

Overview & Scrutiny Children & Young People Scrutiny Commission

Date of Meeting: 24th February 2020

Title of Report: Relationship & Sex Education Delivered by the Young Hackney Health & Wellbeing Team, April 2019 - December 2019

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This report provides an overview of the offer from Young Hackney's Health & Wellbeing team (H&W) around Relationship and Sex Education (RSE), Relationship Education (RE) and Health Education delivery in primary, secondary and special schools in Hackney and the City of London, and how it supports the RSE Regulations due to come into statutory force in September 2020. It examines the most requested subjects by year group, provides a brief summary of the way in which external agencies such as H&W are utilised to make optimal use of limited curriculum time, and presents a breakdown of school coverage by religious affiliation and special provision. The dataset used comprises the 851 sessions delivered in schools and alternative education providers (AEPs) between April 2019 and December 2019.

Identified areas for improvement include recruiting and upskilling teachers, ensuring sessions H&W deliver are not a one-off but a part of a holistic RSE/PSHE teaching policy, and arranging timely information sharing (including of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or particular sensitivities).

Nature of Service

Young people today are growing up in an increasingly complex world and living their lives seamlessly between on- and offline environments. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities, but also new risks and challenges in managing their various interpersonal relationships in a positive way. Schools have an important role to play in supporting their students in navigating this new reality, and statutory Relationships and Sex Education along with general Personal, Social and Health Education, are designed to help them do that in a more relevant and proactive way.

Replacing the Sex and Relationship Education guidance (2000), the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019, made under sections 34 and 35 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, make Relationships Education compulsory for all pupils receiving primary education, and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) compulsory for all pupils receiving secondary education. They also make Health Education compulsory in all schools except independent schools.

High quality, evidence-based and age-appropriate teaching of these subjects can help prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life, as well as enable schools to foster and guide the moral, social, cultural, mental and physical development of their students, in and out of the classroom. Schools are free to determine how to deliver sensitive content, yet effective teaching will ensure that core knowledge is broken down and communicated clearly and inclusively within a planned, coherent programme of lessons. In turn, parents and carers have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE, but not from its Relationship or Health Education aspects.

Many schools are choosing to deliver relationships or sex education as part of a timetabled PSHE programme, while others may choose different curricular models for delivery. While there are a lot of excellent resources available to draw on, the use of external agencies as it fits within the planned programme and RSE policy, can be invaluable in enhancing the teaching expertise on offer and thus promoting students' retention, application and critical thinking on the topics at hand.

The Young Hackney Health & Wellbeing team is a free, non-statutory, specialist service aimed at supplementing existing PSHE and RSE provision in all state schools in the London Borough of Hackney and the City of London. We deliver targeted, evidence-based and prevention-focused educational interventions to young people aged 5 to 19 (up to 25 with additional needs) that build their knowledge, self-esteem and resilience to enable them to lead healthier and safer lives, both now and in the future. The team is comprised of professionals from a variety of backgrounds, such as youth work, nursing and counselling, and experience in working with young people in sexual health, the community and education. Topics the team specialise in include Consent & the Law, Relationships & Domestic Violence, STIs & Contraception, Gender & Sexuality, Pornography, Online Safety, Child Sexual Exploitation, Teenage Pregnancy, Emotional Wellbeing, Healthy Lifestyles, Puberty, Body Image and Personal & Dental Hygiene; with schools given the option to either have delivery tailored according to the specific needs/experiences of their students, or receive an AQA or ASDAN-accredited programme of sessions. In addition, we offer bespoke teacher- and professionals' training, taster assemblies and carousel-format event days providing a bite-sized introduction to some of the topics above.

In the current reporting period (April to December 2019), we have already delivered 851 sessions in schools and AEPs, and have worked with 98% of primary and 94% of secondary schools in the borough, as well as with a number of other youth settings, including youth clubs, FE colleges, sports teams and statutory agencies.

In addition, we work in partnership with other locally commissioned services such as CHYPS Plus (clinical health and wellbeing service for 5-19 year olds or up to 25 with additional needs) and School Nursing to ensure that children and young people have access to the National Healthy Child Programme (HCP). LBH Public Health is responsible for delivery of the HCP and commissions the aforementioned services, including the Young Hackney Health and Wellbeing Service through an internal service level agreement.

Current Demand and Activity

The impending introduction of the RSE regulations in September 2020 has already had a pronounced impact on the nature of demand for our service.

Requested Subjects

The last couple of years have seen a gradual concentration and consolidation of topics requested by secondary schools (*Fig. 1*), with an increasing proportion of subjects taught in-house, and YH-led workshops mostly focusing on sexual health and aspects of emotional wellbeing relating to self-perception and body image. Once loaded issues such as teenage pregnancy and sexual delay seem to either be comfortably covered by school staff, addressed in pastoral interventions or feature as part of other sessions. Similarly, due perhaps to greater cultural prominence, discussions of gender, sexuality and bullying tend to be embedded in general teaching and extracurriculars, rather than being addressed separately in dedicated sessions. Whether this will prove enough to stamp out abuse remains to be seen, but anecdotally, pupils seem to be relatively well-informed and demonstrate broadly positive attitudes.

STIs and Contraception remain the main priority throughout, followed by Healthy Relationships and Consent, the latter especially in the formative lower grades. Emotional Wellbeing, particularly around dealing with stress, is also frequently requested, although this tends to be more ad-hoc and reactive, in response to either specific events or around traditionally stressful exam times. Puberty also continues to be a popular subject for younger pupils. Finally, specialist subjects such as Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Domestic Violence are still in demand, but mostly as targeted work with groups of at-risk young people, rather than as whole-class lessons. Successful partnerships with school liaison police officers have been established at several schools, often in response to specific incidents or disclosures.

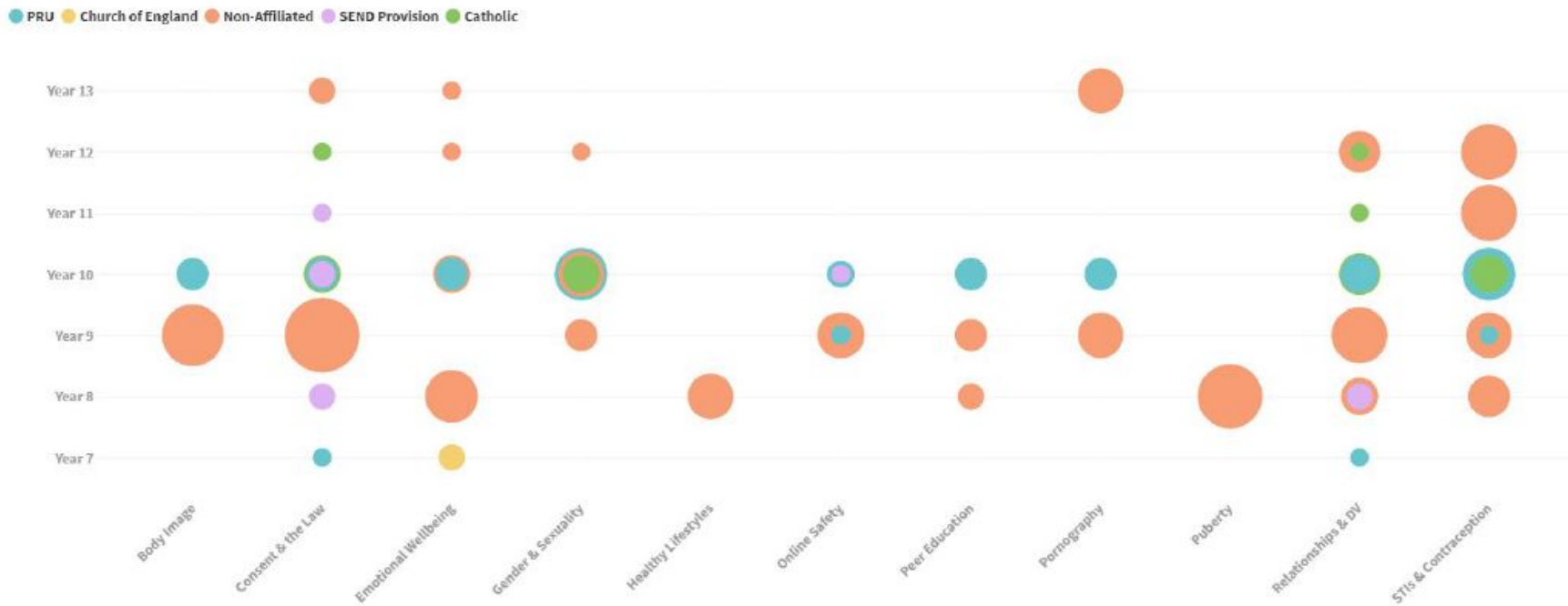


Fig.1 Sessions delivered in secondary schools, by subject, year group and school affiliation

The situation is similar in most primary schools (*Fig.2*), where Healthy Lifestyles (in terms of nutrition, sugar consumption, exercise and sleep), Dental and Personal Hygiene and, to a lesser extent, Emotional Wellbeing feature consistently in session requests across all ages. Successful joint work has been undertaken with school nurses to deliver assembly talks as part of the National Child Measurement and Fluoride Varnish programmes.

By far the bulk of our work with younger pupils, however, happens through our participation in the annual Junior Citizenship Scheme (JCS), whereby we spend four weeks delivering 15 minute-long interactive talks to students from most primary schools in the borough. Topics vary from year to year, with Sugary Drinks (an aspect of Healthy Lifestyles) and 5 to Thrive (an Emotional Wellbeing intervention) being this year's main focus. The way these topics are selected is

worth considering in the future, perhaps privileging discussions that are otherwise neglected.

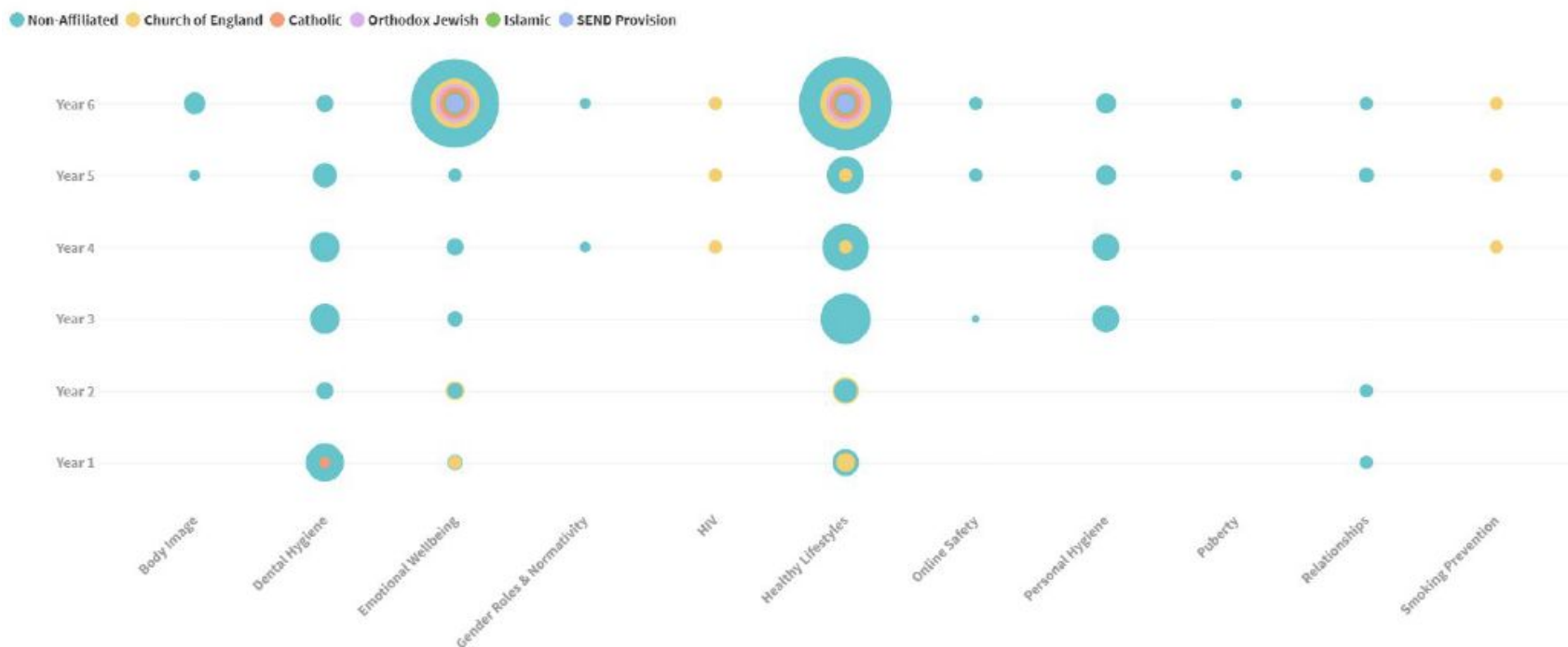


Fig.2 Sessions delivered in primary schools, by subject, year group and school affiliation

Teaching Formats

Timetabling being a perennial issue for RSE, schools are adopting a variety of ways of integrating it into their schedule in preparation for 2020.

Most mainstream secondary schools rely on a combination of drop-down days (usually for years 8 & 9, where a number of external agencies are invited to run workshops on different topics), ad-hoc presentations with specific years (often in the

6th form) and targeted interventions with smaller groups of at-risk pupils. This is often supplemented with bi-weekly lunchtime drop-ins run by the H&W and Substance Misuse teams, where young people can speak to a professional in confidence, ask questions and/or be referred on to relevant support services.

This kind of set-up, together with the limited number of topics requested, suggests that there is a significant portion of RSE/PSHE that is delivered internally, with YH and other agencies only required to complement existing provision. As all mainstream secondary schools we liaise with have a dedicated PSHE lead (many of whom regularly attend the borough-wide PSHE Network meetings), this seems likely to be the case.

Primary schools tend to have more flexibility where teaching formats are concerned - from JCS, carousel events and assembly talks, to full-length lessons, ad-hoc or as part of a longer programme of work: most primary schools are receptive, often even proactive in requesting interventions, and making available the time and resources required for effective teaching. Conversely, sessions do not always seem to be a thought-out feature of a broader curriculum plan for RSE/PSHE, and making sure requested topics correspond to the needs/learning levels of pupils is sometimes a challenge.

A few schools have taken a very different approach, working together with the H&W team to embed RE/PSHE objectives into their general curriculum and relate them to broader learning themes and outcomes throughout the year, including making sure that teachers are upskilled and comfortable to deliver.

Finally, both the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), AEPs and SEND providers seem to recognise the importance of introducing RSE principles to their students, relying on a combination of day-to-day teaching, one-on-one work and dedicated workshops run by external agencies. All have comprehensive, long-standing relationships with multiple services within Young Hackney to ensure young people benefit from a broad spectrum of support.

Teacher Training

In preparation for September, many schools are making use of PSHE Association-accredited resources and training, sharing expertise and best practice as part of local and national PSHE networks, along with potentially attending training delivered by a range of other providers who work with schools in Hackney, the details of which are not always shared with stakeholders. Uptake of the H&W team’s training offer for teachers is therefore still relatively low: since April 2019, we have carried out a total of four training sessions with teachers/education professionals, with one more booked for March 2020. We are finalising a dedicated Teacher Training brochure similar to the one we have been using for students, with the view to expand and streamline our proposition and ensure it addresses schools’ identified needs.

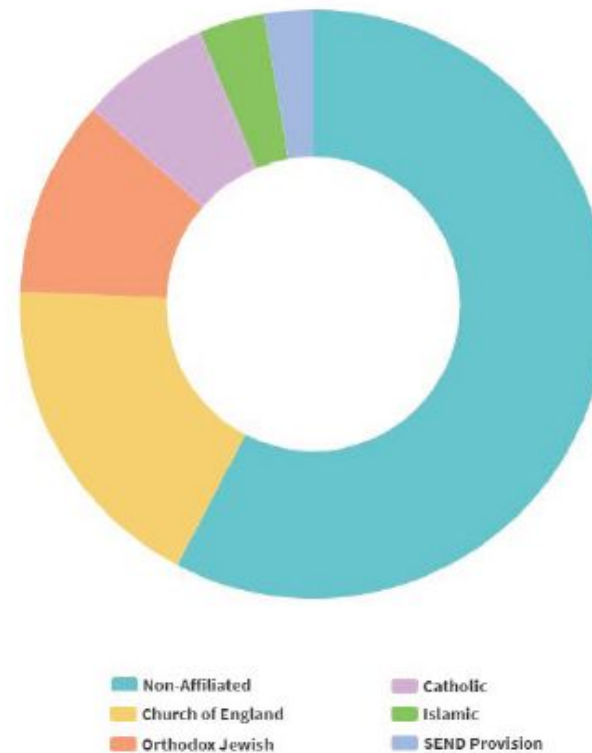


Fig.3 Schools participating in JCS 2019, by affiliation

Parents & Carers

According to the statutory guidance on PSHE/RSE, all schools should work closely with parents when planning and delivering the subject, including ensuring that parents know what will be taught and when, and clearly communicating the fact that they have the right to request their child to be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. The H&W team has significant experience in assisting schools with informing parents and carers about the material their children will be introduced to, and supporting them in reinforcing positive health messages at home. Since April 2019, we have delivered 24 educational sessions to parents/carers, in settings including primary and secondary schools, dedicated parents' groups and to Hackney's own foster carer cohort. Response has been overwhelmingly positive, including in relation to topics that are often perceived to be 'controversial' (LGBTQ training, Puberty, Pornography). We expect demand for parents' evenings in particular to increase in the lead up to September.

Uptake by School Affiliation

Hackney's cultural and religious diversity is reflected in the make-up of its educational provision. The H&W team prides itself on its productive relationships with schools of all denominations, including those serving the Orthodox Jewish, Muslim, Catholic and Anglican communities. Figures 1 and 2 above provide an overview of each category's uptake of different topics, while Figure 3 is a demographic breakdown of Junior Citizenship Scheme participating schools, our most culturally-diverse piece of work.

Challenges Ahead

As outlined above, recruiting teachers to upskill, ensuring sessions the H&W team deliver are not a one-off but are a deliberately planned aspect of a holistic RSE/PSHE teaching policy, and arranging timely information sharing (including of SEND or particular sensitivities) are the main challenges the H&W team faces leading up to the next academic year. However, we do recognise that there is a broad scope of high-quality training available to schools from a range of providers, and will therefore aim to tailor our offer to complement those as required. It is also worth noting that RSE policies and curriculum plans may be in place but just not always shared with us in their entirety, which is an aspect of inter-agency communication we will endeavour to improve with the Hackney Learning Trust's assistance.

In special schools, alternative education providers, the PRU and for some SEND pupils in mainstream education, there may be a need to tailor content and teaching to meet specific needs, as well as having members of staff support visitors in behaviour management and differentiation. This does not always happen in practice. RSE is the main focus of an upcoming SENCO conference taking place in March 2020, where these issues will be discussed in detail.

Areas for improvement notwithstanding, the H&W team has built and maintains strong relationships with schools throughout the borough and has established itself as complementing in-school RSE and PSHE provision. It is worth noting that the reduction of Public Health funding provided to the Council has impacted on resourcing resulting in an in-year budget reduction of £25,000. The current contract value of £250,000 is now supplemented by the Young Hackney core budget so that service delivery is maintained. The team is currently operating at full capacity and the limitations of the budget will be taken into account when mapping both the expansion of the service's teacher training offer and our place in the RSE provision marketplace going forward.