



Review of Personal, Social, Health and Economics (PSHE) Education

November 2011

Eaves Response

About Eaves

Eaves is a London-based charity established in 1977, that provides high quality housing and support to vulnerable women. We also carry out research, advocacy and campaigning to prevent all forms of violence against women.

At Eaves, we put the needs of women first. We are determined to give a voice to the most excluded women in society and provide direct, innovative services to support and empower women to help themselves. There are different projects run by Eaves.

The Lilith Project

Lilith Research & Development have a wide remit ranging from research into various aspects of violence against women, to training and education for the women's sector, to lobbying for legislative change and to working directly with women who have experienced sexual violence.

The Scarlet Centre

The Scarlet Centre is an Eaves service providing advice and drop-in support to women who are affected by violence – including homelessness, rape or sexual abuse, prostitution or domestic violence – and the consequences of violence – including mental health and/or substance misuse problems.

The Poppy Project

The Poppy Project provides support, accommodation and advocacy for women trafficked into domestic slavery and sexual exploitation in the UK. We have 15 bed spaces and capacity for 50 outreach cases per year.

The Serafina Project

Formerly Eaves Women's Aid, The Serafina Project provides support and accommodation for women (and their children) fleeing domestic violence. We provide bed spaces in Westminster in comfortable and safe environments where

a full range of support provided, including help accessing benefits and legal advice.

The Sojourner Project

The Sojourner Project is a pilot scheme run by Eaves and funded by the Home Office. It is for women with no recourse to public funds, who entered the UK on a spousal or partner visa and are eligible to apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) under the Domestic Violence Rule.

To find out more about our work please visit our website on www.eaves4women.co.uk

2. Evidence needed

Please supply up-to-date evidence to answer any or all of the questions in the review. You may want to answer only those questions most relevant to you:

Question1. What do you consider the core outcomes PSHE education should achieve and what areas of basic core knowledge and awareness should pupils be expected to acquire at school through PSHE education?

Current Realities

Young people today are bombarded with sexual images and messages in an unprecedented level; be it through advertisement, music videos and lyrics, the internet, pornography or other means before they are hardly mature to filter and contextualize the contents of these messages.

According to a study, on average young people listen to music for between 1.5 and 2.5 hours each day and many of the music videos sexualise and objectify women. Between 44 and 81 per cent of music videos contain sexual imagery and women are portrayed as decorative objects that pose in a state of sexual readiness.¹

Around 80 per cent of media images show women in sexually explicit postures and in half of all images, women were represented by a body part or parts only, compared with 17 per cent of men.²

The continuous exposure of young people to these images and messages especially the sexualisation and objectification of women and girls results in lower self-esteem, negative moods and depression in young women.³

¹ Sexualisation of Young People – Review Dr Linda Papadopoulos Page 49

² Sexualisation of Young People – Review Dr Linda Papadopoulos Page 50

Worryingly, an increasing number of girls are aspiring to become 'glamour models' and lap-dancers when they grow up. A recent online survey that asked 1,000 15–19 year olds to indicate what their ideal profession would be, from a list containing careers including doctor and teacher, found that 63 per cent of 15–19 year olds considered 'glamour modelling' their ideal profession while a quarter of all girls surveyed cited lap dancer as their top choice.⁴

This clearly demonstrates the consequences of what happens when girls are time and again told that what matters is not what they think, aspire and learn but how they look like or how much 'sexy' and 'hot' they are.

Furthermore, there is significant evidence that links stereotypical attitudes to women's sexuality to acceptance of the 'rape myths' and sexist beliefs such as aggressive sexual behaviour towards women. For instance, a study of 458 young adolescents showed that, while girls were less accepting of sexual harassment than boys, exposure to music videos reduced their resistance. Frequent TV viewing and exposure to pornographic material also led to greater acceptance of sexual harassment in both boys and girls.⁵

According to a survey by the NSPCC 33 per cent of teenage girls aged 13–17 had been subjected to unwanted sexual acts while in a relationship, and 25 per cent had suffered physical violence. It is estimated that the number of girls in England who have been sexually abused is 1.1 million and as many as 2 million under-16s and one in five girls is a victim of 'sexual abuse or violence'. Sexual harassment, and gendered and sexualised name-calling and bullying are on the rise in both primary and secondary schools.⁶

On another spectrum, many young women and girls in the UK are victims of harmful traditional practices including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Research from Forward, a charity working to tackle FGM, suggests that 20,000 girls may be at risk of FGM in the UK and it mostly takes place at primary school age.

The Metropolitan Police have recently teamed up with Lilian Baylis School in south London to create a video featuring young girls learning about the consequences of FGM, as part of an FGM resource pack for teachers and students. The pack can be downloaded by schools⁷ and these types of initiatives should be part and parcel of the schools national curriculum.

³ Sexualisation of Young People – Review Dr Linda Papadopoulou Page 58

⁴ Sexualisation of Young People – Review Dr Linda Papadopoulou Page 62

⁵ Sexualisation of Young People – Review Dr Linda Papadopoulou Page 67

⁶ Sexualisation of Young People – Review Dr Linda Papadopoulou Page 67, 68

⁷ Classrooms in London schools tackle genital mutilation – Deutsche Welle www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,15546779,00.html

Core outcomes

Given the current realities, schools have a huge role to play in tackling these issues and creating a productive and healthy generation of young people. The core objectives of PSHE education must be equipping young people (both girls and boys) with essential knowledge, understanding and attitudes to live a healthy, productive, safe and satisfying life. Young people especially girls should be supported to be able to develop a sense of self worth and identity, confidence in their body and sexuality which would be a foundation to a healthy development.

Content

PSHE education should incorporate (according to age appropriateness and progressively) range of issues including; sex, relationships, consent, sexuality, media awareness (issues around airbrushing, etc), harm of pornography, body image, violence, gender/race stereotype, equality/discrimination, racism, sexism, sexual harassment, alcohol and substance misuse, sexual and reproductive health, etc.

Question2. Have you got any evidence that demonstrates why a) existing elements and b) new elements should be part of the PSHE education curriculum?

Your answer should provide a summary of the evidence and where appropriate contain the title, author and publication date of research.

- Independent Review of the proposal to make Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education statutory – Sir Alasdair Macdonald
- Sexualisation of Young People Review – Dr Linda Papadopoulos
- End Violence Against Women Coalition Response to the Bailey Review on Commercialisation and Sexualisation of Childhood
- National Children’s Bureau - Briefing for Committee Stage in the House of Lords in introducing PSHE within the National Curriculum

Question3. Which elements of PSHE education, if any, should be made statutory (in addition to sex education) within the basic curriculum?

See Q 1. All elements mentioned above should be made statutory. Given all the evidence showing that young people are constantly bombarded with negative message in the media as regards relationships, sex, consent (e.g. number of Facebook pages promoting rape and violence against women which are easily accessible by young people), body image, self-worth, sexuality and the role of

women and girls its vital that schools through a structured national curriculum challenge the problem.

Besides such content should be considered as an entitlement; something basic schools should do as a means of conveying basic knowledge and understanding to their pupils on the issues. These elements of PSHE should not be left to the discretion of individual schools and teachers; all pupils should be entitled to basic knowledge and understanding of what a healthy relationship is, how the portrayal of the media of women and girls is so distorted, the harms of pornography, etc.

Besides, evidence shows that pupil's access to good quality PSHE education is highly variable; some schools are not prioritising the subject and not allocating sufficient curriculum time to it others are not delivering it at all.⁸ Making it statutory will actually improve quality by improving teacher training, assessment and inspection.

Question5. How can schools better decide for themselves what more pupils need to know, in consultation with parents and others locally?

Although it is vital to get the viewpoint of parents and communities it is important to remember that the contents of PSHE could have very essential implications on the right of a child in terms of their right to be protected from any physical, emotional and sexual abuse, their right to equality, their right to information, etc.

Article 17 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states – “States parties... shall ensure that the child has access to information and material from a diversity of national and international sources, especially *those aimed at the promotion of his or her social, spiritual and moral well-being and physical and mental health.*”

Question7. Have you got any examples of case studies that show particular best practice in teaching PSHE education and achieving the outcomes we want for PSHE education?

Your answer should be evidence based and provide details of real-life case studies

Question8. How can PSHE education be improved using levers proposed in the Schools White Paper, such as Teaching Schools, or through alternative methods of improving quality, such as the use of experienced external agencies (public, private and voluntary), to support schools?

- PSHE teachers should have the necessary and adequate training to have the appropriate skills and confidence to address issues

⁸ Independent Review of the proposal to make Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education statutory

- There should be an ongoing professional development opportunities where best practice is shared and lessons learned
- Providing well structured lessons with clear, realistic learning objectives
- External experts/agencies should be involved to make the subject more motivating and practical

Eaves also coordinates the **Sexual Violence Action and Awareness Network** – a network of 68 organisations working with women and girls who have experienced sexual violence.

One of our networks' member organisation, Scottish Women Against Pornography (SWAP), had endorsed the above response and added the following comment:

Scottish Women Against Pornography believes PSHE must be compulsory in all schools and age appropriate lessons commence in year one at Primary Schools and continue until the female/male child completes their secondary education.

Given pornography has now become mainstream and widely viewed as 'harmless (male) sexual entertainment' this means innumerable numbers of boys and girls are uncritically accepting as 'truths' the lies pornography promote that women and girls are males' disposable dehumanised sexualised commodities.

SWAP recognises that because our society predominantly views all women and girls as non-human PSHE lessons will very effectively combat and challenge misogynistic messages girl children are receiving and internalising. Innumerable girls and boys are growing up uncritically accepting or being denied the tools and means to combat the now incessant rampant misogyny and women-hating being promoted by popular culture and the mainstream media.

Women's and girls' human rights are fundamental 'not a special case' and these rights include women's and girls' ownership and control over their sexuality and bodies rather than popular culture's claim women's and girls' bodies are males' sexual property. These lies operate to justify/excuse/minimalise male accountability in respect of what is now endemic male violence against women and girls.

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