



**OFFICIAL REPORT**  
AITHISG OIFIGEIL

# Education and Skills Committee

**Wednesday 22 February 2017**

**Session 5**



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**Wednesday 22 February 2017**

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**EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE**

**5<sup>th</sup> Meeting 2017, Session 5**

**CONVENER**

\*James Dornan (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)

**DEPUTY CONVENER**

\*Johann Lamont (Glasgow) (Lab)

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

\*Colin Beattie (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)

\*Ross Greer (West Scotland) (Green)

\*Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)

Richard Lochhead (Moray) (SNP)

Fulton MacGregor (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)

\*Gillian Martin (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)

\*Tavish Scott (Shetland Islands) (LD)

\*Liz Smith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)

\*Ross Thomson (North East Scotland) (Con)

\*attended

**THE FOLLOWING ALSO PARTICIPATED:**

Clare Adamson (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP) (Committee Substitute)

Joanna Barrett (NSPCC Scotland)

Clare Clark (Sexpression:UK)

Jordan Daly (Time for Inclusive Education)

Jack Douglas (National Union of Students Scotland)

Hilary Kidd (Young Scot)

Jeff Maguire (Scottish Government)

Erin McAuley MSYP (Scottish Youth Parliament)

Mark McDonald (Minister for Childcare and Early Years)

Janet Westwater (Bearsden Academy)

**CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE**

Roz Thomson

**LOCATION**

The Mary Fairfax Somerville Room (CR2)



## Scottish Parliament

## Interests

### Education and Skills Committee

*Wednesday 22 February 2017*

*[The Convener opened the meeting at 09:31]*

### Decision on Taking Business in Private

**The Convener (James Dornan):** Good morning and welcome to the Education and Skills Committee's fifth meeting in 2017. I remind everyone to turn their mobile phones and other devices to silent for the duration of the meeting.

We have received apologies from Fulton MacGregor, and Clare Adamson is attending as a substitute for him. Apologies have also been received from Richard Lochhead, as he is attending another committee meeting.

Before we start the first agenda item, I put on record the committee's sincere thanks to Fiona Sinclair, who was our administrative assistant and has moved to a new role in the Parliament after more than 10 years supporting this and other committees. We wish her well in her new role. I also welcome Jane Davidson to the clerking team.

The first item of business is a decision on whether to take item 8 in private. Are members content to take that item in private?

**Members** *indicated agreement.*

09:32

**The Convener:** As this is the first time that Clare Adamson has attended the committee, the second item of business is an opportunity for her to declare any relevant interests.

**Clare Adamson (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP):** As well as drawing members' attention to my entry in the register of members' interests, I particularly want to declare that I am a board member of the Scottish Schools Education Research Centre.

## Subordinate Legislation

### Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 (Modification) Regulations 2017 [Draft]

09:32

**The Convener:** The committee has two pieces of subordinate legislation to consider today. For the benefit of people watching, I explain that each instrument will be dealt with under two agenda items. Under the first item, the committee will take evidence and have the opportunity to ask questions of the minister and his officials, and under the second item, there will be a debate on a motion that seeks the committee's recommendation of approval of the instrument.

We start with consideration of the draft Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 (Modification) Regulations 2017. I welcome Mark McDonald, the Minister for Childcare and Early Years. With him from the Scottish Government are Jeff Maguire, policy manager, and Lorraine Stirling, principal legal officer. I understand that the minister wishes to make an opening statement.

**The Minister for Childcare and Early Years (Mark McDonald):** Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee in connection with a proposed further suspension of specific consultation requirements for local authorities under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

As the committee knows, we are committed to nearly doubling the current early learning and childcare entitlement to 1,140 hours per year by 2020. That expansion will require a substantial increase in the workforce and infrastructure, and the draft Scottish budget for 2017-18 proposes allocating £61 million to support the first phase of that expansion. Additionally, the expansion will require new and innovative models of delivering ELC, which will involve a rethinking and reconfiguring of provision at the local level, which we are exploring through our blueprint consultation and the delivery model trials.

The 2010 act requires education authorities to comply with a number of statutory requirements before they proceed to implement a new proposal in relation to an education authority-managed school or early years centre. On average, that process takes six to nine months. Proposals to establish a new nursery school or nursery class in a school and to relocate existing nursery schools or nursery classes are classed as relevant proposals for the purposes of the 2010 act.

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 introduced a requirement on education

authorities to ensure that 600 hours of ELC per year is made available for eligible pre-school children. That came into effect on 1 August 2014. To allow authorities to comply with that requirement, the consultation requirements in the 2010 act were suspended until 31 March 2017 in relation to the establishment of all new nursery schools and classes.

We have listened to the clear message from local authorities and their representative bodies—the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and the Scottish Local Government Partnership—that a further suspension of such consultation requirements is needed to enable the expansion to 1,140 hours by August 2020.

Lobbying from local government has centred around the timescales that are required for such a major expansion of ELC. Under the 1,140 hours programme plan, fully developed and robust local service delivery plans will not be completed until later this year, so construction under those plans will not be able to commence until the first half of 2018 at the earliest. Only from that point on could authorities begin to meet specific consultation requirements under the 2010 act on what they propose to build and/or relocate and where, which would delay the onset of construction by another six to nine months. That could create the risk that sufficient new infrastructure would not be completed in time for 2020, given the numbers of new infrastructure projects that are required and the lead-in times that are required for construction.

It is important to emphasise that all new ELC infrastructure projects will still be subject to national and local planning procedures and laws, which will ensure that there are still statutory requirements on local authorities to plan all new ELC infrastructure in a sensitive manner that takes account of local circumstances and community views. That requirement is covered by the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 and Scottish planning policy, which underpin local development plans. Further, local authorities are also subject to the requirement in section 1(2B) of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 to consult parents of pre-school children every two years about how they should provide for such children.

The draft regulations that are in front of the committee have been drafted to modify schedule 1 to the 2010 act to implement the proposal that education authorities should not be required to comply with the specific consultation requirements in the 2010 act if they want to establish new nursery schools or new nursery classes in schools and/or relocate existing nursery schools and nursery classes in schools as part of their expansion planning for the 1,140 hours. The exemption will not apply to establishment or

relocation proposals that relate to primary or secondary schools, or to proposed nursery school or nursery class closures, which will still have to comply with the 2010 act consultation requirements in full. The regulations therefore propose modifying schedule 1 to the 2010 act from 31 March 2017, when the current order expires.

**The Convener:** Are there plans to reintroduce the duty to consult on the creation or relocation of nursery schools and classes at a later date?

**Mark McDonald:** Once the suspension is no longer required, the option will be available to us to seek a further modification at a later date. We have not taken a firm decision on that yet. However, there are a number of means by which consultation can take place on early learning facilities under the various acts that I listed in my opening statement.

**The Convener:** Before I open up the session to questions from members, I have a further question. Why are the changes not time limited?

**Mark McDonald:** The changes are not time limited because we want to keep an open mind on what might be required further down the line, so that we do not face a situation like the 31 March 2017 expiration, when we would have to come back to the committee to seek a further suspension.

**Johann Lamont (Glasgow) (Lab):** I have a number of points for clarification. Why would the Scottish Government have originally proposed to suspend the requirements until 31 March 2017 if it had not thought that that was achievable? Why did it not think that it was necessary to go beyond that? Why did the Government go for a suspension at that point, given that you are now getting rid of the provision altogether?

**Mark McDonald:** The decision was based on the policy approach to the 600-hour entitlement, which predated our decision to expand to 1,140 hours. The policy proposal that we are currently pursuing was not the one that we were pursuing when we proposed the initial modifications.

**Johann Lamont:** With respect, it might be argued that the Government was pursuing a policy without thinking through the possible consequences. The Government started by looking at hours and the end time, then worked backwards. It may be of some concern that the Government is now saying that, to fulfil the current proposal, it has to get rid of another consultation process.

**Mark McDonald:** If I can just clarify in relation to that—

**Johann Lamont:** Has the Government considered the option of simply saying that the form of consultation that is identified in the 2010

act does not enhance anything? You have suggested that there are other provisions that protect community and local interests. Why not get rid of the proposal to consult across the board?

**Mark McDonald:** The proposal that we are taking forward on early learning centres is very different from the approach that would be taken in relation to primary and secondary schools. This proposal is specifically informed by a policy approach that is being taken to the expansion of hours at early learning centres, whereas we are not taking forward such a proposal in relation to schools. Moreover, among the consultation opportunities that I highlighted, the two-yearly consultation with parents on early learning and childcare is of course specific to early learning and childcare.

Your first point was that we have not thought through what we are doing. The 31 March 2017 proposal related specifically to our expansion to 600 hours, which has taken place. All children in Scotland are now entitled to receive 600 hours, and the proposals on that have been enacted at local level.

What we are looking at today relates to our policy to expand provision to 1,140 hours, which we introduced post the election, following the success of our election campaign manifesto. It would not have been possible for us to make provision in 2014 for a policy that we did not put to people until the 2016 election.

**Johann Lamont:** Would it not be realistic to match your delivery commitments to the reality of your ability to deliver them? That is the point that I am trying to make. All that you seem to have established is that such consultation does not actually add anything—for example, it is not providing protection, because you can remove it. Why would you not take the same approach for primary and secondary schools?

**Mark McDonald:** We have no plans to do this for primary and secondary schools; moreover, it is not the case that the consultation does not add anything. We have listened to local authorities' concerns about the truncated timescale on which they would be forced to operate were they to have to extend consultation requirements. We have taken the decision on that basis; it is not a matter of the consultation itself being devalued.

**Johann Lamont:** The constraint is defined by the timetable that the Government has established.

I will ask one last question about something that is quite common in Glasgow—you will forgive me if it is not common in other places. More often than not, nursery classes are being located in primary schools. I think that we would all encourage such a campus approach, with an additional support

needs school, a nursery and a primary school all at one location but, if a local authority were to develop part of its provision on that kind of campus—I accept that councils should have that flexibility—what would happen with the consultation?

**Mark McDonald:** Jeff Maguire will respond to that question.

**Jeff Maguire (Scottish Government):** There are a number of areas where local authorities have to seek clarification from their legal teams. Sometimes, the position depends on the future management arrangements for a new centre, but we have drafted the modifications in a way that supports local authorities in thinking flexibly and imaginatively about how they configure or reconfigure their early learning and childcare estate as they move towards the 1,140 hours. If we are talking about just a relocation, with the management staying in place, that is exempt from consultation, but if closures are involved, consultation will have to be carried out. The decision depends on a number of factors, including the management arrangements for the centre.

**Johann Lamont:** What would be your advice to a local authority that wanted to expand its childcare provision by establishing a campus that included a primary school and nursery class? Would it have to consult?

**Mark McDonald:** As Jeff Maguire has highlighted, that is for local authorities to determine on the basis of the advice that they receive from their legal officers.

**Johann Lamont:** What would your advice be, given your decision that the regulations need to go through?

**Mark McDonald:** It is not for me to issue advice to individual local authorities about the approach that they take locally. In making the regulations, I am reacting to correspondence and conversations that we have had with local authorities about what they see as a requirement for them. If local authorities had come to us and said, "If you remove the suspension, it will create great difficulties for us," we would have thought carefully about that. Instead, they have come to us and said, "We need you to continue the suspension beyond 31 March 2017 to enable us to undertake the changes that you wish to see." We are just reacting to what local authorities have told us.

**The Convener:** Does Tavish Scott want to come in?

**Tavish Scott (Shetland Islands) (LD):** Johann Lamont has covered the point that I wanted to raise.

**Liz Smith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):** I will pursue the relevant point that Johann Lamont has raised. Part of a consultation will inevitably look at parents' concerns; after all, the transition between nursery and primary 1 and primary 2 is an essential issue for many parents.

Minister, you said that you thought that the suspension would be disapplied with regard to primary and secondary education, but I am not sure that it could be. What if a consultation were to provide quite a lot of evidence that nursery provision was having quite a lot of effect, either through the campus set-up that Johann Lamont described or simply through points being made about provision in a local authority area? Have you thought that through?

**Mark McDonald:** I am not quite following where you are going.

09:45

**Liz Smith:** A consultation will inevitably result in feedback from parents and possibly teachers about what is a very important issue in Scottish education: the seamless transition between the different stages. Because nursery provision has a direct impact on what happens in the first stages of primary school, that will almost certainly lead to issues about overall provision being raised in the consultation. I am not clear from your answers to Johann Lamont about whether all that has been thought through.

**Mark McDonald:** It has been thought through. To enable the expansion to 600 hours, we suspended the requirement in the 2014 act; as part of the expansion to 1,140 hours, we expect local authorities to consult parents across the local authority area as they look at their likely requirements. Indeed, we have already seen that happening with regard to what parents want. We are saying that, when detailed proposals emerge from local authorities, authorities should go through the normal planning process for any proposals that require construction or extensions to buildings, but we do not want every single detailed proposal to be potentially delayed by a further six to nine-month consultation period, as that would impact on local authority timetables.

**Liz Smith:** You are absolutely confident that the proposal ties in with existing legislation.

**Mark McDonald:** Yes.

**Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab):** I understand the drive behind the proposal, but will it not permanently change parents' right to consultation? Why would it be so detrimental to place a time limit on the suspension and come back to the committee for a further extension?



**Mark McDonald:** To be clear, the right to consultation has already been suspended, which means that it is not there at the moment.

**Daniel Johnson:** That is not permanent.

**Mark McDonald:** You are right—the suspension is not permanent; it expires on 31 March. However, local authorities have told us that they require a further suspension. As I said in my opening remarks, other methods of consultation exist in relation to early learning centres, which will drive local authority planning. I expect local authorities to consult parents—indeed, I know that they have done so—but, to allow local authorities to take a more flexible approach, the regulations will remove a six to nine-month statutory requirement to consult.

**Daniel Johnson:** If there were a time limit but you needed more time, why would it be such a problem to come back to the committee to seek a further extension?

**Mark McDonald:** Are you talking about what would happen if I said, “We will apply this only until 2020”?

**Daniel Johnson:** Yes.

**Mark McDonald:** We weighed up the matter and, on balance, we thought that we might want to ensure—*[Interruption.]* I have just been told that we should have planned for an open-ended approach with regard to the 31 March 2017 cut-off, because we did not plan far enough ahead. We are therefore leaving it open to us to carry out further planning beyond 2020. However, I have said to the committee that, if I am of the opinion that we need to come back to modify the 2010 act to reinsert the requirements, we will do so.

**The Convener:** We move on to item 4, which is the formal debate on motion S5M-03791, in the name of the minister. I remind everyone that officials are not permitted to contribute to formal debates.

*Motion moved,*

That the Education and Skills Committee recommends that the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 (Modification) Regulations 2017 [draft] be approved.—*[Mark McDonald]*

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Convener:** The committee must report to Parliament on the instrument. Are members content for me, as the convener, to sign off any such report?

**Members** *indicated agreement.*

**The Convener:** I thank Mr Maguire and Ms Stirling for their attendance, and I suspend the meeting for a changeover of officials.

09:49

*Meeting suspended.*

09:50

*On resuming—*

### **Continuing Care (Scotland) Amendment Order 2017 [Draft]**

**The Convener:** I welcome to the meeting alongside the minister Carolyn Younie, who is corporate parenting and formal care team leader in the Scottish Government, and Liz Blair, who is a senior principal legal officer in the Scottish Government. I understand that the minister again wishes to make an opening statement.

**Mark McDonald:** Thank you for the opportunity to introduce the draft order, which will amend article 2 of the Continuing Care (Scotland) Order 2015 and will have the effect that, from 1 April 2017, the higher age limit for eligible persons that is specified for the purposes of section 26A(2)(b) of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 is increased from 18 to 19 years of age. That means that, from 1 April, an eligible person for the purposes of the duty on local authorities to provide continuing care under section 26A of the 1995 act will be a person who is at least 16 years of age and who has not yet reached the age of 19.

By virtue of article 3 of the 2015 order, the local authority’s duty to provide continuing care lasts from the date on which an eligible person ceases to be looked after until the date of their 21st birthday.

In summary, part 11 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, which is on continuing care, and the accompanying secondary legislation stress the importance of encouraging and enabling young people to remain in their care setting until they can demonstrate their readiness and willingness to move on to interdependent living. Interdependence more accurately reflects the day-to-day realities of an extended range of healthy interpersonal relationships, social support and networks. Continuing care undoubtedly normalises the experience of care-experienced young people who are in kinship, foster and residential care by allowing strong and positive relationships between young people and carers to be maintained and reducing the risk of multiple simultaneous disruptions occurring in their lives as they approach adulthood.

The draft order will make a procedural amendment to increase the higher age limit for eligible persons from 18 to 19 years of age, as part of an agreed annual roll-out strategy to increase the higher age range in step with the first eligible cohort of 16-year-olds, until the entitlement

eventually covers all young people who cease to be looked after on or after their 16th birthday, so that they will remain in continuing care up to their 21st birthday.

The draft order will revoke the Continuing Care (Scotland) Amendment Order 2016.

**The Convener:** As nobody has questions for the minister, we will move on to item 6, which is the formal debate on motion S5M-03892, in the name of the minister. Again, I remind everyone that officials are not permitted to contribute to the formal debate.

*Motion moved,*

That the Education and Skills Committee recommends that the Continuing Care (Scotland) Amendment Order 2017 [draft] be approved.—[Mark McDonald]

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Convener:** As with the previous instrument, the committee must report to Parliament. Are members content for me, as the convener, to sign off a report?

**Members indicated agreement.**

**The Convener:** I thank the minister, Mark McDonald, and his officials for their attendance and suspend the meeting to allow the witnesses to change over.

09:53

*Meeting suspended.*

09:58

*On resuming—*

## **Personal and Social Education**

**The Convener:** Agenda item 7 is a round-table discussion on the content and delivery of personal and social education.

I put on record my thanks to everyone who has already contributed to the committee's work on personal and social education. We have received hundreds of comments and submissions by email and social media, and members of the committee have had discussions on the topic with young people and teachers. The level of response has been notable. I thank in particular students in schools, including Bearsden academy, who have spent time in class workshopping what PSE should be about and have sent us pictures of the fruits of their labours. Janet Westwater, who is one of our witnesses, is from Bearsden academy—she is the one with the big grin. I ask her to pass on our sincere thanks to the pupils, please.

Round tables are intended to promote a more conversational style of evidence gathering as the committee scopes the issues related to PSE. That said, I remind everyone to indicate to me or the clerks if they would like to speak, and I will call them.

I suggest that we briefly introduce ourselves. I am the convener of the committee.

10:00

**Johann Lamont:** I am the deputy convener.

**Ross Greer (West Scotland) (Green):** I am an MSP for West Scotland.

**Janet Westwater (Bearsden Academy):** I am the principal teacher of guidance at Bearsden academy.

**Clare Clark (Sexpression:UK):** I am the communications director at Sexpression:UK.

**Ross Thomson (North East Scotland) (Con):** I am an MSP for North East Scotland.

**Colin Beattie (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP):** I am the MSP for Midlothian North and Musselburgh.

**Daniel Johnson:** I am the MSP for Edinburgh Southern.

**Hilary Kidd (Young Scot):** I am the development manager at Young Scot.

**Erin McAuley MSYP (Scottish Youth Parliament):** I am a member of the Scottish Youth Parliament and a student teacher.

**Jack Douglas (National Union of Students Scotland):** I am the LGBT+ officer at NUS Scotland.

**Tavish Scott:** I am the MSP for Shetland and I have teenage children at school.

**Gillian Martin (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP):** I am the MSP for Aberdeenshire East. I also have teens at school and college. My husband is a PSE teacher and a guidance teacher at Turriff academy.

**Jordan Daly (Time for Inclusive Education):** I am the co-founder of the time for inclusive education—TIE—campaign.

**Joanna Barrett (NSPCC Scotland):** I am the policy manager at NSPCC Scotland.

**Liz Smith:** I am a Conservative MSP for Mid Scotland and Fife.

**Clare Adamson:** I am the MSP for Motherwell and Wishart, and I have a teen.

**The Convener:** Thank you very much. I suggest that we start the discussion on the content of PSE. We can focus on how that content is delivered a little later. The submissions indicate that there is a desire for a great breadth of subjects to be taught in PSE, from financial planning to issues around mental health and sex education. It would be helpful to know how our guests think schools should go about identifying what to prioritise when teaching PSE.

I am pleased to let anyone start if they would like to catch my eye—otherwise it is going to be a short meeting.

If no one wants to answer that question, let us move on to sex and relationships education. Do we have the balance right between being inclusive of all types of relationships in talking about what healthy relationships look like and talking about the biological mechanics of sex?

**Jordan Daly:** One of the primary issues with relationships education in schools is that it is not necessarily inclusive, despite there being frameworks and guidance in place. The guidance on relationships, sexual health and parenthood education was updated in 2014 to be LGBT inclusive, but the issue is how we get that guidance used in schools. Up to now, the Scottish Government has issued that guidance, which recommends what teachers should teach, discuss or pick up on, but it has never followed that up to see whether the guidance is being followed, and it has never issued a requirement that it be followed. Our research on RSHP found that the majority of teachers had either never heard of or never read the guidance and that only 7 per cent of teachers had been actively following it.

As many of you will know, the issues around LGBT inclusivity in schools are pressing. LGBT young people right across the country are feeling excluded and marginalised, and I was one of them only a few years ago. I went to a school in North Lanarkshire, and for me, as for many of my fellow pupils, PSE was a waste-of-time subject. To be frank, we knew that a video would be stuck on or we would have a workbook about drugs and alcohol to fill out. For my entire time at school, we focused primarily on drug and alcohol awareness—there was nothing at all about relationships and very little sex education. There was absolutely nothing about LGBT inclusivity. That could have been partly because I went to a faith school—I can speak only about my experiences—but 86 per cent of LGBT people who took part in our research in 2016 reported that LGBT issues were never discussed or taught in their schools, and only 5 per cent felt that their teachers would have been adequately equipped to discuss such issues.

The picture that is quite consistent across all the research and data that are available is that LGBT inclusivity in schools is an issue, and I am aware that a lot of submissions to the committee have verified that.

For us, the issue comes down to consistency. How can we ensure that the guidance and the frameworks, which need to be updated anyway, are used? RSHP could do with being bulkier. We would argue that it is about putting it out with a requirement of uptake. I know that there is also a steady debate about whether PSE should be statutory within the curriculum. I think that there are ways that we can move around that and still allow flexibility for teachers in their schools.

For us, the clear problem is that there is no consistency in schools, and that comes down to the fact that the guidance is put out as a recommendation. We need to move beyond that language.

**The Convener:** Thank you for that. Clare Clark wants to come in.

**Clare Clark:** I am from Sexpression:UK, which provides sex education in schools and the community. I have personal experience of the Aberdeen area, where my branch is, and I have found that teachers do not know how to teach about relationships because they are not told what to teach and they do not get any guidance on that. For that reason, they have us come in, and we cover issues such as body image, healthy relationships and consent.

Consent is a massive issue, but it seems not to be coming across to young people. There is clearly a gap. That is demonstrated by the fact that we are having to do consent classes in

universities. We are letting people leave school with no information about consent, and we are having to cover it in universities.

**The Convener:** Can I interrupt? This is an old man talking. You mentioned consent classes. Will you explain that?

**Clare Clark:** We run workshops with groups of young people to talk about what they consider to be sexual consent. We cover verbal consent, movement and body language. It is about understanding body language and people's consent around sex and relationships.

**The Convener:** Thank you. Janet Westwater wants to come in.

**Janet Westwater:** In East Dunbartonshire, a sexual health programme is laid out from secondary 1 to 6, and there is flexibility within that. We teach consent in S4.

A point that comes through in the submissions to the committee is that pupils obviously want more classes on LGBT issues. We have a really good relationship with LGBT Youth Scotland. In East Dunbartonshire, our S2 pupils get contact, but we also have an equalities group running. At present we are heading towards purple Friday. It is a big issue for us. However, Jordan Daly is right that there is a need for more materials to come through on LGBT issues.

I am mindful that we are really lucky in our school in that our principal teachers of guidance teach their case loads from S1 all the way through to S6, which does not necessarily happen throughout Scotland. It is positive to have principal teachers of guidance who have contact with their children for one to two periods a week, because they can build that relationship. It is complex to teach things such as consent, sexual health and LGBT issues, and teachers need to be skilled to do that. I think that principal teachers of guidance are best placed to be teaching those things.

**The Convener:** Thank you. Jack Douglas wants to comment, and then Hilary Kidd.

**Jack Douglas:** I want to pick up on Clare Clark's point about consent. In a really interesting study that the Terrence Higgins Trust did in 2016, 75 per cent of young people said that they had not learned about consent in PSE lessons. That is a shocking figure. It was a United Kingdom-wide study, but it shows how big an issue the lack of teaching about consent in pre-16 education is.

On the LGBT side, section 28 was abolished about 17 years ago, but its effects are still very much there in education. In the study that I mentioned, about 50 per cent of young people rated their PSE education as either poor or terrible, and the worst results were amongst people who are trans. As someone who is trans, I

had a very different experience from Jordan Daly. I was not in a religious school. We had relationships and sexual health education, but it was done in an entirely heteronormative and cisgendered way, so it was just not relevant to me in any way.

NUS Scotland believes that PSE has to change. It needs to be statutory in some form so that there is high-quality provision throughout Scotland and not just in certain parts.

**The Convener:** Thank you, Jack.

**Hilary Kidd:** Interestingly, Young Scot was commissioned by the Scottish Government's creating a healthier Scotland joint improvement team. Its purpose was to involve young people in the national conversation on the future of health and social care. As part of that, we supported a youth investigation team, comprising young people aged between 15 and 23, who did research that was presented to the Cabinet Secretary for Health, Wellbeing and Sport. Despite the fact that the research was on health and social care, one of the key themes was education. Interestingly, its recommendation was to change the delivery structure and content of the PSE and physical education curriculums in Scottish secondary schools, to ensure that all young people are equipped with the knowledge and tools to live healthy lives.

A key reflection raised by young people in the youth investigation team's report was about—I will word this exactly, because there is an issue around terminology and how we describe the subject—personal, social and health education. The reflection was:

"PSHE does not properly address topics surrounding sex, gender and sexuality as they are seen as uncomfortable to talk about."

That has been echoed by everyone who has spoken so far.

Taking a slight step back, at Young Scot we believe in co-design and involving young people in delivery from the very beginning. That involves young people systematically co-creating, co-producing, co-designing and co-delivering solutions. We feel strongly about that in relation to topics such as this. We need to be engaging young people around the delivery of something like this from the very beginning.

**Liz Smith:** Some schools have done fantastic work and have very strong committees on these issues that involve pupils, parents and staff. Is there any evidence that things are better when schools have that kind of committee structure, or is there no evidence to support that view?

**Janet Westwater:** There needs to be on-going support for schools when they are introducing these issues. Our equalities group is quite new

and we are working with LGBT Youth Scotland to build it.

Schools need to build a culture in which LGBT is the known. It needs to be part of what is on the curriculum. Everybody will teach it and everybody will know about it, and everybody should and will be comfortable about it. More importantly, teachers need support for delivery. As we have said, support is the main thing that we need to look at.

**Erin McAuley:** From the Scottish Youth Parliament's point of view, the issue is very clear across the whole of Scotland. Time and again, the Scottish Youth Parliament gets motions on better sex education. It is clear that young people in Scotland feel that not only are they not equipped, but teachers are not equipped. If a teacher is not confident about what to teach or how to talk about relationships or sex education, that has a profound effect. That has been expressed to us clearly: young people feel that not only are they not equipped but their teachers are not confident to talk about sex education.

A lot of young people who we spoke to said that there is not much emphasis in sex education on the emotional side of things. It is done by the book and that is it; there is no follow-up on the emotional aspect. There is still embarrassment and stigma around sex education.

There is a massive call for better sex education. Time and again we get motions on better sex education. Young people do not feel equipped, and that is quite worrying.

**Janet Westwater:** A couple of years ago, we brought in the sixth-year lesson on what is kind of the sixth-year holiday. It is becoming more common that sixth-year pupils are going on holiday to wherever they go. Our sixth-year pupils responded really well to that and said the information on what happens when they go away was what they wanted. Equipping our fifth and sixth-year pupils with a bit more knowledge about what happens outwith the school bubble, as it were, is really positive. That view comes back in evaluations.

**The Convener:** My grandson is going on a sixth-year holiday. Perhaps after this meeting we can have a wee chat. [*Laughter.*]

**Ross Greer:** I feel that I should start by almost declaring an interest, as a former pupil of Bearsden academy, although it was just before Janet Westwater's time.

Within the first 10 minutes of the meeting, we identified some really significant gaps. One is that sex and relationship education is not inclusive of LGBT young people, and another is that issues such as consent are missing from courses for the

overwhelming majority of young people. I want to drill down into that a bit more. What are the consequences of LGBT young people not being included in sex education at school and of most young people not learning about consent, which means that universities have to offer that? What happens as a result?

10:15

**Clare Clark:** When we teach people about consent, we are not talking just about rape; we are talking about how they respect themselves. I am a fourth-year student at university. When people go to university, they are in a particular world—in a bubble. They have just left school and they feel like they can do what they want. They do not have any background on what they should be doing and how to keep themselves safe, and they do not have any respect for themselves or for others. In Aberdeen, we found that there was a gap in that people did not know what consent was. They thought that it was okay to grope someone in a nightclub, or do things with more serious consequences, because they had never been told that that was wrong.

As Janet Westwater's school did for its sixth-year holiday, at the University of Aberdeen, we spoke to everyone who was going on a massive university ski trip. We ran a scenario-based consent class, where we showed people videos and got them to discuss in small groups what they thought consent was. The groups had a mix of girls and guys, and they all talked about what they thought and gave different opinions. It was a group learning situation and everyone was involved in it.

However, people told me that they thought that the information should have been delivered earlier. They should not have just found out that some things are wrong in first or second year at university, at 18 or 19 and having been living alone for up to two years. If those things are taught earlier, people will have more respect for themselves. The subject is not just to do with consent and rape; it is to do with relationships—knowing what is right in your relationship and what you want from it. It aims to ensure that people are not pressured and feel that they have to be in relationships or that they have to do this or that at university. The subject also covers things such as peer pressure on drugs and alcohol. I feel that that is missing from and is required in under-16 education.

**Jordan Daly:** I want to respond to Liz Smith's question and then I will respond to Ross Greer, if that is all right.

Liz Smith asked about equalities groups and LGBT committees in schools, which are a relatively recent phenomenon in most of the

schools that have them. As far as we are aware, no quantitative data or statistics have been produced on the impact of those committees. However, there is anecdotal or qualitative data, which you would find if you visited some of the schools that have those committees—unfortunately, they are in the minority—such as Vale of Leven academy in Dumbarton, Rosshall academy and Bannerman high school. We go into schools regularly—in fact, every week, we are in different secondary schools to attend school assemblies and work with some of the young people—and we see the impact of those committees. They are about more than just having a safe space in the school where young LGBT people can go; they are about empowering young LGBT people to actively campaign in their school. That increases their confidence and helps them to educate their peers.

However, I would caution against placing too much emphasis on having a committee, because that means relying on one or two teachers and the young people to change the entire ethos of a school. The approach needs to come from a national level. The big problem is consistency. We have a unique opportunity to look into how PSE is delivered in schools and how teachers are equipped to deal with the issues that they are presented with in an ever-changing society. We need to do more through a national approach and stop saying that it is the local authorities' or schools' responsibility. Things such as equalities and human rights and the treatment of LGBT young people are actually the responsibility of Government. We have the Equality Act 2010 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and it is a national responsibility to ensure that they are enforced consistently in schools.

On Ross Greer's point about the consequences of a gap in LGBT inclusivity in schools, most members will be aware of the statistics that we have uncovered that 90 per cent of LGBT young people experience homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in school, that 27 per cent have attempted suicide once as a result of bullying and that a further 15 per cent have tried more than once.

We constantly hear about self-harm and feelings of isolation. When I was in the first year at school, I wanted to kill myself because of the way that I felt and there was a lack of support available at my school. There are individual and social implications for young people not being included in the school environment, not being able to learn from people such as teachers who we rely on, feeling very isolated at school and not feeling able to ask the school for help. I certainly did not feel able to ask for help and, bearing in mind that I left school only three years ago, some of the things

that I heard from teachers were appalling and I wish now that I had understood the equality act when I was at school.

On the concept of sex education—I hope that my mum is not watching this live—I became sexually active when I was a senior at school and, as a gay man, I was sexually active with another man. At that point, I had been through five years of supposed sex and relationships education in the Scottish school system yet, when I first became sexually active at 17, I thought that HIV was curable. I thought that it was like gonorrhoea or chlamydia in that it could be treated with pills—I had absolutely no idea. That was only four years ago and it tells you quite a lot about what is happening in schools when it comes to sex education.

The obvious elephant in the room is faith schools and their position on what they are prepared to teach. It is not acceptable to continue to allow opt-outs on moral grounds as there are LGBT young people in faith schools and they have the same right to an inclusive education as everyone else. That definitely needs to be discussed.

**Erin McAuley:** I echo Jordan Daly's point with regard to faith schools. I went to a faith school and I did not feel informed or educated when I went on to university.

Some of the views that we hear at the Scottish Youth Parliament about PSE are pretty negative, but it is important to recognise that there are some really good things going on and that some PSE sessions are great. We have to ensure that that is consistent around Scotland, because some young people say to us, "I really like my PSE class—my teacher is great and it is really informative," whereas others say, "It's just a waste of time and there is no point so I don't go."

Returning to Ross Greer's point on consequences, it cannot be stressed enough that early intervention is very important to prevent the consequences arising in the first place. He talked about people going to university, but not every young person goes to university, which is a consequence in itself. Not every young person has that opportunity and, if they do not get their school education, they might not ever get an education, yet education is one of the most powerful tools that we can use.

It is important to have a PSE system that is well equipped for modern society and which includes and engages with young people. The Scottish Youth Parliament believes that young people should be part of the process for forming PSE sessions, which would ensure that they are engaged and that they learn what they feel they need.

**Jack Douglas:** Ross Greer asked about the direct consequences. When NUS Scotland looked into what we termed as “lad culture” for a report a couple of years ago, we found that one in five college or university students faces some form of sexual harassment during their first term, which might be anything from sexual comments to wolf whistling to outright sexual assault. That is a direct consequence of consent not being discussed in PSE classes in pre-16 education.

I want to say well done to the TIE campaign for the fantastic report that it published in 2016. There are two big figures that jump out of that report. First, 90 per cent of LGBT people have experienced homophobia, biphobia and transphobia at school. Secondly, 87 per cent of teachers hear homophobic, biphobic or transphobic language at school. Those percentages are incredibly high and represent a significant majority. If you are LGBT, it is incredibly likely that you will face some form of discrimination at school. Those are the direct consequences of the lack of inclusive PSE lessons in school.

To return to the point about stigma, we find that it is drastically shaping PSE lessons. For example, we still see anti-choice speakers and organisations coming into schools, trying to make relationships or sex shameful and promoting abstinence. That often creates a hell of a lot more problems than solutions. As that is mostly down to local authorities and teachers, we often find that their viewpoints on equality shape the approach. It is harming many students, because the provision is not statutory.

**Hilary Kidd:** I want to pick up on a specific point on inconsistency that was made by Jordan Daly in his excellent comments. In “Creating a healthier Scotland: What matters to you”, it was interesting that the young people noted that although a new curriculum should be mandatory for all pupils in Scotland—they compared it to religious education—rather than just for S3 and S4 pupils, they specifically said that the curriculum should be flexible in order to tackle local issues, because the issues facing a young person in Glasgow are not necessarily the same as those facing young people in Thurso. Thinking about the importance of such flexibility, while covering the issues that are important to young people, is a key element when we speak about consistency.

**The Convener:** Others still want to speak, but I will bring in Tavish Scott at this point.

**Tavish Scott:** I want to reassure Jordan Daly that most MSPs still worry about their mother watching the committee, too, so he should not worry about what he says.

**The Convener:** I was thinking exactly the same thing.

**Tavish Scott:** I have two questions for this brilliant panel. Many of you talked about who is teaching PSE. My straw poll of that was at a swimming gala back home in Shetland on Sunday. I talked to lots of mums and dads of my age who are all worried about their kids online, bullying, sexting, what is going on in school to deal with that and whether they should ban mobile phones from schools or whether we should be doing something about the mobile phone companies, which are just in it for money.

That is all a bit of a sideshow, but I am interested in your take on who the best folk are to deliver relationship and sex education. A number of the mums on Sunday made a good suggestion, which was that, given that there are good youth workers attached to schools who are generally a little closer to young people, perhaps they could be used to deliver that education. I am interested in the thoughts of the great group of people that we have here today.

**The Convener:** You are obviously not including the MSPs in that group.

**Tavish Scott:** Certainly not.

**Joanna Barrett:** A range of people need to be involved in such work. It is not about the one or two hours of lessons a week. Someone can give the most consistent and equal messages in that class, but that might not be reinforced in school policies or how bullying incidents are dealt with and it may be undermined by messages that children are getting from the media about women, body image and various other things.

It is not necessarily fair to focus just on teachers. The teachers we have spoken to are really struggling with those issues. Continuing professional development budgets are being cut and teachers feel that they are the last bastion—they have to deal with all the social issues under the sun and they are not equipped to do that.

I have another point to make, although it does not answer your particular question. We have talked a lot about secondary education and other people have declared teenagers, but I declare three children under five—hence the bags under my eyes—because this issue affects them and will continue to affect them through primary school, too. We need to sow the seeds of respect and dignity—for themselves and others—at primary school. I do not know whether we have even started to look at that. We offer a programme for primary 1 to 7s—in a very safe, engaging and age-appropriate way—about how to recognise abuse and what to do about it.

I underline that the subject is not just for teenagers; it relates to the whole of childhood and the curriculum.

10:30

**Clare Clark:** Sexpression:UK consists of students who teach sex education to students, so we preach that we are a near-peer organisation in that sense. We also feel that what we do is useful for kids because they will not have the same teacher for sex education as they do for maths, for example; instead, they have a dedicated person who they feel they can talk to because they are of a similar age and have had similar experiences. When I taught my first sex education lesson I was 17 and had just gone through the school system, so I was teaching people who were maybe three or four years younger than me.

It is better to have somebody like a youth worker coming in who specialises in teaching sex education, knows exactly what they are talking about and has the evidence to back what they say, rather than have a teacher doing it who is overworked, whose speciality might not be PSE and who might not have enough time. My mum is a teacher, and I know that it is a very demanding job. If an expert in PSE comes in to speak to the kids, they will relate more to them and will be able to ask them questions that they might not be able to ask their regular teacher.

Joanna Barrett mentioned kids under five. I recently taught an LGBT lesson to a primary 6 class and I noticed that the children were using what I would call casual homophobic terms. They had no idea that that was wrong, because they had heard the terms in the playground and had never been told that it was wrong to use them. We let those kids get to the age of 10 or 11 without realising that it is wrong to use those terms, but that is something that should be dealt with at an earlier stage. If we leave sex education until kids get to secondary school, we will just bombard them with so much information when they have exams going on and other things to worry about that they will not have time to take it in; they will say that their PSE lessons are a waste of time and that they could be doing other things.

On the point about faith schools, I went to a faith school. I loved my school and I am not going to slag it, but we did not get any sex education. We were just given a textbook in the RE department that glossed over anything about contraception and anything that could be controversial. That is not an appropriate way for anyone to learn. Even those in non-denominational schools will not learn from just being given a textbook or watching a teacher put a condom on a banana. Our Sexpression:UK lessons are activities that engage young people, who can discuss matters and learn from each other. We feel that that is a much more valuable experience for pupils and that they will probably learn more in the hour that we spend with

them than they would if they were just given a textbook.

**The Convener:** Gillian Martin is next, because she has been waiting to speak for a while.

**Gillian Martin:** I have more questions now, convener, than I did when I first caught your eye.

**The Convener:** Do not think that you are getting to ask them all. [*Laughter.*]

**Gillian Martin:** I know.

I think that the key issue here is how teachers are equipped. My question is for the people who deliver PSE. Obviously, I can talk to my own source on the teaching of PSE—I have talked to him about it—but the quality seems to be patchy. Is good practice shared? If so, how is it shared? What would the panellists like to see happening in the sharing of good practice and good ideas?

It occurs to me that, not only through PSE but throughout the school curriculum, there should be a normalisation of talking about sex through, for example, the types of literature looked at in English classes and through the study of art and history. The issue should permeate the entire school curriculum so that it is not just the guidance teacher who students can talk to about it. What do the panellists think about that?

**Janet Westwater:** That is a good point. First, it is about who is teaching sex education. That is done by the principal teacher of guidance in Bearsden academy, but we love to have visiting specialists come in. However, we find that it is sometimes difficult to get good coverage of specialists based on time.

The constraints of the school timetable might mean that we have two S1 PSE classes at period 1 on a Monday morning, the next two PSE classes just before lunch on a Wednesday and another two at the end of a Friday, so we might have to ask specialists to come in at 9 o'clock on a Monday morning and again a couple of days later. It is difficult for charities and agencies to give up their time to do that but we have found that, when they can do so, that is a valuable resource. The teachers learn from being in the class and we gain extra information from the people who come to the school—it is like a mini CPD session—and the impact on the pupils is much greater, because, after the people from outside have delivered their session, we can pursue the lessons further.

We did a cascade with LGBT Youth Scotland that involved taking LGBT materials and using them across various year groups. That model works. Within time and cost constraints, it is worth doing.

I am a principal teacher of guidance. I teach PSE but I also teach drama—I have a 10-period



teaching commitment in that subject. Among the guidance teachers in my school, there are subject specialists in modern studies, history, drama, English and so on. Since I came to Bearsden, we have set up an anti-bullying unit in drama and PSE. Through cascading that, our PSE is covered in S1. That is quite good, in the classroom.

If we could get more time and more money and get more agencies to help us to deliver the work, that would be good.

**Erin McAuley:** Specialists are a key part in the delivery of specific things in PSE. Young people perhaps feel that they can express their views more easily to that person, because they do not see them every day.

In my personal experience, it was great when a specialist came in. However, there was no follow-up—there were no resources for the teacher after the session. Okay, we learned about the subject from a specialist, but then what? What happens then?

Gillian Martin's point is important. The Scottish Youth Parliament is campaigning on mental health and is trying to push the people around this table to endorse the idea that mental health should be a core part of the curriculum for excellence, not just in PSE but in modern studies, English, PE and so on. A lot of things that are contained within PSE at the moment should be cross-curricular. We should talk about loads of different things in every subject, and teachers across subjects, not just in guidance, should be empowered to help shape discussions about the issues. There are so many important issues that it is impossible for them all to be covered in PSE alone.

**The Convener:** I hear what you are saying but, to be fair, we are here to discuss PSE. You have been doing a lot of work on mental health. How do you think that PSE could be used better to promote good work in relation to mental health?

**Erin McAuley:** There is a long way to go on mental health. Our campaign highlights that. For example, around 73 per cent of young people do not know where their local support services are. Again, that comes back to the fact that a lot of teachers do not know what language they should use, in terms of triggers. In order to have a curriculum that promotes mental health, teachers need to have the confidence to be able to speak about it.

Mental health is something that we are pushing for in the curriculum for excellence. It is an issue that affects a lot of young people. I know that we are not talking about attainment, but a lot of young people have been saying that they genuinely believe that the state of their mental health affects their attainment. How can they possibly be expected to meet the required standards when

their emotional wellbeing is not being addressed at school?

**The Convener:** That is a fair point.

Does Hilary Kidd want to come in? If anyone wants to link our discussion so far with the issue of mental health, that would be helpful. Clearly there are links between the issues for lots of kids.

**Hilary Kidd:** Young Scot is in quite an interesting place at the moment. We have 650,000 card holders and 2 million page requests for our digital content. The digital platform provides universal, bespoke and targeted information on a range of topics from personal wellbeing to physical and mental health, touching on hygiene, friendships, relationships and so on. We work with other partners such as the choices for life initiative, which includes information for teachers on how to deal with drug and alcohol-related issues in the classroom.

We also work with other stakeholders to ensure that there is a single destination for information for young people. We have a role to play in promoting that further among teachers and pupils, but we also engage through social platforms such as Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook and Twitter, in recognition of where young people are consuming content, which Tavish Scott talked about. We would welcome the opportunity to work with PSE teachers and others across Scotland to improve engagement. Supporting that more is a further stage for Young Scot.

**Jordan Daly:** Again, I will quickly go through a couple of points that have been brought up. Gillian Martin asked who should deliver PSE. It is a case of finding the right balance between teachers and external organisations. In our strategy paper, we speak at length about the role that external groups can play. When we go into schools, we deliver assemblies for entire year groups. We generally go into a school for the full day so that we can cover every pupil, and we follow up on that.

Fundamentally, the issue comes down to teacher training. It cannot be left to external organisations. As Erin McAuley has said, we are not in a position in which we can have a constant relationship with a pupil, as teachers can, and we cannot go back to the same school throughout the year. We need to make sure that there is a consistent level of teacher training. The argument is made that we cannot make things mandatory in the curriculum, but we can make things mandatory in teacher training. As well as initial teacher education, there is career-long professional teacher training.

If we can get teacher training right—we would argue that guidance teachers and teachers in promoted posts should be targeted first—at least we will have a solid base of teachers who are

trained and equipped with the right kind of guidance to discuss personal and social education. They or the schools can get in other organisations, but we need to have a good base.

When it comes to LGBT issues, the training needs to be free of charge. There is no point in charging a school £500, £600 or £700 to get their teachers trained. We cannot be charging schools £100 or £200 a teacher to get trained because, as has been mentioned, CPD budgets are being cut. Schools will not prioritise this if they have to pay hundreds of pounds to get their teachers trained. We are exploring how such training can be provided for at a national level, whether through ring-fenced funding or by making up the deficit that training organisations would face if they were to provide their training free of charge.

We do teacher training for primary teachers, secondary teachers and teachers in the additional support needs sector, which is a key area—I will probably email the committee after the meeting to discuss that. It is a question of making sure that all teachers receive that training and that it is free of charge. If we can get the teacher training and the guidance right, we will have a good base in schools for external organisations to build on.

**Jack Douglas:** I want to follow up on the content of the teacher training. It must be advanced as well as inclusive. If it is not advanced, it is impossible for it to be inclusive. I will use the example of the differences between gender or sex. When those are taught in schools, they are often taught in a binary manner. That fails binary and non-binary trans people; it also fails intersex people, who do not fit in with the terminology of male or female. That needs to be fixed. Some people would say that that is a very complicated subject for young people, but I totally disagree. I would say that the issue comes down to the people who are teaching the subject. They might not feel confident in teaching it or they might worry that they will offend or cause harm, or accidentally say something wrong. It might also be down to their viewpoints.

We have talked about external organisations coming in. We need to be extremely careful about that and about the content that they provide. We must make sure that it is not an environment of stigma and that it is a safe environment, in which people can feel proud of their relationships and of their sexuality and gender. That is extremely important for an inclusive PSE lesson and for education in general.

10:45

**Clare Clark:** Going into schools and teaching sex education, I speak to a lot of teachers. They have a fear of speaking about LGBT issues,

because they are scared that they will offend someone as they do not have background information. I thought that that fear would be just among established teachers, but last year, when I did a six-week course in teaching, I spoke to people who were going to graduate as teachers in a year or two, and they had that fear too. They were 20 and 21 years old and had grown up in an environment with Facebook, Snapchat and Twitter, but they still did not know what they should be saying to pupils. They also do not know what to say to children when it comes to things such as safe sex and contraception, because obviously parents are involved as well and they do not know the pupils' background.

I think teachers would feel more confident talking about something that was mandatory. They would have a background to fall back on and could say, "That is actually part of our curriculum and we have to speak about it." There would be less fear and stigma attached to teachers talking about such issues.

**The Convener:** That is a very good point.

**Joanna Barrett:** I think that there is a job to do—and I would be really keen to see the committee do it—just to find out what is going on with PSE. We all have knowledge of our bit of it, we have done some research and we have anecdotal knowledge, but overall we do not know what consistency is, we do not know how teachers feel, and we do not know who is delivering PSE.

Fundamentally, we do not know what children and young people want to talk about, and that is where we should start. We think that it should be an open and discursive curriculum, because it should provide space for children and young people to raise and talk about whatever queries they have.

In the evidence that I read for the meeting, somebody raised the question of how evidenced what we do is. That is a fantastic question. How do we know that what we are delivering is actually having an impact on the knowledge and behaviours of, and the outcomes for, children and young people?

Therefore, there is a case for ramping up this work nationally. The NSPCC has championed mandatory PSHE in England and elsewhere in the UK. As Jordan Daly mentioned, there is a bit of it in our curriculum, but none of it is mandatory. I am getting to the point of asking whether that is a good enough answer.

As people in public service who are thinking about children's rights, our first question is, "What is in the best interests of children?" I think that that is where we should be coming from, rather than asking about what is and is not mandatory. The evidence today has shown that we are doing

children and young people a disservice in hiding and shying away from issues and not talking about them. We see loads of calls to Childline—there were 60,000 last year—about peer-on-peer abuse and interpersonal relationships, largely from teenagers.

There has been an inquiry at Westminster about sexual harassment and bullying at schools in England, which found huge levels of both. Things are going on in young people's relationships that we need to better equip them for.

**Johann Lamont:** I should declare an interest, as I was a schoolteacher. I stopped teaching in 1999. In 2000, this Parliament tried to get rid of section 2A, and the world fell on our heads. That is the context in which as much progress as has been made was made, which should make us optimistic.

The young people whom I was teaching in 1999 did not have the platform, or even the language, that you have to be able to talk about these things. We should recognise that progress and thank the young people who, over time, have had the courage to raise these issues and challenge people. They are not just LGBT issues; attitudes to women 20 years ago were massively different—although I cannot tell you how profoundly depressed I am that somebody can get to second year at university now without working out that it is not a good idea to grope people. That is a broader question that we need to deal with.

My question is about the extent to which we focus on PSE or whether there is something deeper. We need to be clear about the limits on PSE as well. When I was still teaching, we called it PSD—personal and social development—which I think I prefer. In a school that was very radical on the question, the classes were half the usual size—we only had groups of 10. The groups were pupil led, so the pupils determined what they talked about.

It would be interesting to do an audit of what PSE looks like now in the context of budget cuts and other pressures.

I agree very much with Gillian Martin's point. I think that a lot of it is about relationships. When I was still an English teacher, a lot of the literature that we worked on was about exactly that—it was about life. How confident are schoolteachers in their ability to draw out those lessons from what is in the curriculum? That, again, is not just about PSE and narrowing the focus, but saying that it is about something broader.

My final point is on something that I am interested to hear about from our witnesses. It seems to me that there is a balance between allowing a conversation to happen—opening it up and encouraging young people to discuss their

feelings—and having a school ethos that identifies things that are unacceptable.

Some of this might not be about ignorance or a lack of awareness; some people might be actively homophobic, anti-women or racist. It must be understood that the school ethos means that there are certain things that are unacceptable. Where do you think that the balance lies as regards the role of the school? It is not just about educating people about things that are wrong, but about actually creating that context as well.

**The Convener:** Erin McAuley wants to come in.

**Erin McAuley:** I would like to speak on what is probably a more positive note, because we seem to have been quite negative so far.

I am training to be a teacher right now, so I am going through the system. I am quite worried that, having left school only two years ago, at this point in training to be a teacher, I do not feel equipped enough in a lot of areas, such as sex education and some basic stuff—even financial skills—yet I am expected to take all that into consideration in the teacher training programme.

The positive thing that I can say is that, as I am going through the programme right now, I can see that there has been quite a positive shift. We are learning about inclusive education and we are talking more about mental health. It is really good that a lot of the student teachers who are going through the programme right now are getting that sort of education. It is about balancing the old approaches of the teachers who have been there for years and the new approaches of the people who, like me, are coming through. However, that balance is not quite there yet.

On what PSE should look like, I think that it should be a discussion. As Jordan Daly said, young people feel more that they are being lectured, rather than feeling that they are free to ask questions of their teachers. Young people should have an opportunity to discuss the burning issues in their heads. It should be more of an open forum for discussion rather than a lecture. That PSE should be a discussion rather than just a lecture on a subject is an issue that has also come before the Scottish Youth Parliament.

**Johann Lamont:** Does the panel agree with the observation that school teachers can be the victims in certain circumstances? For example, a woman can be quite intimidated if unacceptable language is used in the school. Many years ago, I had a colleague who was gay, and the significant issues for him were the amount of bullying that he suffered and the lack of support that he got as a professional. I do not know whether those are still issues.

More generally, what is the panel's view on the evidence from the Educational Institute of Scotland? Its view is that the process should not be prescriptive and that we should be empowering staff to develop the curriculum, as they are committed to proper support for our young people.

**The Convener:** Would Janet Westwater like to respond?

**Janet Westwater:** I want to tell you a little bit about our model at Bearsden academy. Our first-year pupils have two periods of PSE a week. One is PSE and one is transition, because we are mindful that the transition from primary to secondary still takes a little bit of getting used to. Those transition lessons, and lessons about the community and the environment around the pupils, go on until about October or November, when we merge into two periods of PSE, in which pupils look at the S1 profile.

We are launching—in fact, we have launched—My MerIT, which allows us to use pupils' achievement profile online. They log all their achievements and celebrate success through PSE. It is a really positive thing that that relationship starts early on. The school celebrates with its young people success in the learning that is going on in other classrooms and draws in that cross-curricular activity, with pupils knowing what everybody else is doing in their classrooms. We can feed into that, within that timeframe.

Classes in S2, S3 and S4 have one period each. Classes in S5 and S6 also get a dedicated period of PSE with us. Just now, that is looking at the Universities and Colleges Admission Service and at colleges, but it also dips into mental health, which is an issue that the pupils have brought to us, along with, for example, sexual health and the sixth-year holiday. The Student Awards Agency for Scotland is coming in, and we also work with the Teenage Cancer Trust, which will come in and speak to us as well. Anthony Nolan was in last week. If you follow our Twitter feed, you will see what is going on—and we are using Twitter more from the angle of introducing a pupil voice.

We took a wee snapshot of what S1 and S2 thought that PSE should be about. All the pupils were really positive about having that discussion. That is what pupils want—they want to be actively involved.

Yesterday, I spoke to a fifth-year class about how, next year, between August and November or December, when they are filling out their UCAS and college applications and are thinking about their positive destinations, we will use one of the weekly PSE periods to guide them. We use the time to good effect.

When I asked the pupils what else they wanted, they told me that they are not equipped to go out

into the big wide world. They want to look at buying a house, finance, mortgages and setting up a proper bank account—not just the squirrel account or whatever they still have. Those are all issues of the day on which they are not getting advice anywhere else, and they want to get it in the PSE class. We are able to look at that in my school. I hope that other schools are able to do that, and to ask their students to tweet about what the current issues are and what they are learning in PSE, because that would be a great conversation to have.

Furthermore, as soon as the safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included—SHANARRI—indicators come through from primary, we have an interview with the first years and ask them how they are feeling and to rate whether they feel safe using a score of 1 to 5. We interview them again at the end of their first year, so we can gauge if someone is struggling and has not quite transitioned properly into secondary and pick that up with them.

We were not lucky enough to be able to keep our school counsellor, but we wish that we had been. I think that we had a school counsellor in Ross Greer's time but, unfortunately, the service was cut. We are feeling the effects of that with more and more mental health issues coming through in our young people. Self-harm is becoming a little bit more prevalent in our society, as are stress and anxiety—indeed, a lot of anxiety is caused by exam pressures—so it would have been great to have a counsellor in our school.

**Clare Clark:** I want to comment on two of the points that Janet Westwater made.

First, nowadays, kids do not just take all their information from schools. PSE should not just be taught by teachers; it should be taught by parents, too. The kids should be able to go somewhere online, such as a Facebook page, or even Google, to get information about the issues.

It is really hard. I have been doing some research into sex education and its impacts on sexual health. I was trying to find out where people get their information from. There is no properly informed online information for kids. A lot of children get most of their sex education online, through pornography and that sort of media. Because of the lack of information, that is where kids are having to go to get it.

Secondly, life skills are completely missing from the curriculum. I left school three years ago and I still do not know how to put on a washing machine—I phone my mum every time I need to do some washing. I know people who have got into massive amounts of student loans debt, as they just keep on extending their overdraft because they do not know how to manage their

finances. We are going to have kids who were fortunate enough to go to university but who will end up in a lot of debt or who will perhaps not be able to afford a house because they have not managed to work out their finances. I still do not know what a credit score is and I am a fourth-year medical student. Life skills should be taught early on, so that when people leave university, they do not feel that they have been abandoned and have nowhere to go.

**Joanna Barrett:** What Johann Lamont spoke about was the very definition of a whole-school approach. That approach is often advocated by people who do not necessarily know what it means. It is all well and good when it is delivered in the class, but how do we respond to incidents outside the class? Do we have zero tolerance in relation to language? Everyone—not just pupils, but teachers, support staff and everyone else—in the school environment should expect that to be the case.

In responding to incidents, I wonder whether teachers are confident in knowing what the child protection boundaries are, particularly in the online space where images are being shared. Knowing how much to contain and at what point something becomes a child protection issue are perhaps areas to explore.

11:00

We are definitely in favour of making PSE mandatory. There is a difference between prescribing PSE and making it mandatory. Making it mandatory gives it parity of esteem with all other subjects, and it does not currently have that.

We are really interested in—and worried about—online space. We know that an increasing number of children and young people—and me, actually—are spending loads of their time in online spaces, and we are really concerned that children are getting their sex education from pornography. We did some research that showed that, by the age of 14, 90-odd per cent of young people had seen pornography, and about half of boys thought that it was an accurate representation of sex. Girls were articulating that they were very worried that boys' impressions of and attitudes to women were negatively impacted by exposure to pornography. There are real issues that we need to look at, and we need to ensure that we are equipped to build children's resilience.

I would not advocate removing phones or being paternalistic and saying "Do not ever send this" or whatever. It has to be an open discussion and we need to equip children and young people with knowledge and skills, so that they have the resilience to navigate the issues. What is a coercive relationship? What is pornography? What

does it actually mean? What are healthy relationships? PSE gives us a good opportunity to explore those questions.

**The Convener:** A number of people want to come in. We have talked a lot about what the issues are, but how do we resolve them? How do we make PSE work better than—in your view—it is working now? Jack Douglas wants to come in.

**Jack Douglas:** I want to respond to Johann Lamont's question about who should create the content of the curriculum or the PSE lessons to be used across Scotland. Yes, that should be done by teachers, but it should also be done in partnership with young people who are either in school or have just left school—more specifically, with groups such as women and LGBT+ people.

We have not talked about race or disabilities today, which are also really important when we talk about relationship education and inclusive education in general. They are factors: they are communities of people about whom we all need to be concerned when we are talking about this issue.

To find solutions, the content of the curriculum and PSE in the future needs to be decided through a partnership approach by communities and teachers.

**Erin McAuley:** I echo that there needs to be a partnership approach. Again, I highlight the point that if young people express the view that they see PSE as a waste of time, that means that they are not engaged in it. If young people are actually involved and get a say in what is being taught, they will want to be there and will turn up.

Social media has been mentioned, and it is strongly linked to mental health, especially for young women who may assume that what they see online is what women are supposed to look like and how they are supposed to behave. That is really worrying. The Scottish Youth Parliament has also heard that social media is where a lot of people are being bullied.

Social media is an information source that people go to for information because they are not getting it in school. A big part of our campaign is that we are saying that schools should be talking about the impact of social media on mental health. A lot of bullying takes place on social media, and it is quite difficult for teachers to deal with that in schools. A lot of issues come into school from social media. For example, bullying in school mostly starts on social media now. We need to raise awareness of the impact of bullying on someone's mental health, rather than just saying, "Bullying is bad—don't do it," which is not a very good solution. That is why we are pushing for an increase in awareness of mental health and a modern-day approach to understanding how social

media can impact both a young person's performance at school and their mental health.

**Jordan Daly:** Johann Lamont asked about how we identify what is societal prejudice and what is out-and-out prejudice. We need to ensure that schools are enforcing the Equality Act 2010. Workplaces are generally good on the 2010 act; my workplace, for example, has very clear policies on what should be said, what should not be said, what things are illegal to say and what is a hate crime. A lot of schools that we visit say that they are rights-respecting schools, but the kids do not know that the use of homophobic language and speech is classified as a hate crime; we have to tell them that during assemblies. There is definitely an argument, which is perhaps separate to the PSE discussion, about strengthening the enforcement of the Equality Act 2010 in schools, as we do in other publicly funded sectors.

On James Dornan's point about how we move forward, our model is, in effect, that no one thing will work to tackle the issue. Simply having good statutory guidance, mandatory PSE and teacher training will not work on its own. There needs to be a multi-pronged approach. We advocate exploring how we can deal with LGBT issues in school by setting a standard for schools, perhaps through legislation. What statutory duties can we put on local authorities? The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007 says that all schools must be health promoting schools. Our argument is that we should perhaps go down the same avenue with equalities and human rights and that there should be statutory duties on all schools to be LGBTI inclusive or to focus on the issues that young people face.

We first need the national and systemic foundation, which we argue would be achieved through legislation. Then we need a good cost-free and effective system of teacher training. With the other LGBT organisations, we are exploring whether we can come up with a single national programme that all the organisations can run, so that we do not go into schools training teachers on one thing while Stonewall Scotland is doing another thing and LGBT Youth Scotland is doing another. Among ourselves, we are trying to find some form of consistency and something that we could deliver free of charge in schools. What are we actually training teachers on? We first need inclusive guidance, policies and frameworks, but we should not just give teachers a 300-page booklet and say, "Here you go—read this and deliver it in school." We need to present guidance and train teachers on how to deliver it in school.

The recording of bullying is not necessarily relevant to PSE, but it is important that we monitor that. The Education Scotland schools inspection process currently has an equalities indicator but,

because it is just a generic equalities approach, if a school is really good and clear that there is zero tolerance to racism and is really good on, let us say, inclusivity for pupils with a disability or with additional support needs, it will pass the equalities inspection even though it has nothing on LGBT issues. We have spoken to headteachers in schools in Glasgow who have seen that happen. We are asking for an LGBT-specific indicator in the schools inspection process.

The three most important things are inclusion, training and monitoring. We need inclusive guidance, teacher training and effective monitoring of how that is being delivered in schools. We are happy to leave all our strategy papers with the committee, but it is important to understand that there is not a single solution and that obviously a lot has to change.

**Hilary Kidd:** In relation to the points that Johann Lamont made, I will again provide the views of young people directly, from the "Creating a Healthier Scotland" youth investigation team report. One of the three key recommendations that were made by young people was to introduce a zero tolerance system in which young people and teachers in schools are equipped with the knowledge that they need to understand mental health, wellbeing and the negative effects of stigma.

Another thing that young people raised that it is worth mentioning is that we should stop removing from classes young carers, young parents or children dealing with crises at home. We have not discussed that at all, but it is relevant. It is important that we ensure that those groups are part of normal school hours and classes, and that includes PSE.

I reiterate Young Scot's view of the importance of ensuring that young people have the opportunity to influence the design and delivery of PSE. It is important for us to engage more with schools directly to deliver the information that we provide as an organisation.

**The Convener:** I will bring in Clare Adamson and Daniel Johnson and then get responses to both points.

**Clare Adamson:** So many areas have been covered today that it is difficult to bring it all together. I think that it was Ross Greer who asked about the consequences of not doing this, but to reverse that, we would know that we were getting it right if we were measuring outcomes. That is important.

My son has now left school but, when he was in third year, he came home with a letter about a serious sexually transmitted disease outbreak in the area. The health service was doing an intervention with the schools because the outbreak

was so serious. At that time, my son had had no sex education at all from the school. That shows the dichotomy that we face about the consequences for individuals as well as the societal consequences and costs to the health service and so on.

Outcomes are important. If we are getting this right, the financial and mental health outcomes for young people should be seen to be improved and it is important to monitor that in some way.

**Daniel Johnson:** I have a few points. First, I say to Erin McAuley that it is great to have a student teacher at the table with us. You hinted that thought has been given to teacher training. I am interested to know about the content of your course and what your thoughts are about what could be improved.

I could talk about lots more, but I was struck by something that Joanna Barrett said about having to start PSE much earlier than secondary school. We probably need to start before school and I am conscious of that with my own wee ones who are pre-school. For example, talking about equal marriage is really important.

For PSE to be effective, it needs to reach out beyond school. We have talked about agencies, but we need to draw in parents and be supported by them. It is not easy to do that, but it is important and I am interested to hear the witnesses' reflections on that.

**Erin McAuley:** On Daniel Johnson's point, maybe my generation is becoming a wee bit more confident in itself. The people who are in my class are quite confident about who they are and about talking about mental health.

Daniel Johnson asked what we have learned. We went through case studies and our tutors are quite good at bringing us up to speed on modern-day Scotland and how young people have a range of different issues. That is important and it is because steps are being taken that our generation is recognising that, when we go into the teaching profession, we will want to change it. That might be about drawing on our previous experience of prejudice in our schools.

That also links back to Joanna Barrett's point. It is important for young people to have role models, but a teacher who is gay or who has had a mental health problem might not feel that they have a place to go if they are facing bullying in their work environment or from pupils. We also need to emphasise support for teachers.

We are speaking about PSE and it is great to put all this into the curriculum, but teachers hear a lot of deep stuff from young people and they might sometimes think, "What do I do with this?"

**The Convener:** Is that not where adequate teacher training should be in place so that they can deal with it?

**Erin McAuley:** The teacher training programme that I am on is really good on that. There is a lot about inclusion. Even the policy that we are looking at here is really inclusive. When I went on a voluntary placement, I could see the difference between the training that I am getting and the training that teachers who have been in teaching for years are getting.

**The Convener:** Do you see a difference between the older generation of teachers and the younger generation and the way in which they are capable of dealing with such issues?

**Clare Clark:** We were speaking to a primary 7 teacher who identified as gay, and his class was completely fine with it. We then went into another school that asked us to do an LGBT lesson because the kids did not understand it and the teacher felt that he was getting bullied himself. It depends on the school, how much background training the teachers have had in handling the situation, and how much background information the kids already know.

As Daniel Johnson said, we need to iron out issues like this before school and make sure that everyone knows that everyone is included, no matter their gender, sexuality, race or whether they are disabled. However, doing that before school means that it is parent led.

11:15

**Joanna Barrett:** Young children were mentioned. I have twin four-year-olds. It is fantastic to be able to say to them that they will be able to marry a man or a woman. They have never known anything else.

We have a guide on preventing sexual abuse called the "Underwear Rule", which we have trained nurseries on. Basically, that is about preventing sexual abuse, but the word "sex" does not need to be mentioned. It says that what is under a person's pants is private and belongs to them, that no means no, and who are safe adults to speak to if someone is worried about something. It is age appropriate. There are mechanisms, and that is just one example from us.

The previous discussion on the secondary legislation on the extension of early years education and childcare was interesting. We have not looked at that area. I do not know what the PSE content of the nursery curriculum is. As more children are at nursery for longer, what messages are we giving in that sphere? It would be interesting to look at that.

**Jordan Daly:** I agree with Daniel Johnson that it has to start before school, but the reality is that there are still a lot of parents in this country who will not discuss any of these issues with their kids. My mum certainly would not have sat down and talked in depth with me about sex. Sadly, there are still parents who will pass on their own prejudices to their children. The reality is that there are kids who will not get any of that kind of education at home, so it is the responsibility of all of us, including schools, to ensure that they get it somewhere.

We do primary teacher training that is delivered by a primary teacher who specialises in LGBT, so it is quite good. However, we have found that in primary schools it is often about the simple little things that can be done. Things are less complex in them than they are at the secondary level, especially as a lot of prejudice is already breeding in secondary schools. We do little things, such as funding LGBT-inclusive and LGBT-friendly books in primary schools. Scott Mowat, who does our teacher training, talks quite a lot about how to break down the concepts of equality and prejudice for primary school children. In effect, it is about the same principles, but it is about putting them into age-appropriate language in books. That is a really good approach. However, the fact that we have to fund that and rely on trade union donations says quite a lot about where funding in schools is going.

In case I do not get to come back in, I point out that John Naples-Campbell, who delivers our secondary school teacher training, has developed and delivers LGBT-inclusive PSE lessons for secondary 1 to S4. Therefore, we have PSE lessons if the committee wants me to send them to the clerks to look at.

**The Convener:** That would be very helpful. I am really impressed that Jordan Daly thinks that I am strong enough to keep him out of the conversation for the rest of the session. [*Laughter.*]

**Jordan Daly:** I just do not know how much time we have left.

**Ross Thomson:** I have a couple of reflections, given the discussion that we have had.

I go back to Jack Douglas's point about bullying, the figures that TIE has obtained, the high percentage of pupils in Scotland who experience homophobic bullying in their schools, and what Clare Clark said about the casual use of language. I want to delve into that a bit deeper.

As an example, I came out when I was at university; I did not do so when I was at school. I suppose that university felt like a more inclusive environment. I was bullied horrendously during my primary and secondary school years. There was homophobic language and homophobic bullying.

Others who were not even gay got exactly the same. That kind of bullying cuts across different young people; not only gay people experience it. Staff, too, still get that level of abuse, even if they are not gay.

How do we measure and quantify that? Obviously, TIE has done fantastic work in gathering data, but I know from speaking to teachers in schools in Aberdeen, which is my area, that, although they have forms to complete, there is no requirement to note down that there has been a homophobic bullying incident. When I pressed them a bit more on that, they said that they would sometimes struggle to identify a homophobic bullying incident. The question was whether it was just something that was said in the playground or lads having fun as lads. I found that quite hard. They thought that that was really difficult to judge and quantify. I just want to drill down into the question of how we record these kinds of incidents, and I am interested in hearing what people think we can do to ensure that the Government has better data and any measures are evidence led.

Finally, this might sound like a simple question but, having listened to the discussion, I wonder whether you can tell me what a good PSE class should look like. For example, when we spoke to the young people in Dalkeith, a whole range of issues came up including not only sexual health and LGBT equality but, as has been mentioned, the financial side of things, how you use a credit card or a debit account and so on. The pupils in that school also felt that they had not covered the issue of citizenship, elections and democracy enough; even though 16 and 17-year-olds have the right to vote, not a lot of them seem to be aware that they have to register to do so. I just want to get a better understanding of what happens in PSE classes and the time dedicated to each issue and have a sense of how a good PSE class should be run and how that should come about.

**Jack Douglas:** For me, a good PSE class would completely break down and totally explain the differences between sex and gender and make it clear that, instead of their having a binary structure, there is a spectrum. First and foremost, we have to ensure that people—not just teachers and pupils, but society itself—know that.

This brings me back to Daniel Johnson's question about what can be done before school to influence these things. We as a society are terribly bad in asking from the get-go when someone gets pregnant whether they are having a boy or a girl. Even before a child gets to the age of determining that for themselves, we are already, for example, assigning colours to them; when they are toddlers, we assume that if they have a friend of the



opposite gender they are a boyfriend or a girlfriend and we try to influence that behaviour. What that does is to influence the bullying that happens later at primary and secondary school, because we have the idea that being normal is to be cisgendered or heteronormative. We have to think about how we challenge those values and norms, and I think that we can definitely try to change that situation both within and outwith PSE lessons and, by doing so, clamp down on the huge amount of bullying that we still see in secondary schools.

As I said at the start of the session, it has been 17 years since we had section 28, but it is still, in a way, present in our schools. We therefore must look at how we use PSE to truly ensure that section 28 is dead.

**Clare Clark:** With PSE, you will want to ensure that people get the information. For me, however, school was about giving people not just information but the tools to find out information for themselves and about signposting them to organisations such as Young Scot. Indeed, Durex—I know this only because it is one of our sponsors—has brought out—

**The Convener:** This is not advertising, is it? [*Laughter.*]

**Clare Clark:** No. Durex has brought out something that gives teachers a place to go and find out information, and that is being kept up to date by Bish. Kids need to be able to find out information for themselves and therefore they need a place to go. That is very important. After all, if they cannot get this information at school or from their parents, where can they get it?

**Janet Westwater:** What does a good PSE lesson look like? It looks like everyone being in an inclusive environment, happy, achieving, safe and learning. If teachers are given the right tools and information, they will be able to facilitate a discussion. A lot of the information that I saw was on PowerPoint or on charts, but, as I have said, we need to give teachers tools that facilitate discussion. We have to remember that in Scotland we have amazing young people who are going to be successful learners and confident individuals, and we need to bring those principles into the classroom and make pupils confident enough to come along here and say, “Yes, I had a great PSE experience when I was at school.” I wish that the people sitting here today were saying that.

Signposting by teachers is also important, for example, by offering a couple of links, particularly to local organisations. For example, in our area we signpost to the Sandyford and to national organisations, such as Sexpression:UK. As long as we have that information, we can cascade it out. However, discussion is the key thing.

**The Convener:** I will move on to Colin Beattie before I take further comments.

**Colin Beattie:** I want to go back to a comment that was made at the very start. I have read through the submissions and jotted down on the back of an envelope more than 30 subjects that people think should be included in PSE, all of which have merit when considered on their own. Hilary Kidd mentioned that some of those subjects could be more appropriately determined at local level, depending on local priorities, but how do we go about determining what the core priorities are? How do we determine what should be there for everyone, while leaving local flexibility to allow other elements to be added?

**The Convener:** Jordan, you wanted to come back in, so perhaps you will want to respond to that question. [*Laughter.*]

**Jordan Daly:** Interestingly, this is something that, to be honest, I think many people misunderstand about our campaign. Many people assume that we are trying to tell every single school that there is one way that they must teach LGBT issues, but that is not what we are doing. We are trying to lift schools up to a particular standard and ensure that there is a requirement for schools to engage with inclusive education in order to tackle prejudice-based bullying. How schools do that is up to them; what we are arguing is that some core principles need to be laid out.

We reached that position by researching data, having discussions and visiting schools. We spent the first year of our campaign speaking to teachers and young people, and it was not long before we realised that a lot of things were consistently coming up. We took that information, sat down with young people and teachers and asked they wanted to see in a teacher training course or what they wanted to be discussed in their school. In relation to LGBT, all the same issues came back, including the gender spectrum that Jack Douglas has already mentioned, sexual fluidity, identity, where young people can get support and LGBT history, which is another big issue. There are things that young people want to be taught.

As for the question of what can be done with PSE at national level, I would say again that what you guys have been doing with public submissions has definitely given you a good head start. Certain issues clearly dominate those submissions—for example, there is a lot about LGBT issues, mental health and finance and tax—and I suggest that you start with them and that you look, too, at legislation such as the Equality Act 2010 and the data telling us that LGBT young people face disproportionately high rates of bullying. You need to take all those issues and ask what you can do to ensure a core curricular aspect to PSE.

We would also suggest that every school look at certain fundamental LGBT issues that are too important to young people's identity and wellbeing to be discarded. There could be class discussions about, for example, the fact that it is all right to be LGBT; about where those who are LGBT can access support; and about the fact that homophobia is wrong and that language such as "You're so gay" is homophobic and not okay. There are fundamental things that need to be addressed, but we are also quite big on the idea that there should be room in curriculum for excellence for teachers to pick up on and develop issues based on what they think their pupils need to hear.

We use a document called "Moments"—I will leave a copy for the committee. We believe in what we would call curriculum mapping, which is all about using the expectations, outcomes, indicators and benchmarks in curriculum for excellence in order to guide teachers. "Moments" is effectively an LGBT history timeline in which we link key moments of LGBT history to core subjects in the curriculum. For example, during the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps in 1945, those who were interned for homosexuality were not freed. Given the relevance of that to social studies and religious and moral education, I could, if I were a social studies teacher, look at that document and think about the starting point for discussing the issue. I would already be talking about the Holocaust so we could look at, for example, the use of the pink triangle.

The document is all about guiding teachers in the right direction to what we would call the core part of the curriculum as far as LGBT history is concerned. How teachers use and develop all those little moments is completely up to them, but it is all about having the core aspect in place and trusting that teachers have had the right training and therefore have the flexibility to develop it.

I hope that that answers your question, convener.

11:30

**The Convener:** Yes, it has, and you got in an advert for your magazine, too. [*Laughter.*]

**Erin McAuley:** I agree 100 per cent with what Jordan Daly said.

Colin Beattie talked about the structure of PSE. One of the core things about the Scottish Youth Parliament is that because every local authority has an MSYP and because we sit three times a year, we have a strong mandate and platform to ensure that young people's voices are heard. That is a useful tool that has to be used. As MSYPs, we bring our local issues to a national platform, which is why it is really good that we are having this

conversation today. It is clear that PSE needs to be reformed nationally; indeed, it should be one of the national priorities, and work on that should look at the points that have been made in the submissions or should include organisations such as Young Scot, the TIE campaign and the Scottish Youth Parliament. The issue should be prioritised at a national level, but those at a local level should be allowed to dip into the local issues.

Our main point is that young people are the biggest tool in PSE reform. It is great to see on paper that you want to be inclusive and to engage, but that needs to be put into action. It is clear to me as a member of the Scottish Youth Parliament that young people are not being engaged. They have to be included in the creation of their PSE sessions or they will not be effective, no matter whether or not they look great on paper. The inclusion of young people's voices is the core element.

**Hilary Kidd:** In response to that point, I should say that Young Scot provides information both nationally and locally through engaging with local organisations and community learning and development, which Tavish Scott mentioned earlier in relation to youth workers.

With regard to Erin McAuley's comments about young people's views of a typical PSE class, young people have stated that PSHE should be a more discursive class in which their experiences and opinions are shared rather than defined and that the class should not be influenced solely by the teacher. Young people's views provide an interesting perspective.

**Ross Greer:** Because of the nature of the conversation, a few of my points have already been raised.

The question of when to start teaching these particular topics has come up time and time again. Particularly with issues around sex, relationships and gender, people are almost afraid to start the conversation, and too many people are afraid to advocate for young children learning about sex and relationships, which is nonsense. After all, Jordan Daly mentioned having feelings in S1, his awareness of his sexuality and the issues that that can cause. Although we are very aware of the number of five to seven-year-olds who present as trans these days, the issue does not come up enough.

Beyond the need to start PSE at a younger age, when specifically should we start educating children and young people about those issues? At what age should children learn that gender is a spectrum and that gender and sex are different? It is, as Jack Douglas has mentioned, very easy to do that. I have run a workshop with teenagers using the genderbread person, but you can use

the genderbread person with a five-year-old just as easily as with a 12-year-old. When should we start educating about those areas?

The other issue that I would like to raise—Ross Thomson brought it up, too—is civic rights-based education. Tens of thousands of 16 and 17-year-olds will vote this year but, for many of them, they will know what their local council does only if they have chosen modern studies or politics as a subject at school—and in many schools, those are not options. The Scottish Youth Parliament has been running a political education campaign for years now, but especially now that we have votes at 16, civic rights-based education should be seen as essential.

The issue of rights transitions into a whole range of other areas, including, for example, workers' rights. Most young people will leave school not knowing what the minimum wage or indeed what exploitation is, with the result that many will probably be exploited at work. They will also not know what a trade union can do for them. When I learned about trade unions in modern studies, all I learned was that they got beaten in the 1980s—and that is really not the case. It would be interesting to hear people's thoughts on that. Some schools address such issues really well, and the Scottish Trades Union Congress runs brilliant workshops about how unions can help people and defend young workers' rights.

**Clare Clark:** Speaking more from personal experience than as a representative of Sexpression:UK, I should say that we did not get any political education at school; instead, I took modern studies up to standard grade level, which does not exist any more. Recently, though, more people have started to get involved in politics at a young age. Indeed, three of my friends are members of political parties and advocate that activity. When one young person in a school gets involved in politics, it trickles down to others, because they want to find out what she is doing. That is how I found out about politics.

At 21, I have taken part in, I think, six elections, but I have stood outside polling stations without a clue who to vote for. I did not want to do what previous generations had done and vote for the party that my parents voted for, but I did not know what each party stood for, so I had to look for that information myself online. Young people do not find those things out, even in modern studies. I think that social media should be used to explain the impacts of what people are doing and what they are voting for. My first election was a European Parliament election and I did not really know what I was voting for, but I wanted to vote because I was legally allowed to. If the information was written down somewhere where people could find it, or if there was a Facebook page where

people could see what they were going to vote for and what the impacts would be, a lot more young people would get involved in the process.

Most young people use social media, have access to the internet and can find things out. If what they are voting for—in other words, what the policies are—is written in simple terms that 16 and 17-year-olds will understand and if that information is made relevant to 16 and 17-year-olds, they will be encouraged to vote and get involved in politics, knowing what they are doing.

They will also be able to find out about trade unions. I have worked in the national health service for three years and have only just joined a union; I did not know about it until somebody sat me down and talked to me about it. I never learned anything about trade unions at school or in sixth year.

**Jordan Daly:** I want to address the two points that Ross Greer made in order. First, we would argue that this education should start at nursery level but, as has been mentioned, we need to ensure that it is age appropriate. You would not go into a nursery and start talking about sex, but you might go into a nursery and point out that there are different family types, especially now that—thankfully—we have made progress on same-sex adoption and lots more same-sex parents are turning up at the nursery gates. The education would be about ensuring that the other kids in the school were aware of different family types, and one of the simplest ways of doing that is through books. There are lots of nursery-level and early primary-level LGBT-friendly books available.

Secondly, on political education, I will be brief. Modern studies was my favourite subject at school and I am now studying sociology at university. However, in my modern studies class we did not look much at Scotland; instead, we looked more at America and China and focused quite a lot on British politics. I have said this quite a lot, but I would argue that modern studies should cover a bit of political theory and contemporary national politics. It took me until I was at university to figure out what capitalism, socialism, communism, anarchism and all those political concepts were. We should probably talk about such concepts with kids, because that would help them to understand how politics—not just in Scotland—is framed in terms of the left, the centre and the right. We should also talk to them about how the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Government work and about voting systems; even my parents do not understand the voting system, and a lot of kids certainly do not.

**Johann Lamont:** I just want to say to Ross Greer that I was an EIS member in the 1980s and we were quite successful in achieving things for the teaching profession. It was not all about

strikes. A lot of what we now regard as the norm within the workplace came about because the trade unions were effective.

**The Convener:** Everybody is advertising today. [*Laughter.*]

**Johann Lamont:** I think that there is a danger of every change that we want to see in society becoming the responsibility of schools. At one level, trade unions and women have to be advocates for themselves, but that is not to say that there is no role for society in supporting women, challenging attitudes and all the rest of it. As a mother of children who are now adults, I remember when they were young—I was not a young mother—having a battle about what toys they should play with, what colours they should wear and all that. I recognise that such issues are important, but the question is what can be addressed in schools and what can be addressed in other places.

Hilary Kidd talked about young people leading and directing the PSE curriculum. I could play devil's advocate with regard to that view, given my personal experience, and ask what we should do when the conversation in a class is driven by those who are hostile to our equalities beliefs. I faced that dilemma as a teacher when I opened up a debate and then suddenly realised that the young people who were in charge of the debate were making matters worse because they had been given permission to say things that they would not normally be allowed to say in my class.

My question for campaigning groups and organisations such as the NUS is about where the balance lies for them between creating the space for young people to explore ideas and, with the school's permission, stepping in and saying that, from the organisation's perspective, they have gone too far. Perhaps the panellists can say something about such situations, which I think are the biggest challenge for the teaching profession in this area. I am not saying that most young people will not engage constructively in discussions. However, if young people in a school are engaging in homophobic bullying, how do we create a space in which to have a conversation about the problem without simply amplifying it and risking its being taken beyond the classroom?

**Janet Westwater:** It is important to establish boundaries in the PSE class from the minute that the students step in the door in S1 and to ensure that the school's values and those that the teacher puts across in the class are clear. The PSE teacher has to walk a fine line, as does a drama teacher, when they are exploring different social situations or topics, because the children will have different views that are based on their home lives and their experiences. The teacher must have a positive impact on the discussion and set the

boundaries from the start. I have noticed that a lot of the organisations that come into our school set out a contract with the class at the start, whereby the pupils agree that they will be respectful and responsible individuals in the discussion. That is a good place to start. My experience is that establishing that position has a positive impact on the discussion.

On Ross Greer's question about trade unions and teaching about voting in schools, I have had the delight of running a masterclass on trade unions for S2 and S3 pupils, through the modern studies department. It has been an interesting experience for me to team teach with a modern studies teacher, and the trade unions gave us a pack on workers' rights and so on that was informative. To create depth for our curriculum, we run specific masterclasses that pupils in S2 and S3 who might not have chosen to take modern studies can opt into, which has been a positive activity.

As a PSE teacher, I am not sure what year group should be taught about the voting system, but it is a relevant topic. We will look forward to having Ross Greer back to teach a little lesson on it.

**Ross Greer:** I was obviously just a few years too early to get that education.

**Janet Westwater:** We will look forward to welcoming you back to speak about your experience of the Scottish Parliament and to teach pupils about the voting system.

**The Convener:** We will keep an eye on that.

11:45

**Jack Douglas:** I will try to respond really quickly to three questions.

**The Convener:** I am sorry to interrupt, but we are getting close to the end of the session, so I ask everybody to make their answers as short as possible.

**Jack Douglas:** That is fine.

I will start with Johann Lamont's point about how we ensure that there is an inclusive space. There has to be a safe space, which means that it must be safe not just for people to be there but for them to ask difficult and tricky questions. However, it is important that they do that in a respectful manner. There seems to be a bit of debate just now about safe spaces versus people being seen as special snowflakes, but with 90 per cent of LGBT people being bullied in schools it is incredibly important that we have a safe space. As soon as we do not, that is a barrier to education. If the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Government want to ensure that there are as few barriers as possible

and that we have an education system that is truly fair, it is incredibly important that we ensure that there is a safe space.

Ross Greer asked how early we need to start talking about the spectrum of gender, and I agree with Jordan Daly that nursery is a central place for that. The issue also needs to be talked about in the healthcare system. It is important that those in the national health service are aware of and quite assertive about the differences between sex and gender, as that is a core part of where we start to see problems. As a trans person myself, I know that people having an assigned gender at birth rather than a statement of what their sex is can lead to confusing and oppressive situations later in life.

Colin Beattie asked what issues we would prioritise. I was a little bit jealous of Jordan Daly earlier, because this is LGBT history month and he gave some quotes. I would like to give one, too. Marsha P Johnson was a disabled trans woman of colour who kick-started the modern LGBT+ movement, and one of my favourite quotes from her is that there is

“No pride for some of us without liberation for all of us.”

We need to look at all the issues, not just some of them. We cannot prioritise some issues over others. I identify as trans, disabled, queer and a woman, and none of my identities is more important than any other. We need to be inclusive in education, but we also need to talk about the issues in an intersectional way in which identities overlap and criss-cross. If we want to be truly inclusive in PSE lessons, we need to teach the subject in an intersectional manner in which all identities are considered equally.

**Erin McAuley:** Ross Greer probably answered his own question in saying that the earlier that the issue is raised, the better. Daniel Johnson made a good point, but not everybody gets the sort of attitude that he mentioned in their home life, and prejudices are passed on. If we can develop such an attitude in nursery, through books and the things that Jordan Daly talked about, and not just in inclusive education but in mental health and other things, that will be a really good starting point.

Johann Lamont's point is important. As a student teacher, I look at the profession and see a teacher recruitment problem, and I am sometimes overwhelmed by how much teachers are expected to do. A lot of people may want to be teachers, but teachers are now expected to be everything, which is a problem in the recruitment of teachers. People are expected to be psychologists, teachers, doctors and everything. I find that overwhelming, and it is quite scary to go into the profession because of that.

Johann Lamont talked about how we can strike a balance in the discussions. Going back to an earlier point that she made, it is about the ethos of the school, and the headteacher has to set a consistent standard. There must be an ethos in the school that the children know about, and there has to be a safe environment. If a discussion is young person led, a lot of problems can arise, so early intervention in education is important in preventing those prejudices from arising. There should be a clear ethos of what can and cannot be said. Sometimes, people say things and do not know that they are being prejudiced or that they are offending someone. If a session is going to be young person led, it is helpful to issue clear guidance beforehand about what they can and cannot do.

**Hilary Kidd:** In response to Johann Lamont's question, I agree that boundaries are essential, as has been noted. When we speak about co-design, the “co-” element is probably the most important. It is about young people and professionals, whether they are teachers or others, working together at an equal level, and there is a real boundary facilitation role for teachers in that.

Immediately after suggesting that involvement, which I mentioned in the point that Johann Lamont was responding to, the young people suggested that other young people should be invited into that stigma-free environment to share their personal experiences if they felt comfortable in doing so. They suggested inviting peer mentors on various issues such as eating disorders to share their experiences so that they could learn from them. The boundary setting is crucial to that in ensuring that there is a stigma-free environment.

**Jordan Daly:** On Johann Lamont's question, the issue comes down to balance. I agree with Jack Douglas's point about the need to ensure that PSE classes are a safe space. In fact, the whole school should be a safe space, regardless of people's identities.

I know that this is a wee bit controversial, but there is a way to talk about safe spaces without sounding patronising. When we go into schools, I can guarantee that, if I stand up in front of 400 first years and say, “I just want to let you all know that this is a safe space,” I will either be laughed at or not taken seriously. We approach the issue by allowing the pupils to be honest and trusting them. It is about treating them like adults, first of all, and not patronising them.

For example, we will ask the kids, “Is there anyone in here who doesn't like LGBT people?” Unfortunately, last week, in a school, some of them put their hands up and said yes. Liam Stevenson will then ask, “Is there anyone in here who uses homophobic, biphobic or transphobic language?”, and he describes some of that

language. Initially, we see the kids looking around. Liam will then put his hand up and say, "Well, I'm going to put my hand up, because I used it two years ago," and suddenly all the hands in the room will go up. After that, we get into the conversation. We can break down that fourth wall without being patronising.

This is not necessarily something that a Government can tell teachers how to do. That is what we mean when we talk about flexibility and trusting teachers. Teachers will know their class and the kids in it. They will most likely know which kids cannot be trusted to stand up and talk about LGBT issues and which kids can. When it comes to PSE, we are talking to school pupils about very adult issues and they should definitely be treated like adults. They should not be patronised but should be included in that format.

Every good school has a good anti-bullying policy, but that is not something that every school has when it comes to LGBT issues. It is about enforcing the Equality Act 2010 and the school's anti-bullying policy and deciphering what is prejudice and what is just social stigma. It comes down to striking the right balance, and the best people to do that are teachers on the basis of their understanding of the personalities of their pupils.

**The Convener:** Thank you for that. We are nearing the end of our discussion. Does anyone have any points that they have not had a chance to make on what they consider should be priorities for the committee? If you think of something later, please feel free to email the committee.

**Erin McAuley:** There are many priorities, but I think that it is important to incorporate the issues into the full curriculum rather than restrict them to PSE. The Scottish Youth Parliament is emphasising mental health issues because many young people are saying that we need more mental health education in PSE. However, I think that we need more mental health education in society as a whole. Instead of having just a 30-minute lesson on the subject, we need to address it throughout the full curriculum.

I have emphasised mental health education, but none of the issues that we have discussed today should be restricted to PSE, as they go so much wider than that. Many of the issues could be incorporated into other subjects and should not be covered in just a 40 or 50-minute PSE lesson.

**The Convener:** Thank you. Before we move into private session to consider the evidence, I thank all our guests. You have been an exceptional panel and we have learned a lot. Mr Swinney, the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, will appear before the committee in a fortnight's time, and we will certainly raise some of the issues that have come up today with him.

11:54

*Meeting continued in private until 12:25.*

This is the final edition of the *Official Report* of this meeting. It is part of the Scottish Parliament *Official Report* archive and has been sent for legal deposit.

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