## Supplementary Material 9: Summary of policy and practice stakeholder meeting 2

Positive Choices and Project Respect Second Stakeholder Meeting

*14th June 2019 Summary Note*

**Chair:** Alison Hadley (Teenage Pregnancy Knowledge Exchange, Bedfordshire University)

**Attendees:** Jackie Behan (Department for Education [DfE]), Chris Bonell (London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine [LSHTM]), Sara Bragg (LSHTM), Jayne Bullough (Rape Crisis South London), Rona Campbell (University of Bristol), Dimitrios Charalampopoulos (University of Bristol), Zoe Couzens (NHS Wales), Hartley Dutczak (LSHTM), Rebecca Emerson (Public Health England [PHE]), Lucy Emmerson (Sex Education Form), Lindsey Gullick (National Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children [NSPCC]), Amelia Jenkinson (Sexplain), Amy Johnson (Zero Tolerance), Jenny Lloyd (University of Bedfordshire), Vanessa Lucas (Local Government Association), Janis Marsh (London Borough of Lambeth), Rebecca Meiksin (LSHTM), Pam Miller (NSPCC), Kirstin Mitchell (University of Glasgow), Dolly Padalia (Sexplain), Ruth Ponsford (LSHTM), Roary Pownall (Ofsted), Emma Rigby (Association for Young People’s Health [AYPH]), Naomi Rudoe (University of Westminster), Nerissa Tilouche (LSHTM), Andrew Williams (South West Grid for Learning)

**Apologies:** Jonathan Baggaley (PSHE Association), Claire Robson (PHE), Rachael Scott (University of Sunderland), Laura Tomson (Zero Tolerance)

Welcome and introduction

Chair Alison Hadley welcomed everyone to the meeting. Following a brief reflection on the initial Positive Choices and Project Respect stakeholder meeting (in March 2018) and a review of today’s agenda, she shared a brief overview of the status of statutory RSE for England schools and welcomed today’s attendance by representatives from DfE and Ofsted.

Presentations

Sara Bragg (LSHTM) and Ruth Ponsford (LSHTM) shared an update on progress in the ongoing Positive Choices pilot trial since the first stakeholder meeting in March 2018. Chris Bonell (LSHTM) and Rebecca Meiksin (LSHTM) then presented an overview of the recently-completed Project Respect pilot trial and findings from its process evaluation. Lindsey Gullick (NSPCC) presented on NSPCC’s experience of supporting implementation of Project Respect in secondary schools. Slides from these presentations have been distributed along with this summary note.

Facilitated small group discussions: Next steps for Project Respect?

Following the presentations, meeting participants were split into breakout groups for facilitated discussion about the following questions relating to next steps for Project Respect:

* 1. 1. Where do we go from here? a. What are the implications of new statutory Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) guidance for Project Respect and other dating and relationship violence (DRV)/sexual harassment targeted interventions?
  2. b. Should DRV prevention be taken forward as part of a broader RSE intervention?
  3. 2. Should we seek to involve local authorities in future trials to support delivery/implementation? If so, what role could they best play?
  4. 3. How can schools be best supported to select committed specialist teachers to deliver DRV/RSE programmes and allow time for training and lesson preparation?
  5. 4. Are there other stakeholders/groups who would be interested in Project Respect findings/find them useful? If so, how should we share findings with them (e.g., presentations, written briefings, something more interactive, etc.)? a. Process evaluation findings
  6. b. Survey findings on DRV prevalence

Main points from these discussions are summarised below.

* 1. **1. Where do we go from here? a. What are the implications of new statutory RSE guidance for Project Respect and other DRV/sexual harassment targeted interventions?**
  2. **b. Should DRV prevention be taken forward as part of a broader RSE intervention?**

Participants tended to support integrating DRV content into a broader RSE intervention – potentially Positive Choices, pending results of its pilot. They suggested that a comprehensive RSE intervention aligned with DfE guidance for incoming statutory RSE could be a valuable resource for schools, and they thought teaching about sensitive topics such as healthy relationships and coercion might be easier when done alongside other topics addressed in RSE. Participants suggested this integration would mean bringing some elements of Project Respect, rather than the full intervention, into an RSE programme.

On the other hand, some thought schools might want the flexibility to implement elements that fill gaps in their existing provision. Participants raised the question of which programme elements could be delivered in isolation and acknowledged that limited evidence on “active ingredients” means the effectiveness of this approach would be unknown. A concern was raised that in an integrated DRV/RSE approach, the issue of sexual violence might be lost or diluted because it is a challenging topic to teach.

Participants highlighted the importance of commitment from school leadership for implementing DRV programming and suggested that the extent to which it is prioritised within Ofsted inspections will, in turn, shape how school leaders prioritise this topic.

Participants raised timing as a potential challenge for scaling up an integrated Project Respect/RSE intervention, if found to be effective in a full trial. As schools are currently in the process of considering their provision needs in preparation for statutory RSE, participants highlighted that a crowded field of interventions are and will continue to be competing for schools’ attention. If effective, an integrated DRV/RSE intervention wouldn’t be publicly available until after statutory RSE comes into effect in autumn 2020.

**2. Should we seek to involve local authorities in future trials to support delivery/implementation? If so, what role could they best play?**

There was broad agreement that Local Authorities (LAs) should be involved, and a variety of suggestions about roles they might play:

- Safeguarding and sexual health services referrals should be linked up with LA services and/or informed by knowledge about locally available resources. LAs could provide up-to-date information on local resources and services.

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- Some LAs are appointing PSHE leaders, who could be important contacts. Some participants suggested LAs would be most useful for connecting researchers with schools (e.g., during study recruitment), not for programme delivery itself.

- LAs might like to know which schools are taking part in a trial, and if useful could facilitate connecting intervention schools with each other for added support.

- LAs could support bringing in external speakers by connecting schools with specialists and/or potentially by providing a speaker budget.

- It could be useful for LAs to see the data (e.g., DRV prevalence data from student surveys) collected in the course of the research.

Some participants suggested involving existing local networks, youth and community organisations, and (where they exist) Healthy Schools Forums/Networks. Participants noted that the Academies programme means that many schools are no longer under LA control. Several therefore mentioned the need to engage with Multi-Academy Trusts and Academy chains, and there was a suggestion that some of these might be less interested than LAs in health and wellbeing.

**3. How can schools be best supported to select committed specialist teachers to deliver DRV/RSE programmes and allow time for training and lesson preparation?**

Participants highlighted the need to invest financially in teacher training, including providing money for staff cover, and suggested that formal policies – incoming statutory RSE, an emphasis on teaching quality by Ofsted, and national standards for Relationships, Sex and Health Education teaching competencies – could help drive prioritisation of training for high-quality RSE delivery. Groups suggested a number of potential models for delivery:

- A model of one lead teacher with a group of specialist teachers

- Recruiting and appointing specialist teachers

- Drawing on teachers from other schools

- Developing a network of specialist teachers working in a number of schools, though it would need to be determined which body would commission the network

- Asking for volunteers among school staff and allowing them time to go through the process of specialised training

- Acknowledging that the range of topics covered in Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) are interlinked in young people’s lives, Emma Rigby (AYPH) recommended a model focusing on specialist teachers with the capacity to delivery RSE as well as other PSHE topics and emphasised the importance of senior staff support for PSHE in the school

- A model, supported by SEF, whereby school staff are trained and then receive ongoing support as they embark on teaching, including opportunities to observe specialist teachers before they do and to be observed supportively while teaching.

In terms of delivering training, it was noted as a challenge that INSET days tend to be packed with content planned far in advance. Participants raised the concern that online training meant more work for teachers to undertake on their own, and problems with teacher retention were raised as a challenge. A participant from Sexplain suggested that flexibility in training can be helpful, noting that they provide teaching in the evenings and weekends, which they see as an appealing option for teachers who are committed but unable to attend during the workday. The Christopher Winter Project was mentioned, which provides RSE training for teachers in-line with the Ofsted framework. 4

* 1. **4. Are there other stakeholders/groups who would be interested in Project Respect findings/find them useful? If so, how should we share findings with them (e.g., presentations, written briefings, something more interactive, etc.)? a. Process evaluation findings**
  2. **b. Survey findings on DRV prevalence**

Participants suggested a range of stakeholders who would be interested in findings from Project Respect, including young people, teachers’ unions, the PSHE Association, the Education Endowment Fund, women’s organisations, voluntary sector networks including the Young People’s Health Partnership and the Health and Wellbeing Alliance, and Parliamentarians. Some participants were surprised by the high rates of DRV reported in student surveys and felt these were important to disseminate. Others expressed concerns about how these findings would be shared, especially data on sexual DRV. These participants highlighted the importance of message framing, especially when reporting on gendered aspects of sexual DRV victimisation and perpetration, and recommended consulting with organisations that have direct experience of working with young people who have experienced sexual violence to develop sensitive and constructive messaging around this issue.

Final reflections

Roary Pownall (Ofsted), Jayne Bullough (Rape Crisis South London) and Jackie Behan (DfE) were invited to share their reflections on the day’s discussions.

Roary Pownall (Ofsted) emphasised the high rates of DRV reported in student surveys and the role that schools can play in shaping social norms. He said we have a ‘moral imperative’ to do what we can, even if we can’t fully solve this issue. He highlighted the opportunity presented by new statutory RSE and said that some schools will already have strong RSE delivery and others will be looking for a new scheme and assessing what aspects of statutory RSE programmes cover. Points raised in the ensuring discussion included:

- The potential for health interventions to increase attachment to education, improve attendance and reduce rates of exclusion should be highlighted to schools

- LAs could play a role in sharing study findings and in shaping questions for a process evaluation to explore

Roary discussed what Ofsted inspectors will look for in relation to RSE, including the level of leadership on this issue and school leaders signalling to their staff that it is an important issue; evidence of a ‘joined up’ approach; handling of sexism and incidents of abuse in the school; how well-trained and comfortable teachers are to deliver RSE; and the school’s level of reflection about and the quality of delivery.

Jayne Bullough (Rape Crisis South London) emphasised the need for RSE teaching to be sensitive to survivors of abuse, who will always be in the classroom. She observed that teaching on sexual violence tends to get diluted within broader interventions and suggested schools should be encouraged and supported to work with outside specialists to address sexual violence. She stressed that while charities often don’t have the funds to conduct ‘gold standard’ evaluations of their work, they have highly specialised knowledge and decades of experience on the ground and they are an important resource for teaching about this very sensitive topic.

Jackie Behan (DfE) shared that DfE is currently considering how best to support schools in meeting their training needs as statutory RSE comes into effect, and DfE is working closely with schools to comprehensively understand their needs. She said DfE is currently working with more than 1,000 “early adopter” schools and will be developing an RSE implementation how-to guide for schools. 5

Jackie highlighted that the Project Respect and Positive Choices research comes at an important time and said there is a need for quality-assured materials to support evidence-based practice in RSE. She also shared that at the time of this Stakeholder meeting DfE was preparing to publish final Relationships, Sex and Health Education guidance, which would be similar to the draft currently available.

Learning and next steps for Positive Choices

While discussions focused mainly on next steps for Project Respect, which had recently completed its pilot trial, much of the day’s discussion was also useful for informing the process evaluation and potential development of Positive Choices to include additional DRV content and address requirements for statutory RSE post-pilot. The discussion also provided useful recommendations to support the implementation of a revised intervention.

The Positive Choices pilot came to an end in July 2019 and we plan to report our findings to stakeholders in the new year, with a particular focus on the acceptability of the intervention to staff and students and feasibility of delivery in secondary schools.