



Department of
Education

www.education-ni.gov.uk

Aoibhinn Treanor
Clerk to the Committee for Education
Room 375a
Parliament Buildings
Stormont
Belfast BT4 3XX

Rathgael House
43 Balloo Road
Rathgill
BANGOR
BT19 7PR

Tel No: (028) 9127 9611

Email: george.platt@education-ni.gov.uk

Your Ref: 2025-377

31 March 2025

Dear Aoibhinn

Thank you for your letter of 20 March requesting details of the work the Department has undertaken in response to Recommendation 181 of the Report of the Gillen Review into Serious Sexual Crime. As the Committee has noted the response has been marked as complete – a decision agreed by the full Gillen Review Implementation Team, led by the Department of Justice.

Relationships and Sexuality Education is taught in all grant-aided schools, including special schools and to young people with special educational needs in mainstream schools. Young people with SEN and those with disabilities are taught the value developing and understanding healthy relationships including respect for what make young people who are the same and different. Young people also have the opportunity to learn about their own and others' feelings and emotions. As young people progress prior learning is built on and young people learn about their self-esteem and self-confidence and to stay safe.

While the statutory minimum content applies to pupils from a range of backgrounds and vulnerabilities, the approach to how these young people are taught will vary depending of the complexity of their needs and schools will tailor their approach in line with an RSE policy which they should have developed.

Between 2018 and 2023 and in response to the Gillen Review Report, the Department funded the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) to develop bespoke resources for pupils with special educational needs which explores how sensitive issues can be taught and is an integral part across PDMU and LLW. The link to the relevant area of the RSE Hub is at [Special Educational Needs \(SEN\) | CCEA](#)

The Committee will note that this area of the Hub, commissioned by the Department, provides important information, resources and links for schools who teach vulnerable young people. As with all the resources and materials available on the Hub, it will be

a matter for schools, including special schools, to decide which they should use or adapt to meet the needs of their pupils including those who are disabled, those with sensory disability and those who are members of marginalised communities.

Whilst the Gillen Review action is considered complete, the curriculum should be kept under regular review to ensure it remains fit for purpose. The Committee will be aware of the ongoing Curriculum Review which I commissioned. I look forward to receiving the report in the coming weeks and considering any recommendations arising for the future of the curriculum.

I trust this explains the Department's position.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Platt', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

George Platt
Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer