

PE1526/C

Scottish Parliament Public Petition PE1526 on Making Sex and Relationship Education in Scotland Statutory for all Schools

Response from Shetland Islands Council, Children's Services Directorate:

As an Education Authority, we support making it statutory to teach sex and relationship education with scope to deliver curriculum content appropriate to our pupils within any statutory parameters. Appropriate training and resources requirements would also have to accompany a national decision to make sex and relationship education statutory with clear policies and guidelines as part of the statutory requirements. It is also important that parents are kept informed of these developments. If sex and relationship education becomes statutory the authority would support the right to remove children on religious grounds included in the legislation. It is also important that statutory guidelines reflect recent technological advances and risks associated with these advances.

The current Scottish Government guidance on sex and relationship education centre on relevant curriculum for excellence experiences and outcomes, these are followed in our education authority.

Examples of practice in our schools include:

- Awareness of likes, similarities, differences, social norms, friendships and body parts in the early stage of CfE
- The themes of growth and emotions at the First Level of CfE
- Puberty Education between P5 and P6
- Intercourse, reproduction and relationships and moving to Secondary education in P7
- In Secondary, all Year Groups up to S4 receive sexual health and relationship education in SE, referring to the SHARE programme. In terms of relationships, this theme is covered in a range of different ways in all the curricular areas as part of our teachers' responsibility to deliver health and wellbeing experiences for all outcomes.
- The reproduction system is also taught in Science in either S1 or S2.
- Many schools organise buddy schemes and friendship squads with other children looking out for younger peers.
- Anti-bullying education is strong in all our schools with a focus on friendships and the importance of positive experiences
- The provision of Sexual Relationship Education is considered in many of our young people's individual Care Plans, IEP's and GIRFEC Child Plans in many settings.

Some of the resources used are the Channel 4 series *Living and Growing*, BBC Active Resource called *Sex and Relationships Education* and BBC *Growing Up* resources are also used in many schools with different parts used for different stages. Partner agencies such as Child Line and Police Officers trained in delivering materials work with some schools to deliver an awareness of abuse and online safety.

Shetland Islands Council's School Service has produced two local policies based around Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes to support schools: A Policy on Sexual Health and Relationships and more recently a *Health Education Policy* and the RSHP Framework Resource Pack has also been shared with schools last year as suggested good practice for planning and delivering sexual health and relationship topics as it relates strongly to CfE. Finally, NSPCC guidance for keeping children safe has been used for additional support needs pupils in some of our schools.