



DEBATE PACK

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LGBT history month

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Summary

This pack has been prepared ahead of the debate to be held on Tuesday 28 February on LGBT history month.

The subject for debate has been chosen by Richard Arkless MP.

Contents

1. Background: teaching about LGBT issues in schools	2
England	2
Scotland	2
Wales	3
Northern Ireland	3
2. Parliamentary material	5
2.1 Written parliamentary questions	5
2.2 Oral parliamentary questions	8
2.3 Debates	9
3. Press articles	10
4. Press releases	11

The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

1. Background: teaching about LGBT issues in schools

Education is a devolved policy area. As a result, teaching relevant to LGBT issues is covered in different ways in the four countries.

England

Local authority maintained schools in England are obliged to teach sex and relationships education (SRE) from age 11 upwards, and must have regard to the Government's [SRE guidance](#). Academies and free schools, the majority in secondary education in England, do not have to follow the National Curriculum and so are not under this obligation. If they do decide to teach SRE, they also must have regard to the guidance.

The guidance states:

1.30 It is up to schools to make sure that the needs of all pupils are met in their programmes. Young people, whatever their developing sexuality, need to feel that sex and relationship education is relevant to them and sensitive to their needs. Sex and Relationship Education Guidance. The Secretary of State for Education and Employment is clear that teachers should be able to deal honestly and sensitively with sexual orientation, answer appropriate questions and offer support. There should be no direct promotion of sexual orientation. (pg 12-13)

The Library briefing [Sex and Relationship Education in Schools \(England\)](#), SN 06103, provides more general information.

Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) is a non-statutory subject, but the Government expects all schools to make provision for it. In September 2013, following an internal review, the Department for Education issued new [guidance on PSHE](#), which makes clear that it is largely up to schools to determine what is taught.

The Government provides funding to various bodies, principally the PSHE Association, to support the teaching of PSHE. The PSHE Association have produced a range of guidance materials for schools, including a [Programme of Study](#) covering Key Stages 1-5 (ages 5-18). Issues relating to sexual orientation and gender identity are included in the programme at key stages 2-4.

The Library briefing [Personal, social, health and economic education in schools \(England\)](#), CBP 7303, provides broader information.

Scotland

Scotland's [Curriculum for Excellence](#) includes relationships, sexual health and parenthood education as part of its health and wellbeing strand.

Relationships, sexual health and parenthood education (RSHP) is a part of this strand.

The Scottish Government's [Guide for Parents and carers](#) provides an *example* of a sex education programme which includes several aspects relevant to LGBT issues:

- Understanding of own developing sexuality, developing an awareness of gender identity, dealing with sexual feelings (upper primary level)
- Gender stereotypes, equal opportunities and discrimination (early secondary)
- Awareness of sexual orientation (middle to upper secondary)

Revised guidance on the [Conduct of Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood Education in Schools](#) was published by the Scottish Government in December 2014. The guidance states:

36. It is also important that RSHP education addresses diversity and, for example, reflects issues relating to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) young people or children with LGBTI parents, such as same sex marriage and hate-crime reporting. A survey has shown that LGBT young people experience high levels of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying. Another useful resource for schools and teachers is the 'Dealing with Homophobia and Homophobic Bullying in Scottish Schools, a Toolkit for Teachers'. As indicated above, all bullying is wrong. (pg 8)

Wales

All maintained secondary schools are required to include sex education for all registered pupils as part of the basic curriculum of the school.

The Welsh Government has published [guidance for sex and relationships education](#) (SRE) in schools. It sets out the following in relation to matters of sexual orientation:

2.18 SRE programmes should be relevant to learners and sensitive to their needs. Equally it is important that young people recognise diversity and show respect for others regardless of their sexual orientation. Hence teachers should:

- deal with matters of sexual identity or sexual orientation honestly, sensitively and in a non-discriminatory way
- answer appropriate questions and provide factual information (pg 10)

The Welsh Government's website includes other [sources of information and support for schools](#) in formulating their SRE policy.

Northern Ireland

The Department of Education in Northern Ireland requires all grant-aided schools to develop their own policy on how they will address [Relationships and Sexuality Education](#) (RSE) within the curriculum.

Guidance has been published by the DoE on [primary](#) and [post-primary](#) education, both of which deal with issues of sexual orientation and gender identity.

The post-primary guidance notes:

A young person's sexual orientation and/or gender identity is a central and significant part of who they are and how they see themselves in relation to others. The results of a study carried out in Northern Ireland in 2013 reveal that, across lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) groups, the average age at which young LGB people became aware of their minority sexual orientation is 14.1 years; for males the average age is 13.8 years, and 15.5 years for females. Recent research reveals that transgender young people become self-aware that their assigned birth sex is different from their gender identity between the ages of 3–5 years old. However, it is between the ages of 6–16 years old that transgender young people began to understand their feelings and could begin to talk about them.¹ (pg 14)

¹ This section of the guidance includes references to the relevant research, which is linked at the end of the document.

2. Parliamentary material

2.1 Written parliamentary questions

[Pupils: Bullying](#)

Asked by: Hayes, Helen | **Party:** Labour Party

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what steps the Government Equalities Office is taking to ensure that schools are safe spaces for children and young people to learn without the threat of (a) sexual bullying, (b) LGBT bullying and (c) harassment.

Answering member: Caroline Dinenage | **Party:** Conservative Party |
Department: Women and Equalities

Protecting women and girls from violence is a key priority for this Government.

Working with partners like the PSHE Association, we are ensuring schools have access to safe, effective and high quality resources for teaching about healthy relationships. In February 2016 we launched "Disrespect Nobody", the second phase of the teen relationship abuse campaign, encouraging teens to rethink their views on violence, controlling behaviour and consent. This followed on from the acclaimed 'This is Abuse' campaign.

Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying is unacceptable and the Government is committed to tackling it.

The Government Equalities Office has launched a £3m programme to invest in charities that are working to prevent and address homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in schools in England.

14 Feb 2017 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 63383

[Schools: Homophobia](#)

Asked by: Lord Storey | **Party:** Liberal Democrats

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many cases there have been of homophobic bullying recorded in schools in each of the last three years; and what plans they have, if any, to increase awareness of LGBT rights amongst young people.

Answering member: Lord Nash | **Party:** Conservative Party |
Department: Department for Education

The Government does not hold information on the number of cases of homophobic bullying recorded in schools, as the recording of instances of bullying is managed locally by schools. Nonetheless, we are examining the overall prevalence of a range of types of bullying, including homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic bullying, through surveys such as the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) Teacher Voice and the Pupil and Parent/Carer omnibus surveys, which will report later this year.

We are committed to promoting LGBT&T equality, including amongst young people. We are currently investing £2.8 million in a three-year programme to prevent and address homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in schools.

01 Feb 2017 | Written questions | Answered | House of Lords | HL5039

[Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education](#)

Asked by: Lucas, Caroline | **Party:** Green Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will bring forward legislative proposals to make provision for age-appropriate personal, social, health and economic education, including sex and relationships education, to be a statutory requirement for all schools; and if she will make a statement.

Answering member: Edward Timpson | **Party:** Conservative Party |
Department: Department for Education

We want schools to provide all young people with a broad and balanced curriculum that equips them for success in adult life.

High quality PSHE teaching has an important role to play in this, helping young people understand the world around them, building resilience and helping them to make positive choices and stay safe. We have made it clear in the introduction to the national curriculum that all schools should make provision for PSHE, drawing on examples of good practice. Academies and free schools are encouraged to teach PSHE as part of a broad and balanced curriculum.

Sex education is already compulsory in secondary maintained schools, and the Government is clear that all schools should make provision for high quality, age-appropriate sex and relationship education (SRE) which is a vital part of preparing young people for life in modern Britain.

The Secretary of State agrees that we need to look again at the case for further action on PSHE and SRE provision, as a matter of priority with particular consideration to improving quality and accessibility. We are actively considering what steps we could take and will give a view soon.

11 Jan 2017 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 58120

[LGBT People: Bullying](#)

Asked by: Andrew, Stuart | **Party:** Conservative Party

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what recent steps the Government has taken to tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying; and if she will make a statement.

Answering member: Caroline Dinenage | **Party:** Conservative Party |
Department: Women and Equalities

We want to ensure that all schools are safe, inclusive environments where pupils are able to learn and fulfil their potential. The Government expects schools to take a strong stand against all forms of bullying and cyberbullying.

This is why we recently announced a three year, £2.8 million, programme to prevent and address homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in schools

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/thousands-more-children-to-benefit-from-anti-bullying-app>).

We have also published new cyberbullying guidance

(<http://www.childnet.com/resources/cyberbullying-guidance-for-schools>)

and an online safety toolkit for schools to help provide advice on understanding, preventing and responding to cyberbullying

(<http://www.childnet.com/resources/pshetoolkit>).

12 Dec 2016 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 56245

[Teachers: Training](#)

Asked by: Lumley, Karen | **Party:** Conservative Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent discussions her Department has had with teachers and other education providers on the training required by teachers to effectively tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying.

Answering member: Caroline Dinenage | **Party:** Conservative Party | **Department:** Department for Education

Bullying, including homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying, is unacceptable and should not be tolerated in our schools. The Government is committed to tackling it in all forms.

All schools are required by law to have a behaviour policy with measures to tackle bullying among pupils. Schools are free to develop their own anti-bullying strategies but they are held clearly to account for their effectiveness through Ofsted. We trust schools to decide for themselves what training their staff need in order to be able to do this effectively.

However, we know that individuals who are, or perceived to be, homosexual, bisexual or transgender are disproportionately affected by bullying. In 2015, research by the UCL Institute of Education identified that 56% of young LGB people aged 14-16 were bullied compared to 45% of their heterosexual peers. To help schools to tackle bullying and support victims, in September 2016 the Department for Education and the Government Equalities Office announced £4.4m of funding for 10 projects to tackle bullying, including £2.8 million for projects tackling specifically homophobic, transphobic and biphobic bullying. This programme focuses on primary and secondary schools in England which currently have no, or ineffective, measures in place. The funding will involve voluntary sector organisations engaging with teachers and schools through training, and supporting them to work through a whole school approach. Further information can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/thousands-more-children-to-benefit-from-anti-bullying-app>.

08 Dec 2016 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 55628

[Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education](#)

Asked by: Reed, Mr Steve | **Party:** Labour Party · Cooperative Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, for what reason gender issues are not a compulsory part of the PSHE curriculum; and whether she has any plans to so introduce such issues into that curriculum.

Answering member: Edward Timpson | **Party:** Conservative Party |
Department: Department for Education

It is for schools to decide how best to deliver the curriculum. They can teach about gender issues through personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, which is a non-statutory curriculum subject. The non-statutory PSHE programme of study, issued by the PSHE Association, includes teaching pupils about gender issues.

12 Oct 2016 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 47426

2.2 Oral parliamentary questions

[Sex and Relationships Education \(HC Deb 8 December 2016 cc360-1\)](#)

Ruth Cadbury (Brentford and Isleworth) (Lab)

4. What plans the Government have to update their guidance to schools on the provision of sex and relationships education to include (a) LGBT relationships issues and (b) sexual harassment in schools. [907759]

The Minister for Women and Equalities (Justine Greening)

The sex and relationships education guidance was issued in 2000. MPs from all parties, including those in the Chamber who have held my position during the past 16 years, know that this is a complex area and that we need a thoughtful and measured approach to updating the guidance. I made it very clear at the Education Committee that we are actively looking at the SRE guidance to ensure that all young people are supported in developing healthy and respectful relationships.

Ruth Cadbury

As the Secretary of State outlined, five Commons Select Committee Chairs, countless children's charities, MPs across this House, experts and academics agree that good-quality statutory age-appropriate relationships education in schools will provide children with the knowledge and resilience they need to develop healthy and respectful relationships, and will ensure that they are less vulnerable to sexual harassment and violence. The Government have finally accepted that the current quality and accessibility of SRE are not good enough; will they amend the Children and Social Work Bill to introduce good-quality statutory SRE that applies to every school?

Justine Greening

We have already set out the fact that we are actively looking at the SRE guidance. It was first brought in 16 years ago, and we all recognise that the world that children are growing up in now is very different from that world. The hon. Lady's question raises in particular LGBT

relationship issues and sexual harassment. Those are important areas where we can do better. I am very proud of the Government's record on LGBT issues and bringing forward same sex marriage, but it is an important area and is one that we are looking at.

Mims Davies (Eastleigh) (Con)

A young trans person in England is, sadly, three times more likely to have self-harmed and almost twice as likely to have attempted suicide as their peers. Does my right hon. Friend agree that more should be done to improve LGB and trans sex and relationship education in schools to support all students to understand better and be compassionate, to help reduce those shocking statistics and the often heartbreaking outcomes for those young people?

Justine Greening

My hon. Friend is right. No child should suffer the kind of discrimination and harassment she mentioned. In September we set out £2.8 million of funding over the next three years to focus in particular on tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in schools. It is important that, alongside education, we are clear that we need to change attitudes as well.

Sarah Champion (Rotherham) (Lab)

I appreciate the Secretary of State's answer on the SRE guidance. It is indeed almost 17 years out of date. At the last Women and Equalities questions she said she would "provide an update shortly"; now she is carefully looking. She is right that the guidance is completely out of date. It does not include anything on the internet or online grooming—it does not mention grooming full stop, let alone exploitative relationships. I wrote to her last month about this but she has not replied. Children in this country are waiting for a reply on when they will get proper sex and relationships guidance. Will she please answer now?

Justine Greening

The hon. Lady wrote to me on 17 November. I will of course respond to her letter. In addition, we have been very clear that we want to see how we can make progress in this area. However, as many questions have underlined, it is very complex, with many different aspects that we need to work on very carefully to get right. Although I know that within this House there have been some excellent reports underlining some of the areas where the guidance should be updated, there is also a broader debate in the country about the right way to do that. This matter needs to be handled very sensitively. That is why we will make sure we take the time to get the process right and then set it out to MPs.

2.3 Debates

- [Sex and Relationship Education \(HC Deb 23 January 2017 cc130-8\)](#)
- [Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education \(Statutory Requirement\) Bill \(HC Deb 20 January 2017 cc1242-3\)](#)

3. Press articles

[MSPs back same-sex education for Scots curriculum](#)

Third Force News, 27 February 2017

[Hundreds Of Students Make An MP Their Valentine To Demand Compulsory Sex And Relationships Education](#)

Huffington Post, 14 February 2017

[Sex and relationships education 'fatally neglected' by Ofsted officers, investigation finds](#)

Independent, 26 January 2017

[Corbyn: Labour would add LGBT history to school curriculum](#)

Guardian, 27 October 2016

4. Press releases

[NASUWT welcomes call for action on homophobic bullying in schools](#)

NASUWT, 22 February 2017

[Government must guarantee the rights of LGBTI teachers, says the NASUWT](#)

NASUWT, 11 February 2017

[Landmark report on child physical and mental health recommends statutory PSHE education](#)

PSHE Association, 25 January 2017

[Yvette Cooper addresses delegates at Stonewall Education for All Conference](#)

Stonewall, 8 July 2016

[Make sex and relationships education compulsory campaign](#)

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