



Coalition of Consent Pop Up Campaign : Putting Sex and Relationship Education on the National Curriculum For All

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Introduction: Why are we campaigning for Sex and Relationship Education in Schools?

Activists across the country are clear- to prevent violence against women and girls we need to do more to ensure both young men and women are supported to develop positive and equal relationships with their peers. Recent research by Women’s Aid and Avon found that 50% of 16-18 year olds wouldn’t know where to go to get support if affected by domestic abuse and 18% were unsure or didn’t believe slapping counted as domestic violence. There is a worrying lack of awareness of what constitutes domestic and sexual abuse and who can support if it’s experienced.

The evidence for the need for action has been further strengthened by recent studies by Ofsted¹ into the quality of sex education provision in the UK and the Office of the Children’s Commissioner into children’s increased exposure to sexualised imagery². A YouGov poll in 2010 found that almost a third (29%) of 16-18-year-old girls say they have been subjected to unwanted sexual touching at school³, and the NSPCC found that a third of girls in relationships aged 13-17 have experienced physical or sexual violence in relationships, while

¹ <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/not-yet-good-enough-personal-social-health-and-economic-education-schools>

² http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/content/publications/content_667

³ http://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/data/files/Schools_Safe_4_Girls/YouGov_poll_for_EVAW_on_sexual_harassment_in_schools_2010.pdf

one in 16 of this group reported experiencing rape⁴. At the same time NSPCC Research has shown that children are facing increased exposure to sexual content through modern communication methods especially 'sexting'. Children as young as twelve are "*worried, confused and, in some cases, upset by the sexual and 'sexting' pressures they face*"⁵

This is an issue that parents and children want to see tackled. The End Violence Against Women Coalition (EVAW) commissioned a poll of parental attitudes to the teaching of healthy relationships as part of sex & relationships education. The YouGov poll found that "86% of UK adults believe that sex and relationships education which 'addresses sexual consent and respectful relationships' should be compulsory in secondary schools."⁶

At the moment, Sex Education is compulsory on the National Curriculum but this focuses primarily on the mechanics and biology of sex as well as good sexual health. We want to put the R into sex education. Whilst families play a key role in mentoring children to overcome these cultural and social pressures, high quality sex and relationship education delivered to both boys and girls is also a vital tool in equipping and empowering young people to cope with the challenges and pressures they face. This should be grounded in a zero tolerance approach to violence against women and girls that is reinforced throughout schools from the curriculum to behaviour policies. Making SRE part of the curriculum would also guarantee standardised materials and resources being made available for teacher training, improving quality.

If children can be made to learn about compound interest⁷ and now compost⁸ through the national curriculum, why not consent?

What Next: Amending The Children and Families Bill

There is currently a piece of legislation passing through Parliament - The [Children and Families Bill](#) – which covers a mixture of legal issues around children and young people including adoption, care and education. Labour has tabled amendments to this Bill which would ensure that all schools provide sex and relationship education for all students. This amendment has been included by Lisa Nandy MP, Sharon Hodgson MP and Stella Creasy MP and is supported by the One Billion Rising Campaign.

This proposal will be debated on Tuesday 11th of June and MPs should have an opportunity to vote on this ensuring that the proposal will be debated in the House of Lords, becoming law at the end of this process. Sex and Relationship Education would have positive effects

⁴ http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/research/findings/partner_exploitation_and_violence_wda68092.html

⁵ http://www.nspcc.org.uk/inform/resourcesforprofessionals/sexualabuse/sexting-research_wda89260.html

⁶ <http://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/news/98/womens-groups-urge-pm-to-take-urgent-action-to-prevent-abuse>

⁷ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/money/2013/feb/07/money-skills-secondary-school-curriculum>

⁸ http://www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/sto/public/school_meals/article1251936.ece

on campaigns to improve sexual health, healthy relationships, reducing violence and abuse and the emotional well being of our children and young people.

Parliament supported a [motion calling for the Government to introduce legislation](#) to make SRE statutory. This Bill represents the first opportunity for this to take place.

The full text of the amendment can be read [here](#) but it will:

1. Add PSHE to National Curriculum;
2. Make age appropriate SRE a statutory component of this curriculum at all 4 Key Stages;
3. Specify that same-sex relationships, sexual violence, domestic violence and sexual consent be part of the curriculum on PSHE

Please note this amendment is New Clause 20 of the Children and Families Bill.

Who are we? A Coalition for Consent

This pop up campaign is being supported by a wide range of organisations including Women's Aid, End Violence Against Women, National Union of Students, the Family Planning Association, Brook, the PHSE Association, The EQUALS coalition, No More Page 3, Everyday Sexism, NSPCC, Terence Higgins Trust and Women's Aid as well as the Labour Party who will be voting for this amendment. Mumsnet will also be sharing details of this campaign with their members.

How you can help this campaign?

Contact your MP to support this amendment- Unfortunately the only time available to debate this issue is next Tuesday (11th June) meaning that there is only time for you to email your MP or find them on social media like Facebook or [Twitter](#). Find out who your MP is and how to contact them here: <http://findyourmp.parliament.uk/>

See the suggested text for an email at the end of this briefing.

Background Information: One Billion Rising UK

One Billion Rising was a day of action on February 14 2013, the 15th anniversary of V-Day, combining [creativity](#) with campaigning. Across the world, in over 200 countries, people danced, campaigned, and raised their voices in protest to end violence against women and girls. Here in the UK over 160 events took place from [Belfast](#) to [Birmingham](#), in [Norwich](#) and in [Cardiff](#) from [Bute](#) and [Glasgow](#) down to [Penzance](#) women, men, boys and girls took place in a huge variety of events. The campaign also secured national media coverage especially on the [Guardian](#) who [live-blogged](#) events from around the country and [Channel 4 news](#).

The One Billion Rising campaign has been looking at how to end violence against women in the UK. The following information reflects the scale of the challenge Britain faces:

- 35 per cent of all murders in England and Wales are domestic homicides.⁹
- In West Yorkshire alone, over the last 6 months, almost 20 per cent of all emergency 999 calls - over 10,000 incidents– were domestic violence-related.¹⁰
- In 2010/11, 728,145 incidents of domestic violence were recorded by the police. Of these, just 14 per cent, or 101,242 incidents, were referred to the Crown Prosecution service for investigation. Of those cases referred, only 63 per cent (or 63,782) ever came to charge and 58 per cent (or 59,101) resulted in a successful prosecution. This means that in 2010/11, only 8 per cent of domestic violence incidents reported to police ended in a prosecution.
- The total cost of domestic abuse to services (the criminal justice system, health, social services, housing and civil legal) amounts to £3.8 billion per year¹¹
- Domestic Violence is more likely to involve repeat victimisation than any other ‘criminalised behaviour’ (*British Crime Survey, 2009*) Repeat victimisation accounted for three-quarters (76%) of all incidents of domestic violence as measured by the 2009/10 BCS.¹²
- In any one year, there are 13 million separate incidents of physical violence or threats of violence against women from partners or former partners. (*Walby and Allen, 2004*)¹³
- 31% of the funding to the domestic violence and sexual abuse sector from local authorities was cut between 2010/11 and 2011/13, a reduction from £7.8 million to £5.4 million. (*Walby 2011*)¹⁴
- According to the 2010/2011 Women’s Aid Survey, on a typical day 3410 women and 2502 children are living in refuge accommodation. However, 230 women, just fewer than 9% of those seeking refuge were turned away due to a lack of space.¹⁵
- The number of Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) has been reduced: in 2011, among 8 major IDVA service providers supporting 13,180 clients, 2 faced cuts of 100%, 3 cuts of 50%, 3 of 40% and 2 of 25%.¹⁶

⁹ <http://www.examiner.com/article/murder-suicides-romantic-relationships-discussed-with-expert-katherine-van-wormer-ph-d>

¹⁰ <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmhansrd/cm120911/halltext/120911h0001.htm>

¹¹ http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/resourcesforprofessionals/domesticabuse/domestic-abuse-statistics_wda87794.html

¹² <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/crime-research/hosb1210/hosb1210-chap2?view=Binary>

¹³ <http://www.avaproject.org.uk/media/28384/hors276.pdf> p22

¹⁴ <http://www.trustforlondon.org.uk/publications-research/gender/professor-sylvia-walby-reports-on-the-impact-of-cuts-on-violence-against-women-services-2.html>

¹⁵ www.womensaid.org.uk/core/core_picker/download.asp?id=3675

¹⁶ <http://www.trustforlondon.org.uk/publications-research/gender/professor-sylvia-walby-reports-on-the-impact-of-cuts-on-violence-against-women-services-2.html>

- [750,000 children a year witness domestic violence](#),
- Only [one in thirty rape victims can expect to see their attacker brought to justice](#)
- [24,000 girls are at risk of female genital mutilation](#).

Here is the suggested text of a possible email to your MP, asking them to support making sex and relationship education a part of the curriculum.

Find out who your MP is and how to contact them here: <http://findyourmp.parliament.uk/>

Dear Rt Hon/Mr/Ms XXXXX,

Legislating for Sex and Relationship Education

I'm writing to you as one of your constituents to ask you to support bringing forward legislation on Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) as part of efforts to safeguard future generations from violence and abuse.

On 14th February 2013 Parliament passed a motion endorsing the One Billion Rising campaign to make sex and relationship education, including a zero tolerance approach to violence and abuse, a requirement for boys and girls. The unopposed motion called on the Government to bring forward legislation on this issue and now a chance has come up to make that happen.

Sharon Hodgson MP has tabled amendments to the Children and Families Bill would provide for clear, high quality and age appropriate Sex and Relationship Education to be made part of the National Curriculum rather than just being an optional subject. The Government has made financial education a requirement so if we can teach children compound interest why can't we teach them about consent?

I hope you will vote in favour of this amendment and if you cannot please let me know what other ways you will encourage the Government to listen to the voice of Parliament and legislate to bring in high quality SRE to give our young people the chance to reflect on and learn about the pressures they now face; giving future generations the skills and knowledge to better protect themselves from violence and abuse.

Yours sincerely,

[Insert name]

[Include your postal address to show that you're a constituent]