

Teaching of LGBTQ History

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 13 Hydref 2020
Petitions Committee | 13 October 2020

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Petition Number: P-05-1022

Petition title: To follow the Scottish Parliament and have LGBTQ Welsh history taught in all Welsh schools.

Text of petition: As someone who grew up under the shadow of Section 28 lack of LGBTQ+ education in schools has affected my entire life. It is unacceptable that the next generation of LGBTQ+ people should grow up this way. Wales has a rich and varied LGBTQ+ history and we believe that teaching this in schools will create a safer and more accepting environment for all.



1. Background

1.1. Current curriculum

The current National Curriculum for Wales comprises the core and foundation subjects which are set out in the Education Act 2002. The core subjects at Key Stages 2 and 3 are maths, English, science and in relation to Welsh speaking schools, Welsh. History is [a foundation subject within the national curriculum](#). The Welsh Government's [History Programme of Study](#) (PDF 155KB) (January 2008) sets out the current requirements for history at Key Stages 2 and 3. Beyond Key Stage 3, the WJEC has published specifications for history at [GCSE](#) and [AS/A level](#). These were introduced for first teaching in 2017 and 2015 respectively.

Delivery of PSE is a statutory requirement of the basic curriculum although content is at the discretion of schools. The non-statutory [Personal and social education framework for 7 to 19-year-olds in Wales](#) (2008) provides a recommended approach and learning outcomes. This includes that at Key Stage 4, learners should be given the opportunity to understand the range of sexual attitudes, relationships and behaviours in society.

Primary schools must provide sex education as contained within the national curriculum in Wales, (for example in the science subject order), but there is no requirement for primary schools to provide sex education as part of the basic curriculum. In secondary schools, and other educational settings that cater for learners of secondary school age, the basic curriculum must include provision for sex education for all registered pupils. The Welsh Government published guidance, [Sex and relationships education in schools](#) in 2010.

1.1.a. New curriculum

Subject to the Senedd passing legislation, the new age 3-16 Curriculum for Wales will be introduced in all maintained schools and publicly funded nursery settings from September 2022 on a phased basis. The [Curriculum and Assessment \(Wales\) Bill](#) was introduced to the Senedd on 6 July 2020. The Bill sets out the four purposes of the curriculum:

- To enable pupils and children to develop as ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives;
- To enable pupils and children to develop as enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work;

- To enable pupils and children to develop as ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world;
- To enable pupils and children to develop as healthy, confident individuals, ready to live fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

The Welsh Government has emphasised that the new Curriculum for Wales will be **purpose-driven rather than content-driven**. Specific learning content is not stipulated in the same way as under the current national curriculum.

The Bill sets out six Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLEs) for the new curriculum and the mandatory elements within them. The AoLEs are:

- Expressive Arts
- Health and Well-being
- Humanities
- Languages, Literacy and Communication
- Mathematics and Numeracy
- Science and Technology.

The mandatory elements within the AoLEs will be English; Relationships and Sexuality Education; Religion, Values and Ethics and Welsh.

History will be taught within the Humanities AoLE. The Humanities AoLE also encompasses geography, religious education, business studies and social studies. The new curriculum is non-prescriptive and does not include a list of topics that all schools must teach.

The Bill provides for a ‘What Matters Code’ to set out key concepts of learning and experience in each AoLE (including Humanities) and that schools’ curricula must encompass each of these concepts. The Welsh Government has published ‘Statements of What Matters’ in the Curriculum for Wales documentation. This is intended to provide the ‘national approach’ which the Minister for Education says will ensure consistency for learners.

The provisional statutory guidance on the Humanities AoLE, was published in January 2020.

1.2. Relationships and Sexuality Education

Following the review of the Expert Panel, chaired by Professor Emma Renold, the Minister announced in 2018 that the current requirement to teach sex education

in secondary schools would be extended to primary schools but that this be ‘age-appropriate’ and under the revised focus on ‘Relationships and Sexuality Education’. The Welsh Government consulted in February 2019 on draft guidance for schools on provision of RSE.

The draft guidance states that:

Inclusive RSE recognises the importance of diversity and difference across a range of identities related to relationships, sex, gender, sexuality and that this diversity is a source of strength and is foundational to a cohesive, fair and equitable society.

2. Position in Scotland

The Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) is the national curriculum in Scotland used from nursery to secondary school. It was implemented in 2010. It is similar in design to the new curriculum in Wales in that it is purpose rather than content driven. CfE is intended to foster four capacities in all young people:

- successful learners
- confident individuals
- responsible citizens
- effective contributors

Relationships, sexual health and parenthood is part of the Health and Well-being curriculum area.

On 19 April 2017, the Scottish Government set up the LGBTI Inclusive Education Working Group. The Group's report was published on 8 November 2018. Included in the Group's recommendations was that the Scottish Government should develop national guidance which clearly states expectations regarding LGBTI inclusive education. They also recommended that the 2014 Conduct of relationships, sexual health and parenthood education in schools Statutory Guidance should be updated to use a ‘thematic outcomes’ based approach. The outcomes will cover various themes relating to LGBTI equality and inclusion, including:

- Understanding LGBTI terminology and identities;
- Representations of LGBTI people and their relationships in ways which seek to deliver understanding and equality;

- Recognising and understanding homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia within school and their impact on wider society;
- Tackling homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia within school and their impact on wider society;
- Understanding prejudice in relation to the LGBTI community and an awareness of the history of LGBTI equalities movements; and,
- An understanding of respect, privacy and consent.

The Scottish Government accepted all the recommendations. All state schools will be supported to teach LGBTI equality and inclusion across different age groups and subjects, grouped under various themes. The aim is for these recommendations to be delivered by the end of March 2021.

3. Position in England

In England, from September 2020, Relationships Education is compulsory in all primary schools; Relationships and Sex Education is compulsory in all secondary schools, and Health Education is compulsory in all state-funded schools. Due to the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, while the legal provisions came into force on 1 September 2020, schools may delay their introduction of the new requirements until summer 2021 if they are not ready to begin teaching the revised subjects.

The Department for Education guidance (June 2019) states that schools are free to determine how they address LGBT specific content, but they expect:

all pupils to have been taught LGBT content at a timely point

and that:

At the point at which schools consider it appropriate to teach their pupils about LGBT, they should ensure that this content is fully integrated into their programmes of study for this area of the curriculum rather than delivered as a standalone unit or lesson.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that

these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.