



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Let's Talk About Personal and Social Education

The Committee undertook a short piece of work to examine Personal and Social Education (“PSE”) in spring 2017. The Committee held a round-table evidence session on 22 February and discussed the issue further with the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills at its meeting on 8 March 2017. The Committee also held a number of focus groups in January and February 2017 with teachers, students and others during which, among other things, PSE was discussed. In addition to holding formal evidence and focus groups, the Committee asked online ‘what should Personal and Social Education sessions be about?’ and how it should be delivered. The level of response was tremendous and the Committee received hundreds of submissions, Facebook comments, short emails of around 100 words, and tweets.

While the Committee’s inquiry was short, the evidence it received was very powerful as much of it was from young people and teachers themselves. For example, the Committee found a worrying number of instances where the issue of sexual consent had not been adequately covered in PSE.

The Committee’s recommendations also built upon the work of the Session 4 Health and Sport Committee and recommended that the Scottish Government commission a review of PSE led by Education Scotland and taking account of Ofsted’s 2013 report [*Not yet good enough: personal, social, health and economic education in schools*](#).

Between the Committee finishing taking evidence on PSE and it publishing its report, the Scottish Government committed to a review of PSE in its Mental Health Strategy: 2017-2027.

The Committee’s report also discussed:

- whether PSE or sex and relationships education should become mandatory;
- improving LGBTI inclusiveness in education;
- co-production of PSE;
- expertise required to teach PSE;
- age appropriate PSE; and the
- availability of support and information for young people beyond PSE lessons.

The Scottish Government’s response agreed with many of the Committee’s recommendations and provided more details on the planned review of PSE. The Committee also received a response from COSLA which supports the review of PSE and suggested that much of the practice the Committee suggests should be included in PSE is already good practice and happening in many of our schools. The

Committee also received responses to its report from Colleges Scotland and Joanne Barrie, a Community Sexual Health Educator.

Useful links:

- [Education and Skills Committee report, Let's Talk About Personal and Social Education](#)
- [Quick read version of report.](#)
- [Inquiry page, including links to Official Reports, written evidence and responses to the Committee's report.](#)