

Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

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Dear Clare

I am delighted to inform the Scottish Parliament's Education and Skills Committee. I have received the report and recommendations from the Personal and Social Education (PSE) Review that I established in July 2017.

The review was an action for the Scottish Government from the March 2017 Mental Health Strategy that committed the Scottish Government to undertaking a national review of PSE and the role of guidance in local authority schools and also a review of services for counselling and their evidence base for children and young people.

The review has identified 16 priority actions to strengthen the delivery of Personal and Social Education and the wider network of pastoral guidance available to all pupils. The recommendations include a new toolkit to improve learning in health and wellbeing; an enhanced support network offering pastoral guidance to every pupil; new guidance to ensure consent education is taught appropriate to children and young people's age and stage of learning and is relevant to the issues that are facing children and young people in today's society, especially from online influences; new resources to support all school staff and pupils, with an initial focus on resources to address the issue of sexual harassment in schools.

The Review has recognised the important and vital role that young people themselves can play in delivering engaging learning. A senior phase PSE Mentoring programme will be established to enable pupils to design and deliver aspects of personal and social education, providing opportunities for young people to develop their skills, knowledge and confidence.

I have accepted these recommendations in full.

The recommendations will be taken forward by a new Delivery and Implementation Group, which will monitor progress against each of the recommendations, with the aim of full delivery by the end of the current Parliamentary term in March 2021. As a next step, the Scottish Government and COSLA officials will begin to plan the practical delivery of the agreed recommendations.

I am sure the Committee will share in my determination to take these recommendations forward to ensure Scotland is equipping young people with the knowledge, skills and resilience they need to navigate the various stages of their lives and reach their full potential.

JOHN SWINNEY