSE responsibilities:

Current provision of Sex and Relationships Education in schools is limited

Drawing on the available research in Wales, international research and Estyn's (2017) recent thematic review on Healthy Relationships, it is possible to argue the following key findings:

SRE is often too biological, too negative, and not enough focus is placed on rights, equity, emotions and relationships

School based SRE programmes have been criticised for being ‘too biological’ at the expense of a focus on children’s rights, equity, emotions and relationships; and too negative and risk focussed, at the expense of the affirmative and positive aspects of relationships and sexuality.

There is a gap between children and young people’s lived experiences and the content of SRE

Current SRE provision is not enabling children and young people to understand and negotiate the challenges and complexities they may face in relation to sexuality and relationship issues off line and online (see Renold and Mcgeeney 2017). There is also a gap between what children and young people want to learn and what SRE they experience in school contexts.

There are not enough opportunities for children and young people to influence what they learn in SRE

Children and young people do not contribute enough towards curriculum development, peer support and education, or wider community activism on SRE issues. Just under half of schools in Wales have no student involvement in developing SRE policy (SHRN 2015¹)

SRE is rarely inclusive and too heteronormative²

Few SRE programmes address children and young people’s diverse needs, particularly in relation to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer+³ (LGBTQ+) and other minority sex, gender and sexual identities, expressions, experiences, relationships and rights.

SRE is inadequate for children and young people with disabilities

There is a lack of formal and informal SRE for children and young people with disabilities or opportunities to access information about when and how to seek advice and support.

High quality SRE: starts early; is adaptable and needs-led; offers a spiral curriculum; collaborates with external providers; is of sufficient duration; is

¹ The School Health Research Network is a partnership between the Centre for the Development and Evaluation of Complex Interventions for Public Health Improvement (DECIPHer) at Cardiff University, Welsh Government, Public Health Wales, Cancer Research UK and the Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research, Data & Methods (WISERD), funded by Health and Care Research Wales via the National Centre for Health and Well-being Research. The work was undertaken with the support of DECIPHer, a UKCRC Public Health Research Centre of Excellence. Joint funding (MR/KO232331/1) from the British Heart Foundation, Cancer Research UK, Economic and Social Research Council, Medical Research Council, the Welsh Government and the Wellcome Trust, under the auspices of the UK Clinical Research Collaboration, is gratefully acknowledged.

² Heteronormativity is a term that is used to raise awareness of and challenge the assumption that everyone is, or should be, heterosexual.

³ The ‘+’ sign acknowledges all minority sex, gender and sexual categories, identities, expressions and orientations.

engaging and participatory; and creates a safe, respectful and confidential learning environment.

A recent synthesis and review of international research on children and young people's views suggests that these characteristics contribute to high quality SRE provision⁴.

A whole school approach is the single most important element for high quality and effective SRE

A whole school approach to SRE reinforces key messages across the curriculum and in different areas of the school and community. Supported by external agencies a whole school approach will be more likely to result in changing attitudes and behaviour.

SRE as a curriculum area is often poorly resourced, given low priority in schools, leading to uneven and unequal provision

As a basic curriculum subject with non-statutory guidance, SRE provision is patchy and partial and fails to meet the needs of ALL children and young people.

There is a lack of awareness and education on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV)

Few schools are aware of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act (2015) and associated guidance and resources. Only half of secondary school students in Wales agree that their school teaches them who to go to if they, or a friend, experiences violence within a relationship (SHRN, 2015⁵).

Effective delivery of high quality SRE depends upon having a well-trained and confident workforce

Most SRE teachers have had no specialist SRE training and most teachers report feeling ill-equipped when delivering SRE; which is anxiety provoking for teachers and students. Around one third of schools in Wales do not provide any staff training in safeguarding young people specifically about issues relating to sexual health and relationships (SHRN, 2015⁶).

Successful take up of national SRE specialist training programmes will depend upon the programme being publicly funded and the subject having equal status to other curriculum areas

The current dearth of specialist SRE training for teachers can be explained in part by the low status of SRE as a non-examined, non-mandatory subject.

⁴ Pound P, Denford S, Shucksmith J, *et al* (2017) What is best practice in sex and relationship education? A synthesis of evidence, including stakeholders' views, *British Medical Journal Open*, 7 (5): e014791. doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2016-014791

⁵ School Health Research Network (2015) 'Student Health and Wellbeing Survey 2015'. Unpublished data. Accessed May 2017

⁶ School Health Research Network (2015) 'Student Health and Wellbeing Survey 2015'. Unpublished data. Accessed May 2017

Key areas and expert panel recommendations

Key Area 1: Definition, status and guidance

From sex and relationships to sexuality and relationships

To ensure a holistic and inclusive understanding and approach to the new Sex and Relationships Education curriculum, the panel recommend a name change from Sex and Relationships Education to Sexuality and Relationships Education.

This new definition is informed by and draws upon the World Health Organisation's (WHO) definition of 'sexuality', with an emphasis on rights, health, equality and equity. The term sexuality emphasises the panel's holistic approach which, as the WHO states, is shaped by "the interaction of biological, psychological, social, economic, political, cultural, legal, historical, religious and spiritual factors" (see Annex 4 for the panel's working definitions of sex, gender, sexuality and relationships and other key definitions used in the report).

Working definition of Sexuality and Relationships Education

An inclusive, holistic, rights and gender equity based SRE aims to gradually enable and empower children and young people to build the knowledge, skills and ethical values through which they can explore and understand how sex, gender, sexuality and relationships have shaped and continue to shape people's lives around the world.

Needs-led and experience-near, it aims to enable ALL children and young people to see themselves and each other in what they learn and encourage children and young people to identify, and speak out on the injustices that impact on their own and others' lives and well-being.

Preventative and protective, it will also aim to support children and young people's rights to enjoy equitable, fulfilling, safe and healthy sexual lives and relationships over their life course, including the ability to recognise and understand discrimination, abusive relationships and gender-based and sexual violence and know how and where to seek support, advice and factual information (e.g. on sexual health, LGBTQ+ issues, VAWDASV)

Statutory SRE as an entitlement in the new curriculum

The 2017 European Network of Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC) position statement on Comprehensive Relationship and Sexuality Education, states that all children and young people have the right to high quality, holistic and inclusive education about sexuality and relationships (ENOC 2017). Under the proposed new curriculum, 'Successful Futures' (2015) an element of Sex and Relationships education will be part of the Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience.

Informed by current international SRE research on the consequences of non-statutory SRE (Renold and McGeeney 2017), the recent UNCRC (2016, Section 65b) and ENOC (2017) statements that children and young people have the right to

meaningful, high quality, comprehensive and inclusive SRE, and Objective 2 in the Welsh Government's National Strategy on Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (2016-2021) which states that the new curriculum must include the importance of safe, equal and healthy relationships, the panel recommend that Sexuality and Relationship Education is statutory within the new curriculum for all schools, from Foundation Phase to compulsory school leaving age (3-16).

High quality, holistic and inclusive SRE is associated with a range of positive and protective outcomes for children, young people and their communities and can:

- help reduce homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (HBT) bullying and increase safety and wellbeing for LGBTQ+ children and young people;
- help young people make informed decisions about sexual intimacy and reproductive health;
- help challenge gender and sexual stereotypes, and advance awareness of sex, gender and sexual equality and equity; and VAWDASV
- help increase children and young people's understanding of safe, consensual, equitable and positive relationships.

Statutory SRE legislation and guidance is the beginning of a process

Making SRE in the new curriculum statutory is essential for ensuring that children and young people in Wales have access to high quality SRE. Without this legislative change it is clear that SRE will remain a low priority for schools, be narrowly conceived, and where children and young people's rights, needs, questions and concerns are not sought or met and where sex, gender, sexuality and relationship inequalities and inequities remain unchallenged and endure.

However, making SRE statutory⁷ is only the beginning of the process to ensure that every child in Wales receives high quality, rights and equity based, inclusive, holistic SRE. It is a starting point from which to develop comprehensive statutory guidance that embeds the core principles set out in this report and to develop and deliver professional training to ensure that schools are equipped to deliver and forge the partnerships necessary for high quality SRE provision.

⁷ The remit of the panel was to look at the role of SRE within the new curriculum, which does not apply to independent schools. The panel advocates however that independent schools also provide high quality SRE to all children and young people underpinned by the core principles set out in this report.

Key Area 2: Curriculum Content, Pedagogy and Assessment

A living SRE curriculum

In *Successful Futures*, Donaldson (2015, p.14) outlines 10 principles for curriculum design. The curriculum should, he states, be “authentic, evidence-based, responsive, inclusive, ambitious, empowering, unified, engaging, based on subsidiarity and manageable”. Many of these features are embedded in the guiding principles for SRE established by the panel: *rights and gender equity based; creative and curious; empowering and transformative; experience-near and co-produced; holistic; inclusive; protective and preventative.*

With children’s rights and gender equity as core under-pinning principle, each satellite principle will support the creation of a safe and empowering learning environment for what the panel term a “living curriculum”. A Living SRE Curriculum is a relevant, needs-led curriculum that recognises, connects to and builds upon children and young people’s own learning and experience.

Holistic, inclusive and adaptable, a living SRE curriculum will value diversity and difference, and evolve to meet changing biological, social, cultural and technological issues and knowledge. Using engaging, critical, creative and transformative pedagogy it will attune to children and young people’s evolving capacities to see themselves and each other in what they learn and experience (e.g. with peers, family, community, real-world issues etc.).

Fundamentally, it will be informed by the protective articles embedded in the UNCRC, and enable children and young people to build their knowledge, understanding and skills of how to recognise and seek advice and support in relation to discrimination, abusive relationships and gender-based and sexual violence. Affirmative and empowering, it will also invite children and young people to identify, forge alliances with others and be supported to act on the injustices in their own lives and others’ lives and well-being.

Sexuality and Relationships Education: A Living Curriculum



Rights and Gender Equity Based SRE supports children and young people's rights to a relevant, holistic, inclusive and empowering SRE that is embedded in and promotes gender equity, social justice, safety and well-being

Creative and Curious SRE supports a questioning curriculum and draws upon creative pedagogies to facilitate an ethical, safe and agentic learning environment.

Empowering and Transformative SRE creates an affirmative and transformative curriculum that invites children and young people to advance social justice for gender, sexual and relationship equity and well-being

Experience Near and Co-produced SRE is developed with children and young people to ensure a relevant and responsive curriculum that enhances pupil voice and agency.

Holistic SRE explores the interconnected ways in which sex, gender, sexuality and relationships shape people's lives across the world.

Inclusive SRE recognises and values diversity and difference across the domains of sex, gender, sexuality and relationships.

Protective and Preventative SRE supports children and young people to develop: social, emotional and physical literacy; resilience to cope with change, conflicts and pressure; the knowledge to recognise discrimination, abusive relationships and violence; and the confidence to seek support, advice and factual information (e.g. on sex and gender equality/equity, sexual health, LGBTQ+ issues and VAWDASV)

A living SRE assessment

To embed the core principles outlined above, the panel recommend that the Health and Wellbeing AoLE, which includes elements of SRE, must have an equal status to other AoLEs and equal status to other areas *within* Health and Wellbeing. Parity of status should also extend to assessment. Guided by Donaldson's own recommendations, the panel argue that a *Living SRE Curriculum* should be supported by robust assessment arrangements for a meaningful, interactive and innovative *Living Assessment* to support pupil voice and agency.

A project-based assessment with outcomes that have real-world impact and consequences (e.g. similar to Welsh Baccalaureate Community Challenges) will connect more directly with children and young people's own concerns and interests. It will also realise the 4 purposes of the new curriculum that encourage children and young people to be: *ethically informed citizens; healthy, confident individuals; enterprising, creative contributors; and ambitious capable learners.*

The importance of a whole school approach to SRE

An effective living SRE curriculum will extend into and be embedded in a whole school approach. The panel supports Welsh Government's SRE (2010) and VAWDASV (2015) guidance for schools that a whole school approach is the single most important element for high quality health and well-being education.

A whole school approach to SRE means that the core principles informing the learning and experience from planned SRE sessions (in or outside the classroom) will be reinforced (and importantly, not undermined) across different areas of the school and community. In relation to prevention, protection and transformation, whole school approaches are not just more likely to result in sustained cultural changes at the level of the individual learner, but across school staff and governing bodies and the wider school community. Pioneer schools, supported by Welsh Government and specialist organisations should thus explore how the SRE element of the Health and Wellbeing AoLE and wider SRE curriculum can be embedded in a 'whole school approach' with a view to develop new and comprehensive SRE guidance underpinned by the core principles and the 4 purposes of the new curriculum.

Whole School Approach to SRE: Key Domains

1. school leadership and policy
2. professional learning
3. student learning
4. community partnership building
5. safeguarding and support for staff and students
6. school culture and environment.
7. student voice and participation
8. evaluation and impact

The panel also suggests that whole school approaches to SRE will be developed alongside and integrated within evolving preventative programmes that ensure children and young people's safety and well-being in relation to for example, prejudice-based bullying, VAWDASV and safeguarding.

Recommendations

- 2. The SRE Curriculum should be guided by the following core principles and thematic areas with clear learning outcomes that can evolve to meet changing biological, social, cultural and technological issues and knowledge.**

Core principles include: Rights and Gender Equity ; Creative and Curious; Empowering and Transformative; Experience-near and Coproduced; Holistic; Inclusive; Protective and Preventative

- 3. The SRE Curriculum should be engaging, relevant and developmentally appropriate with clear progression pathways for learning and experience.**
- 4. Pioneer schools, supported by Welsh Government and specialist organisations should explore how the SRE curriculum can be embedded in a 'whole school approach'.**
- 5. The Health and Wellbeing AoLE should have an equal status to other AoLEs. SRE should also have equal status to other areas within Health and Wellbeing and the wider AoLEs, including robust assessment arrangements that support pupil voice.**

Key Area 3: Training and Standards

The urgent need for professional training

Current initial teacher education (ITE) programmes enable student teachers to meet the Qualified Teacher Status Standards as part of the requirement to teach in maintained school settings in Wales. The standards ensure that teachers can teach the curriculum, which could include SRE as part of the Personal and Social Education Framework. However, no specialist training is currently required.

High quality school-based SRE depends upon having a well-trained and confident workforce. Without specialist training schools may either avoid covering perceived sensitive or challenging topics altogether or deliver SRE in a way that fails to adequately safeguard children and young people.

The panel recommends that the SRE curriculum is embedded in a whole-school approach. This means that the workforce required to deliver SRE will consist of all school staff, including; teachers, teaching assistants, school support staff, school governors, health professionals such as school nurses and sexual health specialists, workers from specialist agencies such as those working in the VAWDASV, LGBTQ+ and Drugs and Alcohol sectors, youth and community workers, peer and near-peer educators and peer mentors and religious and spiritual leaders.

To ensure that SRE is delivered by a confident and skilled workforce, the panel recommends that the Welsh Government develops specialist national SRE training and professional development pathways for teachers and other professionals involved in SRE design and practice.

Developing new training pathways in ITE and post qualification pathways for in-service teachers

There has never been a certified national professional development programme for in-service teachers to support SRE or PSE in Wales. However, the current overhaul of ITE in Wales in light of the Donaldson (2015) and Furlong (2015) reports presents an opportunity to make changes to the ways in which trainee teachers are prepared to create and implement an SRE curriculum.

The panel also recommends that the Government support the development of an ITE SRE pathway in addition to post-qualification pathways for in-service teachers. This would include the opportunity for some members of the workforce to achieve a specialist qualification and have the opportunity to professionally develop and achieve a Masters level SRE qualification.

Very little is known about what training is currently being provided for educators working for specialist organisations and community services in Wales and whether this is meeting current need. We do know that there are a number of existing training programmes in Wales and the panel suggests that these needs must be considered when mapping current practices and building future training pathways in light of the panel's recommendation that SRE curriculum be embedded in a whole school approach to SRE.

Leadership monitoring and support

A dedicated SRE lead in every school

The panel recommends that every school, including schools with a religious character, has a dedicated SRE lead with protected hours and access to resources and guidance to co-ordinate a whole school approach to SRE.

This role will involve researching and promoting best practice, facilitating peer to peer training / mentoring alongside collaborating with specialist organisations and incorporating pupil voice into a high quality SRE offer as part of a whole school approach.

A dedicated SRE local authority lead working with consortia

There are large numbers of in-service teachers in need of SRE training. It will also take time before any changes made to ITE will have a large scale impact on the capacity of the teaching profession to offer high quality SRE as set out above. Collaborating with external agencies that can bring expertise, skills and effective educational approaches to SRE, is not only valued by young people and school staff (Estyn 2017), but vital in the short and long term.

To support schools to manage the involvement of community partners the panel recommends that each local authority has a dedicated SRE local authority lead, supported by the consortia and the national research, training and practice network.

The role of the local authority lead will be to provide external support, co-ordinate training and professional development opportunities and ensure the consistency and quality of input from local community partners and agencies that can support schools to embed SRE in a whole school approach.

Monitoring, quality improvement and the role of Estyn

As part of a whole school approach to SRE schools will need to review, reflect and revise their SRE curriculum each year.

The panel also recommends that Estyn play a key role in inspecting the SRE curriculum, including the effective implementation of a whole school approach, as part of new inspection arrangements which will be developed to align to the new curriculum. Estyn staff will require training to ensure that they are able to effectively monitor and report the quality of SRE provision.

Estyn's reviews of Healthy Relationships Education (2017) and Sex and Relationships Education (2007) have provided the panel with a valuable overview of SRE provision in Wales. It is recommended that Estyn provide a bi-annual report on SRE to support its effective implementation in the initial stages. The panel

recognises that this will not be required for other areas of the curriculum but that it may be necessary to provide extra scrutiny to SRE provision as it will be a new area of the curriculum for some schools.

Recommendations

- 6. Welsh Government to establish a SRE professional development pathway, differentiated for stage of education, to be incorporated into ITE and professional learning courses.**

This pathway would provide an opportunity to further progress their professional development and specialise in SRE, allowing scope for the workforce to achieve a Masters level SRE qualification.

- 7. All schools should have a specialist trained SRE lead with access to resources and guidance to co-ordinate a rights and gender-equity based curriculum. Hours for delivery across the key stages should be equitable with other curriculum subjects. This role should involve embedding SRE in a whole school approach.**
- 8. Each Local Authority, working with Consortia, should have a dedicated SRE lead to provide external support, co-ordinate CPD and ensure consistency and quality recognising that specialist external organisations of educationally trained providers, including FE and HE sector, can enhance SRE curriculum content and its implementation in a whole school approach.**
- 9. For Estyn to build on recent changes to the inspection framework to consider the inspection of SRE as part of aligning new inspection arrangements to the new curriculum.**
- 10. Welsh Government to consider establishing a SRE excellence mark to highlight exemplary whole school approaches to gender equality and equity and SRE.**

Key Area 4: Research and Support

Addressing significant research gaps

To achieve educational excellence in SRE, Wales needs to urgently address the significant gaps in the research literature on current SRE provision and provide a sustainable evidence base as the SRE curriculum and intervention programmes evolve. For example, there is no robust quantitative or qualitative research on:

- What SRE is currently provided in Welsh schools, how it is delivered, in what contexts and with what aims / objectives;
- The quality of the SRE experience for students and teachers;

In particular, there is a lack of research on SRE provision and quality in faith schools; early years; primary schools; special schools and mainstream schools for students with disabilities;

- What professional training is currently delivered for pre-service and post-service teachers;
- The quality of professional training for in-service and post-service teachers, health professionals and community workers involved in delivering SRE; and
- What children, young people, parents, carers and wider communities in Wales think about school-based SRE provision.

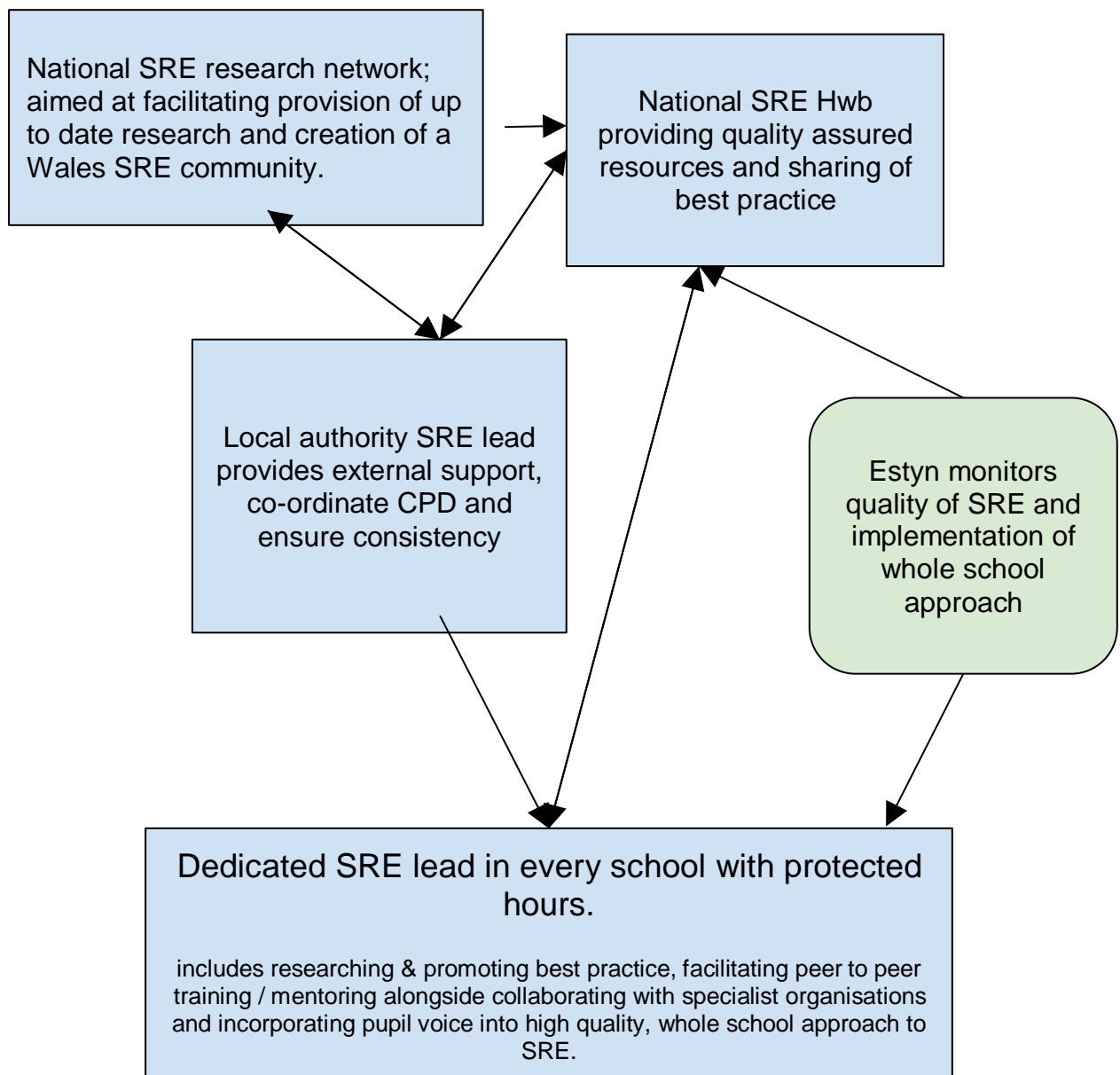
Establishing a SRE Hwb Zone and a SRE research, practice and training network

A solid research base is vital for the development of a much needed SRE Hwb zone to support schools with the challenge of staying up-to-date and accessing high quality resources and expertise. The SRE Hwb zone would be an interactive online space where educators, researchers, schools and other organisations could access up-to-date guidance, resources and ideas.

The SRE Hwb zone would be supported by a national SRE research practice and training network. A key function of an SRE research, practice and training network would be to work with research partners to facilitate up to date research and share best practice for the Welsh SRE community. In the short-term the network will have a role in ensuring that local authorities and schools are able to develop and share best practice and stay up to date with findings from emerging research.

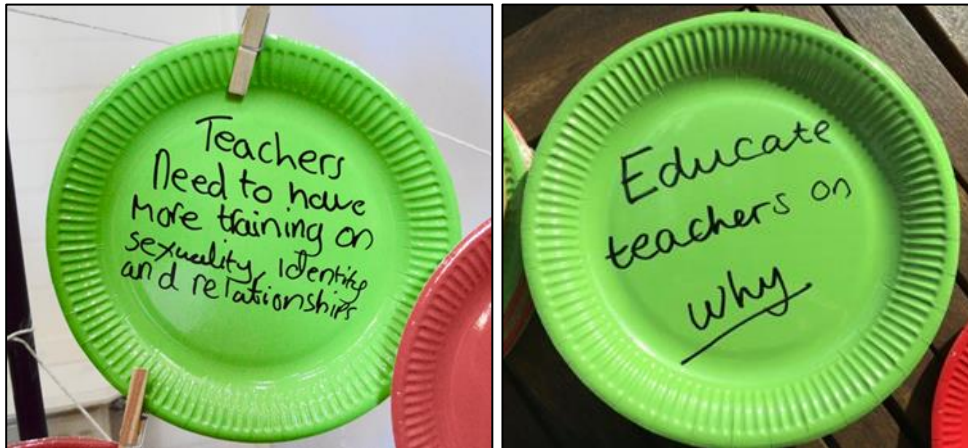
In the short and long term, the network will play a key role in enabling collaborative work between researchers and practitioners and across the different sectors that have an important role to play in the delivery of school based SRE. As the many examples in the accompanying report testify (Renold and McGeeney 2017), best

practice in SRE is rarely achieved without collaborations with specialist educators, specialist services, researchers or other collaborators (e.g. from the creative arts).



Recommendation

11. Welsh Government to establish a SRE Hwb Zone to support high quality SRE in schools and to service a SRE research, practice and training network, aimed at facilitating provision of up to date research and training opportunities and creation of a Wales SRE community of practice.



Summary of recommendations

Key Area 1: Definition, status and guidance

Recommendation 1: Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) should incorporate a name change from Sex and Relationships Education to Sexuality and Relationships Education. This new definition will draw upon the World Health Organisation's (WHO) definition of 'sexuality', with an emphasis on rights, health, equality and equity.

To make the Sexuality and Relationships Education (SRE) a statutory part of the new curriculum for all schools (age 3-16) and underpinned by the core principles in recommendation 2.

To develop new statutory guidance for Foundation Phase, Primary and Secondary Schools underpinned by the core principles in recommendation 2.

Key Area 2: Curriculum Content, Pedagogy and Assessment

Recommendation 2: The SRE Curriculum should be guided by the following core principles and thematic areas with clear learning outcomes that can evolve to meet changing biological, social, cultural and technological issues and knowledge.

Core principles include: Rights and Gender Equity; Creative and Curious; Empowering and Transformative; Experience-near and Coproduced; Holistic; Inclusive; Protective and Preventative

Recommendation 3: The SRE Curriculum should be engaging, relevant and developmentally appropriate with clear progression pathways for learning and experience.

Recommendation 4: Pioneer schools, supported by Welsh Government and specialist organisations should explore how the SRE element of the Health and Wellbeing AoLE can be embedded in a 'whole school approach'.

Recommendation 5: The Health and Wellbeing AoLE should have an equal status to other AoLEs. SRE should also have equal status to other areas within Health and Wellbeing and the wider AoLEs, including robust assessment arrangements that support pupil voice.

Key Area 3: Training and Standards

Recommendation 6: Welsh Government to establish a SRE professional development pathway, differentiated for stage of education, to be incorporated into ITE and professional learning courses.

This pathway would provide an opportunity to further progress their professional development and specialise in SRE, allowing scope for the workforce to achieve a Masters level SRE qualification.

Recommendation 7: All schools should have a specialist trained SRE lead with access to resources and guidance to co-ordinate a rights and gender-equity based curriculum. Hours for delivery across the key stages should be equitable with other curriculum subjects. This role should involve embedding SRE in a whole school approach.

Recommendation 8: Each Local Authority, working with Consortia, should have a dedicated SRE lead to provide external support, co-ordinate CPD and ensure consistency and quality recognising that specialist external organisations of educationally trained providers, including FE and HE sector, can enhance SRE curriculum content and its implementation in a whole school approach.

Recommendation 9: For Estyn to build on recent changes to the inspection framework to consider the inspection of SRE as part of aligning new inspection arrangements to the new curriculum.

Recommendation 10: Welsh Government to consider establishing a SRE excellence mark to highlight exemplary whole school approaches to gender equality and equity and SRE.

Key Area 4: Research and Support

Recommendation 11: Welsh Government to establish a SRE Hwb Zone to support high quality SRE in school and to service a SRE research, practice and training network, aimed at facilitating provision of up to date research and training opportunities and creation of a Wales SRE community of practice.

Annex 1: Terms of reference

The panel were tasked to consider the following objectives, which provided the terms of reference for the group:

- To consider the core principles and key areas for ‘high quality’⁸ comprehensive and inclusive Sex and Relationships Education.
- To identify examples of effective and innovative practice⁹ for ‘high quality’ comprehensive and inclusive Sex and Relationships Education.
- To identify the barriers to effective and innovative practice for ‘high quality’ comprehensive and inclusive Sex and Relationships Education.
- To identify teaching and learning resources and training opportunities that support schools to create ‘high quality’ comprehensive and inclusive Sex and Relationships Education.
- To identify progression steps for schools to create ‘high quality’ comprehensive and inclusive Sex and Relationships Education.
- To identify effective ways for children and young people to inform the future SRE curriculum, as part of the Health and Wellbeing AoLE.
- To identify effective ways for education professionals to inform the future SRE curriculum, as part of the Health and Wellbeing AoLE.

Two additional objectives were also part of the terms of reference for the panel. Both have been explored by the panel and/or by the chair via dedicated agenda items in panel meetings or with the relevant civil servants outside of the panel meetings.

- To contribute to the development of the refreshed anti-bullying guidance (Respecting Others) – see Annex 7)
- To contribute to the development of the future Sex and Relationships Guidance.

If the expert panel are asked to continue their role to inform the development of the new SRE curriculum and guidance, then these items can continue to be addressed. Alternatively a dedicated task and finish group for each item will be the most appropriate way forward.

⁸ “High-quality SRE, delivered as an integral component of a well-planned whole school PSE programme, contributes positively to learners’ well-being” (Welsh Government, ‘Sex and Relationships Guidance for Schools’, 2010, para 2.9, p.9)

⁹ Practices include approaches (e.g. whole-school approach) and pedagogies (e.g. using the creative arts).

Annex 2: Membership of the Sex and Relationships Expert Panel and external consultation

Membership

Siriol Burford	RCT / Health and Well-being consultant
Eleri Butler	Welsh Women's Aid
Mary Charles	Public Health Wales
Mwenya Chimba	BAWSO
Sam Clutton	Barnados Cymru
Rosalyn Evans	Hafan Cymru (The Spectrum Project)
Corinne Fry	Principle Youth Officers Group Wales
Ellen Jones	National Union of Students
Vivienne Laing ¹⁰	NSPCC Cymru
Paul Lewis	Office of the Children's Commissioner for Wales
Faith McCready	All Wales School Liaison Core Programme
Anthony Mulcahy	Estyn
Cressy Morgan	Health and Wellbeing lead (ERW Consortia)
Jan Pickles	National Safeguarding Board
Dr. Tamasine Preece	Brynterion Comprehensive School
Andrew White	Stonewall Cymru
Samantha Williams	Learning Disability Wales
David Wright	South West Grid for Learning (SWGFL)
Dr. Honor Young	Cardiff Univeristy (Schools Health Research Network)

¹⁰ Ruth Mullineux represented NSPCC in Vivienne Laing's absence.

Welsh Government

Heather Temple-Williams	Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Branch
Nia Griffiths	Curriculum Reform Health and Wellbeing lead
Lloyd Hopkin	Curriculum Reform Digital Competency Framework lead
David Sargent	Curriculum Division

Additional consultation/meetings with:

Lisa Drury-Lawson	Initial Teacher Education Training and Furlong implementation Branch
Ceri Dunstan	Terrence Higgins Trust
Mark Isherwood	Education Workforce Council
Rev Dr Philip Manghan	Catholic Education Service, Adviser for Wales
Kate Murray	Support for Learners Division
Gemma Nye	Initial Teacher Education Training and Furlong implementation Branch
Dr. Debbie Ollis	Deaken University, Melbourne, Australia.
Averil Petley	Support for Learners Division
Fr Bernard Sixtus	Cardiff Archdiocesan Director of RE

Annex 3: Meeting agendas and non-panel member presentations¹¹

Panel Meeting Overview

- Meeting 1** Introductory Meeting
- Meeting 2** Mapping Effective Practices for comprehensive and inclusive, whole-school approaches to SRE (2): panel members' expertise and experience
- Meeting 3** Mapping Effective Practices for comprehensive and inclusive, whole-school approaches to SRE (2): front-line expertise and experience from teachers and students.
- Meeting 4** Exploring Creative and Cross-Curricular approaches for holistic and inclusive Sexuality and Relationships Education
- Meeting 5** Final Report and Recommendations

External Presentations to Panel

Matthew Abraham – Doctoral Researcher, Cardiff University.

Jên Angharad - POSSIB: Lleisiau Mewn Celf - Voices in Art.

Siriol Burford (speaking on behalf of) Mountain Ash Comprehensive School.

Richard Byng - Deputy Head-teacher, Ysgol Hendre Felin, Pioneer School

Professor Kate Fisher - Exeter University.

Professor Gabrielle Ivinson – Manchester Metropolitan University.

Professor Rebecca Langlands - Exeter University

Catrin Pallot - Assistant Deputy Head Teacher, Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Plasmawr

Marc Lewis (Drama Teacher and Equalities Lead) and students, Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Plasmawr, Pioneer School.

Dr. Ester McGeeney - Sexual health researcher and practitioner.

¹¹ For full agendas and presentation titles, see Renold and McGeeney (2017).

Annex 4: Key concepts glossary – working definitions used by the panel

Sexuality

The World Health Organisation (WHO) definition of sexuality is used in this report.

The WHO¹²'s working definition of sexuality is:

“...a central aspect of being human throughout life encompasses sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction. Sexuality is experienced and expressed in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviours, practices, roles and relationships. While sexuality can include all of these dimensions, not all of them are always experienced or expressed. Sexuality is influenced by the interaction of biological, psychological, social, economic, political, cultural, legal, historical, religious and spiritual factors.” (WHO 2006, 2010).

For further WHO definitions of sexual health and sexual rights, see http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/topics/sexual_health/sh_definitions/en/

Relationship

Working definition of relationship developed by the panel

The world is made up of all kinds of relationships that shift and change over time. For example, they can be platonic, romantic, non-sexual and sexual.

Who we are is defined to a great extent by our relationships with others and the world around us. They can be formed with and between people, communities, deities, place and nature (e.g. caring for pets or the environment). We are all inter-connected and shaped by each other in one way or another.

Interpersonal relationships, that is relationships between people, are formed in the context of social, cultural, technological and other influences (e.g. ecological, historical). They can be made up of two or more people, and range in duration and intensity, from the very brief to life-long commitments. Inter-personal relationships can include a range of consensual and non-consensual associations and bonds between, for example, strangers, peers, friendships, families/kinship relations, partnerships, civil partnerships and marriage. Relationships can encompass a range feelings (e.g. affection, attraction, closeness, care, fear, love, obligation, power, powerlessness, respect, trust).

Relationships are formed and experienced across diverse spaces and places (e.g. from playgrounds and places of worship, to schools and social media) that

¹² http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/topics/sexual_health/sh_definitions/en/

increasingly traverse any simple online/offline divide as digitally networked and enabled relationships proliferate. Relationships are often regulated by law, custom, ritual and mutual agreement, and operate in the context of shifting, uneven, unequal or abusive power relations.

Sexuality and Relationships Education

Working definition of Sexuality and Relationships Education developed by the panel:

An inclusive, holistic, rights and gender equity based SRE aims to gradually enable and empower children and young people to build the knowledge, skills and ethical values through which they can explore and understand how sex, gender, sexuality and relationships have shaped and continue to shape people's lives around the world.

Needs-led and experience-near, it aims to enable ALL children and young people to see themselves and each other in what they learn and encourage children and young people to identify, and speak out on the injustices that impact on their own and others' lives and well-being.

Preventative and protective, it will also aim to support children and young people's rights to enjoy equitable, fulfilling, safe and healthy sexual lives and relationships over their life course, including the ability to recognise and understand discrimination, abusive relationships and gender-based and sexual violence, and know how and where to seek support, advice and factual information (e.g. on sex and gender equality/equity, sexual health, LGBTQ+ issues, VAWDASV)

Sex

'Sex' is used in this report to refer to the biological processes and attributes that societies use to assign sex categories (e.g. male, female, intersex). These biological attributes include chromosomes, hormones and internal and external physical sexual and reproductive anatomy.

Gender

'Gender' is used in this report to refer to how sexed bodies are *lived* (e.g. as identity, as expression, through social interaction), *represented* (e.g. in language, media, popular culture) and *regulated* (e.g. by socio-cultural norms, such as the stereotypes of 'masculinity' and 'femininity', and in law). While the concept gender can include the different ways societies assign chromosomes or body parts to sex categories, it is not synonymous with sex, and does not only refer to gender identity or gender expression. It is a concept that allows for analyses of gender as an organising principle of society (e.g. how gender shapes and is shaped by economic, environmental, political, cultural, legal, historical, religious and spiritual factors). As a concept, it also enables an exploration of how different societies address the intersection of biological, socio-cultural and psychological processes.

Gender identity

'Gender identity' is used in this report to refer to a person's inner sense of self. Gender identity does not necessarily relate to the sex a person is assigned at birth. Feelings about gender identity start early, around the age of 2-3.

Gender Expression

'Gender expression' is used in this report to refer to the outward signs that people use to communicate their gender identity (i.e. inner sense of self). This can include, for example, preferred pronouns, choice of name, style of dress and appearance, mannerisms and behaviour.

Transgender

Transgender or Trans is used in this report as an umbrella term to refer to people who identify differently with the sex or gender assigned at birth. Transgender can include a wide spectrum of gender identities and expressions. Not all people who are questioning or who don't identify with the sex or gender assigned at birth define themselves as transgender (e.g. non-binary, gender-queer, gender-fluid).

Queer

The term 'queer' is used in this report as an umbrella term to refer to non-conforming gender and sexual identities, expressions and orientations.

Gender Equality and Gender Equity

Gender equality is used in this report to mean that regardless of sex group assigned at birth, gender identity or gender expression people enjoy the same social, economic and political rights, resources, opportunities and protections. *Gender equity* is used in this report to refer to the different needs and interests that people require to ensure and achieve gender equality. Gender equality and gender equity are often used interchangeably, but the two refer to different, yet complementary strategies that are needed, for example, to address and reduce gender-based and sexual violence.

Bullying

Bullying is used in this report to mean the inter-personal abuse of social and cultural power relations that are persistently directed towards targeted people or groups of people over time. It can be covert or overt and expressed in verbal, physical, psychological, material, or technological ways (see also Annex 7 in Renold and McGeeney 2017).

Gender-based violence

Gender-based violence refers to:

(a) violence, threats of violence or harassment arising directly or indirectly from values, beliefs or customs relating to gender or sexual orientation

(b) female genital mutilation

(c) forcing a person (whether by physical force or coercion by threats or other psychological means) to enter into a religious or civil ceremony of marriage (whether or not legally binding).

as defined by the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015.

Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse, also referred to as domestic violence, is the exercise of control by one person over another within an intimate or close family relationship; the abuse can be sexual, physical, financial, emotional or psychological. The abuse can happen in the home or elsewhere.

It is usually a pattern of behaviour, and happens regardless of sex, sexuality, age, carer responsibility, class, disability, gender identity, immigration status, ethnicity, geography or religion. However the gender of the victim and of the perpetrator influences the severity, risk, and harm caused.

There are many different forms of domestic abuse, these include but are not limited to:

- coercively controlling behaviour (a pattern of control, isolation, degradation, intimidation and the use of threats)
- emotional / psychological abuse
- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- financial abuse
- harassment and stalking

The cross UK government definition of domestic violence and abuse is:

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality¹³

Violence against Women

Also known as violence against girls and women. Violence against women is a violation of human rights and both a cause and consequence of gender and other inequality between women and men, and is connected to wider patterns of sex and other intersectional inequalities, including ethnicity, class, gender identity, age, ability, sexuality, religion and belief. It happens to women because they are women and women are disproportionately impacted by all forms of violence¹⁴.

It includes all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological, or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life. This encompasses, but is not limited to:

¹³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-definition-of-domestic-violence>.

¹⁴ <http://gov.wales/docs/dsjlg/publications/commsafety/161104-national-strategy-en.pdf>

(a) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation;

(b) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution;

(c) Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State¹⁵.

Sexual violence

Sexual violence is used in this report to refer to '*sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, or threats of violence of a sexual nature*' as defined by the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015.

For additional specific definitions on abuse, female genital mutilation and harassment, see Welsh Government's National Strategy on Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence¹⁶ : 2016 – 2021

¹⁵ <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/48/a48r104.htm>

¹⁶ <http://gov.wales/docs/dsjlg/publications/commsafety/161104-national-strategy-en.pdf>

Annex 5: Core principles for a living SRE curriculum



RIGHTS & GENDER EQUITY BASED SRE...

...supports children and young people's rights to a relevant, holistic, inclusive and empowering SRE that is embedded in and promotes gender equity, social justice, safety and well-being

Sexuality and relationship rights are an evolving set of human rights related to sex, gender, sexuality and relationships and that contribute to the freedom, equity, equality, dignity, well-being and safety of all people. International research states that the most effective SRE programmes are those that have a rights and gender-based approach. Situating SRE firmly within the United Nations on the Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the Equality Duty (2010) the Violence against Girls and Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Act (2015) and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015), supports all children and young people's rights to enjoy a holistic sexuality and relationships education that is embedded in the context of gender equity, social justice, safety and well-being.

A rights and gender equity based SRE curriculum will create learning environments that enable children and young people to explore the impact of uneven power relations in society, and specifically how the advancement of gender equity and equality contributes to the realisation of sex, gender, sexuality and relationship rights and freedom from gender-based and sexual violence. It will enable children and young people to understand the impact of gender and sexual norms on self, other and society, and the role that gender and sexual norms play in social and economic marginalisation, and inter-personal conflict, oppression, discrimination, abuse and violence.

A rights and equity based curriculum is the foundation of a creative and curious, empowering and transformative, experience-near and co-produced, holistic, inclusive, and protective and preventative SRE.

- **Inclusive**

INCLUSIVE SRE ...

...recognises and values diversity and difference across the domains of sex, gender, sexuality and relationships

An inclusive SRE curriculum is vital in a changing social, cultural, political and digital landscape where gender, sexual and relationship identities, cultures and laws are expanding and contracting in complicated ways around the world. An inclusive SRE curriculum not only recognises diversity and difference across the domains of sex, gender, sexuality and relationships, but values these differences as a source of strength and foundational to cohesive, fair and equitable societies. An inclusive SRE can fundamentally address how unequal power relations play out when other markers of social, cultural, geographical, embodied and cognitive differences (e.g. age, dis/ability, ethnicity, class, religion, faith, body, locale etc.) interact in ways that empower or disempower individuals, groups and communities.

- **Holistic**

HOLISTIC SRE ...

...explores the interconnected ways in which sex, gender, sexuality and relationships shape people's lives across the world

A holistic SRE curriculum offers an inter-disciplinary curriculum for learning and experience. Shifting away from segregated or single issue based curriculum programmes (e.g. lessons on 'pornography', 'consent', 'gender identity'), a holistic SRE is characterized by its capacity to integrate these issues with reference to how they connect with each other (e.g. the biological, cultural, economic, historical, political, psychological, social and digital domains). A holistic and inter-disciplinary SRE can enable children and young people to explore the dynamic and interconnected ways in which sex, gender, sexuality and relationships are shaped across the six core areas of learning and experience, including creative arts and expression; health and well-being; humanities; languages, literacy and communication; mathematics and numeracy; science and technology.

- **Experience-near and co-produced**

EXPERIENCE-NEAR and CO-PRODUCED SRE ...

...is developed with children and young people to ensure a relevant and responsive curriculum that enhances pupil voice and agency.

Expectations of what is an age-appropriate SRE curriculum are rarely grounded in, and often fail to address (or silence) children and young people's *own* learning and experience on matters of sex, gender, sexuality and relationships. A developmentally appropriate *experience-near* curriculum is needs-led, and recognises and responds to children and young people's own agency, knowledge and experience (UNCRC Article 13, ENOC 2017). Co-producing the curriculum with children and young people can ensure a relevant *living* curriculum as it connects directly to what children and young people are experiencing around them. Utilising a range of critical and creative pedagogies, it will not assume, but attune to children and young people's *evolving capacities*, enabling ALL children and young people to see themselves and each other (e.g. peers, family, community, world issues) in what they learn. Working co-productively also offers opportunities and spaces for children and young people to "directly influence decisions about curriculum, pedagogy and assessment" (Successful Futures p.23).

- **Creative and curious**

CREATIVE & CURIOUS SRE ...

...supports a questioning curriculum and draws upon creative pedagogies to facilitate an ethical, safe and agentic learning environment.

Promising and best practice in sexuality and relationships education has documented the benefits of drawing on creative pedagogies for the development of engaging and safe learning environments. Creative pedagogies, which often utilise the expressive arts (e.g. drama, visual art, poetry), have the potential to facilitate interactive, agentic and ethical spaces to feel, think, question, embody and share often sensitive or difficult personal issues without children and young people revealing too much of themselves. This is often achieved through integrating the mode of expression (e.g. visual collage) with distancing techniques, and utilising critical pedagogies that invite children and young people to create scenarios that connect to the personal but provide opportunities for collective thought, understanding, debate and action for change (UNCRC, Article 13).

- **Empowering and transformative**

EMPOWERING AND TRANSFORMATIVE SRE ...

...creates an affirmative and transformative curriculum that invites children and young people to advance social justice for gender, sexual and relationship equity and well-being

Too often, children and young people learn about sexualities and relationships through highly normative gendered, racialized, heterosexist, classed and ableist

scripts of risk, shame and blame. An affirmative and empowering SRE curriculum is vital for a meaningful, interactive and engaged learning experience. It is fundamentally non-judgemental, non-stigmatising and anti-discriminatory. It promotes active and collective meaning-making and understanding through critical inquiry into historical or contemporary issues and problems of when, where, how and why things happen and their potential for change. A transformative approach to SRE can support children and young people to challenge the impact of negative social attitudes and expectations in relation to sex, gender, sexualities and relationships and invites children and young people to identify, forge alliances with others and act on the injustices in their own and others' lives and well-being.

- **Protective and preventative**

PROTECTIVE & PREVENTATIVE SRE ...

...supports children and young people to develop: social, emotional and physical literacy; resilience to cope with change, conflicts and pressure; the knowledge to recognise abusive relationships; and the confidence to seek support

A protective and preventative SRE is informed by many of the protective articles embedded in the UNCRC. Article 19, 32, 35 and 37 state that governments should protect children under 18 from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, and sexual abuse. Article 2 covers freedom from discrimination (e.g. sexism, racism, sectarianism, homophobia, transphobia, discrimination against the disabled or ableism); Article 8, the right to an identity (including gender and sexual identity) and article 24 and 31 state children's rights to health, well-being and play. Integrating these articles with the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act (2015), the Equality Act (2010) and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015), a protective and preventative SRE curriculum will enable children and young people to build their knowledge and understanding of how to recognise discrimination, abusive relationships and violence.

A preventative and protective SRE will also avoid focusing only on strategies which minimise personal risk. Rather, it will address personal risk within the systemic constraints (e.g. social norms and inequitable power relations) which provide conducive contexts for the types of discrimination, oppression, violence and abuse outlined above. It will be embedded in a whole school approach, utilising interactive pedagogies that aim to create transformative collaborative learning environments within the school and wider community. These environments will support children and young people gain the social, emotional and physical literacy¹⁷ and resilience to understand and manage change, conflict, and pressures of different kinds (e.g. in relation to identity, their body, in relationships, in families and in society). They will also support building children and young people's confidence to speak out and know

¹⁷ Physical literacy in the context of SRE would enable learners to develop embodied knowledge, communication skills and well-being in relation to SRE related topics (e.g. affirmative consent).

where and how to seek advice, support, protection and factual information (e.g. on sex and gender equality/equity, sexual health, LGBTQ+ issues and VAWDASV)

A protective and preventative SRE is an ethical curriculum that promotes the awareness of mutual respect, care of the self and others, as responsible, ethically informed individuals and citizens of Wales and the world.

Annex 6: Thematic areas for a living SRE curriculum

The beginning of a process

It is envisaged that the core principles outlined Annex 5 will underpin the progression pathways in the future design of clear developmentally appropriate learning aims and outcomes. It is expected that this process will be undertaken by the pioneer and cluster schools, with extensive support from relevant and available expertise, over the next four years (2018-2022). While it is beyond the capacity of the panel and inappropriate to create more detailed thematic content without a robust process of consultation, particularly with children and young people themselves (see for example Johnson et al. 2016¹⁸), the panel did make some progress on exploring *guiding thematic areas*. However, these thematic areas only mark the beginning of a process and should be read in the context of useful starters for discussion and debate for the pioneer schools and any task and finish group that advises on the development of statutory guidance and statutory SRE. They have been drafted in the context of, and guided by, a range of curriculum resources (see Part 3, Renold and McGeeney 2017).

A holistic approach to SRE: integrating the I and We of SRE

While the following thematic areas have separated out ‘personal’ skills, knowledge and experience from the other core areas of knowledge and experience, as the below illustrates, they are crucially inter-connected in ways that traverse any simple self/other/world divide. Lamb and Randazzo¹⁹ (2016) refer to this as the I and We approach to SRE. For example, integrating the I and We, educators would facilitate SRE learning environments and activities that would explore the self always in relation to and connected with others, as Lamb and Randazzo state, “what would be good for me, is hopefully transformed into what would be good for society, for the other person and for the world”.

¹⁸ Johnson, B., Harrison, L., Ollis, D., Flentje, J., Arnold, P., & Bartholomaeus, C. (2016) *‘It is not all about sex’: Young people’s views about sexuality and relationships education*. Report of Stage 1 of the Engaging Young People in Sexuality Education Research Project. Adelaide: University of South Australia.

¹⁹ Lamb, S. and Randazzo, R. (2016) From I to We: Sex education as a form of civics education in a neoliberal context, *Curriculum Inquiry*, 46 (2): pp. 148-167



RIGHTS, GENDER EQUITY AND POWER

Indicative core areas could include student learning and experience on;

- How social and cultural norms shape the way people learn about and express their sex, gender, sexuality and relationships
- How new technologies, the media and the law shape the way people learn about and express their sex, gender, sexualities and relationships
- Sex, gender, sexuality and relationship rights across the world.
- Sex, gender, sexuality and relationship equity across the world.
- Sex, gender, sexuality and relationship-based discrimination, oppression, abuse and violence across the world.

IDENTITIES, EXPRESSION AND BEHAVIOUR

Indicative core areas could include student learning and experience on;

- The history of gender, sexuality and relationship identity formation, expression and behaviour
- The diversity of gender, sexuality and relationship identities, expression and behaviour, across the world and over the life course.
- Representations of sex, gender, sexuality and relationship identities, expression and behaviour in arts, media and culture.

BODIES

Indicative core areas could include student learning and experience on;

- The diversity of sexed bodies over the life course and across the world.
- The changing body, human reproduction and life cycles.
- The social, cultural and technological world of body image, body objectification & body modification.

RELATIONSHIPS & FEELINGS

Indicative core areas could include student learning and experience on;

- The history of relationships across the world
- The diversity of relationships across the world, and over the life course.
- The biological, social, cultural and technological world of feelings
- Representations of relationships and feelings in arts, media and culture.

PERSONAL SAFETY, CARE, SUPPORT AND WELL-BEING

Indicative core areas could include student learning and experience on;

- How personal, social and cultural values and beliefs impact on decision making, feelings and behaviours for self and others
- Communication skills: discursive, embodied and digital
- Bodily autonomy, respect, privacy and consent
- Managing safety, conflict, risk and pressures of different kinds & unwanted behaviours and outcomes
- The social, emotional, physical and legal nature and impact of violence against girls and women, domestic abuse and all forms of gender-based and sexual violence, including homophobic, bi-phobic and transphobic violence.
- Seeking support and advice and accurate factual information

SOCIAL JUSTICE & ETHICAL CITIZENSHIP

Indicative core areas could include student learning and experience on;

- How laws and policies contribute to equity and human rights regarding sex, gender, sexuality and relationships.
- The opportunities and challenges people face in exercising their sex, gender, sexuality and relationship rights across the world.
- How people, including children and young people, contribute to social justice, equity, equality and rights regarding sex, gender, sexuality and relationships.

Annex 7: Respecting others for respectful relationships – panel statement on addressing bullying cultures in schools

Respecting Others for Respectful Relationships: Addressing bullying cultures in schools

This statement was submitted by Chair to the Welsh Government following panel meeting 4 (see Annex 2).

Understanding what bullying is and what schools can do about it is in need of a critical overhaul.

Proposed working definition:

Bullying is the inter-personal abuse of social and cultural power relations that are persistently directed towards targeted people or groups of people over time. It can be covert or overt and expressed in verbal, physical, psychological, material, or technological ways.

Understanding the roots of bullying acts

Individual or group-based bullying acts are expressed within the context of and sustained by, wider social and cultural inequalities. In brief, bullying acts tend to replicate these inequalities.

Bullying acts frequently reinforce what is socially and culturally acceptable (e.g. what a 'boy' can wear or where a child should live). Individual or groups of children and young people who are perceived as 'different' from the 'norm' are frequent targets of bullying.

What can schools do?

Schools need to understand bullying behaviours as the micro-expression of wider persistent social inequalities. Only then will interventions be targeted at creating conducive contexts for addressing the root cause and consequence of bully cultures and making safer schools environments for all.

To achieve actionable and sustainable change, we need to shift the focus solely from individual bullies and victims, and work towards interventions that address bullying cultures in the context of rights, equalities and social justice (e.g. how can we support students and all staff understand the root causes of power and inequality in school and the wider world; what we can do to identify and change the conditions and contexts which enable bullying cultures to thrive)

What is best practice?

Best practice will encourage school policies and practices to work with children, parents and the wider community to develop affirmative interventions that:

- Advance awareness of children's rights to be safe and free from discrimination and harm
- Celebrate (not tolerate) difference and diversity, and understand how bullying acts and cultures related to protected characteristics are interconnected

- Situate anti-bullying work in the wider context of an equalities and social justice approach to respectful and healthy relationships and violence prevention.
- Measure progress of successful proactive and affirmative²⁰ activities that promote difference, diversity, rights and social justice more widely, as part of their whole-school equalities plan.
- Support and celebrate whole-school student-led action campaigns research projects to evaluate progress (NB. student ownership is paramount to successful interventions, and allows them to raise areas of change that matter to them)

To achieve the above, **training and workshops** for school staff need to focus on:

- **understanding** the root causes and consequences of bully cultures: that is, how individual or group-based bullying acts are expressed within the context of and sustained by, wider social and cultural inequalities.
- how they can **co-produce activities that address the root causes and consequences** with children through a whole school rights-based approach as part of their equalities plan.

Professor Emma Renold, July 2017

NB. The panel, via the chair, can provide references drawn on to support the approach above at a later date if required.

²⁰ An affirmative approach to address bully cultures is vital in supporting schools who fear stigma by raising awareness of these issues. If bullying acts and cultures are understood as signs and symptoms of living in, and struggling with the uneven and unequal power relations that exist in society, this might alleviate the stigma of schools of proactively addressing bullying acts and cultures.