

# Scottish Government submission of 24 January 2023

## PE1991/A: Develop an educational resource on abortion

Thank you for your e-mail of 30 November 2022 on behalf of the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee regarding Petition PE1991 seeking to develop an educational resource on abortion. I am replying as I am responsible for relationships, sexual health and parenthood (RSHP) education policy in the Scottish curriculum and I apologise for not meeting the Committee's deadline.

The Scottish Government is committed to ensuring all children and young people receive high quality RSHP education, an integral part of the health and wellbeing area of the Scottish curriculum, which has been in place since 2010. The curriculum is not mandatory, it is up to teachers to decide which resources they use to deliver relevant and engaging learning. However, we are specific about the need for children and young people to gain knowledge appropriate to their age and stage of education. The aim of RSHP education is help children and young people build positive, safe and healthy relationships as they grow older. Young people should experience learning which is factual, objective and enables them to make informed choices that promote and protect their own and others' sexual health and wellbeing. Content should be delivered in a non-judgemental manner, within a framework of sound values and an awareness of the law, including that on sexual behaviour.

There are many resources available to teachers to help them deliver meaningful RSHP learning, a summary of some of these are available on [Education Scotland's National Improvement Hub](#). One of those resources, [www.rshp.scot](http://www.rshp.scot), was developed and published by a collaborative partnership of health boards and local authorities, to help improve delivery of the existing curriculum. It provides teachers with a valuable resource to support children and young people's learning and understanding in RSHP education. The resource provides teachers with factual information about sexual and reproductive health, in a non-judgemental manner, to enable children and young people to make informed decisions about their lives. In developing the resource, it was ensured learning outcomes remained age appropriate in all Curriculum for Excellence levels.

All of the content available from this online resource was quality assured and peer reviewed by a partnership of educators, health professionals and third sector organisations. The resource was also informed by extensive feedback over the 2018/19 academic year. Draft content was posted online during 2018 and educators, parents and carers were encouraged to comment and use the drafts. This allowed for a process of review and refinement until final content was agreed and the resource was published in September 2019. As well as an open process that allowed anyone to contribute, a number of schools were recruited as pilot settings. During this period the resource was informed by over 1,000 primary and secondary teachers and piloted in 38 schools across the country.

In terms of the area highlighted in the petition, the resource contains an age appropriate learning activity covering this area at third/fourth level (S1-S3) at <https://rshp.scot/third-fourth-level/#abortion>. This is designed as part of a progressive learning experience where children and young people will develop their knowledge around their sexual health and which services they may access in the future to support their sexual health.

However, the use of this resource remains a matter for individual schools and the professional judgement of teachers, based on the needs of the pupils in their classroom.

I hope the Committee find this letter helpful in considering the petition.