

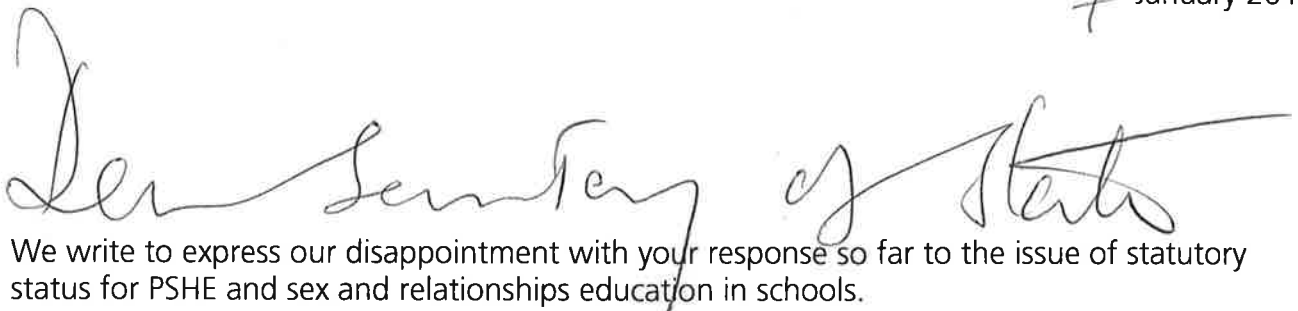


Education Committee

House of Commons London SW1A 0AA
Tel 020 7219 1376 Email educom@parliament.uk
Website www.parliament.uk/education-committee

Rt Hon Nicky Morgan MP
Secretary of State
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

7 January 2016



We write to express our disappointment with your response so far to the issue of statutory status for PSHE and sex and relationships education in schools.

PSHE is a crucial part of preparing young people for life. It can provide them with the knowledge and confidence to make decisions which will affect their health, wellbeing and relationships, now and in the future. It can help develop the skills and attributes needed to secure employment, and can help protect young people from abuse in many forms.

A number of cross-party parliamentary committees and prominent Government advisers have concluded in the last 18 months that it is essential that the subject is taught in all schools:

- July 2014: The **Home Affairs Committee** recommended as part of its inquiry into Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) that PSHE should be made compulsory, including teaching children about FGM in high prevalence areas (*Female genital mutilation: the case for a national action plan*, para 67).
- January 2015: The **Joint Committee on Human Rights** recommended as part of its inquiry into violence against women and girls that "the UK would be in a stronger position to say that it is fulfilling the requirements of Article 14 of the Istanbul Convention if all schools were required broadly to teach the same curriculum in relation to PSHE and we believe that this national curriculum should include issues relating to violence against women and girls" (*Violence against women and girls*, para 67).
- February 2015: The **Education Committee** recommended that the DfE "develop a work plan for introducing age-appropriate PHSE and SRE as statutory subjects in primary and secondary schools, setting out its strategy for improving the supply of teachers able to deliver this subject and a timetable for achieving this" (*Life lessons: PSHE and SRE in schools*, para 148).

- November 2015: **The Children's Commissioner** recommended that "all schools equip all children, through compulsory lessons for life, to understand healthy and safe relationships and to talk to an appropriate adult if they are worried about abuse" (*Protecting children from harm*, recommendation 4).
- December 2015: **The Chief Medical Officer** recommended that PSHE and Sex and Relationships Education become a "routine and, if necessary, statutory part of all children's education" (*Annual Report 2014*, recommendation 8).

It is clear to the four of us that there is a need to work towards PSHE and SRE becoming statutory in all schools, and we urge you to accept the recommendations that a range of parliamentary Committees have made.

The Government has now missed its own deadline of responding in full to the Education Committee's report on PSHE by the end of 2015. We ask that you now make tackling the issue of PSHE in schools your New Year's resolution.

Yours sincerely,



Neil Carmichael MP
Chair of the Education Committee



Dr Sarah Wollaston MP
Chair of the Health Committee



Rt Hon Keith Vaz MP
Chair of the Home Affairs Committee



Iain Wright MP
Chair of the Business, Innovation and Skills Committee