

Aoibhinn Treanor
Clerk
Committee for Education
Northern Ireland Assembly
committee.education@niassembly.gov.uk

Your Ref: 2025.338

x February 2025

Dear Aoibhinn

Thank you for your email dated 28 January 2025 requesting information regarding Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) at the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE). I am responding in my role as Head of Learner Services Branch with responsibility for the college's Student Support Service.

CAFRE is an integral part of the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs and delivers Further Education and Higher Education programmes across its three campuses at Greenmount (Antrim), Loughry (Cookstown) and Enniskillen.

At CAFRE we do not have a formal assessment of learner awareness in respect of RSE. The Student Support Service provides a varied range of information to promote positive attitudes towards relationships and sexuality. This is widely promoted and available to learners studying on full-time and part-time further education and higher education programmes. Targeted support is provided when identified by a learner, a member of staff, or an external partner. This is generally provided in association with the Northern Health and Social Care Trust (NHSCT), the Western Health and Social Care Trust (WHST) and the voluntary sector.

Student Support Services have in place several initiatives to provide RSE resources. In collaboration with NHSCT, WHST, voluntary organisations and youth sector organisations the service aims to provide learners with information and resources that are factual, evidence-based and safe. RSE content is provided at induction when safeguarding procedures are outlined and initiatives such as the C-Card scheme are promoted.

Fresher events held each October, and student wellbeing events, held each February are pivotal opportunities for learners to engage with organisations who provide information, support, and advice on RSE. Organisations who support these information events include Health and Social Care Trusts (Northern and Western), Women's Aid, Common Youth, PSNI, NEXUS and Positive Life. Student Support Services meet regularly with colleagues in NHSCT and WHSCT to discuss RSE health promotions and how CAFRE can be involved in the delivery of initiatives. The Student Support Services team are visible and accessible and offer information, flyers and signposting. The continuous professional development of staff working in this area is reviewed annually with staff having previously received training in various aspects of RSE mostly delivered by the Public Health Agency and organisations such as NEXUS, Cara Friend, and Common Youth.

Initiatives carried out to supplement earlier secondary school teaching is undertaken and focuses on consent, gender, sexual health, contraceptive information, image based sexual violence, domestic and sexual violence, sexually transmitted infections.

CAFRE is committed to promoting the health and wellbeing of all learners. This includes addressing relationship and sexuality education. I hope that the Committee of Education find the information provided helpful.

Kind regards

Valerie Finlay
Head of Learner Services Branch (acting)
College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise.



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

NI Universities and FE Colleges

Date 28/01/2025

Our Ref: 2025.338

Sent by Email:

Dear Sir/Madam,

Relationship and Sexuality Education

The Committee for Education is currently engaged in an inquiry into Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE).

At its meeting on the 15 January 2025, the Committee agreed to write to all the Universities and Further Education colleges to ascertain how they assess students' awareness in respect of RSE; what measures are being put in place to provide RSE resources; and inviting news of any initiatives carried out to supplement earlier secondary school teaching.

I would be grateful for a response at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

Aoibhinn Treanor

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