

**REPLY BY THE PRESIDENT OF
THE COMMITTEE FOR EDUCATION, SPORT & CULTURE
TO QUESTIONS ASKED PURSUANT TO RULE 14 OF THE RULES OF
PROCEDURE BY DEPUTY GAVIN ST PIER**

Preamble

A 'Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges' [Research and analysis overview: Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/reviews/sexual-abuse-in-schools-and-colleges) was published by the UK Government on 10th June 2021 having asked Ofsted to conduct a 'rapid review' in England. This followed numerous media and social media reports earlier in 2021 of sexual abuse in schools. Among other findings, the Review concluded: *"This rapid thematic review has revealed how prevalent sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are for children and young people. It is concerning that for some children, incidents are so commonplace that they see no point in reporting them."*

I am grateful to the Committee for Education, Sport & Culture, its President and its officers for their engagement to date with me on this topic last year. In order that the work undertaken in this area can be shared with a wider audience, I should be grateful to receive the Committee's responses to the following questions:

Question a.

To what extent does the Committee consider the recommendations in the Review have local application?

Answer

Following the publication of the Review referred to above in June 2021, as part of the ongoing and updating of safeguarding and child protection practice, its recommendations were reviewed by senior officers within the Education Office to understand their relevance in the Bailiwick context and to ensure local practice was aligned with them. The UK Review was clear that *'School and college leaders should create a culture where sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are not tolerated, and where they identify issues and intervene early to better protect children and young people. In order to do this, they should assume that sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are happening in their setting, even when there are no specific reports, and put in place a whole school approach to address them.'*

The Island's Safeguarding Children Partnership (ISCP) has a duty to co-ordinate and promote a multi-agency approach for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. As part of the ISCP Annual Review 2020, partners, including Education, identified an Island priority to *'raise awareness and identify clear and concise evidence of local need in addressing harmful sexual behaviours and to develop appropriate responses with an emphasis on prevention, assessment and intervention'*. As part of this process and in partnership with the ISCP, Education has reviewed the findings within the Ofsted report to ensure that learning can be applied within The Bailiwick context.

The Committee endorses the above approach, and one of the four key priorities of the Education Strategy is **Achieving equity, safety and inclusivity**, central to which is embedding whole-setting cultures and practices that promote inclusivity, challenge inequity, support well-being and remove barriers to personal ambition. Ensuring that the Bailiwick Curriculum reflects the needs of all learners in all phases of education and is appropriately broad, diverse and ambitious is a key part of this priority.

Question b.

Can the Committee please summarise the work undertaken to address harmful sexual behaviours in local educational settings?

Answer

The Island Safeguarding Children Partnership's (ISCP), Bailiwick of Guernsey Annual Report 2020, also identified the need to prioritise a Harmful Sexual Behaviour Multi-Agency Audit and the NSPCC was commissioned by the ISCP to undertake the Audit using its existing Framework.

The Audit covered settings including private Early Years providers, States-maintained Schools and the Grant-Aided Colleges as part of a wider multi-agency response. The NSPCC's Audit concluded that *'...agencies have provided honest, clear feedback, they have reflected well on positive practice but have not shied away from indicating areas for improvement. The reliability of the responses is backed up by their consistency – the areas identified for improvement were consistent across multiple returns.*

There are clearly areas for improvement in Guernsey, however there is also evidence of some positive multi-agency working and a real desire to improve the system overall.' In conjunction with the NSPCC, a draft Action Plan is currently being developed and a multi-agency Steering Group has been established.

As part of this multi-agency approach, we continue to contribute to this priority area as follows:

- Our **Safeguarding and Child Protection Model School Policy**, which is adopted by all States-maintained schools, was revisited and updated September 2021 having regard to: i) the most recent Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) advice; ii) the 'Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges'; iii) ISCP guidelines; and iv) the Bailiwick Ofsted Framework. The Policy covers matters such as managing allegations of abuse against a child, including 'peer on peer' abuse. The Policy requires that each setting:
 - *Has relevant policies in place (e.g., behaviour policy, including anti-bullying)*
 - *Has systems in place for any learner to raise concerns with staff, knowing that they will be listened to, believed and valued (Note: these systems must be well promoted, accessible and easily understood. Schools should keep clear records of allegations.)*

- *Develops robust risk assessments where appropriate*
- *Challenges any form of derogatory or inappropriate language or behaviour*
- *Is accepting of all religions, cultures, social identities and backgrounds.*

The Policy makes it very clear that staff must challenge inappropriate behaviours between peers and challenge any culture of unacceptable behaviours, any unsafe environment for children and, in worst case scenarios, any culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not reporting it.

To support in the realisation of the Policy, all States-maintained schools completed a Safeguarding Self-Assessment with any actions resulting from the assessment feeding into its School Development Plan.

- We have a dedicated **Sexual Health and Relationships Education (SHARE) team** whose staff support schools across the Bailiwick to teach Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) to learners from age 10 (year 5 primary) through to age 18 (for students at the Sixth Form Centre and The Guernsey Institute's College of Further Education). As part of the SRE programme, the SHARE team delivers lessons on consent, and students revisit the topic, through a spiral programme, where prior learning is reinforced and extended year-on-year, to develop their awareness and understanding of the subject.
- In addition, as part of the Secondary phase PHSE delivery, **'BE LADS' lessons** are now included, the aim of which is to enable girls and women to feel safer when they walk alone and teaches boys and men how they can help.
- Over the last two years, States maintained schools have adopted the **UNCRC Rights Respecting Schools (RRS) Award** which promotes the rights of every child to survival, protection and education. All schools have achieved a Bronze award after which progress is made towards achieving the Silver award, with one school already having achieved the Gold Award.
- To minimise the risk of peer-on-peer abuse, Schools provide a developmentally appropriate curriculum, including **Personal, Social, Health, and Citizenship Education (PSHCE)**, that develops learners' understanding of acceptable behaviour, healthy relationships and keeping themselves safe.
- As part of the ISCP identified 2020 priorities, as set out above, Education engaged with the NSPCC to undertake a Harmful Sexual Behaviours Multi-Agency Audit as part of a wider multi-agency response.
- A School Safeguarding and Child Protection Audit was also undertaken.

PSHCE and SRE developments are ongoing and include:

- 'Sexual Harassment in schools' guidance provided to Secondary schools by the PSHCE Lead Officer (including supporting the delivery of the locally developed 'BE LADS' session for year 11 students).
- 'Sexual Harassment in schools' guidance provided to Primary schools.

Developing and fostering an island-wide approach to inclusive practice and culture is an ongoing focus and events to support this have included:

- The Inclusion Conference 2021: "Inspiring Cultural Change in Education Leadership for the Bailiwick".
- Emotional Literacy Skills Assistants' training.
- Contextual Safeguarding training for Safeguarding Lead Officers.

Question c.

Is it possible to get an accurate picture of the number of incidents of harmful sexual behaviours displayed by local students?

Answer

Within the Bailiwick there is currently no easily available data on incidents that would be categorised as Harmful Sexual Behaviours as there has not been a consistent method of recording occurrences across different agencies and services. Within the Harmful Sexual Behaviours Multi-Agency Audit the identification and collation of data was seen as a key area to address within the Harmful Sexual Behaviours Action Plan and how data capture is undertaken is being explored within the ISCP.

It must be noted that the UK has also found the collation of definitive data on the prevalence of Harmful Sexual Behaviours to be problematic and it is important to factor in the likelihood of significant under-reporting when making any assessment of prevalence.

The NSPCC quotes research from the UK that estimates around a third of sex offences against children and young people are committed by under 18s. *"Only one in eight child abuse victims are known to the system. We know that the children that come to our attention for HSB are a small proportion of the children who display HSB."* Donald Findlater, Lucy Faithful Foundation (UK).

Question d.

In light of this Review, is the Committee satisfied that the resources committed to the Sexual Health and Relationship Education (SHARE) service are adequate?

Answer

The Committee is satisfied that the resources committed to the SHARE service are adequate. As a result, SHARE is able to operate effectively and successfully, working closely with other agencies and the third sector in the delivery of SRE and PSHCE in our settings.

This good work has been recognised by the NSPCC who identified as part of the Harmful Sexual Behaviours Multi-Agency Audit in May 2021 that there is *"good evidence of PHSE in schools being delivered consistently by SHARE team."*

Date of receipt of the Question: 4th January 2022
Date of Reply: 19th January 2021