# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Launch of the public consultation on updated curriculum guidance for Relationships and Sexuality Education.** |
| **DATE**  | **18 February 2019** |
| **BY** | **Kirsty Williams, Minister for Education** |

In March 2017, I established the Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) Expert Panel to explore opportunities and issues regarding the ability of schools to provide high quality learning regarding healthy relationships and sex education. In December 2017, the panel published 11 recommendations regarding steps to improve delivery of this subject within the current curriculum and the new curriculum for Wales.

Following consideration of the Expert Panel’s recommendations, I announced that I would be supporting their implementation. One of these recommendations was that updated guidance should be issued for the current curriculum, that the name of this subject area should change from SRE to Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) and that it should be statutory in the new curriculum.

In the recently published white paper, *Our national mission: a transformational curriculum – proposals for a new legislative framework*, we are proposing that RSE should be statutory in the new curriculum. We are not waiting, however, for the introduction of our new arrangements to start the process of improving the quality of RSE. We want to ensure that support for schools and practitioners to plan effective RSE provision is made available as soon as possible.

That is why I am announcing today, the launch of a public consultation into our updated curriculum guidance document – *Relationships and Sexuality Education in Schools*. This guidance is intended to provide schools with additional advice and support regarding

implementing a whole school approach to RSE, aligned to the evidence put forward by the expert panel. The public consultation on this guidance has been published today and I would encourage practitioners from all settings to let us know their thoughts on what we are proposing. The consultation can be accessed at:

 <https://beta.gov.wales/draft-guidance-relationships-and-sexuality-education>

The curriculum, whilst important, is not the only area through which we are providing greater support for RSE. Improving professional learning opportunities is also a key component in helping schools deliver high quality learning in this area. Last year, I provided £200,000 to consortia to start the process of identifying professional learning needs around RSE. I am pleased with the work that this funding has enabled, with each consortia working with their schools and practitioners to understand the needs of learners in their locality and target support accordingly.

I would like to thank the SRE expert panel and their chair, Professor Emma Renold, for their support. Professor Renold has continued to work with my officials and pioneer schools to develop and embed the statutory requirement for RSE across all of its areas of learning and experience in the new curriculum.

I know there is still much to be done to better secure the good physical, mental and emotional health of young people in Wales. I will continue to work, in partnership with schools, practitioners and stakeholders to ensure that we build upon these achievements as we move forward with the reform of our education system.