



# Commissioning

and PSHE Education in Staffordshire &  
Stoke-on-Trent

# 2023

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# INTRODUCTION

The PSHE Education Service, funded by Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner aims to support the development and delivery of age appropriate, good quality, consistent PSHE education across Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent.

Personal, Social, Health, Economic (PSHE) education helps children and young people to develop the knowledge, skills and attributes they need to thrive as individuals, family members and members of society.

The Pan-Staffordshire PSHE Education Service recognises that there may be opportunities for local authorities and other partners to commission specific education packages that can support the PSHE education curriculum.

We have created this guidance document to support the commissioning of training or education resources to enable decision-makers to ensure they are in line with best practice principles and the Pan-Staffordshire PSHE Education Service's quality framework.



# CONTEXT & BACKGROUND TO PSHE EDUCATION 4

The Education Act (2002) requires all schools to teach a curriculum that is *"broadly based, balanced and meets the needs of pupils'.* Schools must promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, and prepare pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life".

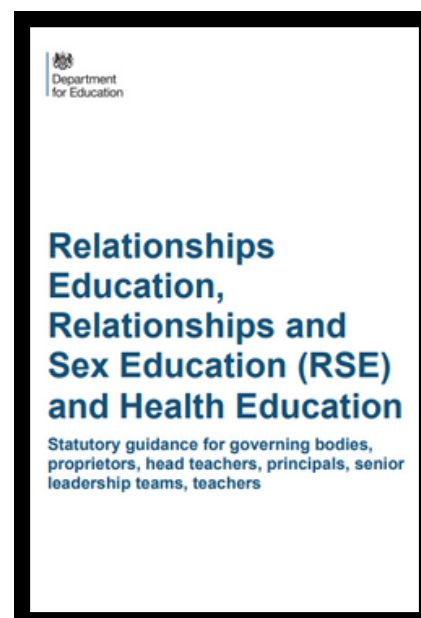
Since September 2020, Relationships Education, Health Education, and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) has been compulsory in England. The Department for Education (DfE) advise that this should be taught as part of a wider PSHE curriculum. Schools are expected *"to use their PSHE education programme to equip pupils with a sound understanding of risk and with the knowledge and skills necessary to make safe and informed decisions."*

*Within this statutory guidance it is stated that:*

- *Schools should show flexibility to respond to local public health and community issues to meet the needs of pupils*
- *Should be addressed sensitively and clearly*

Based on this, the Pan-Staffordshire PSHE Education service utilises the PSHE Association framework of planning to ensure consistent learning outcomes based on a broader curriculum than just the statutory guidance, tailoring this to local contextual needs.

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# PAN-STAFFORDSHIRE PSHE CHARTER

The Pan-Staffordshire PSHE Education Service has created a PSHE Charter.

For PSHE education to be effective it must be:

- Delivered within a safe learning environment based on the principle that prejudice, discrimination and bullying are harmful and unacceptable.
- Have clear learning objectives and outcomes and ensure sessions and programmes are well planned, resourced and appropriately underpinned by solid research and evidence.
- Relevant, accurate and factual, including using the correct terminology.
- Positively inclusive in terms of:
  - Age;
  - Disability;
  - Gender identity;
  - Pregnancy and maternity;
  - Race;
  - Religion or belief
  - Sex;
  - Sexual orientation
- Designed to include the development of knowledge, skills and values to support positive life choices.
- Using positive messaging, that does not cause shame or victim blaming.
- Challenging attitudes and values within society, such as perceived social norms and those portrayed in the media.
- Reflective of the age and stage of the children and young people and be tailored to the environment and group.
- Utilising active skill-based learning techniques that accommodate a range of learning styles.
- Ensuring that children and young people are aware of their rights, including their right to access confidential advice and support services within the boundaries of safeguarding.
- Delivered by trained, confident and competent professionals.
- Empowering and involve children and young people as participants, advocates and evaluators in the development of PSHE education.

# CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEND)

High quality PSHE is the right of every child and young person, no matter their level of need or ability. Both mainstream and special schools must comply with the Government's guidance on the subject.

The Equalities Act provides the guiding principle that people with disabilities must be able to participate in the curriculum, so PSHE must be accessible. The guidance acknowledges the need for flexibility, to tailor content and teaching to meet the specific needs of children at different developmental stages, and also advises schools to be aware that some pupils are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues due to the nature of their SEND. Schools are reminded that the Equalities Act allows them to take positive action where pupils with SEND may experience disadvantage because of their 'protected characteristic'.

Therefore it is important to consider children and young people with SEND when thinking about commissioning intentions. The PSHE Education Service can help advice about statutory and best practice learning outcomes for children and young people with SEND. It is important to recognise that the age range given may not be the individual's birth age, but rather their cognitive age.



The first thing to consider when spending funding on PSHE education is to consider what the desired outcome is.

This could be a quantitative outcome e.g. to reach X amount of children and young people.

It would always be the recommendation of the PSHE Education Service that the outcome should be qualitative and should be measurable through the learning outcomes. For example:

By the end of the session the participants will be able to:

- Describe what is meant by the term "Hate Crime"
- List three unhealthy behaviours in a relationship
- Name where to go for help and support.

Learning outcomes enable alignment between different sessions and elements, this helps education settings to link funded opportunities into their curriculum plans.

Knowledge on its own won't necessarily stop someone from trying things. In many cases children and young people end up in situations where they know what they are doing is "wrong", but they do it anyway, as they lack the essential skills or attributes to help them effectively manage the situation.

To ensure that sessions are balanced it is important to know the purpose of the activity and create a balanced session that increases or enables reflection on knowledge, skills and values.

The definition of each of these is:

- Knowledge: gaining new information on a topic
- Skills: gaining new skills on a topic
- Values: reflecting on, and potentially altering, your own values in relation to a topic

The PSHE Education Service can help advise what these learning outcomes could be to link them to learning outcomes in statutory guidance or best practice curriculum.

Once it has been decided what the desired outcome is, the best approach/activity can be agreed upon.

# OPTIONS FOR COMMISSIONING

There are three main ways funding can be utilised to support effective PSHE education.

- Training to empower education staff and increase their knowledge in a particular area
- Development of local resources
- Purchasing of external providers to enhance existing provision within education.

It should be noted that PSHE education is usually delivered as preventative education and therefore universal provision. There are some links with commissioning a targeted programme what works with identified individuals but for that to fall under the remit of the PSHE Education Service it must be for children and young people identified “at-risk” rather than already involved in the activity or where concerns already exists.

Approach	Pros	Cons
Training to empower education staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable model as learning can be passed to colleagues and is embedded into</li> <li>• PSHE is more effective when it is delivered by confident facilitator</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Previous training opportunities have had poor take-up due to competing demands on education staff's time</li> </ul>
Development or Purchase of local resources or educational tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be embedded into education setting's own scheme of work.</li> <li>• Learning is sequential and research shows this has more important</li> <li>• Assurance that resources will meet local quality assurance framework</li> <li>• Reflects local needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity within curriculum to deliver non-statutory topics</li> <li>• Capacity to create local resources</li> </ul>
Purchase External Provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Often memorable</li> <li>• Staff have opportunity for discreet CPD</li> <li>• Utilises Subject Experts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One-off events often have limited impact</li> <li>• Some do not meet the local quality assurance framework for PSHE delivery</li> </ul>



# WHY USE EXTERNAL PROVIDERS?

## ENRICH LEARNING THROUGH DIRECT CLASSROOM INPUT

- Learning about local services including health and support services can help build trust and encourage someone to use the service.
- Learning about different perspectives, including faith, culture and social.
- Accessing specialist knowledge on a topic, for example the Sexual Health Prevention team, can provide up-to-date, evidence based input that might not be as readily available to organisation's staff and can increase input.
- Children and young people can develop personal and social skills through hosting and interacting with a visitor.
- Experience a different learning method, e.g. theatre in education.
- Learning about other people's lives from a particular life experience e.g. a teenage parent.

## BUILD CAPACITY TO DELIVER GOOD QUALITY PSHE

- Run small-group or one-to-one PSHE with targeted individuals who may be "at risk" and need personalised support or to utilise a particular skill in meeting specific needs e.g. working with a child or young person with SEND.
- Supports the organisation's CPD plan for PSHE by upskilling staff through on-the-job training, staff meetings or INSET.
- Supports senior leaders and governors in their leadership, for example carrying out consultation with children/young people, parents/carers, staff, governors to inform a review and in turn the RSE/PSHE policy.
- Sharing knowledge of PSHE practice in other organisations, both local and national, to provide a wider perspective and potentially link up organisations with each other for peer support. This is something the PSHE Coordinators can offer through the half-termly PSHE Leads Network Meetings that are advertised in the monthly PSHE Digest.

## ENGAGE WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

- Facilitate a conversation between the organisation and parents and carers about PSHE, for example by supporting a parent/carer meeting.
- Working directly with parents and carers to support them in their role of providing PSHE education for their children and young people.

Using people to share their personal story can be an way to bring a topic to life and many children, young people and professionals will find listening to a lived experience can be impactful. Sharing of personal stories must be carefully managed to ensure that stories do not inadvertently glamorise aspects of their experience, be triggering or frightening for children and young people or drift towards entertaining the participants rather than contribute to meaningful learning.

External providers who share their lived experience tend to be those who were involved in a traumatic event. It is important to recognise that children and young people can learn from lots of different lived experiences including a parent, someone living with HIV, someone in a particular career e.g. to challenge gender stereotypes.

Some visitors have inadvertently given participants instructional content or inspired risky behaviour. Dr Pooky Knightsmith found a workshop on self-harm that had clear negative outcomes for some young people, with one young person saying that they facilitator "was really good, but she gave you ideas"

*"I'd be burning myself for ages and didn't want anyone to know, and she shared all these different ways she'd hidden it and stories she'd told to explain her burns. I used some of them and they worked."*

Another young person said:

*"So I'd been self-harming for ages and had been on all the forums so there was nothing she could teach me about it, but I seriously had to control myself not to stand up and scream at her. It was like some kind of twisted 'how to self-harm workshop' and seeing as she worked so hard to 'break the stigma' and make us realise it was okay to self-harm, loads of kids tried it after that. A couple carried on for ages too."*

Some organisations who utilised the lived experiences method for delivery provide a framework and training for individual speakers and provide ongoing supervision to support them. It would always be our recommendation to engage with these types of organisations.

Research shows that one-off events have limited impact on learning or long-term behaviour change. A 'one-off' event can only raise awareness or perhaps offer should quick strategies regarding a particular topic or issue. It is important to consider how the use of external agencies contributes to the PSHE curriculum. Children and young people need the opportunity to develop skills and attributes including communication, problem-solving and decision-making; these are developed through a well-planned, sequenced, spiral curriculum that builds on prior learning.

There should be opportunity for the participants to prepare for and debrief from the visit - allowing for deeper exploration of key themes and for the learning to be embedded. This is why the pan-Staffordshire PSHE Education Service developed the follow-on session for Alison Cope, so if local partners commissioned Alison to speak within the school there is an opportunity to embed the learning and for participants to explore their response to Alison's story.

## AVOID SHOCK, FEAR AND SHAME

It is a common misconception that if a child or young person is shocked or scared by what they are shown they will avoid the behaviour in the future.

Whilst young people will often say that they like 'hard-hitting' material and that it engages them more effectively, in fact when experienced in a safe setting (in this case a classroom or youth space), shocking images become exciting (in a similar way to watching a horror film or riding a rollercoaster) and this excitement response can block the desired learning. Equally, for anyone who has previously been affected by something similar, it can re-traumatise them or they can block the message as it is too close for comfort, which again prevents the intended learning. It also presents a scenario which is more likely to make young people think 'that won't ever happen to me' than the desired 'that could be me' response.

Therefore, best practices and research demonstrate that sessions should not include graphic images of injuries, incidents, scenes e.g., a knife injury, sexually transmitted infections, images of a smokers' lung.

The 1996 Education Act (Provision 407) requires that lesson content avoids political indoctrination, PSHE sessions should avoid inappropriately biased input on any issue.

PSHE education is not 'value-free', but an important space in which children and young people can explore their own values and beliefs to different topics in as neutral a way as possible. The PSHE curriculum should be influenced by, reflect and support the school's agreed ethos, being clear on the law and promoting healthy, safe behaviours whilst encouraging children and young people to question and explore different topics.

Organisations should check the background of any external provider and their funding source to consider whether there is any potential for bias. This can be mitigated by providing visitors with differing perspectives, however there is a duty to ensure that participants are not exposed to, for example extremist (or offensive content).

Balance should be carefully considered. It is more complex than just offering two different or opposing viewpoints. One may have a considerable amount of evidence that underpins their position, whilst the other is supported by very little (or none) factual evidence. Participants could consider each visitor equally, they should have the opportunity to reflect on what has been heard, how it has been presented and their response to it. This ensures that personality, charisma, or conviction in position is not confused with factual information.

## ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT IN LEARNING

People learn better when they are involved and active learning techniques are the most effective teaching technique for PSHE education.

It is important that children and young people actively engage with their new learning. A "chalk and talk" session from a well-meaning expert is likely to have much less impact than an interactive session where children and young people are encouraged to prepare questions, take part in activities which encourage reflection on their own views and share ideas with the 'expert' who challenges, extends or deepens their thinking

The most effective model of delivery for PSHE education is a sequenced, spiral programme that builds on prior learning as children and young people progress through school. And like any other school curriculum subject it needs regular curriculum time – at least an hour a week ideally.

The PSHE Education Service will always advocate for timetabled classroom based sessions as the most effective form of PSHE education, we recognise that Commissioners and Education Settings sometimes have to consider alternative models though, depending on circumstances.

Assembly is where there are large groups of children and young people, these are usually delivered with either one person at the front sharing their experience or giving a talk or a theatre in education production.


Classroom sessions are to smaller groups of no more than 35 children and young people. They are usually more interactive.

***The table on the next page highlights the pros and cons of each approach.***


It is also worth noting that the PSHE Education Service adheres to the PSHE Associations recommendation that PSHE Education should not take place within 'vertical tutor groups', which contain a small number of young people from each year group.

While there are compelling arguments in favour of vertical tutoring for pastoral tutoring, we would never advocate it as a model for PSHE education lessons. Effective PSHE education is also age and stage appropriate, taking the starting point and individual learning needs of young people into account. How in such a group could you ensure that the learning offered was relevant to such a diverse age range? This would be impossible to achieve in a 'vertical group' and in the case of some elements of PSHE education, such as relationships and sex education or drug education, could potentially do more harm than good.

## Assembly

Benefits	Challenges
Reach large numbers	No opportunity to interact with audience
Briefly introduce a topic to be developed further in a lesson	Hard to pitch message at right level with large numbers
	Can be traumatic for any CYP affected by the issue
	Limited opportunity to ask questions or seek further support
	Unlikely to have a sustained impact on attitudes and behaviours
	Does not follow best practice principles of PSHE Education

## Classroom

Benefits	Challenges
Better learning experience which can impact on behaviours and attitudes	Requires more time and planning
Opportunity for positive interactions	
Tailor learning to individual groups	
Can develop skills and explore attributes as well as provide information	
Can be more effectively embedded within a PSHE curriculum	

The Pan-Staffordshire PSHE Education Service cannot recommend specific providers, we are happy to provide support, advice and guidance to any local commissioner on best practice principles, details of who is working in this space, other resources, work being developed in this area to avoid double-funding and ensure value for money. We do recommend that commissioners use the standards below to aid them to make right choices when looking to commission providers to deliver training on PSHE or deliver activity directly to children and young people that is linked to the PSHE curriculum.

Standard	Indicators
<p>Staff and volunteers are committed to the principle of providing non-judgmental, impartial support and accurate information to young people and the principles of equality, including all protected characteristics.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has its own set of published values showing that the organisation is committed to providing non-judgmental, impartial support, giving accurate information and the principles of equality, including all protected characteristics.</li> <li>• Uses appropriate referral pathways that do not exclude any of the full range of options available</li> <li>• Ensures that all staff and volunteers commit to working within the value statement</li> <li>• Creates a safe learning environment for the session/activity</li> </ul>
<p>Staff and volunteers working with young people maintain a comprehensive and up-to-date understanding of the subject area and local provision</p>	<p>All staff and volunteers involved in delivery have completed training covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguarding</li> <li>• Equality &amp; Diversity</li> <li>• Basic training relating to their subject area</li> </ul> <p>The PSHE Education is currently developing a local training offer for external providers</p>
<p>The organisation has a comprehensive evaluation framework that is used to inform future delivery</p>	<p>The organisation does the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is aware how their contribution fits into the PSHE frameworks</li> <li>• Has aims and objectives for the lessons and evaluates if these have been achieved</li> <li>• Has an evaluation system in place</li> <li>• Has systems in place to gather feedback from participants and staff</li> <li>• Shares feedback with education settings,, when required</li> <li>• Plans input and delivery in partnership with education settings</li> <li>• Acts on feedback, especially safeguarding concerns</li> </ul>

Standard	Indicators
<p>The organisation is committed to safeguarding all young people it works with.</p>	<p>The organisation does the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All staff or volunteers involved in delivery are DBS checked (and barred list if appropriate) at least every three years</li> <li>• Has clear processes in place to report safeguarding concerns to the education setting's DSL</li> <li>• Policies are in place on safeguarding, equality and diversity and confidentiality</li> <li>• Staff and volunteers are signed up and aware of the above policies</li> <li>• Policy and guidance is in place to deal with disclosures or any ongoing issues that arise during the session</li> <li>• Policy and guidance in place to provide support to school post session</li> </ul>
<p>The organisation is equipped to create a learning ethos which meets the needs of all learners</p>	<p>The organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has experience of working with children and young people on the relevant subject areas within education settings</li> <li>• Uses age-appropriate materials, resources and language</li> <li>• Has staff and volunteers who use diverse learning methods to include all children and young people, taking account of their backgrounds, identities and learning needs (including SEND)</li> <li>• Creates a safe learning environment to make participants feels safe, comfortable and respected in expressing their thoughts, views and opinions</li> <li>• Develops some of its resources in coproduction with children and people or in consultation with them</li> </ul>
<p>The organisation adheres to requirements for PSHE delivering including RSHE statutory guidance</p>	<p>The organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenges stereotypes and "perceived" social norms</li> <li>• Sessions are inclusive and include representation from a broad spectrum of protected characteristics</li> <li>• Sessions utilise evidence-based information and can source that the evidence is from a reputable source</li> <li>• Includes signposting information of both local and national organisation within their session</li> <li>• Does not use victim-blaming language</li> <li>• Does not use fear, guilt or shame tactics</li> <li>• Uses the correct terminology</li> <li>• Sessions are designed to include the development of knowledge, skills and values</li> <li>• Ensures children and young people are aware of their rights</li> </ul>



# REQUESTING LOCALLY PRODUCED RESOURCES

The Pan-Staffordshire PSHE Education Service recognises that in some instances creating locally produced resources will have more impact than utilising nationally sourced ones. Due to capacity it is important to recognise that locally produced resources cannot always be created by the PSHE Education Service and so other organisations may be commissioned to create these, with the PSHE Education Service providing advice and guidance to ensure the standards meet the local quality framework.

Sometimes this may be within a wider commissioned piece of work e.g. when commissioning a wider service and others it will be a one-off commissioning occurrence.

It is essential to consider the intended outcomes from commissioning the resources before committing to the approach or type of resource.

The final decision on if locally produced resources are published on the PSHE Education Service's Central Resource Library lies with the PSHE Coordinators, as the PSHE subject experts.

Sometimes it may be appropriate to purchase a resource to support a topic e.g. an empathy pregnancy belly, fake food or smokers' lung to help provide a talking point for education settings within their sessions.

Considerations should be taken on the logistics of these resources if not being purchased for an entire type of setting in the district or borough.



The Pan-Staffordshire PSHE Education Service cannot recommend specific providers, we are happy to provide support, advice and guidance to any local commissioner on best practice principles and other resources, work being developed in this area to avoid double-funding and ensure value for money. We do recommend that commissioners use the standards below to aid them to make right choices when looking to commission providers to supply resources linked to the PSHE curriculum.

Standard	Indicators
<p>Staff and volunteers are committed to the principle of providing non-judgmental, impartial support and accurate information to young people and the principles of equality, including all protected characteristics.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has its own set of published values showing that the organisation is committed to providing non-judgmental, impartial support, giving accurate information and the principles of equality, including all protected characteristics.</li> <li>• Uses appropriate referral pathways that do not exclude any of the full range of options available</li> <li>• Ensures that all staff and volunteers commit to working within the value statement</li> <li>• Creates a safe learning environment for the session/activity</li> </ul>
<p>Staff and volunteers working with young people maintain a comprehensive and up-to-date understanding of the subject area and local provision</p>	<p>All staff and volunteers involved in development of resources have completed training covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguarding</li> <li>• Equality &amp; Diversity</li> <li>• Basic training relating to their subject area</li> </ul> <p>The PSHE Education is currently developing a local training offer for external providers</p>
<p>The organisation has a comprehensive evaluation framework that is used to inform future delivery</p>	<p>The organisation does the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is aware how their contribution fits into the PSHE frameworks</li> <li>• Has aims and objectives for the lessons and evaluates if these have been achieved</li> <li>• Has an evaluation system in place</li> <li>• Has systems in place to gather feedback from stakeholders including children and young people</li> </ul>

The organisation is committed to safeguarding all young people it works with.

The organisation does the following:

- Has clear processes in place to report safeguarding concerns to the education setting's DSL
- Policies are in place on safeguarding, equality and diversity and confidentiality
- Guidance is in place to deal with disclosures or any ongoing issues that arise during the session

The organisation is equipped to create a learning ethos which meets the needs of all learners

The organisation:

- Has experience of working with children and young people on the relevant subject areas within education settings
- Uses age-appropriate materials, resources and language
- Has staff and volunteers who use diverse learning methods to include all children and young people, taking account of their backgrounds, identities and learning needs (including SEND)
- Creates a safe learning environment to make participants feels safe, comfortable and respected in expressing their thoughts, views and opinions
- Develops some of its resources in coproduction with children and people or in consultation with them

The organisation adheres to requirements for PSHE delivering including RSHE statutory guidance

The organisation:

- Challenges stereotypes and "perceived" social norms
- Sessions are inclusive and include representation from a broad spectrum of protected characteristics
- Sessions utilise evidence-based information and can source that the evidence is from a reputable source
- Includes signposting information of both local and national organisation within their session
- Does not use victim-blaming language
- Does not use fear, guilt or shame tactics
- Uses the correct terminology
- Sessions are designed to include the development of knowledge, skills and values
- Ensures children and young people are aware of their rights



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