

# Engaging with schools and communities to support inclusive teaching of Relationships and Sex Education

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# Foreword

The importance of delivering high quality and inclusive Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) cannot be overstated. It helps keep children safe and gives them the confidence and knowledge they need as they mature through adolescence and into adulthood.

Councils have worked with schools for many years to help ensure pupils receive the best teaching possible. But now the need to get it right is greater than ever. From September 2020 it will become a statutory requirement for all primary schools to provide age-appropriate Relationships Education and all secondary and specialist schools to provide age-appropriate RSE. Health education will also become mandatory in all state-schools.

There will be many schools that are already compliant with the new requirements, but there will be a number that are not. Councils are working hard to support them, many in partnership with other organisations such as the Sex Education Forum, PSHE Association and Stonewall through their Children and Young People's Champions programme.<sup>1</sup>

Delivering high quality, inclusive RSE has to be part of a broader Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education programme incorporating everything from online safety and anti-bullying to mental health and drugs and alcohol. Indeed, health education is also becoming statutory as part of the changes.

So what is happening on the ground? The case studies in this report should give you an idea of what is being done and what still needs to be done.

Lesson plans are being developed and teachers are being trained. In Leeds there will be a series of conferences with expert speakers and workshops, while Leicestershire has paid for teachers to access specialist training, to give two examples highlighted in this report.

Schools will be required to engage with parents about this teaching, and this is already proving to be a vital element of their work towards statutory RSE. This helps build understanding for why these subjects are important, and address any misconceptions.

Sadly, we have seen protests against several schools in the last year. These have opposed RSE, including teaching about lesbian, gay, bi and trans (LGBT) people.

Teaching about LGBT people at primary and secondary is timely and essential. It helps all young people see their families and themselves reflected in what they learn.

<sup>1</sup> [www.stonewall.org.uk/children-and-young-peoples-services-champions-programme](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/children-and-young-peoples-services-champions-programme)

Providing bespoke support to schools to deliver LGBT-inclusive RSE is key. In Shropshire the council has been proactive in giving schools access to training and guidance on LGBT-inclusive teaching as well as celebrating good practice.

In the small number of cases where disruption has occurred, this has required care. In Nottingham, the council has supported its schools by developing myth-busting information that it has circulated on social media as well as having a communications strategy that sees it taking responsibility for media handling for schools if problems do occur.

There is much to do. But, if we get this right, we will make a huge difference to children across the country.

**Councillor Ian Hudspeth**

Chairman, LGA Community Wellbeing Board

**Councillor Judith Blake**

Chair, LGA Children and Young People Board

# What does statutory RSE mean in practice?

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 made RSE a statutory requirement from September 2020. The Department for Education (DfE) published guidance in June 2019 setting out exactly what this meant. It covers both RSE and health education.

In primary schools Relationships Education will be statutory. The Government recommends that primary schools deliver sex education too – this can go beyond the content already included in the national curriculum for science in primary school, such as the main external body parts, the human body as it grows from birth to old age and reproduction.

In all secondary schools both relationships and sex education is a statutory requirement.

In primary and secondary schools, parents and carers can ask to withdraw pupils from sex education. Relationships Education is compulsory.

In secondary school, if a request is made to withdraw a child from part or all of sex education, the Government states that it is good practice for the school to meet with the parents or carers to discuss the issue, including explaining the benefits of this teaching and any detrimental effects of withdrawal. Only in exceptional cases can the request be refused.

However, if a child who has been withdrawn from sex education at secondary wishes to take part, schools must make arrangements for this in one of the three terms immediately before they turn 16.

In primary school, if a request is made to withdraw a child from some or all teaching on sex education, this must be automatically granted.

The new health education requirements apply to all schools except independent schools, where PSHE is already a statutory requirement. Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are expected to receive the same education, although this may need to be tailored to their individual needs.

The guidance acknowledged there were some 'areas of contention'. It said the key was to ensure that the content was 'age appropriate' and 'developmentally appropriate' and taught 'sensitively and inclusively'.

Schools are free to determine how to deliver the content. The guidance said many will choose to deliver it as part of a timetabled PSHE programme, but others can choose different curricular models.

In particular it asks them to take account of the online world, including how to keep safe, the risks of harmful content and contact and how to keep safe.

Schools are required to have an up-to-date policy that is made available to parents and others that defines the education they are providing, how it is taught and who is responsible for delivering it.

In teaching RSE, schools should ensure that the needs of all pupils are met and that all pupils understand the importance of equality and respect.

This means it is expected that all pupils will be taught LGBT content at a timely point – the guidance leaves it to schools to decide when this should be. But it says LGBT content should be fully integrated in the curriculum rather than a stand-alone unit or lesson.

The guidance<sup>2</sup> will be reviewed every three years.

## Top tips

- Get schools to assess where they are now.
- Host briefings with school leaders – governors and head teachers.
- Provide help to schools to update policies and curriculum.
- Offer training to teachers in how to deliver high quality RSE.
- Develop a plan to deal with parental concerns and potential school disruption in terms of communication strategies.
- Encourage proactive engagement with parents.
- Involve external partners who are experts in the field.
- Continue to provide support beyond the introduction of statutory RSE in September 2020.

## Want to find out more?

### DfE guidance and resources

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education)

### Roadmap to Statutory RSE (Joint PSHE Association and Sex Education Forum resource)

[www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/roadmap-statutory-rse](http://www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/roadmap-statutory-rse)

### Sex Education Forum website

[www.sexeducationforum.org.uk](http://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk)

### Sex Education Forum Evidence Briefing

[www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/resources/evidence/sre-evidence](http://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/resources/evidence/sre-evidence)

### Stonewall RSE pages

[www.stonewall.org.uk/our-work/campaigns/relationships-and-sex-education](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/our-work/campaigns/relationships-and-sex-education)

### Stonewall CYPs Programme

[www.stonewall.org.uk/cyps](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/cyps)

The CYPs Champions programme supports LGBT-inclusion across children's services and is referenced in the case studies.

Please contact [cyps@stonewall.org.uk](mailto:cyps@stonewall.org.uk) for further details about accessing this support and becoming a member.

### Twelve principles of good RSE – poster

[www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/resources/advice-guidance/principles-good-rse](http://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/resources/advice-guidance/principles-good-rse)

### RSE briefing for councillors

[www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/resources/advice-guidance/briefing-local-councillors-supporting-rse](http://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/resources/advice-guidance/briefing-local-councillors-supporting-rse)

### PSHE Association statutory RSE guides

[www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/preparing-statutory-rse-and-relationships](http://www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/preparing-statutory-rse-and-relationships)

<sup>2</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education)

# Case studies

The following case studies are just a small selection of the many pro-active and positive approaches which local authorities are taking to support inclusive RSE.

For further information or contact details for any of the case studies please email [info@local.gov.uk](mailto:info@local.gov.uk)

## Key points

- Brighton and Hove's PSHE service has created a timetable for schools to follow as they work towards statutory RSE.
- It involves tips and advice on carrying out parent engagement.
- Training is also being offered as well as support to develop the curriculum.

Brighton and Hove has a strong track record when it comes to RSE teaching. But it is still making sure no stone is left unturned as it prepares for the introduction of statutory RSE with a particular stress being placed on engaging with parents.

## What was done?

The council's PSHE service, which is funded by public health, has produced a detailed timetable setting out what schools need to do and what they can expect from the PSHE service.

The head of the service, which also incorporates three seconded PSHE lead teachers, said: "Each year we set ourselves a core theme to focus on. Otherwise you can get dragged into lots of different issues and not have an impact.

"We have looked at mental health and drug, alcohol and tobacco education in recent years, but this year we knew implementing statutory RSHE needed to be the focus.

"We know our schools are delivering great RSHE, but this is an opportunity to review and improve what is happening, with a focus on engaging with parents and carers."

The timetable sets out three or four steps during each term throughout the 2019/20 academic year. In the autumn this includes a focus on leadership, raising awareness among school staff and beginning engagement with parents and carers.

To help, the PSHE service has been running some briefing sessions with head teachers and governors in both primary and secondary schools. A power point has also been produced that schools can use with staff and governors.

But it is parent engagement activities that the council is particularly keen for schools to get involved with.

## Why?

The head of the PSHE service said: "Even though we have been delivering what is contained in statutory Relationships Education for some time, it is still a contentious issue for some.

"We have to be aware of that, listen to concerns, provide reassurance and think about how we can adapt our practice, while ensuring statutory content is delivered in a way in which all children and young people feel safe and see themselves and their families represented."

To ensure this engagement is a thorough and comprehensive process, the council suggests schools can carry out two engagement activities – one in the autumn term and one in the summer.

In the autumn term, the PSHE service will provide a statutory policy template for schools to use to get the conversation going and tools to help them engage, including how to engage with faith communities and families with English as an additional language.

This will then lead to a review by each school of its policy and curriculum to reflect what is in the statutory RSE guidance and ahead of an engagement exercise about curriculum content in the summer term.

“There are a few ways schools can do this – they can do it through coffee mornings, workshops or after-school meetings. We will be here to support them. We are already meeting with faith leaders locally to discuss what the changes are all about.

“We will also be continuing with our termly PSHE coordinator network meetings. Although the one in the summer term will be a conference where we will invite a wider group of teachers.”

## What else is happening?

The push does not stop there. Once the statutory RSE lessons start in September 2020 schools will be asked to monitor what is happening and then carry out an evaluation towards the end of the year.

“We will provide the tools to do this. It will be a big piece of work. We hope there will be guidance nationally on how to assess the learning outlined in the statutory guidance. But if there isn't we will work with our schools on measuring progress and the impact of the curriculum.”

The council is also developing period positive practice in partnership with a national menstruation education researcher.

# A MULTI-AGENCY RSE WORKING GROUP

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## Key points

- A working group set up involving teachers, parent reps, school nurses and council officers.
- The group has brought together expertise to help prepare for statutory RSE as well as helping share information.
- A head teacher's reference group has now been established to build on what has been done so far and act as a 'critical friend'.

Camden Council has a strong track record of collaborative working with schools.

In the past it has created working groups to look at specific issues – and this was an approach that Camden felt would help in the lead up to statutory RSE.

## What has been done?

An RSE working group was established in late 2017. It has been meeting termly, providing a forum for information sharing, discussion and advice on the support to schools to get ready for the changes.

There are around 20 members. They include PSHE leads and governors from primary, secondary and special schools as well as parent representatives, the school nursing service, sexual health staff and voluntary sector representatives.

The group is coordinated by Camden Learning, a local partnership set up as a joint enterprise between schools and the council to share expertise, drive improvement and develop excellent practice.

It is chaired by an adviser from Camden Learning and also includes other council officers, including the lead on Prevent and the primary PSHE adviser.

The meetings have been hosted at participating schools.

One of the key tasks the working group has carried out since it was created has been to help inform Camden's response to the consultation on the DfE guidance and feedback on Camden's plans to support schools.

Since the publication of the final guidance in June 2019, the group has been focusing on developing model RSE policies for primary and secondary schools.

## Why?

The RSE working group has enabled Camden to bring together and take account of the views and expertise of schools, voluntary organisations and parent representatives in the move towards statutory RSE.

It has also ensured there is comprehensive and useful support to schools, as well as acting as a forum for informing and raising awareness of the changes to a wide range of professionals involved with schools.

One adviser from Camden Learning said: "It has kept them up-to-date about what has been going on."

## What else is happening?

Camden Learning has also produced a variety of resources to support schools, including a briefing that summarises the government guidance, an FAQs document and a one-page briefing on the four key actions for schools to get ready for September 2020.

Head teachers, governors, PSHE coordinators and others with a key role in leading the implementation of the changes in their schools have been invited to briefings that started in June and continue through September and October.

Meanwhile, a new head teacher's RSE reference group has been formed.

An adviser from Camden Learning said the aim of this group is "to act as a critical friend, helping us to get our support right with schools".

"In the lead up to the introduction of statutory RSE in all schools, both the working group and head teacher's reference group will play vital roles."

# PLAN FOR BOTH RSE AND HEALTH EDUCATION

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## Key points

- Briefing day held in early summer to prepare schools for statutory RSE.
- Three conferences due to be run to provide more detail, covering topics such as LGBT issues and female genital mutilation.
- These will be supplemented by training courses.

Leeds is home to nearly 300 schools. Reaching and supporting them all can be a challenge.

The council's health and wellbeing service has a tried-and-tested method of running one-day conferences to engage schools having held them in previous years on topics such as social, emotional and mental health, and physical education.

## What has been done?

With the introduction of statutory RSE on the horizon, the council decided to organise a series of one-day events. There are three planned in the lead up to the September 2020 deadline.

They are:

- preparing for statutory Relationships Education and RSE
- preparing for Statutory Health Education
- real life issues.

They are aimed at PSHE leads with the council hoping around 100 will attend each event.

There will be keynote speakers, workshop sessions, some of which are tailored at different types of schools, and a question-and-answer 'carousel' at the end where delegates will get the opportunity to quiz experts.

The conferences come after an introduction briefing held in July just after the DfE issued its final guidance on statutory RSE.

## Why?

The service lead for the programme said: "When we held the briefing in July our main focus was to provide an update to schools and at the same time some reassurance too.

"We invited Ofsted and the PSHE Association to discuss the guidance and a local deputy head teacher at one of our schools went through how they were providing RSE.

"We did not want schools to think they had to develop a new curriculum, as many schools are already delivering good PSHE. We have provided a lot of support over the years and many schools are in a really good position to embrace the RE and RSE curriculum.

"We are focusing the three days on what schools may need additional support with, and we are working with the DfE and Stonewall on the first one. We have an LGBT session during this winter – that is an area that schools do want support on."

"We also felt it was important to have a day dedicated to health education – it is easy to forget the introduction of statutory health education as there has been such a focus on RE and RSE.

“There are elements, within the health education curriculum, such as first aid, gambling and self-care, which may be new to some schools.”

The final session, real life issues, will be for exploring topics such as criminal sexual exploitation, grooming and female genital mutilation.

“These are the sort of areas that schools may feel they have to buy-in some expertise. We hope to give them the confidence to deliver it themselves.”

## What else is happening?

The three conferences are being supplemented by the normal range of support and resources the service provides to those who buy-in to the annual service level agreement which offers support as well as access to training.

This includes dedicated training sessions on everything from drug education to LGBT inclusivity. There are also template RSE curriculums and policies schools can adopt.

The service lead said: “One of the things we are keen for schools to do is engage with parents and carers as we get nearer to September 2020.

We think it is important to bring parents in and explain what is happening as part of a wider look at the whole curriculum and not just RE and RSE.”

## DEVELOPING EXPERT TEACHERS

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### Key points

- One-day workshops tailored individually to primary, secondary and specialist schools along with a separate one for school leaders.
- Schools being given access to nationally-recognised lesson resources.
- Eight teachers have completed professional training.

Responsibility for PSHE teaching – and RSE in particular – is a bit of a grey area. In some schools it is left to form teachers, while in others there are dedicated members of staff. It can mean confidence and knowledge in how to deliver high quality lessons can vary.

### What was done?

Leicestershire County Council has invested in training teachers and school leaders in how to provide high quality RSE.

A series of one-day workshops have been run since September 2017 covering everything from the latest policy and lesson planning to answering difficult questions.

There are different workshops for primary, secondary and specialist schools. School leaders, such as heads, deputy heads, governors and PSHE leads, also have their own workshop, while there is a fifth course open to non-school staff, such as housing officers and youth centre workers.

So far 170 have been through the training. Those who have taken part are full of praise, describing it as a “brilliant”, “full of ideas” and a “fabulous way to think and start positive conversations”.

### Why?

A public health commissioner from the council said PSHE and RSE have remained very much a “Cinderella” area of teaching.

“We need to develop real expertise and professionalism in delivering this education – that is what we have tried to do.

“We have a good track record on working with schools in the field of health. We still have a strong healthy schools programme in place with 98 per cent of schools involved.

“We’ve been able to tap into that base as we started to look at how to support schools with RSE. I must say we have had really good buy-in since we started doing the workshops.”

### What else is happening?

To help further, the council has invested money in paying for schools to access specialised lesson resources and put teachers through extra training.

Last year eight teachers from a variety of different schools took part in the National PSHE CPD programme. It involves three days of training and course work in between. The aim is to improve confidence and capability to deliver PSHE. It teaches them how to develop their own school’s curriculum, raise the quality of teaching and best practice.

Alongside this the council has paid half of the cost for 20 schools to access the Cambridgeshire CPD tool and this year 20 secondary schools will get access to the 11 to 16 Jigsaw PSHE resource. Both offer lesson plans, guides and advice and tips on delivering high quality PSHE education.

The public health commissioner added:

“We have limited budget so have to be quite careful how we spent it so I have tried to get schools interested with the view that they will see the benefits of investing in this and carry it on.

“We really need to value high quality teaching in this area. Not all teachers are comfortable with teaching this, but the introduction of statutory RSE is an opportunity to make sure we improve standards.”

# THE ART OF GOOD COMMUNICATION

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## Key points

- Online portal set up to provide resources and quality assured information to teachers and parents about changes.
- Stonewall running courses on LGBT inclusion and relationships education.
- All 165 schools offered training workshops in partnership with the Sex Education Forum charity.

Good communication is key when it comes to preparing for the introduction of statutory RSE.

Northumberland covers a large rural area of nearly 2,000 sq miles, making it one of the biggest in England. As a result, it has more challenges than most in engaging schools and parents.

## What was done?

The county council has sought to get round this by setting up a webpage with all the latest information and guides about the changes. It is run by using the online bulletin board service Padlet and allows approved users to update it on a daily basis.

The portal – linked off the main Northumberland Education website – currently contains information on everything from the latest official guidance on statutory RSE to advice and tips about sexting and cyberbullying, as well as links to Public Health England’s resources on puberty, alcohol and smoking.

The information can be promoted on social media and there is the possibility of setting up an online chat forum.

Meanwhile, their education and skills team is collaborating with colleagues in public health who are developing some bite-sized videos for the portal on everything from where to get condoms for class demonstrations to how to address issues relating to sexually-transmitted infections.

## Why?

One of coordinators of the work said: “Good communication is essential. We have not had any protests or objections yet, but by providing good clear information we would hope to ensure that people are fully aware of what this is all about and alleviate any concerns.

“Our schools are spread over a large area so we think this will be an effective way of distributing information and sharing ideas.”

## What else is happening?

Northumberland has also been arranging some events and workshops for teachers working in the county’s 165 schools.

Stonewall ran an open session in May on LGBT issues. The session focussed on the right language to use. One of coordinators of the event said: “This acted as a springboard to discuss wider issues. But language is often a much under-rated issue. Teachers may not know what language they should be using and that can make them less confident to address these issues with children and young people.

“The emotional health and wellbeing of LGBT young people is a priority in our local transformation plan. Creating safe, inclusive learning environments and ensuring that all schools understand how to eliminate homophobic, biphobic and transphobic incidents or behaviour is part of that.”

The event is going to be followed up by another two sessions from Stonewall in the lead up to September 2020. The next one is on emerging best practice within the county.

Meanwhile, Northumberland has partnered with the Sex Education Forum to offer schools workshops in the forum's training programme, Get ready for statutory! The one-day course covers the new legislation, how to review current provision and best practice in the field.

There are 60 places for primary schools, 30 for secondary and middle and 30 for special schools available during this academic year. Places are being charged at £25 per attendee to cover the cost of lunch and venue hire.

The coordinator said: "We're already seeing lots of interest for the primary face-to-face training. Secondary schools tend to be harder to engage. There is such a focus on attainment and academy status which has diluted the links with local authorities.

"It means we are looking at other ways to make sure we reach out to as people as possible. I want to set up some informal meetings that will not be so time-consuming.

"We are also beginning to get a PSHE coordinator network going. We have 13 schools that are part of the DfE early adopters so it will be good to hear from them about the support they are able to access and use it as a forum to share best practice."

### Key points

- Plan developed to handle flashpoints and protests.
- Information distributed via social and mainstream media.
- Public statement made signed by councillors from all parties.
- Part of wider package to promote RSE, including annual celebration day.

### The problem

The introduction of statutory RSE can be contentious. In Birmingham it has resulted in protests outside primary schools and children being removed from classes over concerns about the teaching of same-sex relationships and transgender issues.

Nottingham has had a small taste of this. During the last academic year there were angry scenes outside one primary school when protesters objecting to the move clashed with counter-protesters.

Police had to intervene and the episode attracted media attention in the city.

### What was done?

The city council was prepared. It took on all the media handling for the school, allowing the head teacher to concentrate on communicating with parents and pupils.

The council leader, gave interviews and could point to the strong backing of councillors from all parties. Just weeks before cross-party support had been given to a public statement signed by members supporting the introduction of statutory RSE and making it clear Nottingham was a city that 'celebrates equality, inclusivity and respect'.

Meanwhile, the council's communications team was able to distribute information, myth busters, infographics and videos across social media. That material had been prepared months before and already circulated as part of a coordinated campaign to be open and honest about RSE.

### Why?

The council leader said: "In Nottingham we do not wish to see the type of protest that took place in Birmingham. Such angry scenes have a negative impact on young children and pose a significant safeguarding risk to pupils who have to walk past protesters in order to get to their school in the morning.

"RSE in schools is nothing new, for many years schools have delivered lessons. Teachers are experienced at managing RSE sensitively in an age-appropriate way and they make sure the right conversations are happening at the right stage in children's lives."

The council's RSE consultant agrees and believes Nottingham's experience shows the importance of being proactive. "We recognised that there was a lot of misinformation circulating about the new guidance that was causing concern for some parents and community members.

"We have taken the approach that it is better to engage with people to ensure everyone has accurate information in order to alleviate concerns and encourage on-going dialogue.

## What else is happening?

The council also holds an annual RSE day to celebrate good practice. Schools and community groups plan RSE activities that encourage people to talk about healthy relationships and positive sexual health. Following the first event in 2018, RSE day then went national in 2019 and was celebrated by schools and organisations across the country.

The council has also created an RSE charter. Running for the last three years, schools sign the charter to commit to effective RSE, based on good practice. Schools audit their provision and receive support to improve policy, curriculum and delivery.

Signing the charter encourages schools to reflect on their RSE provision and involve key stakeholders in developing practice. The charter encourages engagement with parents and consultation with pupils to ensure content and delivery are relevant and effective. So far 82 per cent of schools are signed up.

# SUPPORTING SCHOOLS TO BE LGBT INCLUSIVE

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## Key points

- Training provided to schools on LGBT-inclusive RSE.
- Annual young people's event as part of LGBT History Month with LGBT young people providing case studies on good and emerging work.
- Joint leadership statement supporting schools' work on RSE.
- Award-winning curriculum programme Respect Yourself supplemented with additional LGBT guidance.

The needs of young LGBT people have been highlighted both nationally and locally. This group are recognised as particularly vulnerable, experiencing bullying, discrimination and prejudice with high levels of self-harm suicidal ideation and attempts.

They also have higher rates of non-attendance and under achievement at school and some harmful, risky sexual behaviour and drug and alcohol use.

In Shropshire LGBT-inclusive teaching is core to the Shropshire Respect Yourself curriculum for primary and secondary schools, which is delivered by over 90 per cent of schools, including the independent sector.

## What has been done?

Strategic support for the work has been established and strong partnership working is in place with the voluntary sector.

During 2016/17 schools in Shropshire received training on LGBT-inclusive RSE delivered by the Sex Education Forum funded by the Government's Equalities Unit.

A year later funding was provided by the Shropshire Safer Partnership to enable every school to receive a book called 'How to be a LGBT-friendly school or college'. The book advocates a whole school approach to recognising, celebrating and supporting diversity in relation to sexuality and gender identity.

In 2018 the Shropshire transgender guidance for schools and colleges was developed to complement the Respect Yourself curriculum with the support of national expertise, head teachers, safeguarding and PSHE leads and in consultation with young people and members of the LGBT youth group XYZ, run by the Shropshire Youth Association

This year, with reports of protests about RSE teaching, a joint leadership statement of support for the work was sent to all schools from the director of children's services, lead councillor, Shropshire Safer Communities chair, and chief police inspector. Schools also received information and contacts for staff, pupil and parent support.

## Why?

The director of children's services for Shropshire said the steps have been taken because this group of young people is particularly vulnerable in terms of their emotional mental health and safety – LGBT is the second highest hate crime in areas of the county.

The director says it is also clear that this area of RSE can be controversial.

“Schools have duty of care in terms of safeguarding, equalities and promoting British values. We encourage and support schools to have an on-going dialogue with parents who object to this work and who want to withdraw their children from RSE.

“We know one parent has written to the local MP about the transgender guidance, and there has been an organised protest on the border of Shropshire and meeting called at a local Mosque about RSE.”

## What else is happening?

While Shropshire’s existing guidance on curriculum fulfils the DfE guidance, the council is not complacent.

Other resources have been developed, including LGBT youth information display boards which tour schools and community venues as part of the Shropshire LGBT History display.

In addition, for three consecutive years a youth/school day has been held as part of LGBT History Month in February. School and college leaders, teachers, parents and members of the LGBT community hear from young people about their experiences, listen to poems, songs and presentations.

The young people hand out certificates of recognition for good and emerging practice and workshops are held to identify priorities for the following year.

Training and support for schools continues with help being offered for curriculum implementation, policy development and parental engagement. Every year schools feedback on progress as part of the annual safeguarding audit.

The council works in partnership with their schools to support, inform and challenge.



**Local Government Association**

18 Smith Square  
London SW1P 3HZ

Telephone 020 7664 3000

Fax 020 7664 3030

Email [info@local.gov.uk](mailto:info@local.gov.uk)

[www.local.gov.uk](http://www.local.gov.uk)

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