

Lucy Emmerson is the Director of the Sex Education Forum.

For communication, please email: LEmmerson@ncb.org.uk

Lucy Emmerson

Helping schools to be ready for statutory RSE

The legislation making relationships and sex education (RSE) statutory was passed in an Act of Parliament last March, but the details of what schools will have to provide are yet to be spelt out. Schools are waiting for updated RSE guidance from Government, while the September 2019 start date creeps ever closer in our calendars.

Legislation about sex education has always been fairly complicated, and the new requirements for RSE are no different. At the Sex Education Forum, we try to make things easier to understand, so we put together a set of [frequently asked questions](#) about the new legislation. These cover the differences between primary and secondary school requirements, parent's right to withdraw their children and how the legislation applies to all schools including independent schools, academies, free schools, special schools, maintained schools and faith schools. We have also developed a short [quiz](#) covering key aspects of the legislation, providing a fun way to test your knowledge and share information with colleagues.

With the start date little more than a year away it is important not to lose time. The evidence base about what constitutes effective RSE is very clear, so we have produced a [poster](#) setting out 12 principles for good quality RSE. This is a framework, that starts with placing RSE as an identifiable part of PSHE education, with timetabled lessons, and it prompts schools to consider the key people that need to be involved: parents, staff and pupils, as well as the underpinning values. Schools can use the poster as a prompt for governors and staff to audit how prepared they are for statutory RSE; and it can be

a springboard for discussion with parents and pupils. The principles are supported by NSPCC, The Children's Society, Barnardo's and NCB as well as six education unions. Schools can make their commitment to good quality RSE visible by displaying the poster in the staffroom or reception area. For more in-depth support on implementing the 12 principles, we are producing a series of themed bulletins for our [members](#) this year.

We know from [Ofsted](#) and from [what young people say](#) that the current quality of RSE provision in schools varies greatly. For schools that do not have an established programme of RSE we recommend that a lead teacher for PSHE attends our ['Get ready for statutory'](#) one-day training course, as this will provide the tools, information and skills to implement a programme that is right for your school. Teachers and other school staff who have these foundations under their belt will benefit from ongoing professional development, for example by exploring how inclusive their RSE is, and sampling a range of resources that can foster [LGBT+ and gender equality](#).

The Sex Education Forum [responded](#) to the Government ['call for evidence'](#) on RSE on behalf of our wide range of partners. We will continue to highlight the widespread consensus of support for evidence-based RSE, and to provide our members with up-to-date and accessible information about legislation and research evidence as well as platforms for practice-sharing.

To become more involved, please visit www.sexeducationforum.org.uk