

# Relationships and sexuality education (RSE) statutory guidance and code

## Consultation response form

Your name: Cath Lewis

Organisation (if applicable): Learning Disability Wales

Learning Disability Wales, a national charity representing the learning disability sector in Wales. Learning Disability Wales works with people with a learning disability and their families, Welsh Government, local authorities, disabled people's organisations and the voluntary sector to create a better Wales for all people with a learning disability.

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Responses should be returned by **16 July 2021** to:

Curriculum and Assessment Division  
The Education Directorate  
Welsh Government  
Cathays Park  
Cardiff  
CF10 3NQ

or completed electronically and sent to:

e-mail: [curriculumforwales@gov.wales](mailto:curriculumforwales@gov.wales)

**Respondent type** (please select one from the following)

Child or young person	<input type="checkbox"/>	Employer/business representative	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent/carer	<input type="checkbox"/>	Professional body/interest group	<input type="checkbox"/>
Schools governor or member of school management committee	<input type="checkbox"/>	Voluntary sector (community group, volunteer, self-help group, social or co-operative enterprise, religious, not for profit organisation)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Mainstream school practitioner (head, teacher, teaching assistant, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Regional consortium	<input type="checkbox"/>
EOTAS provider (PRU staff, independent school staff, other provider, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Local authority	<input type="checkbox"/>
Higher education (including universities/academic institutions)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Further education	<input type="checkbox"/>
Politician (Senedd member, county councillors, MP, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other respondent group not listed above, please specify:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lobbyist	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Question 1** – Do you agree that the explanation of the definition of RSE is clear?

<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Disagree</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Agree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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**Please explain your answer:**

The Guidance says what RSE is, but we do not feel that this contains a clear unambiguous definition which can be adopted. This needs to be rectified.

**Question 2** – Do you agree that the principles for embedding RSE are clear?

<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Disagree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Agree</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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**Please explain your answer:**

The principles for embedding RSE are very clear. We agree that RSE should be a whole school approach and inclusive to all. The principle that learners should learn “to value difference, and diversity as a source of strength” is very important as too often disabled children, including those with a learning disability are seen as having a weakness instead of being celebrated for their strengths and what they can offer to others.

**Question 3** – Do you agree that the structure and content of the guidance clear?

<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Disagree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Agree</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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**Please explain your answer:**

The structure and content of the guidance is clear.

**Question 4** – We propose that the content set out in the three broad stages of the guidance will become mandatory as part of the RSE code. Do you agree that they encompass what is important about RSE for all learners’ ages and developmental stages?

<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Disagree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Agree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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**Please explain your answer:**

These appear to encompass what is important for learners – however it needs to be stressed again in this section and not just near the start of the document that the understanding of some children with additional learning may differ from that of other children at their age that this needs to be considered

**We would also like to see consent included into the curriculum from the beginning. At the moment the guidance suggest that children in the age group 3-7 should develop “an awareness of the right to privacy, bodily autonomy and an ability to recognise what is healthy/unhealthy, safe/unsafe and how to seek help.” It would be good to have this be more concrete in that children are taught that they have the right to decide if someone touches them and they have to ask permission to touch others,**

**Question 5** – Do you agree that the RSE code section of the guidance is clear and appropriate?

<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Disagree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Agree</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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**Please explain your answer:**

**Question 6** – Do you agree that the mandatory elements of the guidance (the RSE code) are the right ones? Is anything missing that should be included?

<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Disagree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Agree</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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**Please explain your answer:**

Yes - however we feel that discussion in RSE could set off issues for any child or young people who has experienced abuse. It is therefore important that the guidance includes advice to practitioners on how to deal with this. Some children and young people may disclose abuse for the first time during or after these lessons so again appropriate advice for practitioners such as reporting it to your safeguarding lead, do not ask leading question etc need to be included.

**Question 7** – Do you agree that the guidance offers relevant information to support practitioners when designing their school curriculum for RSE?

<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Disagree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Agree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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**Please explain your answer:**

Learning Disability Wales believes that much more information and guidance should be provided to practitioners about why it is important to teach RSE to children with additional learning needs – e.g. they can be dependent on others for personal care. This can make them vulnerable to abuse as they may not be aware that what is happening to them is wrong or may have difficulty in communicating or expressing concerns about what is happening to them. It is therefore important the difference between appropriate and inappropriate touch is taught.

Learning Disability Wales facilitated a focus group which discussed this and other consultations on the curriculum. One practitioner noted that “RSE (should be regarded as) a safeguarding issue. There are many papers and reports about the facts: People with learning disabilities are three to four times more likely to be abused (including sexually). The guidance should include a focus on prevention of abuse, and awareness of the body and consent. I disagree that we need lots of experts, what we need is adults and peers to be able to talk about the issues openly as and when needed. Most people with learning disabilities do not receive any education about sexuality and relationships and this is staggering.”

Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) Northern Ireland has produced information on the importance of RSE for children with additional learning needs. This includes advice on content, appropriate methodologies, creating a safe space, school leadership and involving parents and carers. We recommend that this is considered for inclusion in the Guidance as it is appropriate for all children and not just those with additional learning needs. Further information is available here - [Special Educational Needs \(SEN\) | CCEA](#)

We also recommend the NSPCC resources produced around promoting healthy relationships for children with additional learning needs and SRE.

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection-schools/promoting-healthy-relationships#children-and-young-people-with-send> and the Love Life resources for young people with a learning disability, again from the NSPCC [https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/schools/love-life?utm\\_source=nspcc\\_blog&utm\\_medium=nspcc\\_learning&utm\\_campaign=201904blog\\_promo](https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/schools/love-life?utm_source=nspcc_blog&utm_medium=nspcc_learning&utm_campaign=201904blog_promo)

**Question 8** – We would like to know your views on the effects that the RSE draft statutory guidance would have on the Welsh language, specifically on:

- i) opportunities for people to use Welsh
- ii) treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

What effects do you think there would be? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated?

**Supporting comments**

**Question 9** – Please also explain how you believe the proposed RSE draft statutory guidance could be formulated or changed so as to have:

- i) positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language
- ii) no adverse effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

**Supporting comments**

**Question 10** – We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them.

Learning Disability Wales would like to take this opportunity to inform you of two projects that have been developed to support RSE for young people with a learning disability.

**The Love Life project** – Learning Disability Wales

The aim of the project was to make sure that people with a learning disability get the right support and information they need to have healthy relationships and support carers and professionals to talk about sex and relationships with people with a learning disability. This project was funded by the European Commission. Learning Disability Wales were one of 6 European Partners involved in the project. People with a learning disability were involved in writing training on sex and relationships for unpaid and paid carers and then trained to deliver it. Further information about the project is available from [Love Life - Learning Disability Wales \(ldw.org.uk\)](http://ldw.org.uk). The project also produced a booklet which contained an easy read guide to words about sex and this can be made available if requested.

**All the Juicy Bits Project - Cardiff Young People First.**

The aim of this project was for young people with a learning disability to work with health promotion specialists and youth workers to create a booklet around sexual health and experiences. Young people were then trained to deliver the training. Further information about the background of the project is available from Cardiff Young People First Sex and Relationships Project – [www.cardiffpeoplefirst.org.uk/...All-The-Juicy-Bits-History](http://www.cardiffpeoplefirst.org.uk/...All-The-Juicy-Bits-History) . Various groups including parents at Woodland School in Cardiff expressed an interest in running the training. More information about the training can be obtained from Ashlea Harris Director of Cardiff People First - [ashlea@cardiffpeoplefirst.org.uk](mailto:ashlea@cardiffpeoplefirst.org.uk)

Responses to consultations are likely to be made public, on the internet or in a report. If you would prefer your response to remain anonymous, please tick here: