

Press release: All pupils will be taught about mental and physical wellbeing

Three new subjects will be universal from 2020 to ensure school prepares pupils for the modern world – health education, relationships education and RSE

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All children in England will be taught how to look after their mental wellbeing and recognise when classmates may be struggling, as the Government unveils new guidance for the introduction of compulsory health education.

Bold new plans set out today (Monday 25 February) by the Education Secretary Damian Hinds confirm that, from September 2020, pupils of all ages will be taught the new subject – with a focus on promoting the positive link between physical and mental health.

This comes alongside the introduction of compulsory relationships education for primary-age pupils and relationships and sex education (RSE) for secondary-age pupils, to ensure children have all the knowledge they need to grow up healthy, happy and safe.

It follows an extensive call for evidence and three-month consultation on the draft regulations and guidance. This received more than 11,000 responses including from leading charities, teaching unions and subject associations – many of whom have welcomed today's proposals.

Making health education universal – and updating sex education guidance for the first time since 2000 – will ensure pupils are prepared for the opportunities and challenges of an “ever more complex” world, both on- and offline.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:

Growing up and adolescence are hard enough, but the internet and social media add new pressures that just weren't there even one

generation ago. So many things about the way people interact have changed, and this new world, seamless between online and offline, can be difficult to navigate. Almost twenty years on from the last time guidance on sex education was updated, there is a lot to catch up on.

Although sex education is only mandatory to teach at secondary, it must be grounded in a firm understanding and valuing of positive relationships, and respect for others, from primary age. In turn positive relationships are connected with good mental health, which itself is linked with physical wellbeing. So it is appropriate to make health education universal alongside relationships and sex education.

I'm very grateful to the many people who have fed into developing these new programmes, to equip youngsters better to deal with the world of today. It starts as it always did with the importance of friendship, kindness, taking turns; as well as learning about the pitfalls and dangers, including on the internet. It will help children learn how to look after themselves, physically and mentally, and the importance of getting away from the screen and the headphones. And it can help young people be resilient as they chart a course through an ever more complex world.

At primary school, pupils will learn that mental wellbeing is a normal part of daily life and why simple self-care – like getting enough sleep and spending time outdoors and with friends – is important.

This will go hand-in-hand with content on nutrition, the importance of staying active, and recognising the early signs of physical illness – ensuring pupils understand how mental and physical health are linked.

Primary school children will also be taught age-appropriate online safety – including what to do if they come across things they are uncomfortable with, the importance of respect for others even when posting anonymously, and the risks of talking to people on the internet that they don't know in real life.

In addition, they will learn how important it is that spending time online doesn't get in the way of exercising, getting enough sleep, or being an active part of their community.

Today's announcement will follow the mental health support being made available by the NHS to a population of more than 470,000 children and young people across England in schools and colleges from September 2019.

The Department for Education is also funding training for senior mental health leads in schools and colleges to ensure a 'whole school' approach to mental health and wellbeing.

The new secondary content will build on everything learned at primary school, ensuring pupils can spot the signs of common mental illnesses such as anxiety and depression in themselves or others. Young people will learn how to

discuss their emotions accurately and sensitively, about the impact of alcohol and drugs on physical and mental health, and how to access professional help.

Secondary pupils will also be taught online safety topics, including the serious risks of sharing private photos, the impact of viewing explicit or harmful content – including how to report it and get support – as well as how the internet can sometimes promote an unhealthy view of sex and relationships.

In addition, schools will be able to access supporting information on how to teach about all aspects of internet safety – not just those relating to relationships, sex and health – to help teachers deliver this in a co-ordinated and coherent way. The new content will complement the existing computing curriculum, which gives pupils a grounding in how to use technology safely, responsibly, respectfully and securely.

It will be left up to schools to decide exactly how they teach the new content, giving them the flexibility to promote health, wellbeing and respectful relationships – as many already do through PSHE – both across the curriculum and outside formal lessons.

To ensure teachers are well-prepared ahead of the subjects becoming mandatory in 2020, there will be a £6m budget in 2019/20 for a school support package to cover training and resources. The Department for Education will also provide support to early-adopter schools who will start teaching the new content from September 2019.

The lessons learned from early-adopters will be shared with other schools, to enable them to design high-quality programmes of study and prepare their teachers. The department will also offer training – either online or face-to-face – for teachers who might need it.

Government support will build on a range of free resources from charities and other organisations that are already available for schools to use.

Jonathan Baggailey, chief executive of the PHSE Association, said:

We strongly welcome this government commitment to compulsory education on health, RSE and relationships. Parents, teachers and young people have been crying out for more focus on PSHE education, so will be delighted that this core content will be guaranteed on the school curriculum. The PSHE Association looks forward to supporting all schools to make the most of this huge opportunity.

Anna Feuchtwang, chief executive of the National Children's Bureau, said:

The guidance published today is a welcome step forward in preparing children for adulthood, improving their wellbeing and keeping them safe and healthy. By providing compulsory health education with a

strong focus on mental wellbeing, and guaranteeing relationships education in primary schools and relationships and sex education in secondary schools, the Government has responded to the needs and concerns of children, young people and parents.

This is an important milestone but there is further work ahead to ensure the new requirements fulfil their potential for helping children grow up healthier and happier.

Speech: Crime Minister addresses government work to tackle modern slavery

Victoria Atkins delivered speech at Paris Supply Chains conference.

Speech: Crime Minister addresses government work to tackle modern slavery

Welcome everybody, I am absolutely delighted to be here and thank you so much to the Ambassador to the British Embassy for hosting today's event and it is a very fitting time in terms of the UK and its battle against modern slavery and human trafficking to hold an event this month because this month marks a milestone in the UK's fight against human trafficking.

This month marks the 15th anniversary of the Morecambe Bay disaster.

In one night, more than 20 people drowned when they were cut off by the tide, while picking cockles off the Lancashire coast in the North West of England.

The workers were Chinese nationals, trafficked into the UK in shipping containers.

By the time they realised that the sea water was rising, it was pitch black, and extremely cold. They could not speak English, and were unfamiliar with the area, or the tidal patterns on the treacherous mud flats.

For each pound of cockles that they picked, they received less than 9 pence.

The disaster was a wake up call to many that forced labour, human trafficking, and slavery are not evils of the past.

They are with us today, and their victims are hidden in plain sight.

In England, Morecambe Bay is known as a nature reserve and holiday resort.

The fact 20 people could be trafficked there from the other side of the world and forced to work – with no one noticing until it was too late – brought home to us all the awful reality of slavery and human trafficking in the 21st Century.

Globally an estimated 40.3 million people are victims of modern slavery and human trafficking, including some 16 million in forced labour in the private sector.

Overall, labour generates \$150 billion in illicit profits annually.

No sector is immune. Workers in labour intensive industries like manufacturing, agriculture, construction and manufacturing are particularly vulnerable to abuse.

And as we gather in Paris ahead of fashion week, we must remember that the textiles sector, with its complex global supply chains, is also a susceptible trade.

The industry faces significant risks, but also with clear opportunities for innovation to improve the lives of workers.

Since the collapse of the Rana Plaza building in Bangladesh in 2013, which killed over 1,000 workers, much of this work has accelerated, but there remains a lot to do.

We know that women – who make up 75% of the workforce in fashion supply chains – are particularly at risk.

That is why the UK is investing in programmes to improve protections for female textile workers.

The Department for International Development's Work in Freedom initiative has now reached half a million female textile workers in India and Jordan.

Through our gender equality at the Workplace project we are partnering with brands including Marks & Spencer, SuperDry and Levis to promote worker's rights and tackle forced labour and sexual violence in the Indian garment sector.

This project has now benefitted more than 14,000 women.

We should take a moment to recognise the good work fashion companies are doing as well.

Many are already changing their purchasing practices to reduce pressures on their supply chain that can lead to exploitation.

Companies like H&M have developed a Fair Wage strategy and commissioned the Ethical Trade Initiative to review their work and publish the findings.

We're also seeing new innovations that are helping to accelerate progress and I'm delighted that we have the Open Apparel Registry here today.

Tools like their transparency map are crucial in enabling collaboration between different brands to identify risks in the supply chain.

As Minister for Crime, Safeguarding and Vulnerability, I am proud that the UK is a world-leader in tackling modern slavery and human trafficking.

In 2015, we introduced the Modern Slavery Act to tackle slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour, and human trafficking.

The act gives law enforcement agencies the tools to deal with offenders and provides enhanced protection for victims.

And, of particular relevance to this conference, the UK is the first country to require businesses to report on how they are preventing forced labour in their global supply chains.

Under the landmark 'transparency in supply chains' provision in the Modern Slavery Act we have seen thousands of transparency statements published.

And I am pleased to announce that today we have appointed Sara Thornton as the UK's new Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, to lead our work and help the UK eradicate modern slavery and human trafficking.

Ms Thornton is one of the most senior police officers in the country and brings her wealth of expertise, experience and independence in seeking justice for victims of crime.

Effectively tackling forced labour requires leadership not just at home, but internationally as well.

At the UN General assembly in September last year, the UK launched the 'Principles to Combat Human Trafficking in Global Supply Chains', with the U.S., Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

These principles commit governments to implementing a range of measures that help address modern slavery and human trafficking in global supply chains.

And, as we meet in Paris, I am proud that the French government stands alongside us in their determination to eliminate human trafficking and labour exploitation.

Here, there is a legal requirement for companies to publish their mechanisms to identify, assess and mitigate exploitation risks.

And, since legislation was introduced on both sides of the Channel, we have seen businesses:

- ensure transparency their supply chains
- start to map suppliers beyond tier one
- identify high-risk areas and introduce tailored steps to support the most vulnerable workers

This is a significant achievement, and today's panels will seek to build on this progress.

Because, we want to see businesses make year-on-year progress. Whether they are already industry-leading in their approach, or mapping their supply chains for the first time.

We also want to see more businesses supporting their suppliers to introduce key protections for workers, from the implementation of the Employer Pays Principle to tackle exploitative recruitment fees, to the global brands we have seen sign up to IndustriALL's ACT initiative.

Legislation, alongside growing consumer awareness, has transformed business culture.

Across all industries, senior business leaders are engaging with the fight against forced labour for the first time.

But we cannot be complacent.

Businesses need to be more vigilant than ever to understand their risks, undertake targeted interventions and measure progress.

They are not alone. The scale of the challenge means that it can only be tackled by government, business and civil society working together.

In November, the Prime Minister announced a joint agreement with the fashion sector in the UK to work together to eradicate forced labour in their supply chains.

And crucially, at last year's G20 summit, she committed to publishing a statement on the steps the UK government is taking to eliminate exploitation in our own supply chains.

Fundamentally, though, the reach of government extends only so far.

It is up to individual businesses to take steps to eliminate forced labour in their own supply chain.

There is a moral – and commercial – imperative to ensure that products are made by people living in freedom, working with dignity, and earning a fair wage

Consumers care about how their products are made, and more so in the fashion industry than many others.

There is a growing number of responsible investors who want to make sure the right protections are in place.

By being here today you have shown that, like us, you want to improve your approach.

I ask you all to take what you learn today and share it with your suppliers, your clients and your competitors.

The British government will do everything in our power to eliminate the scourge of modern slavery and human trafficking.

We remain resolute in our commitment to strengthen our response to this threat and improve protections for the most vulnerable workers across the globe.

I welcome the determination and work of our friends and allies in Europe and across the world

With our European friends, we are acting in defence of the values that we as nations hold dear.

Nothing will change that.

We will remain as committed to the eradication of modern slavery and human trafficking as we are today.

Together, we can build a future where forced labour and exploitation are, truly, a thing of the past.

Merci Beaucoup.

Speech: Urging the Government of Sudan to embark upon the political and economic reforms necessary to deliver true stability

Statement by Stephen Hickey, UK Political Coordinator at the UN, at the Security Council Briefing on Sudan