
A review of healthy relationships education

June 2017



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Introduction

This report is published in response to a request for advice from the Welsh Government in the Minister's annual remit letter to Estyn for 2016-2017. The report is intended for the Welsh Government, headteachers, governors, local authorities and regional consortia. It may also be of interest to those working with faith schools through diocesan authorities.

The report evaluates the quality of provision for healthy relationships education in schools in Wales. It identifies strategies to support schools in improving provision and outcomes for pupils. A series of best practice case studies exemplifies how schools successfully support pupils to develop and maintain healthy relationships.

It is intended to inform the ongoing implementation of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 (National Assembly for Wales, 2015) and contribute to taking forward the recommendations within Professor Graham Donaldson's report, 'Successful Futures' (Donaldson, 2015).

The findings of the report draw on the evidence listed in appendix 1.

Background

Healthy relationships education is the term used to describe the range of learning experiences and support that schools provide for pupils to develop safe, respectful personal relationships. This includes taking responsibility for their behaviour in their personal relationships and how to recognise inappropriate behaviour.

The '*Personal and social education framework for 7 to 19-year-olds in Wales*' (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008a) sets out that:

"Successful relationships demand competent interpersonal skills, a willingness to value others and respect difference. Good relationships are the result of care and support, communication and the willingness to accept responsibility. Learners need to be able to make and maintain friendships, deal with conflict, challenge stereotyping and prejudice, and cope with peer and other influence." (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008a, p. 11)

The Welsh Government, Estyn and educational research bodies have written widely about the important role that schools play in helping pupils to develop safe and respectful relationships. In addition, several pieces of legislation outline the responsibilities of local authorities and schools in relation to this important issue.

In 2004, the Welsh Government adopted, 'Rights to Action', a policy document which translated the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC:

UNICEF UK, 1990) into seven core aims for children in Wales. These aims include that children and young people should have a comprehensive range of education and learning opportunities and enjoy the best possible health and freedom from abuse, victimisation and exploitation.

In 2007, Estyn produced a guidance report on sex and relationships education in schools in Wales. The report identified wide variations in the quality of teaching. It noted that there was too much emphasis on teaching pupils facts about sex and relationships and too few opportunities for learners to engage in discussion about moral and emotional issues. The report recommended that schools:

- take the views of pupils into account when planning or revising sex and relationships education programmes
- use specialists such as personal and social education (PSE) or religious education (RE) teachers to deliver the moral, social and emotional aspects of sex and relationships education

In December 2008, the National Assembly for Wales Communities and Culture Committee produced a report into domestic abuse. The report concluded that schools do not implement approaches to educating children about domestic abuse consistently enough. The report recommended that young people must be taught about what constitutes a safe, healthy relationship.

In September 2010, the Welsh Government produced guidance for schools, '*Sex and relationships education in schools*'. This provided guidance on how schools should develop their sex education policy, plan and deliver their sex and relationships education and work in partnership with others. The guidance set out the legal requirements for teaching sex and relationships educations as:

- Primary schools must provide sex education as contained within the National Curriculum in Wales, for example in the science subject order. However, there is no requirement for primary schools to provide sex education as part of the basic curriculum. It is for individual school governing bodies, in consultation with parents/carers, to determine how best to approach sex education, in accordance with learners' needs and the character and ethos of the school.
- In secondary schools, and other educational settings that cater for learners of secondary school age, for example pupil referral units (PRUs), the basic curriculum must include provision for sex education for all registered pupils.
- Special schools must also include provision for sex education for all registered pupils who are provided with secondary education at the school.

In its report, '*A review of preventative work in schools and other educational settings in Wales to address domestic abuse*' (National Foundation for Educational Research, 2011) the National Foundation for Educational Research found that many schools raised awareness of domestic abuse and its unacceptability through curriculum activities such as PSE lessons. The research identified specialist agencies who provided effective support for schools in teaching pupils about domestic abuse. The two specialist agencies with the greatest reach were the All Wales School Liaison Core Programme and the Hafan Cymru Spectrum programme. The report concluded that specialist agencies had an important role in schools in raising awareness of

domestic abuse and signposting pupils to sources of help and support. However, the report noted that too often the provision in schools for teaching about domestic abuse was one of a themed day, a stand-alone lesson or small block of sessions. As a result, schools do not deliver essential messages often enough to ensure that pupils understand them fully.

In 2014, Welsh Government allocated additional funding to Hafan Cymru to extend the coverage of the Spectrum Programme to support all schools in Wales to deliver healthy relationships education.

The Estyn review 'Action on bullying' (Estyn, 2014) reported that, in schools where there is a strong ethos that promotes equality and diversity, children understand that they have and can exercise a right to be safe. However, the report noted that a minority of schools were anxious about highlighting diversity issues. They tackled issues as they arose, rather than building them into the curriculum proactively.

In April 2015, the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 became law (National Assembly for Wales, 2015). It is the first Act of its kind in the United Kingdom. The provisions of the Act are intended to ensure that there is a strategic focus across the public sector on preventing these issues, protecting victims and supporting those affected by such issues.

The Act provides the Welsh Ministers with powers to require local authorities to report on how they are addressing gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence within their educational functions, including any action taken within schools to promote the purposes of the Act. During the consultation process for the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015, there was significant support for healthy relationship lessons to be made compulsory. This was not included in the Act due to the ongoing curriculum reform work, which would introduce new statutory requirements for the curriculum.

In 2016, the Welsh Government published statutory guidance outlining a National Training Framework on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (Welsh Government, 2016a). The framework requires all staff who work in schools to complete training to ensure that they provide an effective response to those experiencing violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

The Welsh Government and Welsh Women's Aid produced a good practice guide (Welsh Government, 2015) to support the implementation of the Act. The guide provides advice for schools on how to develop, embed and successfully deliver a whole-education approach to promoting gender equality and to challenging violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

In 2016, the Welsh Government also produced a guide for school governors to inform them of the issues surrounding violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence and the actions that they can take to make their schools safer (Welsh Government, 2016b). In 2016, the Welsh Government worked with the Children's Commissioner, NSPCC, Cardiff University, Welsh Women's aid and young people to produce 'AGENDA: A young people's guide to making positive relationships matter'. This resource includes a range of activities for schools to use with young people.

Arrangements for schools to signpost children to appropriate support and guidance were strengthened by the Welsh Assembly Government through the school-based counselling strategy (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008b). This strategy, published in 2008, outlines the government's desire to develop school-based counselling services for children and young people in Wales that are safe, accessible and of a high standard. The strategy was in response to the Clwch Inquiry Report by the Children's Commissioner for Wales (2004). The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, requires local authorities to make reasonable provision of independent counselling services for children and young people aged between 11 and 18 and pupils in Year 6 of primary school (National Assembly for Wales, 2013).

Main findings

- 1 The content and delivery of healthy relationships education vary too widely in schools across Wales. Overall, schools do not allocate enough time or importance to this aspect of personal and social education.
- 2 Schools that are most effective in delivering healthy relationships education create an ethos where pupils understand the importance of equality and respect the rights of others. In these schools, pupils build resilience and grow in self-esteem and confidence.
- 3 All of the schools surveyed as part of this report teach pupils about healthy digital relationships through e-safety education. As a result, pupils develop age appropriate awareness and understanding of important issues such as cyber-bullying, grooming and protecting personal information on-line.
- 4 Nearly all schools teach pupils about gender equality. All secondary and many primary schools teach pupils about domestic abuse. However, not all schools teach pupils about forms of violence against women such as forced marriage, female genital mutilation and honour-based violence. Too many schools, particularly in areas where communities are not diverse, do not recognise issues of violence against women as high priority. They do not prepare pupils well enough to live in a diverse society.
- 5 Evidence from Estyn inspections shows that nearly all Year 6 pupils in primary schools receive sex and relationships education (SRE). Increasingly, primary schools are extending this provision into Year 5 to reflect the fact that some children reach puberty at a younger age. In many primary schools, SRE is delivered by trained and experienced health professionals. A minority of schools avoid teaching aspects of sex and relationships education, other than puberty. Many of these schools leave the teaching of personal hygiene and puberty solely to NHS health professionals in one-off sessions, which does not give pupils the opportunity to raise personal issues with teachers they know.
- 6 In secondary schools, there is a wide variation in planning and provision for healthy relationships education. In many secondary schools, form tutors teach this subject within personal and social education (PSE) sessions as part of the tutorial system. In most secondary schools, healthy relationships education features as part of the PSE curriculum at key stage 3. However, a few of the schools surveyed do not have discrete PSE lessons at key stage 4. These schools promote healthy relationships education during themed days, assemblies and as part of the Welsh Baccalaureate. Schools that deliver healthy relationships education in stand-alone assemblies, themed days or small blocks of lessons in discrete subjects do not give pupils enough opportunity to explore important social and emotional aspects of relationships.
- 7 Many schools make effective use of specialist agencies to deliver important aspects of healthy relationships education. Specialist agencies provide schools with a wide

range of support including training for staff, age-appropriate lessons for pupils and signposting victims to sources of appropriate support. Where schools liaise effectively with specialist agencies, together they provide comprehensive coverage of healthy relationships education including age appropriate work on domestic abuse, violence against women and sexual violence.

- 8 In schools with the best practice, teachers supplement the input of health professionals and specialist agencies well to plan activities for pupils to explore important aspects of healthy relationships in lessons across the curriculum.
- 9 Most schools have arrangements in place to support pupils who have experienced domestic abuse or sexual violence. Many schools in the survey have formed valuable strategic partnerships with specialist agencies that provide appropriate support and advice for pupils. A few primary schools in the survey have used additional funding to extend counselling services beyond Year 6 to include pupils throughout the school. Statistics produced by the Welsh Government (2016c) on the provision of counselling services across Wales show that 11,567 children received counselling in 2014-2015. Nearly half of all referrals were made by school staff with the most common issue being around relationships within families.
- 10 Generally, arrangements for pupils to influence what they learn in healthy relationships education are underdeveloped in schools across Wales. In the very few schools where pupils are ambassadors of gender equality, pupils act as champions of healthy relationships, provide peer-to-peer support and make an important contribution to preventative work in school and the wider community.
- 11 Generally, schools in culturally diverse communities build strong relationships with parents and community leaders. This helps to improve parental engagement with the school, reduce cultural tensions and promote an ethos where diversity is respected.
- 12 There is support from all schools and agencies visited as part of the survey to include healthy relationships education as part of the health and wellbeing area of learning in the curriculum reform being planned following 'Successful Futures' (Donaldson, 2015).
- 13 Many specialist agencies believe that the aims of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Act (Wales) 2015 (VAWDASV Act: National Assembly for Wales, 2015) will not be fully realised without statutory guidance for schools, setting out a core curriculum for healthy relationships education that all children are entitled to receive.
- 14 Most school leaders are not aware of Welsh Government guidance and toolkits to support the delivery of healthy relationships education and implement a whole-school approach to preventing violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. Generally, there are too many guidance documents for schools outlining aspects of personal social education, sex and relationships education and equality and diversity.
- 15 Only a very few governing bodies have acted upon the guidance set out in the Welsh Government practical guide for governors, 'Violence against women, domestic abuse

and sexual violence (Welsh Government 2016b). Only a very few school staff have completed the level 1 online training from the National Training Framework. Generally, school leaders are not aware of the content and requirements of the National Training Framework for violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

Recommendations

Schools should:

- R1 Implement Welsh Government guidance to provide a whole-school approach to preventing violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (Welsh Government, 2015)
- R2 Ensure that key messages around healthy relationships are embedded in the curriculum and reinforced regularly
- R3 Build on the best practice identified in this report

Local authorities and regional consortia should:

- R4 Ensure that all staff who work in schools complete the training set out in the National Training Framework (Welsh Government, 2016a)

The Welsh Government should:

- R5 Publicise guidance further to ensure that schools and governing bodies are aware of the advice and guidance they contain
- R6 Ensure that those involved in curriculum design and development for the health and wellbeing area of learning and experiences are aware of the important role schools have in implementing the VAWDASV Act 2015 (National Assembly for Wales, 2015) and include healthy relationships education in their work
- R7 Provide access for staff who work in independent schools and colleges to the National Training Framework (Welsh Government, 2016a)

Provision

The content and delivery of healthy relationships education

- 16 The content and delivery of healthy relationships education vary too widely in schools across Wales. The non-statutory nature of the PSE Framework means that schools have the flexibility to make their own arrangements for delivering the components of PSE set out in the framework. Overall, schools do not allocate enough time or importance to this subject.
- 17 All of the schools surveyed promote respect for others and teach pupils about e-safety well. This includes teaching pupils about cyber bullying, the dangers of grooming and how to protect their identity and personal information on line. Nearly all schools teach pupils about gender equality and how to report concerns. All secondary and many primary schools teach pupils about domestic abuse.
- 18 However, while all secondary schools in the survey teach pupils about violence against women, this is true for only a minority of primary schools surveyed. Staff in primary schools that do not teach about violence against women believe that the content is not age appropriate. The approach used in these schools is to respond to issues as they arise rather than taking a preventative approach through building them into the curriculum proactively. The Estyn remit report, 'Action on Bullying' (2014) found similar attitudes in a minority of schools regarding teaching about homophobic bullying.
- 19 There is strong support from all contributors to this report to include healthy relationships education in the new curriculum arising from 'Successful Futures' (Donaldson, 2015). However, it is too early in the curriculum reform process to know to what extent these ambitions will be realised within the Health and Wellbeing area of learning experiences.
- 20 The Welsh Government has made online teaching and staff training materials available to schools on the Hwb website. The materials include valuable information on child sexual exploitation, e-safety and how children can access advocacy and advice services. The site can be accessed at:
<http://hwb.wales.gov.uk/search?query=safeguarding>
- 21 Evidence from inspections over the period 2012-2016 shows that nearly all Year 6 pupils in primary schools receive appropriate sex and relationships education (SRE). In many cases, this is delivered solely by trained and experienced health professionals. A minority of schools also deliver SRE to pupils who reach puberty while in Year 5. In the best examples, schools extend the learning from the SRE lessons delivered by health professionals and specialist agencies by including discussions around healthy relationships in whole class sessions. A few schools ensure that male and female staff work together to ensure that they give positive messages about gender equality to pupils learning about healthy relationships.

- 22 A minority of schools invite parents to take part in workshops to view the materials used during SRE lessons. These schools encourage parents to discuss the content and share their views about the resources. This enables these schools to communicate its values for SRE with parents effectively. It also ensures that parents understand the importance of SRE lessons. For example, leaders at Sealand Primary School in Flintshire consult with parents before specialist agencies come into school to deliver work with pupils on domestic violence. Parents are invited into school to discuss their concerns and learn about the initiative. As a result, only a very few parents withdraw their pupils from the sessions.
- 23 In most primary schools, healthy relationships education is linked closely to the development of pupils' social and emotional literacy. In the best examples, staff provide pupils with support to build resilience, self-esteem and confidence. This provision is often highly effective through careful tailoring of support. For example, in a few schools whole-class work is followed up through nurture groups for those pupils needing additional support.
- 24 The following case study shows how Golwg y Cwm Primary School in Ystradgynlais provides all pupils in the Foundation Phase with effective support to develop their social and emotional literacy.

Case study 1: Golwg y Cwm Primary School

Information about the school

Ysgol Golwg Y Cwm is an English-medium primary school serving the area of Penrhos and Ystradgynlais in Powys local authority. Currently there are 210 pupils on roll. Around 32% of pupils are eligible for free school meals which is above the national average. The school identifies around 35% of pupils as having additional learning needs, which is again above the national average.

Context and background to the practice

The school has built strong partnerships with parents and specialist agencies to develop a curriculum that provides effective support for pupils' social and emotional needs.

Description of activity/strategy

The school provides strong support for pupils and parents who are new to the school. Parents of new pupils meet with teachers as part of a school readiness programme to discuss expectations, ethos and desired values prior to starting school.

The school offers nurture provision at breakfast time and lunch time as well as sessions each afternoon. Parents, staff and outside agencies refer pupils into this service and outcomes for pupils are carefully measured. A teaching assistant provides support for pupils who are referred to the service. She liaises with class teachers to ensure that pupils are emotionally and

practically able to manage classroom expectations. At the end of the day, she liaises with parents and prepares pupils for transition to home.

The school has effective partnerships with specialist agencies to support families. For example, Families and Communities Together (FACT) hold weekly workshops at the school for parents and signpost them to sources of appropriate support. The school also provides families of Foundation Phase pupils with resources to support learning at home. A teaching assistant provides advice and support for parents to enable them to work with their children on academic areas and social and emotional areas of the curriculum at home.

Impact on provision and standards

The school has an established ethos of inclusion and support, both for pupils and their families. Pupils' specific social and emotional needs are met through a tailored package of interventions. All partner agencies demonstrate a strong commitment to working together for the benefit of the pupils. Pupils and their families feel valued and supported and know whom to approach for help.

- 25 In many secondary schools, healthy relationships education features as part of the personal and social education (PSE) curriculum at key stage 3 and is delivered by form tutors as part of the tutorial system. However, a few of the schools surveyed do not have discrete personal social education lessons at key stage 4. In these schools, healthy relationships education is promoted in themed days and assemblies, and features as part of the Welsh Baccalaureate. However, many of these schools do not give enough time for pupils to consider the moral and personal aspects of what they have learnt.
- 26 In the best examples, secondary schools plan interesting and interactive activities that reinforce key messages about healthy relationships in subjects across the curriculum. In a few schools, a senior member of staff co-ordinates this work across departments and lessons successfully, for example by leading collaborative work between religious education, English, art and drama departments. Pupils report that they remember the key messages around healthy relationships better when they learn about the issues in a wide range of subjects and have the opportunity to discuss matters of concern.
- 27 The following case study shows how leaders at Ysgol Uwchradd Tywyn liaise with specialist agencies and community drama groups to develop a comprehensive programme for healthy relationships education.

Case study 2: Ysgol Uwchradd Tywyn

Information about the school

Ysgol Uwchradd Tywyn is a bilingual 11-16 mixed comprehensive school in rural west Wales, situated on the coastline between Barmouth and Aberystwyth. There are currently 270 pupils on roll and the proportion of pupils eligible free school meals stands at 11%. The school has identified 30% of pupils as having a range of additional learning needs. One point nine per cent (1.9%) of pupils come from an ethnic minority background. According to PLASC 2016, 7% of pupils are fluent in Welsh.

Context and background to the practice

The school is committed to providing an inclusive, wide-ranging education to its pupils, and to encouraging and building a supportive environment where pupils and staff understand, appreciate and respect the views, rights and situations of others. Healthy relationships education plays a key role in raising the awareness of pupils about how to establish, maintain and recognise positive relationships and how to identify signs and symptoms of unhealthy relationships.

Description of activity/strategy

The school delivers important information about healthy relationships through a wide range of activities. These include PSE lessons, subjects across the curriculum, suspended timetable days, drama productions, assemblies and outside speakers.

The school holds information-sharing and training workshops for staff and parents, delivered by specialist agencies on issues such as e-safety, sexting and domestic abuse. These are popular and useful in helping adults to support young people.

The school provides a high level of support for vulnerable pupils in sessions that focus well on respecting self and others, improving self-image, and the need to respect the choices others make.

The school operates a buddy system. Prefects undergo peer-mentoring training and each prefect is matched with lower-school tutor groups and allocated a small group of pupils within those classes. The prefect meets every week with their mentees and checks their wellbeing. Younger pupils are often more comfortable to raise concerns with older pupils than with a member of staff. Any concern is then passed on to the inclusion officer or pupil progress co-ordinator or senior leadership team, depending upon its nature.

Impact on provision and standards

This is an inclusive school, where the needs of groups of pupils are considered carefully. Pupils and staff understand the role they play in

encouraging and developing healthy relationships and in helping young people to recognise and respond appropriately in situations where they may feel awkward, uncomfortable or threatened. There is a strong support network within the school, which is proactive in establishing and sustaining healthy relationships.

Partnerships with specialist agencies

- 28 Many schools make effective use of specialist agencies such as Welsh Women’s Aid, BAWSO¹ and the Police Liaison Core Team to deliver important aspects of healthy relationships education. Specialist agencies provide schools with a wide range of support including training for staff, age appropriate lessons for pupils and effective support for pupils who are victims of abuse. However, a few schools do not place enough emphasis on teaching pupils about domestic abuse, violence against women and sexually harmful behaviours and do not recognise the useful contribution that specialist agencies can make.
- 29 Many of the schools visited liaise effectively with the Hafan Cymru Spectrum project. The project provides schools with a wide range of information and guidance concerning healthy relationships education including violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. The project delivers training for school staff and age appropriate information for pupils in well planned lessons delivered by experienced teachers. The syllabus used by the Spectrum project provides comprehensive coverage of healthy relationships education including aspects that many school-based courses omit. These aspects include valuable information on the impact of domestic abuse on children, honour-based violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation.
- 30 Information provided by Hafan Cymru notes that, between March 2014 and April 2015, Spectrum sessions were delivered to over 16,000 children and over 1,300 adults in 121 primary and secondary schools across Wales. Schools in the survey that have worked with the project value their input highly.
- 31 Where schools liaise effectively with specialist agencies they provide comprehensive coverage of healthy relationships education including age-appropriate work on domestic abuse, violence against women and sexual violence. Where partnerships between schools and specialist agencies are less effective, schools are over-reliant on these agencies and do not revisit and reinforce important messages through the curriculum.
- 32 In a few schools, theatre companies provide valuable support for SRE through thought-provoking productions. These performances often engage pupils’ interest well. Pupils appreciate such opportunities and find them valuable in extending their knowledge and understanding.
- 33 The following case study shows how Brackla Primary School in Bridgend engages effectively with parents and specialist agencies to develop a powerful ethos that supports pupils in developing healthy relationships.

¹ See glossary

Case study 3: Brackla Primary School

Information about the school

Brackla Primary School is in Bridgend local authority. There are currently 314 pupils on roll aged 3 to 11. Around 20% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is in line with the national average. According to PLASC 2016, 35% of pupils have additional learning needs. Most pupils are of white British ethnicity. A very few pupils speak Welsh at home. A very few pupils are learning English as an additional language.

Context and background to the practice

The school has worked collaboratively with all stakeholders to develop a powerful ethos that supports pupils in developing healthy relationships. This ethos supports the school to develop strong core values and knowledge, skills and attitudes in pupils that enable them to become resilient and reflective learners.

Description of activity/strategy

Since September 2015, the school has had a Family Engagement Officer to enhance and extend partnerships with parents. Part of the role is to support the development of healthy relationships both at home and school. This includes supporting individual and targeted groups of pupils through daily drop-in sessions, nurture groups, a family values scheme and regular internet safety workshops. The school encourages parents to attend nurture group sessions alongside their child to reinforce skills learnt at school in the family home

The school liaises effectively with an extensive range of external agencies to deliver healthy relationships education. These agencies provide training for staff, enhance the PSE curriculum through delivery of specific sessions on the importance of showing respect for others. The school works well with external agencies to provide them with information about pupils' specific needs identified through parental concerns or the school's wellbeing assessment tool. This tool provides valuable information about important aspects of wellbeing such as pupils' attendance, behaviour and attitudes towards themselves and others.

Impact on provision and standards

The school's focus on promoting pupils' health and wellbeing has a strong impact on pupil outcomes and family engagement. For example, attendance has improved over the last four years and for 2015-2016 was 95.6%. In 2016, all Year 2 pupils achieved the expected outcome 5 and many achieved outcome 6 in the personal, social, wellbeing and cultural diversity (PSWCD) strand of the Foundation Phase curriculum.

Partnerships with an extensive range of agencies make a strong contribution

to widening the range of learning opportunities and support available for pupils.

Relationships with targeted families have improved. There are increased attendance rates at parent events and consultation evenings.

Meeting the needs of vulnerable groups

- 34 Many schools in areas serving a diverse population with a wide range of cultural traditions make strong provision for groups of pupils who are at risk of social isolation and discrimination. In the best examples, schools liaise well with specialist agencies, such as BAWSO, to provide staff with training and advice on the specific needs of pupils from black and ethnic minority backgrounds. However, too many schools, particularly in areas where communities are not diverse, do not recognise issues of violence against women as high priority. As a result, they do not provide staff with appropriate training to identify and respond to concerns of this nature and do not prepare pupils well enough to live in a diverse society. For example, evidence from specialist agencies indicates that not all teachers are aware of the mandatory reporting duty placed on them regarding female genital mutilation (FGM).
- 35 All secondary schools surveyed and many primary schools report that they have arrangements in place to support pupils who have experienced domestic or sexual violence. Most secondary schools make effective use of the school counselling service and also signpost pupils to other specialist support services as necessary. These include specialist counselling services for victims of sexual abuse. A few primary schools surveyed make use of Pupil Deprivation Grant funding to provide specialist counselling and support for pupils.
- 36 The following case study shows how St Woolos Primary School in Newport provides training for staff that is relevant to the needs of their culturally diverse population and how they support the needs of vulnerable pupils.

Case study 4: St Woolos Primary School

Information about the school

St Woolos Primary School is in Newport. Currently there are 337 pupils on roll aged 3 to 11. The school has a diverse population made up of pupils from many countries. Across the school population, there are 43 different languages spoken. Forty-nine per cent (49%) of pupils speak English as an additional language. Around 38% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The school has identified that 38% of pupils have additional learning needs. These figures are well above national averages.

Context and background to the practice

St Woolos Primary School is committed to ensuring that all pupils feel valued, safe and secure. The school promotes an understanding of diversity and respect for all and ensures that pupils develop a strong sense of responsibility and empathy for one another.

Description of activity/strategy

The school provides a comprehensive package of training for staff that equips them with the awareness and skills necessary to understand the cultural heritage of pupils and support their diverse needs. For example, staff receive regular training from specialist agencies including child and adolescent psychotherapists and BAWSO. In addition, staff have gained qualifications to enable them to run innovative intervention programmes supporting pupils' social and emotional development. These include 'restorative justice' sessions, which enable pupils to understand how their behaviours affect others and how they can resolve disagreements successfully. The school also runs projects to develop parents' communication and language skills alongside their children.

Teachers plan many worthwhile opportunities for pupils to learn about healthy relationships within topics across the school. For example, the school uses positive role models from the local community to raise the aspirations of pupils from the black and ethnic minority community. Welsh Women's Aid run workshops with pupils at key stage 2 to learn about gender equality and the importance of healthy respectful relationships. Faith leaders from the local community come into school to increase children's understanding of the main faiths represented at the school.

The school uses grant funding successfully to provide additional services to support pupils. These include counselling and play therapy.

Impact on provision and standards

The curriculum promotes respect and understanding of the many faiths and cultural identities of the pupils. As a result, pupils with a wide range of languages and cultural backgrounds work together well. They show care and consideration for each other and value equality and diversity.

Staff build positive relationships with key stakeholders including parents and community leaders. As a result, parents have increased their engagement with the school.

- 37 Leaders in a minority of schools make effective use of surveys and the school council to gather pupils' views on the content of the personal and social education curriculum. However, only around half of schools surveyed have arrangements for pupils to specify topics they would like covered in healthy relationship sessions.
- 38 In a very few schools, pupils act as ambassadors for gender equality. In these schools there is a strong emphasis on pupil participation and strong partnerships with specialist agencies that promote pupil involvement. Pupils at Pen Y Dre School in Merthyr Tydfil plan assemblies for senior staff to deliver on aspects of relationships education and influence what is taught in PSE through the work of the school parliament. A group of Year 10 pupils worked with staff from a higher education institution on a project to develop creative methods to challenge sexism and sexual violence. A case study on the project is included in the Welsh Government and Welsh Women's Aid Good Practice Guide (Welsh Government, 2015).

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs

- 39 Evidence from inspection reports for the period 2010-2016 show that provision for pupils' care support and guidance is a strong feature of nearly all maintained special schools in Wales. Nearly all special schools tailor the PSE curriculum to the specific needs and abilities of individual pupils. This includes effective provision for pupils with complex needs to learn about important aspects of personal safety such as how to communicate their likes and dislikes, what is appropriate touch and how to identify adults whom they can trust.
- 40 In Pen Y Cwm special school, Blaenau Gwent, leaders have introduced an approach to assessment that identifies each pupils' developmental age and ability to understand issues of personal safety. Teachers use this information to plan a curriculum that is tailored to meet the developmental needs of each pupil. This ensures that key messages around personal safety and healthy relationships are appropriate to the individual needs of each pupil.
- 41 In north Wales, the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board funds the Jiws² project to provide SRE in community and education settings to vulnerable young people under the age of 25. In 2015-2016, they delivered SRE to 409 young people including learners at four colleges of further education, 11 secondary schools, three PRUs and two special schools. Staff from the project provide sessions for groups of pupils and support for individual pupils to raise their awareness of safe and appropriate relationships and behaviours. Schools that have worked with the project value the specialist advice and support provided for vulnerable pupils.

Family and community involvement

- 42 Many schools, particularly those in culturally diverse areas, build effective partnerships with parents and community leaders. This helps to build trust and confidence between the parents and the school. A few primary schools in the survey liaise closely with community groups to provide support for parents from ethnic minority groups to improve their communication skills. They signpost parents to sources of support and guidance for a wide range of wellbeing issues. This helps to improve parental engagement with the school, reduce cultural tensions and promote an ethos where diversity is respected.
- 43 A case study on this aspect of healthy relationships education from Maindee Primary School in Newport was included in the Estyn remit report, 'Action on Bullying' (Estyn, 2014). This can be accessed at:
<https://www.estyn.gov.wales/sites/default/files/documents/Action%20on%20bullying%20-%20June%202014.pdf>

² See glossary

Leadership

Leadership in schools

- 44 In nearly all of the schools visited for this report, school leaders place a high priority on health and relationships education. They establish a clear vision and ethos that promotes important aspects of pupils' health and wellbeing effectively. They are committed to developing confident, safe and happy learners who have the knowledge and skills to make informed choices.
- 45 In most primary schools, the ethos encourages pupils to be kind and show respect for others. In nearly all schools where there is a strong ethos, pupils articulate the school's ethos and core values clearly. They understand the need to respect others and speak out if they or someone they know is at risk of harm. In highly effective schools, staff model appropriate behaviours and demonstrate high levels of respect for colleagues and pupils through their actions.
- 46 A few schools visited as part of the survey use the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC: UNICEF UK, 1990) as the basis for their ethos. They promote a rights respecting approach across the curriculum effectively. Pupils at these schools know about their rights and have positive attitudes to respecting the rights of others.
- 47 In many primary schools, leaders identify and promote key values that form part of their ethos. In the best examples, staff embed these values well in assemblies, acts of worship and subjects across the curriculum. As a result, teaching reinforces and revisits these values regularly. For example, at St Helen's Roman Catholic School in Caerphilly, staff promote key values from the religious education (RE) syllabus across a wide range of subjects and activities. As a result, pupils revisit values that promote healthy, respectful relationships each year to build on previous learning. Pupils talk confidently about the importance of treating others as they themselves would like to be treated.
- 48 Many schools use assemblies well to promote their ethos. The faith schools visited for this survey are particularly effective in using collective worship to link the values of the school to the values that inform the practice of their faith.
- 49 Schools with leaders that are committed to the Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes usually have positive approaches to delivering, monitoring and evaluating healthy relationships education. The scheme assesses seven aspects of healthy education including personal development and relationships. The award assesses the school's provision for SRE including the suitability of policies, staff training, and support for pupils, involvement of families and the community, pupil involvement and the content of the curriculum.
- 50 According to data supplied by Public Health Wales at the end of March 2015, 1,317 primary and 212 secondary schools across Wales were enrolled on the scheme. Of these, 275 primary and 36 secondary schools were working towards the National

Quality Award. This award is made to schools that can demonstrate a whole school approach to all areas of health listed within the Healthy Schools Scheme: One hundred and ten primary, seventeen secondary and five special schools have received the Award.

- 51 In many schools surveyed, the provision for PSE is included in the school's cycle of quality assurance activities. These activities mean that PSE is included in lesson observations and the scrutiny of teachers' planning documents and of pupils' work. Around half of schools surveyed report on the quality of the provision for PSE to the governing body.
- 52 In nearly all primary schools, PSE is planned for and delivered by class teachers. In many secondary schools, form tutors deliver the healthy relationships content of PSE. However, in secondary schools there is too much variation in the quality of planning and provision for healthy relationships education. Where primary or secondary school staff have not received specialist training to deliver topics such as female genital mutation and honour based violence, these important aspects are not usually covered.
- 53 A few schools in the survey have effective arrangements in place to ensure that all staff who deliver healthy relationships education are knowledgeable and confident with the subject content. For example, at St Joseph's Catholic and Anglican School in Wrexham, pupils move between staff as part of a carousel system. As a result, staff deliver aspects of the PSE course that they are confident with.
- 54 The following case study shows how Cathays High School in Cardiff provides a high quality programme of health and relationships education. The school ensures that provision is relevant to the needs of all pupils, including those from vulnerable groups.

Case study 5: Cathays High School, Cardiff

Information about the school

Cathays High School is located near the centre of Cardiff and serves the Cathays and Roath areas. However, 61% of pupils come from other parts of Cardiff; with 33% of pupils living in the city's more deprived wards. Around 33% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This figure is above the national average.

There are around 830 pupils on roll. Around 80% of pupils have black or ethnic minority backgrounds. There are currently 64 different languages spoken as a first language in pupils' homes. Around 69% of pupils have English as an additional language. Around 39% have a level of acquisition in English that is less than competent.

The school identified the need to review the content of its healthy relationships education to meet the needs of particular groups of pupils.

Context and background to the practice

Cathays High School is committed to creating an inclusive, safe and positive working environment. The school has invested time and resources in developing its healthy relationships education. The school's provision for healthy relationships education is tailored to the needs of different groups of students, including those at risk.

Description of activity/strategy

The school's inclusion and wellbeing team identifies pupils who are at risk and ensures that these pupils receive focused intervention and support. This includes additional lessons on how to keep safe, counselling support, close monitoring of absence, and increased communication with parents. There are regular opportunities for parents to visit the school to learn how to keep their children safe.

Leaders have effective strategic partnerships with specialist agencies such as Spectrum, BAWSO, Barnardo's and the NSPCC. These organisations provide staff training and deliver sessions on healthy relationships as part of the PSE programme and additional focused support for targeted groups. For example, Spectrum have delivered lessons to all pupils on healthy relationships in Years 9 and 10 and the NSPCC 'Pants' project is delivered to targeted pupils to promote respect for themselves and others in the context of sex and relationships.

Barnardo's and BAWSO have provided awareness training for all staff, with additional training for key staff key staff such as heads of year.

Impact on provision and standards

Pupils are aware of the importance of forming respectful and positive relationships. They are confident when talking about healthy relationships in lessons and with staff.

The school identifies those pupils that are at greater risk and supports them to make healthy choices.

Staff are trained well to identify pupils and risk and know the actions to take in reporting these concerns.

Parents of vulnerable pupils know to whom to turn for support if they have concerns about their child.

Staff training

- 55 Evidence from school inspection reports for the period 2010-2016 shows that nearly all schools have appropriate arrangements to train staff about safeguarding issues. In the best examples, this training is part of the induction process for all staff and is revisited regularly to update staff on changes to legislation and statutory guidance.

Designated senior persons (DSPs) in schools receive appropriate additional training to support their work with multi-agency teams in managing safeguarding and child protection procedures.

- 56 In nearly all schools surveyed, the DSP for safeguarding has received additional training to make them aware of domestic violence, violence against women and sexual violence. However, very few schools have effective arrangements to share this training with other staff.
- 57 Generally, high profile cases of child sexual exploitation covered in the media have raised the awareness of school leaders to this aspect of safeguarding pupils. Leaders at a minority of schools surveyed have taken appropriate action to safeguard pupils who are at risk sexual exploitation and sexual violence. This includes providing additional support for these pupils in school and close partnership working with parents, community leaders, the education welfare service, social services and the police. Senior leaders in these schools have received appropriate training relating to violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV).
- 58 Only around half of schools surveyed were aware of the Welsh Government statutory guidance, 'The National Training Framework on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence' (Welsh Government, 2016a). Staff in only a very few schools have accessed the training. In order to access the online training staff have to log on using a local authority email address. This stops staff from schools in the independent sector from accessing the training. At the time of the survey the training was in its pilot phase and was only available to schools in areas covered by two of the seven local health boards in Wales.

The impact of Welsh Government guidance

- 59 Only a very few of the headteachers surveyed are aware of the Welsh Government and Welsh Women's Aid Good Practice Guide: 'A Whole Education Approach to Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence in Wales (Welsh Government, 2015). As a result, only a very few schools have implemented a whole school approach to preventing these issues.
- 60 Most school leaders are not aware of the toolkits for primary and secondary schools produced by the Welsh Government to support the delivery of healthy relationships education and implement the good practice guidance.
- 61 Only a very few governing bodies are aware of the practical guide for governors, 'Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (Welsh Government, 2016a). In the very few schools where governors have responded to this guidance, they have used the useful self-reflection questions in the annex to help them monitor their policies and arrangements for delivering healthy relationships education. However, it is too early to evaluate the impact of this work.
- 62 The following case study shows how Pen-Y-Dre High School in Merthyr Tydfil has used Welsh Government guidance to implement a whole-school approach to healthy relationships education. The strategy adopted by the school promotes gender equality and includes a clear focus on preventing violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

Case study 6: Pen-Y-Dre High School

Information about the school

Pen-Y-Dre is an English-medium 11-16 school maintained by Merthyr Tydfil local authority. There are 549 pupils on roll. Around 33% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average of 17.4%.

The school serves a catchment area consisting of the Gurnos Estate, as well as a number of valley communities on the edge of the Brecon Beacons. Pupils come mainly from six partner primary schools. Seventy per cent of pupils live in the 20% most deprived areas in Wales.

The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is around 49%, which is significantly higher than the national average of 25%.

Context and background to the practice

Pen-Y-Dre High School is committed to the wellbeing of pupils, staff and the local community. Leaders, including governors, recognise and understand the important role that education has in promoting healthy relationships and reducing domestic abuse in society. The school has built strong partnerships with specialist agencies, who support the school to implement the nine elements of a whole-education approach to tackling violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence as set out in Welsh Government guidance.

Description of activity/strategy

A senior leader has responsibility for mapping and monitoring the school's actions to implement the nine elements of the whole-school approach. He co-ordinates the school's actions against targets set out in a detailed development plan for healthy relationships education. Actions are set for staff in departments across the school.

The school promotes healthy relationships through a wide range of activities including assemblies, themed days, its website, parent workshops and through lessons across the curriculum. Teachers in a wide range of subjects deliver healthy relationships education to pupils in all year groups to ensure that important messages are revisited regularly across the curriculum.

Pupils take ownership of related issues and how they are delivered. Form groups design assemblies weekly for senior staff to deliver. The Student Parliament present their views to the senior leadership team and are active in promoting healthy relationships across the school and in the local community.

Impact on provision and standards

The school has successfully developed an inclusive ethos in which pupils are aware of the importance of healthy relationships and respect equality and diversity. Pupils have the confidence to voice concerns and understand the importance of challenging sexual violence and abuse.

Pupil outcomes

- 63 Evidence from Estyn pre-inspection learner questionnaires for the period 2010–2016 shows that most pupils in schools across Wales feel safe in school and know whom to talk to if they are worried.
- 64 Many schools use a range of strategies to help pupils to develop positive attitudes towards being healthy and safe.
- 65 Schools with effective PSE programmes teach pupils well so that they understand issues such as peer pressure, coercive behaviour, domestic abuse and homophobic bullying. This helps them to make relevant choices and sensible decisions when dealing with these issues.
- 66 Where SRE is delivered well, pupils develop confidence in thinking and talking about sex and relationships. This helps to raise pupils' awareness and self-esteem when dealing with difficult situations and making important choices.
- 67 In schools with an ethos where pupils respect the rights of others and understand the importance of diversity and equality, pupils contribute well to wider community events and develop a greater sense of social responsibility. As a result, pupils develop a good understanding of the needs and rights of others within their local community and become active and informed citizens.
- 68 The following case study shows how pupils at Ysgol Plasmawr in Cardiff take the lead in promoting gender equality within both their school and the wider community.

Case study 7: Ysgol Plasmawr

Information about the school

Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Plasmawr is a Welsh-medium school that is maintained by Cardiff local authority, for boys and girls aged between 11 and 19 years. The school is situated in Fairwater in Cardiff. The school serves the western side of the city and has a very wide catchment area. There are currently 1,002 pupils on roll.

Context and background to the practice

The school places a high priority on pupil participation and encourages pupils to develop their leadership skills through organising a wide range of conferences and assemblies that have a focus on healthy relationships and respect for others. The school also promotes effective peer to peer support through training pupils as mentors for the development of academic and social skills.

Description of activity/strategy

There are effective means for pupils from across the school to work with each other to develop positive relationships. For example, assemblies and all age conferences focus on important issues such as gender stereotyping in the mass media, sports, toy making and the world of work. Pupils benefit from being part of campaigning groups such as 'Merched Mentrus' (Enterprising Girls) to promote sexual equality and healthy relationships, 'Bechgyn Bonheddig' (Noble Boys) to develop social skills, 'Digon' (Enough) to tackle homophobic attitudes and 'Balch' (Proud) to celebrate the school's multicultural community.

'NewidFfem' is a pupil led initiative that promotes gender equality within the school community. It has succeeded in raising awareness of gender issues faced by pupils and in changing the attitudes of pupils and teachers towards feminism and gender equality. The group is responsible for organising monthly conferences where every pupil has the opportunity to discuss current affairs concerning gender equality. The group challenges traditional gender based attitudes towards careers. Members of the NewidFfem group have shared their work successfully with pupils from other schools through being part of the AGENDA project.

Impact on provision and standards

Pupils develop as active and informed citizens. They have the skills and confidence to challenge inequality and unhealthy disrespectful attitudes. They act as ambassadors of healthy relationships education through working with younger pupils in local primary schools to raise awareness of gender equality. Pupils' participation in the school community is comprehensive. The way in which pupils lead contemporary and innovative mentoring groups is a significant strength of the school.

Appendix 1: Evidence base

The findings and recommendations in this report draw on:

- evidence from inspection outcomes
- evidence from a survey questionnaire
- visits to schools
- interviews with representatives of specialist agencies

The thirteen schools selected for visits had been identified as having strong practice in aspects of healthy relationships education as a result of Estyn inspections. In these visits, inspectors:

- reviewed curriculum plans and documentation
- met representative groups of pupils
- held discussions with middle and senior leaders responsible for PSE

Information was also provided by a further thirteen primary, eight secondary and one special school through an on line survey questionnaire. The sample takes account of geographical location, socio-economic background, size of school and linguistic contexts.

Specialist agencies were identified in Estyn inspection reports as having strategic partnerships with schools around the delivery of healthy relationships education.

Schools visited as part of the survey were:

- Brackla Primary School, Bridgend
- Cathays High School, Cardiff
- Connah's Quay High School, Flintshire
- Dinas Powys Community Primary School, Vale of Glamorgan
- Maindee Community Primary School, Newport
- Pen Y Cwm Special School, Blaenau Gwent
- St Helen's Roman Catholic Primary School, Caerphilly
- St Joseph's Catholic & Anglican High School, Wrexham
- St Woolos Primary School, Newport
- Ysgol Golwg Y Cwm, Powys
- Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Plasmawr, Cardiff
- Ysgol Llanddulas, Conwy
- Ysgol Pen-Y-Dre, Merthyr Tydful
- Ysgol Uwchradd Tywyn, Gwynedd

Sealand Community. Primary. School, Flintshire provided evidence through telephone contact.

Specialist agencies that contributed to the report were:

- Barnardo's Better Futures Project, Cardiff
- BAWSO, Cardiff
- Hafan Cymru Spectrum Project, Cardiff
- Governors Wales
- Gwent VAWDA
- Police Wales School Liaison Programme
- Public Health Wales
- Welsh Healthy Schools Network
- National Adviser for Violence against Women and other forms of Gender-based Violence, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence

Appendix 2: Glossary

BAWSO	BAWSO is an all Wales provider delivering specialist services to people from black and ethnic minority backgrounds who are affected by domestic abuse and other forms of abuse, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, human trafficking/slavery & prostitution.
Cyberbullying	The use of electronic communication to bully a person, typically by sending messages of an intimidating or threatening nature
Domestic abuse	Abuse where the victim of it is or has been associated with the abuser. Abuse means physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or financial abuse.
Hwb	Hwb (hwb.wales.gov.uk) is key component of the Welsh Government's Learning in Digital Wales programme. Hwb provides all maintained schools in Wales with consistent access to a wide range of high quality digital learning tools and bilingual resources that can support the transformation of classroom practices.
Jiwsj	Jiwsj is Family Planning Association sexual health education and training service funded by Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB). It delivers sexual health and relationships education (SRE) to groups of vulnerable young people in education and community settings and provides SRE training programmes to BCUHB staff throughout North Wales.
Personal, social education (PSE)	Programmes to support learners to be personally and socially effective by providing learning experiences in which they can develop and apply skills, explore personal attitudes and values, and acquire appropriate knowledge and understanding
PLASC	Census information collected by Welsh Government in January each year from all maintained schools. The information is used by Welsh Government to ensure accurate targeting of funding and develop and monitor policy.
Sexual violence	Sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, or threats of violence of a sexual nature

Sex and relationships education (SRE)

The range of learning and support that schools provide regarding the emotional, physical and social aspects of relationships, sexual health and wellbeing, to enable children and young people to understand bodily changes, manage sexual feelings and enjoy safe, responsible and happy relationships

Spectrum

Spectrum is a project funded by Welsh Government to raise awareness of domestic abuse and associated issues in primary and secondary schools across Wales.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is an international human rights treaty that grants all children and young people (aged 17 and under) a comprehensive set of rights. The UK signed the convention on 19 April 1990 and ratified it on 16 December 1991, and it came into force on 15 January 1992.

Violence against women and girls

Gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence where the victim is female

Numbers – quantities and proportions

nearly all =	with very few exceptions
most =	90% or more
many =	70% or more
a majority =	over 60%
half =	50%
around half =	close to 50%
a minority =	below 40%
few =	below 20%
very few =	less than 10%

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