



response to the Government consultation on Relationships and Sex

Today the Church of England publishes its response to the Government's consultation on draft guidance for Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education. This is the second consultation on this subject, with the Government previously calling for evidence ahead of these drafts at the end of 2017.

We were pleased to see that many of the areas identified in our original response were covered by the draft guidance which followed. Our priority remains supporting children and young people in developing positive relationships, helping them gain the resilience needed to avoid harmful relationships and equipping them to deal with the things that undermine their self-esteem and identity.

We have welcomed much of what has been proposed, such as the inclusion of health education and the need to show respect for LGBTI+ people and to teach about sexual orientation in the secondary phase.

However, we are disappointed that the opportunity is not been taken to improve the status of Personal Social & Health Education (PSHE) and particularly financial education.

Our principal focus today has been to ensure that mainstream views held by people of faith are welcomed and understood. We are concerned that, although the draft guidance makes it clear that schools of a faith character may teach faith perspectives within RSE, it seems to indicate that other schools would only cover this within the subject area of RE.

We believe that there is a risk here of ghettoising faith perspectives on relationships, wrongly suggesting that they are only relevant to pupils attending schools of a religious character. This, we believe, serves to problematise religion, rather than giving children and young people the skills and knowledge they need for life in pluralistic communities with diverse belief, faith, religion and culture.

The Church of England is a major provider of schools which serve the whole community, irrespective of faith background, and as such we work to help children and young people to understand different views.

Yet our concern is not only for the 1 million pupils who attend our schools each day, but also for the nearly 8 million who do not. Children and young people up and down the country deserve a broad understanding of the positive way faith impacts on people's identity, self-esteem, daily life and choices.

More information

- [Read the full consultation response](#)