



# Women and Equalities Committee

## Oral evidence: [Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence in Schools - 14 06 16, HC 91](#)

Tuesday 14 June 2016

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Members present: Mrs Maria Miller (Chair); Ruth Cadbury; Maria Caulfield; Angela Crawley; Mims Davies; Mrs Flick Drummond; Gill Furniss; Ben Howlett; Jess Phillips.

Questions 143-208

### Witnesses

**I:** Gareth Edwards, Principal Policy and Performance Advisor, Norfolk Police/National Police Chiefs' Council, Rosamund McNeil, Head of Education and Equality, NUT, Jane Millward, Senior HMI, Ofsted, and Gwendolyn Sterk, National Services Development Officer, Welsh Women's Aid.

Written evidence from witnesses:

- [National Police Chiefs' Council – Children and Young Person Business Area](#)
- [National Union of Teachers](#)
- [Ofsted](#)

## Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Gareth Edwards, Rosamund McNeil, Jane Millward and Gwendolyn Sterk.

**Chair:** Good morning. I thank everybody for coming along to the second evidence session of our inquiry into sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools. We are most grateful to you for taking time out. We know how long it takes to prepare for sessions like this and to come to Parliament, so thank you, on behalf of the whole Committee.

You will know the format. There are several areas of questioning that we want to take the opportunity to talk to you about, and each Member will do that in turn. We are keen to cover as much ground as possible, so please excuse me if I move things on a bit if we need to cover more ground more rapidly. That is usually because my colleagues are asking very long questions, not that you are giving long answers. I apologise for that in advance. After that short introduction, I will hand over to Ben, who will start our questioning today.

Q143 **Ben Howlett:** No pressure on my normally very long questions. Thank you and welcome. The question I have to kick off is probably best answered by Ofsted and the NUT. We have received an awful lot of written and oral evidence suggesting that there is quite a lot of confusion around what is mandatory in this area, not least for myself and some of our colleagues. The Education Committee's report into PSHE and SRE also noted the confusion between DfE statements and Ofsted statements regarding the status of SRE. What is the current situation and how clear is it?

**Chair:** I am sorry that I did not ask you to introduce yourselves, so if when you speak for the first time you could please say the organisation you come from, I would be most grateful.

**Jane Millward:** I am Jane Millward, senior HMI with Ofsted. With regards to SRE, we would ask that maintained schools and academies deliver SRE. That is usually done through the PSHE curriculum. We would expect that to be age appropriate for the children they are teaching. Ofsted's role would be to look at the quality of the SRE and the PSHE curriculum. It is clearly not Ofsted's responsibility or jurisdiction to say whether it is taught. That is a matter for the Government.

At key stage 3 and 4, in secondary schools, maintained schools and academies, we would want the SRE curriculum. There would also be a policy statement for younger children in the school that we would want to see; what is their position statement. They don't have to teach it but we would want to see how they are developing children through relationships, for example. That would then come through the PSHE curriculum more so.



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With schools that do not have to follow the national curriculum we would want to see, and look for on inspections, a broad and balanced curriculum. Where a school is not obliged to follow the national curriculum, they would still have to evidence that broad and balanced curriculum and we will be looking to see whether children are prepared for the next stage of their education. That involves the PSHE curriculum and also social, moral, spiritual and cultural curriculum, and clearly all of those are very much interwoven.

**Rosamund McNeil:** My name is Rosamund McNeil, representing the National Union of Teachers. I am head of education and equality policy at the NUT. Thank you for having us. You asked about clarity. I think that, on balance, head teachers and teachers are clear. The sciencey elements, if you like, are the bits that people understand are statutory. It is the Education Act 1996 and the sex education elements of national curriculum science that are mandatory for pupils of primary and secondary school age. That is the science bit that you will know: anatomy, puberty, biological aspects of sexual reproduction and the use of hormones, interestingly, to control and promote fertility. That is the statutory mandatory element for primary and secondary.

Secondary schools are required to provide an SRE programme around that, but that is not mandatory. That includes the other elements of PSHE, as we have just heard from Ofsted. That is the non-statutory part that fits around the science curriculum. Of course, any school that is now academy status does not need to follow the national curriculum.

So we have the two sets of frameworks running there and we have got the science part of it that is mandatory in the clear expectation, and then the SRE is part of the curriculum but is not part of the statutory national curriculum. I think schools on the whole are clear about that. The debate that is ongoing—I know it is part of your discussions—is whether it is helpful or unhelpful for the PSHE bit to be non-statutory versus the parts of the curriculum that are statutory, such as English, maths, citizenship, geography and history.

Q144 **Ben Howlett:** So the S bit sounds clear but the R bit does not sound as clear. Is that a fair assessment?

**Rosamund McNeil:** Yes.

Q145 **Ben Howlett:** What statutory mechanisms, guidance and compliance would be most effective in ensuring that schools deliver good-quality SRE that addresses sexual harassment and violence in schools? That is open to everybody.

**Gareth Edwards:** My name is Gareth Edwards, I work for the National Police Chiefs' Council and I am here on behalf of Chief Constable Simon Bailey. He is the national policing lead for child protection and abuse investigation, therefore this is obviously an area of particular interest to him.



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From our perspective, we recognise and believe in the strong importance of PSHE and of sex and relationship education in particular. One of the biggest concerns in our area is around ensuring that that is done to a high quality, with people who have the credibility to deliver those messages to children and young people in ways they can understand. Some of the messages and particular areas of focus for us would be things around understanding notions of consent, and also translating and understanding some of the external influences that children may be experiencing, such as access to pornography, and what that may be doing to their views around sex and relationships in general.

**Gwendolyn Sterk:** I am Gwendolyn Sterk. I am from Welsh Women's Aid and I am here representing some of the good practice that we have going on in Wales, both from the Welsh Government and from the sector's perspective.

We would say that we are going beyond SRE and are actually looking at a whole-school approach to the whole issue of violence against women, and are looking at sexual harassment and sexual violence within that context. The whole-school approach enables us to look at this as a key component throughout the school—not just within PSHE education, but as a wider element of the pupils' experiences within school and the staff's experience as well—and then to embed prevention throughout the education; that is within maths, history and beyond. We have produced good practice education guidance to enable that to be instilled.

Further, we are going to have statutory guidance from the Welsh Government that will provide leadership around that. Also, as part of the whole-school approach that we have developed, we are getting young people involved, as active citizens, in designing the delivery of that approach. A group of students have worked with Professor Emma Renold at Cardiff University and have developed actual tools that are useful, from their perspective, in addressing these issues.

Q146 **Ben Howlett:** Jane, in terms of the statutory mechanisms that are available in England at the moment, is some sort of analysis being done by Ofsted as to the guidance and what you would like to see the Government introduce on a legislative basis?

**Jane Millward:** We did a survey in 2013 looking at SRE and we found that there were weaknesses in about 40% of schools through their teaching of SRE. Ofsted put in some clear recommendations with that for what we would want to see improved. Linking to that, we also did surveys on CSE in 2014 and again found some concerns. Latterly, last year in 2015, we also looked at online safety and what schools are doing to keep children safe online. Again, we found some real inconsistent practice with that. We constantly look at surveys and do thematic work.

We look at PSHE, SRE and SMSC in every single inspection that we do. I think it is really clear that the way we train our inspectors is that this is ultimately a safeguarding matter, and we will ultimately look at safeguarding in every single inspection. That is the golden thread that



runs through everything inspectors do, so it is a clear priority really. We had a new framework in 2015 and that made it very clear where we upped the ante for safeguarding in every respect—also leadership and management, because ultimately we are going to hold leaders and managers accountable for the safety of children in school.

**Q147 Ben Howlett:** Rosamund, since that change has happened—not just since 2015, but since the 2013 survey—have you seen a shift? Are your members feeling that there is a change in how SRE is now being taken up?

**Rosamund McNeil:** Teachers still generally, on the whole, say to us that they feel it is unfortunately a Cinderella subject. It still does not have the status and focus within the school that is commensurate with how important it is when we look at what we want young people to leave school with. Of course, we need them to have the knowledge and skills to be ready for work—everybody agrees with that. We also need them to have the competencies, the aptitudes and the emotional and social development so that they can keep themselves happy, contribute to a safe world around them, have safe relationships and be safe colleagues at work. Teachers generally feel that it is not a subject that has enough status in the school curriculum—there are a lot of reasons for that. They also say that they struggle to access CPD around that. There are great organisations like the PSHE Association that have fantastic modules, with great stuff on character education and how PSHE fits in with that, but training and status is an issue.

The overall school curriculum is also very packed, so we have to look at what the purpose of the school curriculum and the national curriculum is. It is an issue of balance and of what we want it to deliver for young people, based on what we want schooling and education to deliver for them.

**Q148 Ben Howlett:** There are quite a lot of MPs and organisations out there that have been pushing the Government to make it statutory. There seems to be quite a lot of reluctance there from the Government, from the evidence that we have seen. Why do you think that might be? What avenues would you advise, to try to overcome that reluctance?

**Rosamund McNeil:** It is important that we make it statutory and give it its rightful place in the statutory national curriculum, but we must not think that that is all we need to do, unfortunately. That will go some way to getting us to where we want to be, but we also need to look at the fact that that is one small part of the curriculum, whether it is statutory or not.

What we are looking at is the culture of the school overall—the culture, the ethos and the values of the school. It is about how the adults treat each other and how the students treat each other; it is about your bullying policy, how you respond to bullying and how you seek to prevent bullying, because we want to prevent the attitudes that lead to violence, sexism, sexual harassment and sexist bullying. It is about prevention, as well as responding to incidents when they happen.



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We want to protect young people, particularly young girls. They need to be heard; we need very good reporting routes and bullying policies in schools. We want to prevent bullying. That has to be done across the school, and to do it effectively you need to make sure that that is a value you have and that you are using history, science, drama and art—it is about the experience that young people are having across the board. To make that more consistent, we need to look at how schools are collaborating. We need schools working as a service and as a team. As we go into a new landscape, we need to work out what we think would be a sensible and constructive way to get schools sharing that information and that intelligence, so that we level up really good effective and innovative practice across schools when in some areas they become slightly more fragmented from each other.

Q149 **Ben Howlett:** Jane, have you any comments?

**Jane Millward:** It is worth bearing in mind that all these issues are around keeping children safe. The “Keeping children safe in education” guidance is something that we will always look at and expect schools to have due regard to. When that is updated in September, there will be considerable advances there on looking at sexual violence and online support. There is a lot of guidance in there and we will absolutely check on inspection that the school has read it and that staff have signed that they have seen it. We will be looking, as we always look, at “Keeping children safe in education”, because all these issues are ultimately about safeguarding—keeping children safe.

Q150 **Ben Howlett:** Do you think the policy is strong enough at the moment to say that children are being kept safe?

**Jane Millward:** Evidence would say that in lots of schools children are kept very safe, and we have some very good practice out there. We still find schools where that has not been adhered to. Is that because of the policy or because of the leadership and management of the school? You can have a policy, but people have to adopt it. As my colleague said, it is about that safeguarding running through—it is about the culture and ethos in the school. That is what we will look at, to see whether safeguarding is the priority, because that is what we expect to see running through a school.

Q151 **Chair:** We are going to come on to Ofsted in more detail, but I want to make sure we bring Gareth in before we move on to our next question.

**Gareth Edwards:** Just a quick comment—maybe an observation. As part of the Government’s response to tackling CSE, they made a number of commitments, one of which was the establishment of a What Works centre, to bring together some of the evidence in place and to inform evidence-based responses. I wonder whether there may be some opportunities to collate some of the examples of good practice that I know were talked about in the last session, from across the voluntary sector and other providers, and to provide some of that academic footing and evaluation so that effectively we have a centre that is recognised by the

Government and that practice can then be shared down. There may be some opportunities around that in the future.

**Gwendolyn Sterk:** That is exactly what we did in Wales as a response. We were commissioned by the Welsh Government, along with AVA and with academics, to do a mapping of the resources that are available out there, so it has actually already been done. We looked at that UK-wide and beyond, so there is also a resource there in Wales. Obviously it is specifically driven towards the Welsh curriculum, but it would be as relevant to you guys as it is to anybody in Wales.

Q152 **Jess Phillips:** On to some of the reporting elements of the issue—I will come to you, Gareth, in a minute as obviously, the police have something to say about reporting. I just wonder whether the others on the panel could give us an idea of how adequately they feel that schools and child protection agencies, the police and so on are collecting the data on sexual violence and sexual harassment in schools?

**Jane Millward:** On inspection, we will look at safeguarding and at case files in schools. So we will talk to schools about what circumstances children are in at the moment with regard to child protection and will look at their case files.

Q153 **Jess Phillips:** But on an individual basis, there isn't an overarching—often they do not go in and say for example, "Where is your reporting policy for sexual violence or sexual harassment in this school?"

**Jane Millward:** We would look at safeguarding as a whole within that. Obviously, if there are child protection cases of that nature then of course we would look at them.

Q154 **Jess Phillips:** What elements of data do you mean when you say safeguarding?

**Jane Millward:** I mean all aspects of safeguarding where there would be, say, a potential safeguarding concern.

Q155 **Jess Phillips:** For example, do you have a data strand that says, this many children are being neglected, this many children are living in homes where there is domestic violence, this many children are living in homes where one parent is in prison? Is there a breakdown of data that Ofsted requires schools to keep on children?

**Jane Millward:** No. For one, we do not inspect all schools.

**Jess Phillips:** I realise that.

**Jane Millward:** Outstanding schools we do not inspect, unless something is flagged as a concern. We don't routinely go to every school anyway, so we wouldn't have the capacity to do that; but the schools that we do go in, we look at thoroughly. Of course, we take it incredibly seriously. Also, where there is a concern flagged to us of a serious or safeguarding nature, we would look at that. We would talk to other agencies; we would talk to the local authorities and the LADO about that. We would talk to the police.



**Q156 Jess Phillips:** What you are talking about is safeguarding with regard to teachers on staff or children in school, aren't you, as opposed to children with safeguarding concerns in a school. Those are two separate issues. When you say something is flagged to you, usually something that would be flagged to Ofsted would be an issue with the school—where a teacher, for example, had had an accusation made against them.

**Jane Millward:** Not necessarily. If I could give an example of a school I inspected myself, looking through English books I read of a girl who talked about being raped at home. So, in everything we do, is safeguarding a priority? Yes, of course it is. We took that very seriously; we took it straight to the police and the local authority and we dealt with it with our procedures. So it does flag through everything, but we can't tell you about every single school because we don't inspect every school. We look at safeguarding in that broader sense.

**Q157 Jess Phillips:** Rosamund, can you say anything about how you think schools are collecting data?

**Rosamund McNeil:** No one has a national picture; the picture does not exist. So there is no way of knowing. There is now nobody with the remit to know that or to want to ask the questions you need to ask to get to know that. Historically, local authorities have played a role in making sure about schools in their area—so if you were in Cumbria or Norfolk, you would make sure that all schools had to understand that they should be recording and reporting racist or sexist incidents. That led to understanding that there was an expectation. You don't report or record just as a paper exercise. You want to do that so that you can have some sense of, right, what is happening in our school—what do we need to do, therefore, preventively? Do we need to do some whole-school assembly? Should we be doing more PSHE? Should we be looking at a particular group of boys in year 10—what is happening? You record that information so that you can then have human conversations around that intelligence, to be able to improve things for all of the cohort.

Safeguarding is when a particular child is at risk, but we also need to be looking at all the life of the school and all the language that is being used. How are young people addressing each other—are there words that are very derogatory about women that we could name—are they being used? If so, what is the school going to do about that? Generally, if we are open and honest about it, that practice has improved at times and when people have come in and supported schools to do that. Either through grouping schools and saying, "Let's challenge each other, let's talk about doing this", or projects from voluntary sector organisations or local authorities have gone in and said, "Let's talk together about how we are going to improve practice. We have done projects. We could tell you about lots of other organisations and how we have done some primary work based on getting primary teachers to think about the gender stereotypes being displayed."

So it is about language, culture, how young people treat each other and how they feel about themselves. It is also about having strong robust



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bullying policies and then—yes, absolutely—reporting and recording serious incidents. I think people outside schools should—it was local authorities. We might need a new model now because, historically, there has been somebody at local authority level who has looked across. If you have had a school with nil returns, you have never thought that that was great news; you have always thought, “What’s going on there? Perhaps I’ll have a chat with that chair of governors about not getting any incidents reported, so let’s talk about how, normally, schools of your size are telling us that this is what’s happening.”

**Q158 Jess Phillips:** With regard to police data, the police have had to accept an increase in reporting in things such as domestic violence. Instead of being able to stand there and say, “Crime is falling; aren’t we doing a good job!”, they have had to accept that increased reporting of domestic violence has got to be turned into a positive. Similarly, I feel that schools are in a similar situation where, if they have loads and loads of reporting in their school, that would be a good thing and the school would be doing a good job. However, the opposite appears to be true. So I turn to you, Gareth, and say—

**Q159 Chair:** Just before you do that, may I ask a question? Rosamund, you said there was no way of knowing the scale of the problem at the beginning of your comments.

**Rosamund McNeil:** Yes, I probably shouldn’t say scale of the problem—

**Q160 Chair:** Sorry, that’s probably my editorialising.

**Rosamund McNeil:** I did say that. I think there is no way of knowing the scale of it. You’re right; I did say that.

**Q161 Chair:** I was just jumping in as we were reviewing the submission we had from the Department for Education. In response to our question around the scale of the problem, they said that schools are safe places and that crime in schools is very rare. Is there a need for us to make an assessment as to what is something that is worth recording or taking action over and what is not worth recording and not worth taking action over? Can you comment on that particular issue? There are more than 2,000 fixed-period exclusions as a result of sexual misconduct in state-funded schools, but that does not really give us an idea of the scale of the problem because, as you say, there is no way of knowing.

**Rosamund McNeil:** You are absolutely right. I can understand why the DFE says schools generally are safe places; they absolutely are. The trouble is, sometimes when we start looking at some instances of knife crime or the experiences we have talked about here today, we get a sense that schools aren’t safe, but they generally are. Schools are situated within the society that we are all in, and the society we are all living in still has very strong stereotypes about men and women and what they should do, what they should think, what jobs they should do. They kick in between age 3 and age 7. Nursery and reception teachers have to actively try to deconstruct those stereotypes, otherwise when we are looking at 14, 15 and 16-year-olds who have strong concepts of what men and women



should do—it sounds like I’m off the point, but this links to bullying and behaviour—this is why boys and girls are using really derogatory language on the bus, on the way in and sometimes in the corridors in a split-site secondary school. So it is true to say that sometimes we need to do more to ensure we support teachers to understand the experiences of young people, because sometimes there is a lot being said: lots of language and lots of incidents between pupils that teachers don’t see. It needs a lot of investment in time. Are we spending time talking to young people? Schools are very time-pressured places.

You asked a good question. If something is unravelling in front of you in the corridor, you as the teacher are making a judgment every time: “I’ve just heard a piece of language. Did I really hear it? Do I intervene now?” That is what teaching is about. You have to decide then, “Do I pull up these pupils now and say, ‘You have just said that; that’s wrong’? Do I leave it now and pick it up later in front of the whole class and say, ‘This week I’ve heard this. Let’s go back. This is how we treat each other in this school. This kind of language is racist’.”

“Girl” is in widespread use as a negative word: “You’re like a girl. Girls do that. Girls can’t play football.” In primary and secondary, “like a girl” is an insult. So teachers have to weigh up whether to get into that here and now. That is not reporting bullying; that is holding your ground rules in the classroom and in the schools: “The ground rules are on the wall. This is how we treat each other here.” How you do that is an ongoing discussion for you. Ideally, teachers should be talking together as the whole staff: “How is it going this term? What are the respect levels in our school like? How are we attending to these young people and supporting them to become the kind of young people we would all be proud of?”

**Q162 Jess Phillips:** Moving on, I am looking at Gareth, although the police aren’t always the best at reporting issues—this is also for everybody—how are we going to ensure better reporting? Although having statutory PHSE might well be the tick-box answer, until we understand the scale of the problem nobody’s ever going to try to really tackle it. At the moment, the DFE put the figure at about 5%. We did not hear that in our evidence. That is not the case; it is far higher than that. What do the police feel about improving the reporting of these incidents in schools?

**Gareth Edwards:** First, it is fair to say that, as you say, the police have had and continue to have issues with their data recording. We certainly face challenges when trying to look at this issue specifically. The first and foremost challenge is that not everything comes to the attention of the police, and that it has not necessarily been our guise to be investigating and looking at this.

Then there are some specifics when getting into the weeds, like actually being able to distinguish a school as a location from among all the other crimes that get reported to us. There are some practical issues for us on obtaining that picture. We certainly have measures from work that is happening around the sexual abuse of children in general. There is a lot of academic evidence out there. We are currently working to the Children’s



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Commissioner's figure for child sexual abuse in its totality of 425,000 children being victimised. Only about one in eight of those comes to the attention of statutory services. We very much work along those lines.

Coming back to the school issue specifically, certainly our experience is that it can be a bit of a mixed bag. There are some key questions that are being asked and raised about what is being recorded—what level you record something, based on the severity of what you are seeing, and the level of detail that is recorded on whatever record—and then about where that information is being captured and how accessible it is for sharing with partners and inspectorates when they go in. The key question is what then can be done with that information if and when it is collected.

Certainly, we would like to have more opportunities to have discussions with schools, other partners and inspectorates about concerns, but maybe not in the broader sense of whether our strategies and our work are in place, alongside more serious incidents that require police intervention or safeguarding interventions outside school. We think there is definitely a lot of scope for looking at this in a bit more detail. The key component is what we are going to do with that information if we begin to collect it.

Certainly, our specific experiences around sexting—I don't know whether you want to come to that later on in this session—

**Q163 Jess Phillips:** We are coming to that later on. Hold your horses, Gareth. Don't get to sexting yet. I would ask the other partners what you think schools can be doing to collect the baseline data better. Are schools able to manage this? I am dealing at the moment with a case of a kid who has raped another kid. One child has accused another child of rape, and they are in the same school. The victim is having to put up with that kid being in school with them all the time. I doubt this is being recorded anywhere while the case goes on. What can they be recording, what should they be recording and what should schools not be afraid of recording? Gwendolyn, what are you doing in Wales?

**Gwendolyn Sterk:** We haven't started yet. The Act is very new, so we are still working on it, but at the moment the Government are looking at integrating the recording and reporting within the statutory guidance that they are drafting guidance at the moment. Estyn—the equivalent of Ofsted in Wales—are looking at carrying out a thematic review around all forms of violence against women, including domestic and sexual violence, in which they will look at how this can be monitored, at how it can continue to be monitored, and at the data that is collected.

**Q164 Jess Phillips:** So that will be a baseline for when it is working.

**Gwendolyn Sterk:** Hopefully. We are looking at what comes out in the guidance, but, yes, that is being looked at at the moment. One of the things that we need to do is to talk to younger people—younger women in particular—about this, because I think they are not coming forward because this behaviour has become so normalised. We have looked at research that shows it is normalised in pre-teens—we are talking about primary school children who have had this normalised—so they are not



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likely to report it in the same way or recognise it. I think you need to work with young people to address this and get them to recognise the issues they are facing.

**Jane Millward:** We do see discrimination against women in schools. I doubt that every incident of that is recorded. The problem arises then, because that can then be seen as the norm. If it is okay to use discrimination against women, where does that stop? I think schools do report serious incidents, and there are procedures within policies that are followed, but it is very much that lower level stuff that can normalise things that I would say is a concern.

**Rosamund McNeil:** You have specifically raised the issue of exclusions, which is very interesting, because historically, over time, the number of exclusions are falling. There is a lot of pressure on schools not to exclude. There is kind of an expectation that an exclusion is a failure. Exclusion is very serious for a young person and heads have always understood that, but there are always and have always been instances where an exclusion is actually a fresh start for the person excluded and for the people who may have had things done against them in the school that led to the exclusion. There is a definite sense now that heads feel exclusion is not the thing they are meant to be doing. Local authorities have long had targets to bring exclusions down. You want to bring exclusions down through preventative work to prevent exclusion, which is absolutely right.

Going back over the last 10 to 15 years, there have been specific people whose job it has been to work with schools to prevent that. They were called BIP teams, which were behaviour improvement programmes, and there were BESTs, which were behaviour educational support teams, and all kinds of multi-agency teams that brought police together with youth offending teams, perhaps educational psychologists and educational welfare officers. So, people brought different disciplines into an inter-disciplinary teams, had case meetings and said, "Right, let's look at what's happening with John, aged 14. His behaviour is escalating." Often some of that might have been behaviour that was violence towards other people and might escalate to a rape, although rape can obviously come out of nowhere. There might not have been a pattern of escalating behaviour.

If we are moving away from those multi-disciplinary teams that will be discussing those young people and their needs, and the fallout of their needs on the young people around them, or perhaps mum at home or other people who are struggling to meet the emotional or welfare needs of that young person. The DfE exclusions guidance is very clear that the head and the governors have the power to exclude a young person immediately in instances such as rape or bringing knives or drugs to school. The exclusions guidance gives the head that discretion—the head makes a decision and the governors review that—but I think it is important that people are aware that there is a perception from heads that exclusions are seen as a failing on the part of the school. That is slightly inconsistent with the powers given to heads in the exclusions guidance, which kind of carves out a discretion for the head, and which says, "You need to keep your



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school safe, so we are therefore giving you the power to exclude pupils who might be a risk to teachers or to other pupils". There is a parallel pressure on heads to somehow prevent every exclusion.

Q165 **Jess Phillips:** None of you have explicitly said that you think schools should collect and be monitored on data of incidents of sexual harassment or sexual violence. That, to me, seemed like the obvious answer, that there should be a baseline data collection—obviously that is what you are going to do in your land of milk and honey in Wales. Is that because it would not necessarily work, or it is too onerous on schools to do it?

**Gwendolyn Sterk:** I think schools should be reporting it.

Q166 **Jess Phillips:** Or is it about understanding low level versus high level, discretion for the teachers and so on?

**Jane Millward:** Ofsted would certainly expect anything of concern to be logged. Are they going to log every low-level comment that happens in the corridor? Schools wouldn't be able to do that.

Q167 **Chair:** Can I just press you on that? What is low level? Some of the coverage around our last evidence session suggested some people might find pinging a bra strap entirely acceptable.

**Jess Phillips:** Lifting up girls' skirts.

Q168 **Chair:** To what extent are you able to comment on what is acceptable sexism or sexual harassment and what is unacceptable?

**Gwendolyn Sterk:** I don't think there is any acceptable sexism or sexual harassment.

Q169 **Chair:** Can I press Rosamund on it? From a teaching perspective, you talked about dealing with children where they are in a school environment. How easy is it for teachers then to be able to single out those who need action to be taken? The sort of things we heard about included name-calling—"slut", "whore"—lifting of skirts, peeling of bra straps, smacking bums—

**Jess Phillips:** Shaming them—

**Chair:** Things like that. Is that acceptable behaviour?

**Rosamund McNeil:** It is not acceptable behaviour. We need to support teachers to understand that they should be intervening. I know we are coming on to teacher training later, but there is a continuum. It is the language and the way young people are viewing each other and talking about each other that then leads to pulling the bra and to—

Q170 **Chair:** So why are they not reporting it now?

**Rosamund McNeil:** Because we are in a country where we still have levels of rape and sexual harassment, and because unfortunately we have not won the battle that all of this is sexism and is unacceptable. It is absolutely core that we are preventing these attitudes in schools through



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the curriculum and through education, but also picking up all those incidents.

Q171 **Chair:** So teachers think that society thinks that is acceptable?

**Rosamund McNeil:** No, I think lots of schools have very good, strong cultures in them. They will be challenging it and will understand that if they hear it, it is not something that you should let go. We are not entirely confident how consistent the practice is, but we are not saying that it is acceptable not to respond to those incidents or to recognise that they are serious, because they are unacceptable.

Q172 **Mims Davies:** There is something I wanted to pick up with Gareth on the centralisation of data, particularly between forces— perhaps where children are in care or fostered and are not able to report, or where there is nobody specifically at home who they feel they can report to. Do you think you have that covered—that issue of children who may be particularly vulnerable and not able to get those messages back to whoever is looking after them? Perhaps something has happened previously, when they were looked after in a different county, and they have moved, so the police are therefore not aware of what is going on in the background.

**Gareth Edwards:** We certainly still have a lot of issues with children being placed outside their own local authority. Notifications come through to the police about that. The volumes that we are talking about here are reasonably large, actually; we would not expect to be notified of every child who is placed outside their local authority, but where there are specific concerns around child sexual exploitation, for example, or specific needs that are likely to cross over into our world, we would definitely want to be notified. There are certainly gaps in that notification process at the moment. That has been an ongoing issue for quite a while now.

As for whether they have the right support mechanisms for contacting the police and other partners, I am not sure that I am able to answer that question fully. Certainly we are doing more and more work in that space. We are doing a lot of work with children's homes, for example—trying to improve relationships with them and the information sharing that takes place. But a lot of other factors are likely to be at play here, particularly in terms of previous experiences with safeguarding professionals and so on, and whether that has been a positive or negative experience. That will have a huge bearing on their likelihood of reporting abuse that, for example, they may have experienced previously and never mentioned before.

Q173 **Mims Davies:** Just to expand on that: if there is some horseplay or exploitation going on in schools, for example, and if that level continues in an area where they are looked after differently and they do not have a parent or somebody they feel they can confide in, and if the school is allowing unacceptable behaviour to become normalised at school and there is then a potential exploitation opportunity, perhaps those children are doubly at risk. That is the point that I suppose I am trying to get



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across. Do you think, across the panel, that there is an understanding that those particular children could be in particular danger? We have seen that, perhaps, in the outcomes of some historical stuff. Do we have a handle on that going forward?

**Gareth Edwards:** From a policing perspective, I can say that I think there are gaps, in terms of whether we are notified about the out-of-authority placements. I do not know whether that corresponds with schools' experiences in this area, though.

Q174 **Mims Davies:** Rosamund, you were talking about group communications around particular children being a threat to others. What about the opposite—particular children potentially being exploited, under pressure and unable to deal with it because they do not have the structures to report to?

**Rosamund McNeil:** One of the areas in which multi-agency working is still quite effective—because there is such a strong statutory duty for looked-after children, there is a clear focus on sharing information. Again, it comes down to having enough professionals in the roles and then enough time to share information, to talk about strategies and to really develop our personal relationships with young people so that they have adults in their life who they trust and know about.

We will come on to training later, but teachers tell us generally that historically, they had more time to dedicate to the pastoral care side of teaching, and that they want to do it. We have slightly moved to a model now where we see teachers as the expert who teach the subject, and we have teaching assistants to do other parts of the role. If teachers are saying, "We feel there isn't quite enough time for us to do the social and emotional side and have conversations with the children," they are not saying that glibly because they don't want to do it. They are saying it because they feel they are time poor.

We have done a report about whether schools are becoming exam factories. We didn't do that research to argue that English and maths are not essential. Teaching English and maths is core, and we need every child to come out with great literacy and numeracy, but teachers—particularly in secondary school—are saying at the moment that schools are becoming exam factories because of the ways we measure schools. There might be more intelligent ways to measure schools. The CBI is saying that too about schools' work.

Teachers are saying, "We're worried that we don't have enough time to get to know young people as individuals." I am very careful in how I present that, because this is a public session. We are not saying that teachers are negligent or don't want to know their children. It is difficult for us to share this, because teachers themselves feel conflicted. They want to professionally air a concern that they have too many young people with complicated lives. They want to play their full part in supporting those young people and sharing information. They are saying they do not have time to do all the things they want to.



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**Q175 Mims Davies:** Young children's lives and pressures are probably more complicated than ever. You have held your own very well on that. Can I quickly touch on the issue that you said you picked up in a book, Jane, about someone being attacked? Was that not picked up on before?

**Jane Millward:** By the school? No.

**Q176 Angela Crawley:** I want to pick up on the point that Jane rightly made about the fact that this can start as a small thing but become a slippery slope. My question is partly to Rosamund and partly to Gareth, and it is first about what exactly is needed for schools. You talked about training, support and time. What exactly do you think schools' requirements are in terms of the resources and training needed to tackle this at the root? Secondly, how does a teacher know, from the slippery slope of a minor incident up to something that could be quite serious, where the support is and where the line for them to escalate it appropriately is? I don't think that is clear, from what I have heard so far.

**Gareth Edwards:** A couple of things particularly help in some of these areas. One is the presence of safer schools officers, where we have a more direct link between schools and the police. That is an opportunity to raise informal concerns and talk through things in a way whereby we can ensure that we are on the right lines and have that ongoing conversation. However, the caveat is that, given the pressures on police forces, at the moment not every area has a safer schools officer.

The second strand where we have seen some good practice in this area is in multi-agency safeguarding hubs, which the panel may or may not be aware of. They are multi-agency teams, often representing children's services and police, and in the better areas they will also have education, and possibly voluntary sector and health around the table. Effectively, they act as a front-door mechanism for child protection referrals and pulling together multi-agency information in that space, so that you can build up a robust assessment and decide what needs to be done.

MASHs have been developed in such a way that they have grown quite organically, so there is not necessarily any statutory guidance around what they should look like or how they should form. That means that some of them have, for example, children's services and police there. Others have an education liaison officer, and that is not necessarily standardised. Where that education liaison officer is there, though, we are seeing an opportunity to have a dialogue with child protection professionals and to talk through those concerns. Where there are ones that are potentially in that grey space, there is an opportunity to have a discussion with other safeguarding professionals and get an opinion on that. We would encourage that as a vital part of managing the threshold between the two.

**Q177 Angela Crawley:** Do you think there is an inconsistency in the approach across the UK? In different areas, is there an inconsistency in the level of support and the level of multi-agency working together to tackle these things?



**Gareth Edwards:** It may be that different arrangements are in place, but it is just that, for example, there is inconsistency in whether safer schools officers and multi-agency safeguarding hubs are in every single place. It may be that certain local areas have developed processes that enable them to get around it, but, certainly from our perspective, we have seen good practice where the education liaison officer is there and safer schools officers are also in place.

**Rosamund McNeil:** You touched on support training and resources, and it is a package, so there is a joined-up policy approach to wanting to support teachers and heads to do this. Ofsted come in and inspect what is happening, but we are looking earlier in the process. We want to build capacity to impact on practice. Initial teacher education is essential. It is an ongoing debate, because there are lots of different areas of expertise, with people saying, "Put this in IT", so I appreciate the Secretary of State's conundrum—she has lots of people saying to her that initial teacher education needs to fit more in—but initial teacher education is about learning to teach and how you teach young people. It needs to be about child development, and we don't have enough about that at the moment. We need to have the equality aspects in initial teacher education. That should be a core part of the entitlement for teachers in the first stages of how they learn to teach. It is a journey—of course you keep learning to teach, and we need continuous development, too—but our view is that it does make the cut for a focus in initial teacher education.

In terms of how we support schools to do it collectively, we need a national strategy. Previously there was something called SEAL—the social and emotional aspects of learning. It applied to every secondary school and there were fantastic resources to say to secondary schools, "How are you developing the emotional literacy of your young people? How are you supporting them on skills, in terms of respect for themselves, resilience, self-esteem and self-worth?" It was a fantastic programme. We don't have anything strategic at the moment that gets secondary school teachers to make the case that that whole side of teenagers' lives is so core. We need either to explore why we are not doing that kind of approach or to accept that we are moving on to schools a school-level expectation that historically local authorities were there to back up. They had teams of equalities people who went in. I accept that we might not be in that world anymore, but if we are taking away those supportive structures I would like us to think through how we are replacing that capacity. There is a discussion about different ways you could do that.

Q178 **Chair:** Before I bring in Flick, both Rosamund and Gareth have been discussing the pressure on resources, but we have had no indication at all and have not received any evidence to suggest that these things were much better in the past and have deteriorated. Are we missing something? It has been indicated to us that this problem has always been there. Have we missed a piece of evidence?

**Gareth Edwards:** From our perspective, from the evidence base we have seen, the prevalence rates around sexual abuse and victimisation are certainly pretty consistent and flat.

Q179 **Chair:** So it hasn't changed over time.

**Gareth Edwards:** That's from the academic evidence, but Mr Bailey has also said in various national forums that he, professionally, believes that there is currently an increase in offending, specifically around the opportunities that the online space is providing to offenders. It is not that there are more offenders out there, it is just that the online space is presenting more opportunities for access to children. That is not yet supported by academic evidence because the academic evidence is not there.

Q180 **Chair:** So your argument would be that there is an increase in incidents, but that that is not necessarily more offenders; it is people offending in different ways.

**Gareth Edwards:** Yes, and their having more opportunity to offend. We are seeing—again, from a police perspective—a significant rise in reporting. We have seen an increase of around 88% in reported offences coming into the police across a four-year period.

Q181 **Mrs Drummond:** Most of my original questions have been answered already—that is the problem with coming in a bit late in the session—so I want to go into more depth, particularly on Ofsted. There are mixed views on what Ofsted can plan in this particular role, but I am more concerned about the quality of the inspectors, because Big Talk Education, in their evidence, said: "A range of OFSTED inspectors observe us, some are knowledgeable and understand the issues whilst others are sometimes embarrassed regarding the topic, they will give the appearance of undertaking another activity...More proactive checking of SRE lessons would hopefully drive up standards in this subject". I know that Ofsted inspectors mostly come from teaching, and we may talk a bit more about the training of teachers in this particular field, but what do you think, Jane, about that? I will then go on to Rosamund.

**Jane Millward:** Ofsted has moved to have more practitioners as inspectors because they are in the field doing it at the moment. We are looking at about 70% of our Ofsted inspectors coming from serving practitioners. We have made a very conscious decision to get people who are there doing it and understanding it day in, day out, to be part of our team. We quality assure our inspections. We do a lot of training of inspectors. Now that we have brought inspectors in-house—all our inspectors now work for Ofsted—they all have a link to HMI, so all Ofsted inspectors are linked to one of Her Majesty's inspectors within a mentor role.

The way in which inspectors are inspecting is tighter than it has ever been. We have a considerable amount of time to train them. We quality assure their work. There is rigorous quality assurance around reports and evidence bases to ensure that the evidence stacks up. A new framework was brought in in September and all inspectors were trained on that and we had a new judgment around personal development and welfare. That was a new judgment for us and everyone had the same training on it, to do that. Now we are looking at fundamental British values and at how



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schools actively promote them, so very much looking at that safeguarding aspect in its wider sense. The quality is more consistent now than it has been in the past.

**Q182 Mrs Drummond:** Just before I move to Rosamund, the Ofsted handbook covers racism, disability and homophobic bullying but not sexism. You mentioned that a new handbook was coming out. Will it be included in that one?

**Jane Millward:** In the "Keeping children safe in education" guidance it is mentioned, yes. It is there as one of the areas to be considered, and we will be checking that all schools have due regard to that. That will be out in September.

**Q183 Mrs Drummond:** Rosamund, from the NUT point of view, do you agree that Ofsted inspectors seem capable of inspecting this particular aspect?

**Rosamund McNeil:** I think we are putting a lot on Ofsted. Ofsted is barely in schools now. That is not to attack Ofsted inspectors; the intention has been to be short and sharp—that is the policy direction. The experience of heads and teachers often is that they are surprised by how little inspectors can see because they are intentionally in just to talk to the head, look at data and review some policies. That has been designed intentionally to make it light touch.

It would be helpful to amend the handbook in the way that you have described because there is not a good case for why that should not be listed. We want schools to understand that sexism is absolutely as important as racism. The harm and the negative consequences are just as serious as from racist stereotypes, so it should be in there.

Ofsted is just one lever and we have to be very careful not to see Ofsted as the solution. Of course, Ofsted should inspect the things that are in the handbook but, on the wider issues, if we had lots of heads and teachers in the room discussing this with us, they would say that we need a slightly different approach to accountability, a different way to measure school performance, because we are not necessarily measuring what we value—we are measuring what is easier to measure. We need to measure academic attainment—obviously we do—but there is an issue of balance, and a lot of headteachers feel that we need to have a different approach to how we measure schools, what we hold them to account for. It is hard to explain unless you are in a real school why it has such an impact on the timetabling and the amount of time given to English and maths, and the amount of focus, time and energy that goes into some subjects at the cost of others. It is hard to explain that because, of course, the Government and politicians expect schools to behave reasonably and sensibly and to hang on to the balance, because that is what schools should do.

But heads are saying very clearly, "Could we have a discussion about how we measure schools so that we can regain and reclaim space for art, music and drama?" That links to this discussion because it is through drama that you talk about attitudes and get young people to challenge each other, such as, "If someone said that to you, what would you do?" It



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is the whole school experience that can help us combat sexism, so we do need to talk about Ofsted, but actually it is about the whole curriculum, and the curriculum is driven by how we measure schools. So it does all link up; I am not just going wildly off piste.

Q184 **Mrs Drummond:** What you have just said is music to my ears. That is something that I have been banging on about for ages.

**Rosamund McNeil:** It is a very wide coalition. CBI and employers are saying it. I know Government, of course, want to support young people to have the right skills for work, life and treating each other fairly. There is an appetite, I think, to modernise school performance indicators.

Q185 **Chair:** I have a specific question on this for you, Rosamund. When young people came in front of us they were very clear that they saw racism as unacceptable. I think colleagues will agree that they were. They then went to say to us, "But we don't really know what you mean by sexual harassment."

Teachers seem to be getting it over when it comes to racism. Whether that is effective or not is for another day, but they knew what that was, but they really struggled to understand what sexual harassment was. Can I press you on that a little further? I am really unclear, from what you said, about whether teachers feel it is their responsibility when it comes to sexism to take action. They clearly are taking action on racism and being very effective according to the young people we talked to.

**Rosamund McNeil:** I absolutely accept the premise of that question and understand why you are asking. Young people have the attitudes that they have because of what they hear at school, in the media and see on TV. I think it is slightly clearer in society that racism is unacceptable. There are still people with racist views. It gets more widely debated.

We have a very sexist culture. Young people—boys and girls—are constantly bombarded with very sexist magazine covers. I am not saying this to absolve schools; schools are the universal service. We have to use schools to prevent attitudes, and we need to be clear to schools that we want them to have a zero-tolerance approach. We don't want them to condone or normalise. They have to find ways to intervene. That is what we are here to explore: how do schools intervene?

We run a project in primary schools called "Breaking the mould", which is about challenging gender stereotypes. It is about going to early years and nursery teachers in particular and saying, "Use great books that talk about different ways that girls and boys can be. While you are doing that, talk about..." Then you get disclosures. You get boys saying, "My dad says that boys can't...My dad says that women can't work." It comes out through this kind of work.

We need to provide opportunities to get teachers to do that. This has been very popular. Primary teachers can't get their hands on it; they want it. We have given it to every Teach First trainee. It is how we get creative ways in to get the message to teachers and to support them to realise that



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sexism is unacceptable. We want to empower, equip and expect them to challenge sexism, to understand what it is and talk about what it is and how it manifests in a school, playground or corridor.

When the boys say the girls can't play football, what do you do as a teacher? You can't just let the boys have the football pitch and abandon it. You have to think through, talk to other heads about what they have done to get the girls on the football pitch. When you get teachers talking they find the solutions themselves and get the girls on the football pitch.

**Q186 Chair:** So, Jane, do you think Ofsted need to change their handbook, because teachers need a bit more help on this?

**Jane Millward:** We judge the personal development welfare of pupils. That came in in our new book. We look at fundamental British values: tolerance and respect.

**Q187 Chair:** No, but specifically recognising sexism. At the moment, factually it is not mentioned in the Ofsted inspection handbook. Do you not think that is an error that should be addressed?

**Jane Millward:** I think that the areas that that encompasses are a discussion that is had with leaders and children in school.

**Q188 Chair:** You think that is already done?

**Jane Millward:** I believe that is part of safeguarding. Certainly, we would look at unacceptable behaviours. The examples you gave of pinning the bra strap or whatever is absolutely unacceptable behaviour that Ofsted would take most seriously.

**Q189 Mims Davies:** I think we have sort of covered some of these areas, in terms of national guidance and the support and help teachers and schools need, but is there anything that we have not had an opportunity to fully pick up? Rosamund, this is probably another one for you. I think you have touched on time and the pastoral issues. Is there anything else that is glaring, in terms of the safeguarding guidance?

**Rosamund McNeil:** I think it is important to share the good practice that is out there and to think about how we can get teachers and heads hearing about that. There are schools doing really innovative, groundbreaking work, so we could ask the question of how we make sure we get that. Obviously the unions are proud and keen to do that, so we spend a lot of time trying to share the good practice around the system, and other organisations outside of unions clearly do that too.

I think that initial teacher education needs to have a focus on this issue within it. I think that we need to have a strategy. We cannot have a lottery approach where we just wait until Ofsted inspections possibly pick up areas for improvement and find great practice. Ofsted do thematic reviews and that has always been very useful. It would be helpful for Ofsted to do thematic reviews every couple of years to pick out areas of good practice for other heads to look at. In the new system that we are setting up—leaders—we need to have this equalities area as an explicit



focus in leaders of education, and to make sure that this is high on the agenda.

The Prevent agenda is clearly high on the agenda because we are all very keen to talk about what the risks of radicalisation are and how we prevent young people from being groomed by people who believe violence is acceptable. We need to think about how this can be given—I don't want to compare, and I have started on a comparison that is uncomfortable, but I think that you are having this inquiry because you want to lead the sector into giving this priority, to make sure that we can have huge impact, to keep young girls safe and to challenge attitudes. This is what politicians and MPs can do to send a very clear signal that this is core education work that is really at the centre of what schools do, in case some people are still of the opinion that this is somehow not core mainstream education—it is, and it should be.

**Q190 Mims Davies:** I was at a local race and equality forum and the two issues—the Prevent strategy and what we were doing—were absolutely prevalent. It was really interesting to see that something has a high priority nationally, so where does this fit? Is this just par for the course of being a kid and being in school? That is very interesting.

In terms of teacher training and working lives, you said that there is a lack of professional development in this area. With regard to the training that is going on at the moment, you have obviously spoken about the Government's priorities in terms of outcomes and results and getting young people work-ready, but do you think that there is a lack of focus between the training on this and the priority that is given to other areas? Are we falling behind at the very start of teachers' training and working lives because the pressures are different and greater now?

**Rosamund McNeil:** I think we are sailing a little bit close to a view that you can teach training on the job and that you can just be taught in one school by one head. Good initial teacher education has always been a partnership between schools, and school-based practice, and universities. We think that the evidence, on balance, suggests that you need to maintain that partnership between universities and school settings. It has never been, and nor should it be, all about learning in a university. You are teaching young people; you are teaching a subject, but you are teaching three-year-olds or 13-year-olds. I would put in a plea to try and keep a partnership model within initial teacher education.

Teachers need time to look at research and evidence. They need to have research skills themselves as graduate professionals and to have access to the evidence about how we promote equality. How do we advance equality through education? How do we do that? You need a core module on equalities at the start for every teacher. We then need to think about how we are planning to bring on a cadre—a group—of PSHE specialists. I have reminded myself that when Sir Alasdair Macdonald did his PSHE review back in 2009, he recommended that there be a dedicated route within ITE that would create a cohort of specialist PSHE education teachers. I think

that was a good recommendation then and it probably remains quite a constructive recommendation at the moment.

**Q191 Mims Davies:** Going back to training and the work between what is going on in schools now and what to expect, and the academic side of learning to be a teacher through universities, have universities got a handle on what teachers are actually going to be experiencing in the classroom in terms of this equalities area?

**Rosamund McNeil:** They do, we have got lots of good—the Institute of Education has great expertise in this. There are also universities around the country that have very good areas of expertise in how we would educate teachers to be able to educate against stereotypes and for equal opportunities for young people. I think that expertise does exist in universities.

It is slightly on the wane because some universities are closing their initial teacher education functions, as the writing on the wall is that we are moving to a school-led system. Parliament would need to accept that if you move to a school-led system, you risk the closure of some of those university faculties, which have skilled gender and education experts.

I am on the board of the Gender and Education Association, which brings together all the academics from Bath and Exeter and the Institute together, and they plan how, as an association, we network teacher trainers around the issues of gender in education.

**Q192 Mims Davies:** That is one threat and then, when you get there, the continuing education is not happening. So there is a two-pronged threat in terms of dealing with this as an issue.

**Rosamund McNeil:** I think you need the initial teacher education and then, when teachers are in service, at that point you need a support mechanism that is going to support schools and bring capacity to the table.

Historically, local authorities had equality teams. I am not there to say that that is how we have to do it in the future. But if we have schools by schools operating, it may be that multi-academy trusts become the new networking forums. However we end up doing it, there would need to be a focus on sharing information about young people and being clear what the goals are. The goals are academic advancement for every pupil, but they are also emotional wellbeing. Are these young people resilient? How are they feeling? How is their self-esteem? What do we do if we have mental health concerns? Who is going to be the hub?

Traditionally, the model is that schools draw down services; they know their local education psychologist, and they know their education welfare officer. Those posts are going, so we need to bring a clear vision for how schools will bring together the hub of services. Teachers teach and they need to be at the heart of really effective multi-agency working, with common assessment frameworks.



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Previous Governments have done a lot of work on things called common assessment frameworks. We had Every Child Matters, the most popular thing any Government ever did. Every Child Matters tried to bring every child and youth service together around five goals, one of which was staying safe and being healthy. That began to integrate services around how we talk and work together to keep every child in front of us safe. What we need is different disciplines to do that.

**Q193 Mims Davies:** So when you talk about the PSHE specialist, are you talking about reforming the SEAL strategy that you mentioned earlier? Is that the strategic teenage emotional life function?

**Rosamund McNeil:** Yes, I think we could explore whether there would be merit in a national strategy like that. I agreed when Gareth talked about the safer schools partnership. That was a very explicit way for teachers to understand how they run a relationship with local police. You don't want teachers just ringing up police at school. It was a really good way for headteachers to understand when to phone the police and being able to say, "When is the area where my discretion comes in? I think an allegation has been made but there were three witnesses, so perhaps I can talk to them and if I can establish straightaway that this is a malicious allegation, I can do that. But if I'm not sure and I want to talk to somebody else, I can draw down some support from the safest course and talk to a police officer." Schools had link people that they began to know.

**Q194 Chair:** Is there an evaluation of SEAL that we can look at to see its effectiveness in tackling sexism?

**Rosamund McNeil:** I think it was independently evaluated. We would be very happy to follow that up and send a letter if that would be useful.

**Chair:** That would be helpful. Thank you.

**Gareth Edwards:** I was also going to mention—I know it was mentioned last time around—the teenage pregnancy strategy. There was an evaluation done of that. I don't know if you have had sight of that, but if you haven't I can send you a link.

**Chair:** Thank you very much.

**Gareth Edwards:** Can I briefly touch on that point as well? The other area, going into the more specialist end, is where we have children who are displaying harmful sexual behaviours and we have those concerns around those children. Mr Bailey and I recently gave evidence to Nusrat Ghani's inquiry about harmful sexual behaviour that they are running with Barnardo's. I know that they are building some recommendations around this space that might be worth linking with that. Some of the concerns coming out of that were about the extent of the provision in place for children who have those quite complex needs and who display those incredibly challenging behaviours, and about the interlinking with schools and professionals to get advice on that. You are getting into quite specialist areas of support potentially needed for those children, so there needs to be strong interlinking with specialists in that area.



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**Q195 Mims Davies:** One thing that has been touched on very strongly in the evidence that we have taken so far is the guidance needed for schools on the best position to take on incidents of sexting and online harassment, and who and where that guidance comes from. We could be doing a whole inquiry just on that section—on the pressures on children, their digital footprint and the profiles that they are building. Gareth, you mentioned the issue of when something is just fun on the internet and when it is potentially predatory or dangerous. Where are we on the schools' best position to deal with this? Rosamund, could you pick up on that one? You are getting fired at this morning!

**Rosamund McNeil:** I think guidance would be very useful. This is an area where schools would really like to be able to refer to something that is very clear about what would or would not be the right sanctions, about what good practice would look like and about how we avoid criminalising young people unless absolutely necessary. If criminalisation is proportionate and sensible, it should be the outcome, but if it is not proportionate and sensible, it should not. How are those judgments arrived at?

When Gareth and I were chatting on the way in, he was beginning to tell me about some guidance, which I am sure he will tell you about, that is coming online and is aimed at schools. That is going to be enormously helpful. I think schools would really welcome specific advice about sexting—about young people choosing and consenting to take pictures of themselves, of their body parts or of somebody else's body parts, and not understanding that if that is a picture of an under-18-year-old, there are consequences that might be criminal. Young people do not understand that, so we need to look at where the part of the curriculum is where we expect teachers to get that message across. We need the message across that rape is unlawful, that drink-driving is unlawful—there are various bits where we expect schools to convey what is right and wrong in society, and this falls into that. I think guidance would be very well received and schools would find that extremely beneficial and constructive.

**Q196 Mims Davies:** Just before Gareth comes in—I have had surgery experience, as I know other MPs have, with issues of that fine line of discretion of the police dealing with it. Certainly, with some older kids, where there is exploitation and pictures sent around universities, to some minds there has been too much discretion in what is being allowed and is going online. I certainly think that if we are not getting this right for the older age groups, there is a real danger that we are allowing those behaviours to come through into the university system. It causes predatory and dangerous behaviour if we do not get this right at the schools level. This is certainly a new area which the Government clearly need to catch up on. Gareth, have you any comments on that discretion area?

**Gareth Edwards:** Certainly. We are producing new guidance at the moment. I am in the process of drafting it—not right at this moment, obviously, but when I leave today I will be going back to that. That will be new national guidance for the police across England and Wales that seeks



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to outline what a proportionate response looks like in this area, recognising that the behaviour and the activity are illegal. There may be a question mark around some of the legislation in this area, and we may need to have another look at that. Certainly a lot of the legislation that relates to indecent images of children was written before the internet and was created predominantly to deal with adults sharing images of children, whereas nowadays obviously what we are seeing is children sharing images of other children.

The new guidance we are producing will effectively seek to outline what a proportionate response looks like around this. It will outline scenarios that we have worked through with children and young people and the support of various voluntary organisations and will describe the different steps and considerations that need to be made.

We recognise that this is definitely an issue that crosses over into education. One of our primary drivers initially for doing this piece of work was concerns that were being raised by schools about the over-criminalisation of children and young people when they come to the attention of the police, and that this is an increasingly seen activity and something that they would also appreciate some guidance on. Recognising that we are not going to be able to deal with this on our own, we are working with CEOP—the education strand of CEOP also chairs UKCCIS, the UK Council for Child Internet Safety; it is an education sub-group—to produce separate but interlinked pieces of guidance for schools that effectively interweave with each other and talk about what a school's initial response should be, how they can go about investigating risk assessments, how they should consider these things, where the thresholds may be coming into play around where you should be notifying the police and where incidents can potentially be managed in-house.

Some of the challenges in this space are particularly around deletion of imagery once it gets out into the public domain. There remain some significant challenges around that. I think it is very important, when we talk about this, that we don't in effect encourage children and young people to do it, thinking it is a safe behaviour, because it certainly isn't. There are lots of risks associated with it, and once an image does get out into the public domain, it is very hard to get it back. We have to tread a fine line with regard to that, but there is both that guidance for the police and the education guidance we hope to simultaneously launch in August, before the new school year starts. We are also working with the Department for Education on search strands where we think there are some gaps in the national guidance, which possibly needs to be tweaked.

**Q197 Mims Davies:** We have been talking about ingraining equality through education and through schools and about how the Prevent strategy has that national profile and common understanding. Do you think that if we don't get a handle on this, there is the potential for almost a national emergency, because these are people's long-term online lives that are out there? Although kids are obviously digital natives now, they don't understand the danger that in the long term it could pose for their



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reputation. We heard from others giving evidence that some people think it is the safer thing to do, rather than putting themselves into a situation where they are having unsafe sex and perhaps will have to deal with teenage pregnancy and so on. Some children are doing this, thinking that they are safer and somehow able to control what is going on online. Is there a danger nationally, for the country, that unless we put this on the same footing as Prevent, we are doing our children a disservice by not really having a handle as a Government, as a country, and as parents and carers on what danger they are in, in terms of the lives that they are expected to lead safely? Or is that massively over-egging it?

**Gareth Edwards:** I think there are some significant risks in this space. There is a big question around resilience. Certainly some children and young people appear to be more resilient to this than others, and that obviously plays into how it extends into exploitation, sexual violence and other strands. I would not necessarily describe it as a national emergency, but I think that part of the issue with this is that we will not necessarily know until five or six years have passed. Also, a lot of this stuff is reasonably new behaviour, particularly with the advent of certain technologies.

**Gwendolyn Sterk:** It is something that we have recognised very much. We run the STAR programme—that stands for safety, trust and respect—with young people. This is an integral part of that. We cover sexual consent, sex and pornography, because we recognise from young people that this is an issue that they need to be taught about and have an understanding of. We need to give them the tools to be able to engage online as well as offline and to have that understanding and, within an equalities context, an understanding that this is going to have an impact on them and particularly on young girls.

Q198 **Mims Davies:** In that, you are absolutely right, because you would not let children of a certain age hang around for three or four hours with somebody down at the precinct behaving in a way that was inappropriate in public and not give them the tools to understand that that is not a safe thing to be doing—"and by the way, what are you doing for those three or four hours?" We are just presuming that there is a safe babysitting service there, I suppose.

**Gwendolyn Sterk:** That is where some of the guidance from our whole education approach comes in. We are also talking about the fact that we need to include parents and governors in that, so that there is a whole spectrum of the school involved. The young people are involved. They have that understanding that the parents are also incorporated in it to have that understanding of all these issues as a form of violence against women and have that addressed. Parents are also brought into the whole school approach and not left out, so that they are able to have an understanding of online abuse that they perhaps do not have at present.

Q199 **Chair:** Before we move on to our last question, can I ask Jane a question? Rosamund suggested in her previous intervention that teachers need more help to know when to contact the police. Surely that is a



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safeguarding issue. To what extent do you already provide guidance to teachers on that, and do you think that guidance is adequate given what Rosamund just said?

**Jane Millward:** We inspect and regulate. It wouldn't be our role to tell schools and teachers when they should do that.

Q200 **Chair:** You don't provide guidance to teachers? Ofsted provides guidance, doesn't it?

**Jane Millward:** We do guidance on our frameworks, guidance on our inspection—

Q201 **Chair:** But it's a safeguarding issue, isn't it?

**Jane Millward:** We would inspect safeguarding within a school. What we wouldn't do is tell schools how to do it. We would look at the impact of their actions; we would look at how schools do things and what the impact is of the way they do that. That is how we would make our judgment. Ofsted wouldn't tell a school how they have to do anything. They wouldn't recommend how long it should take for a school to notify the police. What we would do is look at the impact of how the school operates.

Q202 **Chair:** Given that Rosamund has made it clear that teachers need more help in identifying when to contact the police, what do you think should happen to make sure that that situation changes?

**Jane Millward:** Local authorities are responsible for the safeguarding of all children. If there is guidance that should come out, local authorities should be the ones telling schools what their expectations are. Ultimately, local authorities have to safeguard every child within their authority. What we would do is go in, look at the impact of what schools are doing and see what difference that is making.

Q203 **Chair:** Would it be possible for the Department for Education to provide guidance?

**Jane Millward:** Yes.

Q204 **Gill Furniss:** This is my first Select Committee, so bear with me. It is really fascinating stuff. I am the mother of a teacher who teaches reception and nursery, so I have lots of things to grill her about when I get home; she'll be really pleased about that. What I wanted to ask you is what recommendations you think this Committee should make to have the maximum amount of impact on reducing sexual violence and sexual harassment in our schools. I am very interested to hear from Wales.

**Gwendolyn Sterk:** First of all, I think it needs to be clearly recognised within the context of a human rights issue and looked at from an equality perspective. From a Welsh perspective, we have had success in getting it into the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 and recognised within education, so we have strategic leadership coming from the top. Also, working that down through developing a whole educational approach that, as I said, brings in all

elements of the school, from the governors all the way down to the pupils themselves, to be involved and active within the delivery of this.

The next thing is that there are a lot of resources out there. The specialist sector have developed and delivered resources around this for many years, and they need to be supported and enabled to deliver on that, working in partnership with schools. I know that when we have taken the whole education approach to teachers, they have welcomed it, and the specialist sector's good practice aspects within that, as something useful that enables them to take steps to address this and gives them the tools that they need to start addressing it.

The next thing, we are hoping, is that those steps will be taken forward, and that the whole education approach will be taken forward in Wales. That includes working with partners, for example Estyn, to do the monitoring and evaluating and make sure that we have that picture going forward and that this approach has an impact in future.

**Jane Millward:** I think the implications of the White Paper need to be considered with this. Schools will step away from local authorities even more than they have done in the past. The relationship between multi-academy trusts and local authorities with regard to safeguarding is absolutely crucial in all this. Ultimately, the local authorities will remain responsible for the safeguarding of children but will have less control. I think the role of inspection is even more important than ever, and joined-up working with all parties is absolutely crucial.

**Chair:** Gareth, Rosamund?

**Rosamund McNeil:** I think I've said way too much already. The IT points have already been made, but a focus on that would be key. It would be useful to make the case for the PSHE element to go on a statutory footing, because of the message that that sends, but I think everybody has been clear that it goes wider than that one subject. Local safeguarding boards are one area where we have effective multi-agency working; they come into the picture once you have a concern about a child, about their behaviour or about a risk to them. We have all been talking about the space before that—how we use education as a preventative space, to generate the attitudes and the human rights that we all want to arrive at.

We need to think how we can link up the specialist sector—like Women's Aid, with all the resources and really great models they have—into schools. How do we create the capacity in schools? The appetite is there. Lots of voluntary sector organisations come to me all the time, saying "How can we get into schools? Why aren't heads returning my calls? We have these great resources—why can't we get into schools? Why aren't they interested?" They are interested and they want to do this work, but the barrier is time and capacity.

I return to the point, which is that the new national curriculum is very, very packed. It requires teachers to force pupils through at quite a pace. That is where we are at, but we could consider asking questions about



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what we are measuring when we see what a successful school is, so that we incentivise and reward and so that we recognise that this area of work is core education work. We could do that through the accountability system, to create the time and space for school leaders to get the opportunity to give this a really high status in school. I think that would take us forward.

**Gareth Edwards:** I agree with the comments made, particularly the comments that Jane made. It is important that we are advocating effective SRE within a broader PSHE agenda, in a whole-school approach and with effective multi-agency arrangements around that. I think local safeguarding children boards have a role to play in that area; there are planned reviews of that coming forward in the next legislative calendar. There are some issues there that will need to be carefully watched to ensure that consistency of safeguarding is maintained. The need to be consistent about certain things must not be lost in that process.

There might be some opportunities for some of the sexting guidance we are working on to be put on a statutory footing. To go back to the issue of indecent images of children, there may also be some scope for having a look at some of the legislation in that area.

**Chair:** Thank you all so much—it has been really useful. It is a very technical area and you all bring a very different perspective. Thank you very much for your time today. If anything else comes up that you would like to send through to us, please feel free to do so. It has been a very valuable session. Thank you.