

**CONFIDENTIAL**

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE  
COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

INDEPENDENT EXTERNAL INVESTIGATION  
ON BEHALF OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE (DESC)

REGARDING CONCERNS RAISED INTO THE DELIVERY OF THE RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX  
EDUCATION (RSE) CURRICULUM AT QUEEN ELIZABETH II (QE II) HIGH SCHOOL, PEEL

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**REPORT IN RESPECT OF  
PART TWO OF THE INVESTIGATION**

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A. Introduction to Part Two

1. This report is supplemental to the report in respect of Part 1 of the investigation delivered to the Designated Manager on 16 March 2023. Definitions in Part 1 are adopted here. It is Part 2 of a three-stage report as defined in the terms of reference.
2. Part 1 of the investigation was confined to the delivery of the drop-down day at QEII on 22 September 2022. This report considers the preparation and delivery of RSE in QEII generally.
3. As before, all information and documentation supplied to the EIOs is confidential and is to be delivered to the Designated Manager at the conclusion of the investigation.
4. Annotations in this report marked, for example 1/1, refer to Report 1, Divider 1 and, for example 1/5/█, is a reference to Report 1, Divider 5, statement of █. Annotations such as █/01 are references to exhibits to the statements annexed to both reports. The summaries of the written evidence at sections B, C and D of this report attempt to give a flavour of the salient points of the evidence in so far as it appears to be relevant to the terms of reference for Part 2. █  
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B. Summaries of [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] evidence in relation to Part 2 of the Investigation

5. [REDACTED] is [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] supplemental statement (2/1) provides detail concerning the development, organisation, and delivery of RSE for the 2022/23 academic year at QEII. The PSHE (including RSE) curriculum is delivered in an allocated weekly 50-minute lesson for each year group. The exception is Year 9 where PSHE is delivered in the 25-minute tutor time and through drop-down days. Years 7 and 8 have one lesson a week throughout the year. Years 10 and 11 have a lesson a week until Christmas at which point they move on to Careers. The curriculum delivered at QEII is the DESC Advisory Curriculum ([REDACTED]/06). This was the same curriculum as delivered in the previous academic year. The resources used were agreed at a PSHE [REDACTED] session attended by representatives from all the Island's secondary schools and the [REDACTED]. The [REDACTED] at QEII, [REDACTED] (1/5/[REDACTED]), has confirmed that no complaints were received during the academic year 2021/22 regarding RSE and that no parents/carers asked that their child be removed from the RSE units of work.

6. The QEII RSE Policy ([REDACTED]/02) was approved by the school's governing body in July 2022. It is easily available for parents/carers to access on the school website. The aims of RSE are clearly set out in the Policy as is the right of parents/carers to request that their child be withdrawn from all or part of the sex education lessons that are delivered as part of RSE. If a child is to be withdrawn, parents/carers are expected to inform the Headteacher in writing and the school will keep a record. Except in exceptional circumstances, the school will respect the request to withdraw the child up to and until three terms before the child turns 16.

7. There are 23 periods of PSHE each week at QEII. Given that there are six tutor groups in Years 7, 8 and 10 and five tutor groups in year 11, this is just under the 25 period load of a full time teacher. Teacher salaries start at a [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

8. By an email [REDACTED] prior to any RSE complaints being received, [REDACTED] proposed a future change to the structure of PSHE delivery which [REDACTED] hoped would take effect from September 2023. [REDACTED] suggested that all lessons should be taught by all tutors during the same period on a Wednesday morning. [REDACTED] because all tutors would be delivering it at once, with staff on rotation, taking responsibility for delivering a topic that they are comfortable with and that they can specialise in. An alternative suggestion was for a smaller team of staff to deliver the PSHE curriculum. They could again specialise in certain areas and meet on a regular basis. Subsequently, a programme was devised which would commence in September 2023 and which timetables a smaller group of staff [REDACTED] to invest in further training and support [REDACTED]. The reduced number of PSHE teachers for the next academic year would make it easier for the curriculum team to come together more regularly for discussion. The creation of a shared PSHE planning period with [REDACTED] is being explored, with staff to attend curriculum meetings after school as well as drop-in support sessions. This is key to supporting staff in delivering this topic, given the curiosity of students and the nature of the questions that arise.

9. The Island's RSE Advisory Curriculum is based on the Scottish RSHP programme which was adapted to suit schools on the Isle of Man. The staff at QEII used resources shared by the Department [REDACTED]. If any of these are to be changed, it is essential that it is agreed by secondary school headteachers and [REDACTED] to ensure consistency. [REDACTED] does not plan to make any changes without expert guidance and an agreed way forward as such changes may have a knock-on effect to other sequences of learning in later years.

10. External communication about RSE could be improved. Although the RSE Policy is available on the QEII website, the [REDACTED] is going to write to parents/carers to inform them that students will be starting the RSE unit and providing a brief overview of the topics to be covered with a link to the website and the Policy. If parents wish to meet with [REDACTED] in schools to look through the resources and discuss the

context, then this will be supported. In addition, [REDACTED] suggests that a pre-recorded video of the PSHE and RSE advisory curriculum on the Island would help the community to understand the rationale behind the curriculum, specifically to provide young people with knowledge that will help them to make informed decisions about their wellbeing, health, and relationships. If this was produced by the Department [REDACTED], all schools could use it and provide a consistent message.

11. [REDACTED] statement provides an explanation of the school's complaints procedure which is available to parents via the website. Whilst a small group of parents/carers have raised concerns about the curriculum, the school has also received supportive emails. Most of the complaints have come from [REDACTED] parents. No complaints have been raised by students directly to [REDACTED] and no complaints have been made to [REDACTED] via [REDACTED]. The only concern that was reported to [REDACTED] following [REDACTED] initial investigation was that [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. This was addressed by advice from the [REDACTED] as to how to build the confidence to deliver the lesson.

12. PSHE is a popular subject with students. The suspension of the RSE curriculum will have prevented students from receiving essential information to help them make informed choices to keep them safe and healthy. To not continue the curriculum in September would be failing to safeguard students. When it does recommence, it should be reordered to ensure that all students have been taught the full curriculum.

13. [REDACTED] is the Department's [REDACTED]. In [REDACTED] first statement (1/5/2020) [REDACTED] provides some background to the creation of the RSE Advisory Curriculum. In 2019, secondary [REDACTED] requested guidance to support them in delivering the RSE aspect of PSHE. Primarily based on Scotland's national resource Relationships, Sexual Health, and Parenthood (RSHP), the RSE Framework created in 2020 for Years 7 to 11 provided suggested themes and topics with accompanying learning plans, presentations, and activities. Each of the five secondary schools adopted the framework in different ways depending on their structure for PSHE delivery. The framework was reviewed regularly at the [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] adds that [REDACTED] understands that QEII followed the resources without any amendments,



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

14. In [REDACTED] supplemental statement [REDACTED] provides detail concerning the development and introduction of RSE at QEII for the 2022/23 academic year with some research sources which reinforce the thinking behind the teaching of RSE in the Island's schools. The RSE curriculum is based on best practice from several sources, including the Department for Education (UK), Education Scotland, CEOP, Childnet, NSPCC and the PSHE Association. The Department does not have any guidelines about making lesson content accessible to the public generally or to parents. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

15. [REDACTED] Drop-Down Days in support of the PSHE programme which in turn supports a school's RSE Policy. These days involve outside speakers who specialise in certain subjects that the teaching staff at secondary schools are unable to offer. [REDACTED] plans these events on behalf of the DESC and offers them to schools including QEII. If a school wishes to participate, [REDACTED] finds a date that works and gets it booked into the school calendar. In respect of content, [REDACTED] contacts agencies/departments who may be able to deliver the content on a chosen theme. The content and materials are shared in advance. Drop-Down Days are effective to enhance the provision offered by schools by inviting specialists to discuss topics.

16. [REDACTED] says that there are no specialist PSHE teachers on the Island. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] is often given to those who have space in their timetable [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Some schools allocate a lesson to some year groups, while others rely on delivering content through tutor time. This model of delivery does not allow appropriate time to cover some topics. Therefore, by delivering through a Drop-Down Day there is a guarantee of 6 x 50-minute sessions.

17. Some degree of RSE staff training is available. There are links to UK government training materials and documents and resources are accessible through a SharePoint site. [REDACTED] also offers bespoke training to schools. There were workshops called *“Implementing the RSE Curriculum in your setting”* in October and November 2022.

18. [REDACTED] development of a bespoke PSHE programme which was adopted and rolled out to the schools in September 2021. QEII followed the curriculum provided by DESC. The materials [REDACTED] used during the academic year 2021/22 were handed over to [REDACTED] those same materials during 2022/23. During the academic year 2021/22, there were no complaints on the content or the delivery of the new RSE curriculum.

19. [REDACTED] School policies are reviewed by the Governors. There are four QEII Governors’ meetings each year and there can be as many as ten policies for consideration at any meeting. Established policies are reviewed by the Governors every two years. One of the policies which is reviewed is the RSE Policy which was last approved in July 2022. The Governors also approved the QEII Equal Opportunities and Inclusion, Anti-Bullying and Child Protection/Safeguarding policies to work alongside the RSE Policy. [REDACTED] comments that in considering the RSE Policy the Governors were also aware and approved of several DESC policies, namely the DESC policy statement on RSE 2020, the DESC Advisory Curriculum, DESC lesson plans that support the Advisory Curriculum and the Scottish RHSP used since 2019 as a basis for the DESC Advisory Curriculum.

20. [REDACTED] adds that [REDACTED] may need to review the extent to which the full policy is being applied, especially with respect to appropriate staff training. The media interest in February 2023 concerning the delivery of certain aspects of RSE at QEII and the vexatious and misleading comments about QEII and its staff were unwarranted. In the opinion of [REDACTED], the DESC did not immediately and openly support the underlying strength of the RSE Advisory Curriculum and the

sudden pausing of the programme in all schools may have led to an impression that there was something wrong with the programme.

21. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] aware that the programme of study for the academic year 2022/23 was unchanged. [REDACTED] also aware that the school had reinstated curriculum Drop-Down Days which had been paused during the pandemic. Some Drop-Down Days included opportunities to teach some of the RSE curriculum.

22. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] agreed on an annual basis when the curriculum plan is laid before them. [REDACTED] therefore aware of the three main ways of providing RSE, namely via a Tutor Group, timetabled lessons, and Drop-Down Days.

23. The RSE policy approved by the Governors in July 2022 had been changed since the previous review in 2019 (the 2021 review had been delayed until 2022 due to the pandemic). Significant changes included a change in the name from "*Sex and Relationships*" to "*Relationships and Sex Education*"; separation of the definitions of "*relationships education*" and "*sex education*"; optional support from the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] by way of continuous professional development to support teachers who felt uncomfortable with teaching RSE; a re-write of the aims of RSE; elaboration of the section on "*inclusion*"; new wording for the section on the right to withdraw students.

24. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

25. In conclusion, [REDACTED] have not discussed the lesson content for any one Year group, but [REDACTED] have stated that the curriculum is well thought through and appropriate. [REDACTED] have not received any complaints concerning PSHE.

26. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

27. The development of the RSE element of the PSHE programme occurred prior to [REDACTED]. It is based on the Scottish RHSP curriculum [REDACTED] for more than two years. The curriculum was made available to all of the Island's secondary schools through a share point document. [REDACTED] a copy of the "Advisory RSE Curriculum". The lesson plan and resources accompanying the document are [REDACTED]. QEII delivered the programme to all pupils in Years 7 to 11.

28. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] No changes were made to the resources as the programme had run successfully in previous years. The programme was suspended in February 2023. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

29. [REDACTED] states that, from a safeguarding perspective, it is a necessity to teach RSE in schools. In relation to the age appropriateness of some of the curriculum content, it must be remembered that pupils can have instant access to explicit material on their phones, where the almost limitless content is unregulated and has the potential of a dangerous impact on them. [REDACTED] refers to the Children's Commissioner Report which includes statistics regarding access to pornography from an early age. By the age of 9, 10% of children have seen pornography. By 11 the percentage rises to 27% and by 13 the percentage is 50%. [REDACTED] says that pupils should be properly educated about RSE. [REDACTED] adds that there is evidence that this should begin at a young age and there are reasons why some of the topics on the curriculum are delivered at specific ages.

30. The QEII website gives details of the RSE curriculum. It also provides the means for parents or guardians to exclude their child from RSE lessons if they deem that some sex education is unsuitable or inappropriate for their child. The website does

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<sup>1</sup> The complete RSE set of lesson plans is too voluminous to include as an Appendix to this Report. However, relevant lesson plans for Year 7,8 and 10 are included in Appendix 27.

not, however, publish the detailed lesson plans which means that a parent or guardian may be unaware of the exact content of the lessons.

31. [REDACTED] refers to “*Relationships and Sex Education – The Evidence*”, a publication of The Sex Education Forum 2022. [REDACTED] says that the importance of RSE resonates throughout the document, particularly in relation to the reduction of harm and encouraging young people to speak out resulting, for example, in the reduction of bullying. The document also recommends that the delivery of RSE should be through willing and trained staff and that it is more effective when delivered before a young person becomes sexually active. This again shows the importance of delivering it at a young age and supports the reasoning around the ages that some of the topics are delivered to the students.

32. Looking at QEII in the round, each year has a slightly different RSE curriculum and lesson plans. In Years 7 and 8, teaching is delivered throughout the academic year in weekly timetabled lessons in Tutor Groups. In Year 9, the programme is delivered during Tutor Group time. In Years 10 and 11 there is a return to the weekly timetabled lessons until Christmas. From then onwards, the lesson content for those years changes to Careers and related subjects for the remainder of the year.

33. The teaching staff utilised for timetabled RSE are selected based on spare capacity. They do not receive any specialised training. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] compulsory Inset training days.

Although [REDACTED] feels that the lessons can be delivered without additional specialised training, the importance of delivery in RSE, means that additional training would improve the level of input and increase the confidence of the staff involved.

[REDACTED] believes that some staff have found that some of the content of the lessons is outside of their comfort zone and skills.

34. [REDACTED] distributes the lesson plans and teaching materials supplied by DESC to each member of staff timetabled to teach RSE. [REDACTED] expects each teacher to look through the content and plans before each lesson and then adopt an appropriate

teaching style based on the needs and abilities of each class. This means that teachers provide lessons in different ways to suit both themselves and the needs of their pupils.

35. In support of the RSE programme, the school also sets aside several Drop Down Days across the year, one for each year group. These days are organised by DESC, not the school. On these days, Tutor Groups attend a series of classes with input provided by outside speakers. There are six different sessions over the course of the day. Each school will have the same six sessions for each year group, providing a degree of consistency across the Island. [REDACTED] organises the attendance of teaching staff for each class, as well as making technology and meals available for the speakers. The teachers in attendance will be those who would be teaching that year group at that time. As the days are delivered in Tutor Groups, the attending teachers will not always have taught that group before. They are there as a staff presence to monitor the behaviour of the pupils in the class. They do not take part in the delivery of the lesson.

36. During the 2022/23 academic year, nine weeks of RSE had been delivered since the October 2022 half-term without complaint. Equally there had been no complaints about the identical programme delivered in previous years. [REDACTED]

says that the first complaint was received [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] had a particular concern about the mention of “anal sex”. The Year 7 “intimate relationships” lesson discusses sex and what it is. It mentions both oral and anal sex to be inclusive to people of all sexual orientation. The lesson is not descriptive and does not encourage any sexual act. It merely states the type of sex and what it means. They also looked at the content of the next lesson. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] children had been removed from lessons before the halt to RSE was initiated. The content that has caused the most issues has also been delivered to Years 7 and 8 as part of the “intimate relationships” lesson which, over the past two years, was delivered without

complaint. Subsequently, parents were invited to provide feedback around the delivery of PSHE and RSE at QEII. There were 18 responses, 12 of which are "negative".

37. No teacher feedback has been received but [REDACTED] has had regular discussions with staff about the lessons. Some teachers have commented that some topics are uncomfortable to deliver. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] adds that [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] All staff timetabled to deliver RSE have done so to the best of their ability.

38. Following discussion with [REDACTED] says that the delivery of RSE for the next academic year at QEII is to be revised. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] This will ensure that these teachers receive training and that they are willing to teach sensitive topics such as RSE.

39. [REDACTED] concludes by saying that in [REDACTED] opinion, the leadership and delivery of PSHE at [REDACTED] needs some changes. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] PSHE needs more than the basics which are currently delivered. It is an imperative part of the whole school curriculum, and this should be reflected in how it is driven across the school. [REDACTED]

40. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The school currently has 863 students on roll and has 52.9 Full Time Equivalent teaching staff. The school day commences with a 25-minute form tutor group period followed by 6 x 50-minute lessons.

41. The PSHE timetable (incorporating the RSE curriculum) is delivered within the school timetable as follows. Years 7 and 8 – 1 lesson per week plus additional material in tutor time/assemblies. Year 9 – a series of half/whole drop-down days where students focus on a particular PSHE topic. Years 10 and 11 – 1 x Careers lesson per week and 1 x Citizenship lesson per week. Years 12 and 13 – tutor time plus additional time as required during the school’s KS5 enrichment programme which runs on Wednesday mornings.

42. The school endeavours to ensure that a teacher is primarily deployed to teach their main subject. In some cases, a teacher may be left with several lessons where they are not required to teach their main subject. One of the ways of deploying staff in this position is to assign them to teach PSHE. This is a common practice in all secondary schools. Where possible, staff who have an existing pastoral role within Year groups are deployed but other staff who have some capacity on their timetable will often be deployed to teach PSHE. When allocating such staff, factors such as experience and previous teaching of PSHE are considered and support is always offered for all staff teaching PSHE through the provision of suitable teaching materials and training.

43. The RSE units of work at QEII had all been concluded before the teaching of RSE was paused on 17 February 2023. It is intended in the 2023 PSHE timetable to move to a smaller, bespoke team of staff from within the [REDACTED] to deliver the PSHE curriculum. It is also hoped to teach whole year groups at the same time in Years 7 and 8 to allow (e.g.) the use of external speakers if necessary/as required.

44. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] the programme to Year 8 pupils who are 12 to 13 years of age using the curriculum, materials, and booklets that were already in place. The programme that [REDACTED] involved with passed without incident save an input concerning “*abuse*”. This can be a tough subject for some pupils to take in and [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] The sex education elements of the lessons did not raise any complaints as far as [REDACTED] is aware. Students are told in every lesson that they may step outside the room if they feel uncomfortable.



45. During the 2022/23 academic year [REDACTED] PSHE programme to Year 8 pupils. This includes a lesson entitled “*Contraception*” and another concerning Condoms. [REDACTED] provides age-appropriate material and information. Pupils have inquisitive minds. This is encouraged. In a class there will be pupils who develop physically, mentally and emotionally at different rates so the input and delivery to the group of information is tailored to the group with this in mind. The module discusses safety, health, contraception responsibility and the age of consent at an appropriate level. The condom lesson is the final lesson of the module and uses Power Point slides, condoms, and a plastic demonstration penis. There is a basket in the class for anonymous questions. Pupils can withdraw from the lesson. Parents may ask that their child be excluded from the lesson. No pupil has withdrawn from the lesson or been excluded when [REDACTED] this lesson. [REDACTED] is not aware of any complaints that have arisen from this lesson.

46. [REDACTED] The subject is entitled “*Living together, marriage and civil partnerships*”. The lesson material is uncontentious and age appropriate. [REDACTED] adds that there is insufficient time within the 25-minute Tutor Group period to fully deliver the lesson. [REDACTED] has just enough time to provide the information followed by a little time for class discussion.

47. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was uncomfortable with the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] proceeded with the lesson anyway, as much to show the pupils that [REDACTED] could discuss the content in a sensible and serious way so that the pupils would be encouraged to do likewise. [REDACTED] to deal with anonymous questions. [REDACTED] chose not to answer some of these questions which [REDACTED] judged to be designed to make [REDACTED] appear uncomfortable in front of the class. [REDACTED] adds that children are curious and will ask questions. [REDACTED] attitude is to be professional in [REDACTED] approach to these questions.

48. [REDACTED] has received no training for the delivery of PSHE subjects. [REDACTED] understands that some schools in the UK used trained PSHE staff. That would improve the standard and consistency of subject delivery. The allocation of PSHE

lessons depends upon the spare lesson time that a teacher may have. It is seen as an additional extra subject to the teacher's main subject.

49. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] delivered the same lesson across all the specific year Tutor Groups on a rotational basis. [REDACTED] teachers delivered lessons on other subjects within the PSHE curriculum. The lessons that [REDACTED] delivered were *“Unhealthy relationships”, “Myths about getting pregnant”, “Contraception” and “Getting advice and support”*.

50. In preparation for giving PSHE lessons, [REDACTED] researched the content to ensure that [REDACTED] was confident in delivering the lesson in a clear and structured way that would provide the required learning outcomes. [REDACTED] was not always aware of the ability of the class, their level of maturity or their potential to understand the material to be provided. There were occasions when [REDACTED] decided to adapt the content to ensure that it was age appropriate. Generally, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] to be more immature than previously. [REDACTED] attributes this to the effect of COVID 19 on schooling. This meant that some of the lesson content was not as age appropriate [REDACTED] as had been the case in previous years.

51. [REDACTED] has not received any training in PSHE. [REDACTED] found some of the content difficult and uncomfortable to deliver.

52. Occasionally, for many reasons, a teacher may not be available to give a timetabled lesson, so another teacher must cover. This can present difficulties depending on the teacher's abilities, the materials to use, the make-up of the class and the time available to prepare. Being a *“cover”* can be stressful to a teacher called upon to deliver content that they have not prepared for to a class they may not be familiar with.

53. There are no pupil assessments or assignments connected to PSHE and therefore pupils often treat it as a free lesson with no motivation to learn. This makes life difficult for the teacher.

54. [REDACTED] sees the advantages in PSHE teachers providing the lesson to a class that they are familiar with, providing the whole programme to the same class. Alternatively, a designated group of teachers giving a limited number of lessons or one specific topic to each class would lead to consistency. A further alternative would be to involve specialist outside speakers to deal with specific topics.

55. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] PSHE to [REDACTED] pupils on a rotational basis about "*Feminism*". The lesson takes place during the morning Tutor period which includes class registration. There is limited time during that period for the subject to be delivered. It can be about 20 minutes. The lesson consists of open discussion in the class supported by pre-prepared materials. It is an enjoyable lesson with a good deal of pupil interest and engagement. [REDACTED] believes that some PSHE lessons can be difficult and challenging for the teacher. It is generally known that a teacher can decline to teach a particular subject if they wish. [REDACTED] has not received any training in the delivery of PSHE subjects. [REDACTED] has not received any complaint or adverse feedback. [REDACTED] thinks that changing the staff who teach PSHE keeps the delivery fresh but that there are also advantages in using specialist trained staff, possibly external to the school. This depends on timetabling space and budget availability.

56. [REDACTED] is a mixed group with differing abilities and levels of maturity. [REDACTED] also delivers a PSHE lesson entitled "*Sexual Harassment*" on a rotational basis although the full rotation was not completed because of the suspension of the programme. [REDACTED] has received no training in the delivery of PSHE. There is little time to give this lesson during the Tutor Group period which can leave as little as 9 minutes out of the 25-minute period. [REDACTED] says that [REDACTED] was provided with good resources including data originating from Scotland. The material is age appropriate and uncontentious. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] experience to determine the best way to deliver the content to the class,

encouraging discussion. ■ describes the effect of the lesson as enlightening, valuable and stimulating thought.

57. ■  
■ which limits the time available but also has the advantage that ■ knows the pupils and can judge their level of maturity and understanding. This means ■ can tailor the content to ensure that it is appropriate. Under the Tutor Group system, a teacher retains the group as they progress through school so that a positive relationship builds up with individuals enabling an assessment of their abilities and changing levels of maturity. ■ says that the programme is now more structured than in the past when the system for teacher allocation of PSHE was dependant on teaching time being below capacity.

58. ■  
■ does ■ own research and develops ■ own materials for the lesson. ■ considers that the lesson is relevant and age appropriate. ■ has received no feedback to the contrary and no children have excluded themselves from the lesson.

59. ■ says that delivering the same lesson on a rotational basis would generate a more consistent lesson content delivery from a smaller cohort of teaching staff. PSHE is not a specialist subject and there is no training. ■ thinks that it would be a difficult option for a student teacher at college unless there was a demand for teachers trained in PSHE as a stand-alone subject or second subject. If such trained teachers were available, it would allow schools to develop a more consistently delivered lesson programme.

60. ■  
■ has not received any specialist training in RSE. It is not a subject that ■ would choose to teach.

61. The 2022/23 academic year was due to commence on 7 September 2022. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] and provided the teaching materials for the first lesson. [REDACTED] provided further materials for subsequent lessons. The first lesson was given the following day. It was a one hour directed discussion lesson with activities for the students to think about and discuss. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] give it [REDACTED] best shot. One lesson concerned contraception and condoms. [REDACTED] was uncomfortable in teaching this module [REDACTED]  
There was an option to demonstrate the safe use of condoms within the lesson but [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] believes that other staff teaching this subject have felt the same.

62. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] observes that it is staff who have space in their timetables who are asked to deliver the PSHE lessons. It is not a subject that staff volunteer for. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] PSHE is different and involves a more open and less structured discussion [REDACTED]

63. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
scheduled to teach a [REDACTED] group [REDACTED] was unfamiliar with. [REDACTED] likes to plan [REDACTED] work in advance and felt [REDACTED] was rather late notice.

64. [REDACTED] also comments that PSHE is not assessed or examined. There is no substantial written material to support the lessons for the pupils to work on. Booklets that were available in previous years have been discontinued. [REDACTED] feels that pupils do not really value these lessons and [REDACTED] questions what some of them get from the content. There is no mechanism for pupil feedback other than through the discussion during the lesson. In Year 7, the developmental differences of the range of

pupils can be vast and it is difficult to provide content that meets the level of maturity and the abilities of all pupils. Some of the Year 7 content concerning body image is valuable. By contrast, some of the Year 10 content is unnecessarily graphic. [REDACTED] considers that the Year 10 condom lesson is too advanced for some pupils. The slides that are available to support lessons are generally satisfactory but some of them could be amended or removed so that some issues concerning them would diminish. The use of a smaller group of teachers to deliver with specialised PSHE knowledge and training would result in a more consistent lesson delivery.

65. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] has received no specialist training. It is not a subject that [REDACTED] would choose to teach. [REDACTED] believes that RSE content would be better placed in the "Citizenship" modules delivered after Christmas, enabling one teacher to teach all classes in a six-week rotation.

66. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] would be part of the team teaching the RSE programme to a mixed ability class [REDACTED] for the Autumn term. The topics were set out in the email which also provided teaching materials for the first lesson, *Recognising online sexual harassment*". [REDACTED] provided similar materials for subsequent lessons. The first lesson was to be given a week later. It was a one hour directed discussion with activities for students to think about and discuss. The emphasis was on encouraging debate during the lessons. This was an improvement from the previous year. The content was age appropriate for the Years 10 and 11 groups.

C. Submissions to the DESC/RSE email inbox and subsequent interviews with contributors

67. As a prelude to Part 2 of the investigation, the Department established an email address ([DESCRSE@gov.im](mailto:DESCRSE@gov.im)) as an inbox to receive parental and other feedback in relation to the delivery of PSHE including RSE at QEII. There were several contributions from a number of parents.

68. Several of the email contributions were positive. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] These contributions are summarised as follows. The investigators did not consider that it was necessary to interview these contributors.

69. [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] states that [REDACTED] is more than happy with the RSE being taught [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] finds it entirely appropriate. Conversations [REDACTED] indicate that [REDACTED] also comfortable with what is being taught and the way in which it has been delivered. [REDACTED] believes that open conversations around sex and sexual identity should take place within schools to educate children so that they can make informed decisions regarding their sexual health and wellbeing.

70. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] comments that the whole “*debacle*” has been blown completely out of proportion. [REDACTED] that the world has changed because of modern technology, meaning that children are growing up much more quickly so that the approach to their education must also change. [REDACTED] that the more education and awareness that [REDACTED] can receive around these topics the better. [REDACTED] and states that gender identity is a normal topic which will be a big part of children’s lives as they grow up and must be addressed. QEII has addressed the issue in the correct way. [REDACTED] welcomes an open and full education. [REDACTED] are honest, inquisitive, and unafraid to ask [REDACTED] questions. [REDACTED] believes that parents who have issues around such topics do not nurture such a relationship with their children. Anything that helps [REDACTED] children grow into responsible, mature, and conscientious young adults with a good understanding of what is and what is not acceptable regarding their bodies, other people’s bodies, their beliefs, and other people’s beliefs is welcome. [REDACTED] praises [REDACTED] [REDACTED] for taking on these topics in an open and honest way. None of the “*backlash*” is warranted.

71. [REDACTED] says that the current curriculum has fostered an “*accepting attitude*” in [REDACTED]. This is an attitude which is also encouraged [REDACTED] is pleased that the PSHE curriculum finally includes lessons around oral and anal sex to incorporate different sexualities and instil inclusivity in children from a young age. [REDACTED] learn about sex and consent from a teacher than from Google or accidental exposure to unhelpful and inappropriate content online. [REDACTED] has had conversations [REDACTED] regarding sexuality, safe sex, and consent which [REDACTED] believes would not have taken place had it not been so well covered by QEII. [REDACTED] adds that the rumour, speculation, and thinly veiled homophobia/transphobia expressed on social media regarding the school’s lessons is “*ridiculous and harmful*”. It is neither reflective of the modern world parents are trying to navigate nor the views of all parents/carers. [REDACTED] wishes to thank the staff of QEII for all their hard work and resilience during a difficult time.

72. [REDACTED] on behalf of a group of supportive parents [REDACTED] [REDACTED] have reviewed the curriculum content and [REDACTED] believe that it is important and age appropriate.

73. Specifically, as to **age appropriateness** [REDACTED] that it is essential for children to be educated about sex and gender before they are likely to become sexually active as this enables them to make informed decisions. Because of the internet, children are exposed to sexually explicit content earlier and more frequently than in previous generations. Without alternative and trustworthy sources of information, children are learning about sex through pornography which, at best, is unrealistic and, at worst, is misogynistic and abusive. [REDACTED] are already exploring pornography. Some know how to use the “*incognito*” function on home computers to view explicit material without their parents finding out. Others are sharing videos using their phones. Raising topics such as the different activities that sex can involve in a safe environment such as a classroom provides an essential way of opening dialogue. If children see something of concern on the internet they may feel unable to ask for more information for fear of being told off for viewing something that they should not have looked at, but if the topic



is raised in the classroom, their questions are legitimised and there is a safe way to find out more from the teacher or their parents. Open conversations about sex are a proactive safeguarding measure. Providing children with factual and practical information about sex is necessary to combat the harmful and misleading content that they may otherwise encounter. It opens conversations with trusted adults about topics children may otherwise struggle to deal with.

74. As to **appropriateness of content** it is appropriate and important that children learn about different types of relationships and the different sexual activities these may involve. Vaginal, oral, and anal sex are all common practices among consenting adults. The curriculum itself gives statistics to support this. To exclude anal and oral sex from discussion is to frame them as “*not normal*” and, in doing so, to frame LGBTQ+ people as “*not normal*” because these practices are commonly associated with homosexuality. Statistically, it is [REDACTED] includes some children who identify as LGBTQ+ (or will do so later in life). Those children deserve to feel accepted, not marginalised as “not normal”. Children who identify as heterosexual (or will do so later in life) should also be educated in a way that frames the LGBTQ+ community as a normal part of the spectrum of sexuality so that they grow to be inclusive and caring members of society, not perpetuating bigotry and exclusion. These conversations are critical to reducing inequality and discrimination. Similarly, discussion of gender is also important. The petition which is in circulation refers to a drag queen talking about gender. There should be no issue in having a guest speaker who could potentially make children with gender dysphoria feel validated and children without gender concerns learn about the experiences of someone who has. This fosters inclusivity and empathy, whether a person agrees with the speaker’s beliefs or not. The outrage over a drag queen speaking to the children comes across as transphobic, an example of the bigotry that the group believes it is important to stand up against. The attendance of any guest speaker must, however, be carefully managed by the teaching staff.

75. The petition raises the issue of **safeguarding**. The curriculum supports safeguarding. Children who are informed about consent and the types of activities involved in sex are better prepared to defend themselves against predatory behaviours. They will have a better understanding of what is inappropriate and be able to spot “*red flags*” more

easily. Opening dialogue about sex and making children feel that they can safely discuss these issues, makes it more likely they will raise concerns if they experience abusive or predatory behaviour or pressure to engage in sexual behaviour.

76. [REDACTED] is aware that parents can elect that a child may **opt out** of lessons, a right that [REDACTED] respect and support. [REDACTED] believes that the lessons benefit all children, however, [REDACTED] encourage those parents who disagree with the content to opt out rather than seek to amend the curriculum to the disadvantage of all children. In the view [REDACTED] it would be unmanageable for the school to be expected to provide an alternative curriculum to suit all parents. [REDACTED] therefore support parents who are unhappy with the curriculum being allowed to take their children out of school for the duration of RSE lessons in order that they could teach them about sex and relationships using a curriculum of their own choice.

77. [REDACTED] is in favour of the **transparency** of the curriculum materials, lesson content and details of guest speakers to enable parents to opt out if they wish. This would be made available before the lessons take place to enable informed decisions to be made.

78. [REDACTED] concludes by saying that they want to make clear that the views expressed by the parents who have signed the petition do not represent the views of all parents. There are two separate issues. One is the content of the curriculum. The other is the alleged behaviours/actions taken by teachers and/or guest speakers that is not part of the curriculum and should be investigated. [REDACTED] supports the content of the curriculum. It is based on the Scottish curriculum which was widely consulted upon and created with input from a diverse range of professional organisations. The Scottish curriculum has been criticised, but it should be possible to take from it what is useful and appropriate. A knee-jerk reaction could deny important information to children and undermine inclusivity. Radically changing the curriculum would be a disservice to children. Sex and relationships are an important part of life. Children are having to navigate these issues much earlier than previously. [REDACTED] believes that comprehensive, inclusive sex and relationship education will help children to safely navigate their journey through adolescence, make informed decisions, protect themselves, support inclusivity and enter adulthood with healthy attitudes toward sex and relationships.

79. [REDACTED] has no problem with the content of the RSE classes but adds that [REDACTED] has heard varying information about the delivery of these classes which, if true, would need to be regulated. [REDACTED] sympathises with the staff at QEII who have just been doing what has been requested. [REDACTED] also understands and agrees with the need to convey information to children which identifies different types of sexuality as well as the importance of offering information to safeguard them. [REDACTED] does, however, question the necessity to give such a broad range of information to Years 7 and 8. The topics are too much too soon. There will always be children who explore sex early, but [REDACTED] doubts that showing an 11 or 12 year old how to put on a condom would help them. Open dialogue is important. There is an open and honest approach [REDACTED] suggests that information from school should be drip fed, with more in depth information becoming available in Year 9.

80. To conclude the summary of positive responses to the inbox, there was also an [REDACTED] [REDACTED] parents fully support the teaching of RSE at the school. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was in lessons which dealt with masturbation, oral and anal sex. They say that it would have helped to have known about the content in advance and to have been given the opportunity to consent to the teaching of what could be considered as explicit content for an early stage in secondary school. [REDACTED] would have liked to have had a chat with [REDACTED] child beforehand in a safe home environment. The content was quite graphic for a [REDACTED] so perhaps these lessons could have been pushed back to the year-end or even to later years. As to the issue of the drag queen, [REDACTED] support the school's judgment. Children need to be taught about diversity and inclusion. This element of the teaching is not a concern to [REDACTED].

81. The following paragraphs relate to contributions from parents who, in varying degrees, were unhappy with the delivery of PSHE (including RSE) at QEII. In all cases these parents were offered the opportunity of a meeting with the investigators to elaborate their concerns and to help with the understanding of their respective positions. In most cases, the parents accepted the opportunity to meet. The investigators are grateful for the assistance received.

82. [REDACTED] provided an extremely comprehensive and extensively researched paper which is included in this report in its

entirety at [REDACTED] It is impossible to do justice to the paper by means of a summary. [REDACTED] offered the following highlights to assist in the understanding of [REDACTED] but to fully appreciate [REDACTED] contribution to the investigation, [REDACTED]

83. [REDACTED] *“conservative but not prudish”*. [REDACTED] primary concern is that the content of the RSE curriculum, particularly the Year 7 content, is not age appropriate. [REDACTED] is the safety of the children. Given the sensitive nature of the topic, it was *“eye opening”* to realise how little consultation or consideration had been given to parents as the primary guardians of the children with their best interests at heart. [REDACTED] [REDACTED], it has never been denied that [REDACTED] account of the lessons, in particular the drop-down day, the *“queerifying”* of popular children’s TV programmes, and *“gender ideology”*, was wrong. This makes [REDACTED] stronger ground. In [REDACTED] opinion gender ideology is not an age appropriate *“theory”* for children in Years 7 or 8. It is *“developmentally dangerous”* to be throwing out those ideologies at large. The extent of the *“backlash”* is a clear indication that a line has been crossed. The fact that some teachers themselves are uncomfortable with the delivery of the lesson content should be a *“red flag”*. The Minister’s references in Tynwald to *“inaccuracies”* in the media reports of the drop-down day are concerning. That was never the issue. The real issue was the content of the lesson.

84. [REDACTED] primary position is that there should be a change to the curriculum. [REDACTED] alternative position is that there should be greater transparency regarding specific lesson content to enable parents to make informed decisions as to whether their children should be withdrawn from all or part of the lessons. The curriculum content alone is insufficient. Parents should be consulted and have access to lesson plans. Teachers should also be trained to *“keep to the script”*. They should not have the discretion to go where they will. There needs to be better training and more support for the teaching staff and more open discussion with parents. [REDACTED] says that this would mean that teachers are better prepared and that all parties are *“singing from the same sheet”* with a full recognition of the *“boundaries”*. [REDACTED] wants to protect [REDACTED] children and do what is right for them. [REDACTED] appreciates that there are differing opinions about what is

age-appropriate content for such lessons and would suggest that a starting point for agreement would be for teachers and parents to establish a “base line” or lowest common denominator and when a point of disagreement is reached, bring in other parties and experts to assist.

85. [REDACTED] was “totally disgusted” [REDACTED] “taught” anal and oral sex. [REDACTED] adds that [REDACTED] was “shocked and deeply hurt” [REDACTED] endure a class during which [REDACTED] was told how gay men and men and women could have anal sex which the teacher referred to as “butt sex”. [REDACTED] “embarrassed and disgusted” by animated slides of two men in bed together and of two women also in bed together, in each case with pillows covering their privates. [REDACTED] an 11-year-old does not need to know these things. [REDACTED] also states that parents should have been informed about what was going to be taught and that the school should have asked for parental consent. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] is required to give consent for [REDACTED] to have lunch out of school, yet no consent is sought for [REDACTED] to be taught anal sex. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] adds that [REDACTED] wrote to the school on the subject but was dissatisfied with the reply. [REDACTED] felt that [REDACTED] was being made out to be a liar.

86. [REDACTED] confirmed that [REDACTED] was in favour of the “basic stuff” being taught, meaning [REDACTED] how babies are conceived and how bodies change with age, but this content was a “step too far and opened a door”. [REDACTED] rights as a parent have been taken away. [REDACTED] reaction to this was devastating [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] did not need to know about such things at [REDACTED] age. The lessons seek to “normalise” activity such as anal sex and could be said to be abusive. [REDACTED] asks that there be better communication and consultation with parents. This would enable parents to determine whether lesson content was age-appropriate for their child. Parents should be asked in advance to consent to the lessons.

87. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] Once again, it should be read to fully understand [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] written contribution to the investigation, [REDACTED] key areas of concern are lesson content, age appropriateness,

promotion of left-wing gender ideology in schools to vulnerable children making them susceptible to paedophilia groups, poor school consultation and transparency. [REDACTED] feels that parental control of [REDACTED] children has been hijacked by the school. [REDACTED] believes that the content of parts of the RSE programme is a campaign of left-wing ideologues designing a system which provides children with non-age appropriate and unnecessary information at an early age which will affect their ability to protect themselves, and therefore in [REDACTED] view, normalises perversion. [REDACTED] believes that for some gender/sex content the appropriate age is 16 years. [REDACTED] used the term “*curiosity killed the cat*” meaning that the ability to introduce certain information at a young age makes children more rather than less vulnerable. [REDACTED] feels that there are insufficient checks and balances in the system to protect children in this area. Parents have not been made aware of the exact lesson content prior to the lesson. This removes parents’ ability to make choices and protect their child.

88. In short, [REDACTED] believes that the root cause of the problems with RSE is the introduction of gender ideology politics to school which challenges [REDACTED] view of traditional family values. [REDACTED] would support better communication, parent workshops and prior knowledge of lesson content with choices made available to the parents over child participation.

89. [REDACTED] email to the inbox [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] As of 20 July 2023, the petition appears to have attracted 1,109 signatures.

90. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] “gender reassignment surgery” was taught [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
(1/5 [REDACTED]). This incident was investigated internally by the school and closed. It is outside the scope of this investigation.

91. Having been made aware of other issues [REDACTED] relating to PSHE/RSE, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] is critical of the lack of communication on the part

of the school as to the curriculum and its delivery. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] is that what is being taught is inappropriate for children aged 11. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] it was not [REDACTED] wish to prevent the teaching of RSE at the school or to withdraw [REDACTED] as this would alienate [REDACTED] from the other pupils. On the contrary, [REDACTED] is anxious that the programme should be reinstated as soon as possible as children are missing out, but with age-appropriate content. [REDACTED] primary concerns continue to be the visibility of actual content delivery to enable parents to determine the age-appropriateness for their child. In [REDACTED] view references to such things as anal and oral sex are not appropriate for 11/12-year-old children. As things stand, it is unclear what is being taught by reference only to the curriculum. [REDACTED] seeks improved communication from the school, perhaps by meeting with parents or through a parental panel. In [REDACTED] view, this lack of communication contributed to the situation spiralling out of control, leading to a backlash directed at the school. [REDACTED] also objects to lessons which amount to “gender ideology”.

92. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] attended the drop-down day. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] unhappy about.

93. The first of these concerns the drop-down day and in particular the task given to the children to “queerify” a family structure by reference to children’s TV programmes. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] complain that this goes beyond inclusion and empathy and, instead, asks 11 years olds with differing values to participate in constructing situations that they/their parents may not agree with. Learning about a situation and participating in it are two completely different things. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] clarified that they felt that there is a clear distinction between lessons which assist children to make informed choices for life as opposed to lessons which seek to normalise behaviours which the children or their families do not agree with. They feel that the “queerifying” exercise during the drop-down day falls into the latter category and is unacceptable to [REDACTED] Furthermore, the issue of gender identity is simply too confusing for 11-year-olds.

94. The second incident relates to the gender reassignment surgery topic [REDACTED]. This has already been dealt with by the school [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] did not look at the image in question [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] were concerned to know whether there had been a subsequent internal investigation [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] the issue had been dealt with and certainly would not reoccur. The lesson in question had started with a PowerPoint slide raising the issue of gender choice which, in the opinion [REDACTED] [REDACTED] raises an ideology which has no place in a curriculum for 11-year-old children. It is confusing and abusive, and it is wrong to inflict this on vulnerable children.

95. The third incident relates to a [REDACTED] which had taken place after the RSE curriculum had been paused. [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] This had resulted in references to several words [REDACTED] highly inappropriate for use in front of 11-year-olds. Once again, the investigators understand that this resulted in complaints which were quickly dealt with by the school using internal procedures and it was accepted that it was a regrettable but isolated incident which will not reoccur.

96. Other points raised [REDACTED] during the meeting included the need for greater transparency on the part of the school. Parents need to know what their children are being taught in this sensitive area. This includes much more visibility of lesson plans, videos, and PowerPoint slides. This is because the curriculum itself is very basic. [REDACTED] the "*law of first exposure*", meaning that it is a parent's right to be the first to raise issues such as sex with their children. In [REDACTED] view this right has been stolen from [REDACTED] by the school, without prior consultation. This is why transparency is so important as it would give early notice of lesson content and enable parents to make informed decisions not only about the participation of their children in a lesson at all, but also to give parents the option of dealing with the topic in their own way and in advance. [REDACTED] also urge that there be better training for the teachers who are to deliver RSE. This is very important, and the training should be given



to experienced teachers who want to deliver this lesson content. These topics are unsuitable for delivery by inexperienced teachers or by supply teachers who are insufficiently trained and who do not have an existing relationship with the children. It must also be recognised that the children themselves are likely to need support and this points to the need for student counsellors and other support structures.

97. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] In [REDACTED] email to the inbox (Appendix 20) [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] say that [REDACTED] complained to the school at the time about how the situation was handled. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] In the opinion of [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], the intended topic of the lesson, which was inclusion, was perfectly acceptable but the actual content of the lesson was not age appropriate. Year 7 children have not necessarily learned about procreation or been exposed to different people and their personal wills and desires so arguing that there are 70+ genders is *“irresponsible and scientifically incorrect”*. [REDACTED] are also unhappy that nobody other than teachers were spoken to for Part 1 of the investigation. The outcome of Part 1 of the investigation made the children out to be *“liars”*. This has demoralised [REDACTED] children and impacted upon their confidence, understanding of life and learning. The children deserve an apology.

98. [REDACTED] support the need for there to be what used to be called *“sex education”* but it must be age appropriate and relevant. The RSE curriculum commenced with little information about its content. The syllabus content looks quite *“tame and generic”*, but the reality is that the topics are more graphic. Parents should be apprised of the topics and the contents of the lessons so that they can make informed decisions around the emotional and psychological well-being of their children. This is not appropriate for every subject, but an emotive subject such as RSE requires delicate consideration and handling, and parents should be consulted in advance. The accounts [REDACTED] suggest that some of the lesson content is *“abhorrent”*. During the

meeting with the investigators, [REDACTED] described it as “*porn and not age appropriate at all*”. The children should be taught about safe sex and the implications of not being safe and partaking in sex at too young an age. No 11/12-year-olds need to learn about anal sex and sex changes.

99. During the meeting with the investigators, [REDACTED] added that [REDACTED] were angry that Minister Edge had stated in Tynwald that parents had already been spoken to. [REDACTED] concern is of a “*cover up*”. Furthermore, is it unacceptable that the emphasis to date has been about the impact on the school and the teachers without suitable concern having been expressed for the children. [REDACTED] suspicious that the Department is “*hell-bent*” on hiding the true content of the lessons because the curriculum is nothing more than “*bullet points*”. If there is nothing to hide, then there should be open consultation with parents. In particular, the school should not allow outside speakers to “*push their own agendas*”. A much more age appropriate for the more graphic content of the curriculum to be introduced would be at GCSE age.

100. [REDACTED] been taught PSHE lessons. [REDACTED] It refers to a specific incident [REDACTED] unhappy and to the response by the Minister at the completion of Part 1 of the investigation. The concerns relate to the PSHE lesson [REDACTED] which contained an element concerning “*gender reassignment*”. [REDACTED] this incident was investigated by the school, action taken, and the matter was closed. It is outside the scope of this investigation. [REDACTED] made aware of the actions taken and appear to be satisfied that the matter has been dealt with.

101. [REDACTED] relating to the discussions relating to introducing gender ideology to pupils generally and, specifically, to the younger age group. This ideology relates to a small percentage of the population, yet the school gives it a disproportionate level of school time. This does not give pupils a balanced view of life.

102. The Minister’s performance in Tynwald on 21 March 2023 [REDACTED] believe that the issues raised by parents will be brushed over.

103. [REDACTED] believe that prior disclosure of lesson material would provide an opportunity to make an informed decision about whether the content is suitable [REDACTED] prior to lessons and afterwards as well.

104. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] attended the drop-down day on [REDACTED]. In contrast to the Minister's assertions in Tynwald on 21 March 2023, [REDACTED] reported that the class was visited by an individual who introduced themselves as a "drag [REDACTED]". During this session, many different genders were discussed. Flags were displayed representing them. Whatever the intention was, [REDACTED] impression was that the individual was inspiring the children to be transgender. [REDACTED] believe this to be morally wrong for children of a young and vulnerable age. The content of the lesson was very confusing. [REDACTED] add that there is a fine line between the awareness of issues such as gender change and homosexuality and discussing it to a level which appears to be promoting it to children which is wrong and unacceptable. [REDACTED] also say that "gender incongruence" affects a small percentage of people. While support needs to be available, this is not an issue for the school. For most children, this is very confusing.

105. As to RSE generally, [REDACTED] are unaware of what their [REDACTED] has been taught. [REDACTED] would prefer it if lesson content is disclosed to parents in advance so that [REDACTED] can make informed decisions, prepare their children and discuss it afterwards. They agree with the principle of sex education. [REDACTED] understand the benefits of it in preparing children to make sensible choices when they become sexually active in the future. It is, however, vital that the sessions are carried out by a teacher who is trained in the delivery of RSE and that the content is age appropriate. [REDACTED] hope [REDACTED] has not been exposed to the lesson content which they have heard about anecdotally and from the media. Year 7 children were in primary school last year. They should be allowed to continue to be children and not be exposed to information, which is detailed, graphic and unnecessary. The basic science of sex, reproduction and contraception is all the information that is required at this age, together with legal aspects such as consent. A focus on basic values such as love, honesty and trust will enable respectful relationships in the future.

106. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Once again, the thrust of these contributions is age-inappropriateness and insufficient advance communication from the school regarding the lesson content.

D. Further [REDACTED] with [REDACTED] in compliance with the terms of reference

107. The terms of reference direct that further interviews are to be determined by the investigating officers but may include local constituency MHKs (to understand what correspondence they have received from parents), Public Health (to discuss the meetings prior to the Advisory Curriculum being issued to schools), [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] The terms of reference also indicated that if the investigators deemed it necessary, meetings could take place with students, provided that normal safeguarding procedures were adhered to, including parental consent. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

108. An online interview with representatives from [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] elicited the following comments which are relevant to Part 3 of the Investigation, but which also have applicability to QEII.

109. There is no readily available quantified evidence in the Isle of Man that RSE has affected public health. It is believed that, potentially, anything that promotes healthy relationship skills will prevent abuse. First and foremost, parental responsibility is key. It is recommended that there be an early conversation/consultation process with stakeholders, including parents and faith groups, prior to the roll out of any RSE programme. The curriculum and lesson plans should be openly available to parents. RSE is a difficult subject to teach and teachers require support. Caution and the examination of the content to be delivered on drop-down days or similar input from outside agencies is recommended, to avoid the inadvertent exposure of children to political/ideological messaging. Schools should monitor the material used by outside agencies. The fertile nature of children's enquiring minds makes them and the school vulnerable. A trauma-informed approach is suggested. A school website should include information for parents and children that is informative and supportive. Schools work in a silo system of individual autonomy and the RSE Advisory curriculum provides leeway for schools to

deviate away from this rather than a uniform approach driven from the centre after consultation with stakeholders.

110. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] contribution is made as a parent. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] during a lesson to apply a condom to a wooden dildo [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] This was therefore attributed to something which had been taught during RSE. Other parents subsequently shared varying concerns with [REDACTED] including self-harm being learnt at school and the failure of the school to respond or respond satisfactorily to questions about the curriculum. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] would be given the floor to air their concerns of which there were many. Following the meeting, [REDACTED] agreed to become the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] for this [REDACTED] and RSE was then paused, and this investigation was initiated.

111. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] The video can be accessed at <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=868119894255334> [REDACTED] explained that [REDACTED] which had been interested in the topic for some time. [REDACTED] was happy that RSE had been suspended and that issue was to be independently investigated, [REDACTED] says that [REDACTED] was worried that the concerns of the parents might be “swept under the carpet”. The suggestion arising from the report in respect of Part 1 of the investigation that that there had been “inaccuracies” in media output had upset [REDACTED] and implied that the children who had been the source of much of the information upon which [REDACTED] relied were lying. [REDACTED] did, however, concede that [REDACTED] was wrong in saying that it was the presenter of the September 2022 drop-down day who had “thrown” a child out of the class [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] reacted in the way described in the report was because the lesson content was not age appropriate.

112. [REDACTED] accepts that RSE must be taught [REDACTED] issue is with the way it is taught and with the age-appropriateness of the lessons. As a [REDACTED] feels that a much more suitable age is 14/15. [REDACTED] sympathy with the teachers who, [REDACTED], are asked to deliver the lessons without sufficient training in the subject. In common with other contributors, [REDACTED] emphasised that communication is key. Parents need notice of what is coming up in these lessons so that they can provide back-up at home. [REDACTED] finds gender ideology very worrying and harmful, for example the statement that there are 73 genders, particularly when it is presented as a fact to impressionable children. There should instead be rational discussion at age 15 or 16, including recognition that other people have the right to believe that there are only two genders.

113. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] it was at a point just before the Department announced that an independent investigation has been initiated. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] that it was wrong that the school appeared to have been unable to respond to events on the instructions of the Department. [REDACTED], lesson plans which flow from schemes of work, are frequently influenced by the interpretation of the individual teachers. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] given no training. [REDACTED] it would be an improvement for these lessons to be given by a smaller group of teachers and that there should be clear communication between colleagues and other schools as to the age-appropriateness of the content. [REDACTED] that lesson plans should be made available and that there should be more information on school websites for all subjects. [REDACTED] commented that the investigators were faced with a difficult task owing to their respective backgrounds not

being in education. ■ was of the view that different skill sets were required for Part 3 of the investigation.



E. Observations and Conclusions in respect of the preparation and delivery of RSE in QEII for the purposes of Part 2 of the Investigation

114. The Isle of Man Government's Policy Statement on Relationships and Sex Education (Appendix 24) requires each school to have a written RSE Policy. The Headteacher must consult with parents/carers in developing the school's RSE Policy and the final policy must be approved by the school's governing body. The RSE Policy is to be inclusive of all pupils and take account of different cultural backgrounds. Each school should include in its published prospectus a brief statement of the content and organisation of the RSE provided by the school. The prospectus should also provide an explanation of how parents/carers who wish to discuss this issue can do so and an indication of how parents/carers can put into effect their right to withdraw their child.

115. The present Manx PSHE curriculum appears to have originated from a conference which [REDACTED] a presentation from a member of the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde team who had developed the Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood (RSHP) resource that was being used across Scotland.

116. According to Education Scotland, RSHP education is intended to support children and young people build positive relationships as they grow older. The rationale is to present facts in an objective, balanced and sensitive manner within the framework of curricular values and an awareness of the law. The RSHP resource was developed because of identified need for RSHP education to be fully modernised, a recommendation of the Scottish Parliament's Education and Skills Committee. After numerous consultation and engagement exercises, research studies and evaluations in 2018/19, there was a process of national engagement during which educators and parents/carers were encouraged to comment and use the new draft resource. This allowed for a process of review and refinement until final content was agreed for the start of the school year 2019/20. There is an ongoing process of review and improvement to ensure that the resource continues to be engaging and relevant. The RSHP website has a FAQ page which is useful when looking at why particular content was included (<https://rshp.scot/faq/>).

117. One of the questions relates to the role of parents/carers when it comes to RHSP education and how they can understand more about it. The response states that parents/carers are a child's primary educators. RHSP is a partnership between them and the school. The RHSP resource acknowledges that parents/carers need to understand the content of the lessons their child will receive so they are able to reinforce and consolidate their learning at home. Most parents/carers want their child to receive Health and Wellbeing and RHSP education and find it useful to know in advance what will be taught, what language and terminology is being used and what things they can do to complement their child's learning. To support this the RSHP resource provides open access, information leaflets, text that the educator can share with home about the upcoming learning, learning activities that can be taken home to support conversations between the children and the parents/carers and texts for reading at home.

118. Another question asks whether the content is age and stage appropriate. The response is that during the development of the RHSP curriculum, work was done to ensure that learning is entirely age appropriate. All the resources that support the delivery of the curriculum have been quality assured and peer-reviewed by a partnership of educators, health professionals, and third sector organisations. The curriculum is also informed by the WHO and the work it does on delivering an evidence-informed approach to this learning.

119. The FAQs (Appendix 25) also endeavour to explain why children learn to use the correct words for parts of their body; why the resource helps children and young people to learn about sex and gender equality; why it helps them to learn about consent; and why it helps them to learn about pornography, different types of sexual activity and sexual orientation.

120. [REDACTED] that the programme could be delivered in the Isle of Man. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] The RSE Advisory framework in the Island was created following this and rolled out to schools in September 2021 using materials from the RSHP website save where it was appropriate to "Manxify" the information.

121. An overview document is available to staff so they can see how topics are mapped across year groups. The topic/theme for each session within the blocks is available on a document and a note has been included to give details of suggested content. Each block has a scheme of learning which details suggested activities and signposts to resources including lesson plans and presentations that staff can access if they wish. Some of the lesson plans are included in Appendix 27. The Advisory Curriculum is available on a SharePoint site, along with links to training modules and supporting videos.

122. Each of the five secondary schools adopted the framework in different ways depending on their structure for PSHE delivery. QEII followed the resources without any amendment. The preamble to the QEII RSE Policy makes it clear that it was developed in response to the Isle of Man Government's RSE Policy, and that the consultation process has involved discussions with the wider school community, including Heads of Subjects and the Student Council. All policies are subject to final approval by the Governing Body. The RSE Policy as well as the DESC Advisory Curriculum and the lesson plans were last approved by the QEII Governing body in July 2022. The framework was reviewed regularly at PSHE Lead meetings. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] used the same materials during 2022/23. There were no complaints about the content or the delivery of the new RSE curriculum until February 2023.

123. The school's policy document on its website defines relationships education as learning about the physical, social, legal, and emotional aspects of human relationships including friendships, intimate, sexual, and committed relationships, and family life. Sex education is defined as learning about the physical, social, legal, and emotional aspects of human sexuality and behaviour, including human reproduction. This includes conception and contraception, safer sex, sexually transmitted infections, and sexual health. RSE is best approached in an integrated way and using a gender equity and human rights framework. The aims are to give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds, not just intimate relationships; to teach young people to understand human sexuality and to respect themselves and others; to explore sexual orientation and gender identity; to equip students to make decisions for themselves and how to live their own lives, whilst respecting the right of

others to make their own decisions and hold their own beliefs; to sensitively address grooming, FGM, sexual exploitation and domestic abuse, including coercive and controlling behaviour; and to teach students the principles and rules for keeping safe online. RSE is a key vehicle for promoting equality, inclusion, and social justice. The school's RSE is designed to promote gender equality. It is committed to an RSE that makes every pupil feel valued and included which means a commitment to an LGBTQ+ inclusive and SEND inclusive curriculum.

124. The policy document also makes it clear that parents/carers have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from all or part of sex education lessons that are delivered as part of RSE but not from Relationships Education or Health Education. Parents/carers do not have the right to withdraw their child from any sex education delivered as part of the Science curriculum. If parents/carers do decide to withdraw their child, they should inform the Headteacher in writing.

125. RHSP, on which the Island's RSE is based, emphasises the importance of the role of parents/carers in the delivery of the curriculum. The Isle of Man government's policy also refers to the need for each school's policy document to include details of how parents/carers can discuss the subject with the school should they wish to do so. In [REDACTED] statement the [REDACTED] acknowledges that, although the RSE policy is easily accessible on the school's website, external communication about RSE could be improved. [REDACTED] as [REDACTED] adds that the website gives details of the curriculum, and it also provides the means for parents/carers to exclude [REDACTED] child from RSE lessons if they deem that some sex education is unsuitable or inappropriate for their child. [REDACTED] accepts, however, that the website does not publish the detailed lesson plans. This means that parents/carers may be unaware of the exact content of the lessons.

126. The absence of or the limited nature of the communication from the school was a recurring theme which arose during the interviews with the parents/carers, particularly from those parents who are unhappy with the content of the RSE curriculum and the manner of its delivery. Examples of the concerns raised was that there was too little consultation with parents/carers in advance of the lessons; parents should have been informed the content of forthcoming lessons in sufficient time to object or consent to

their child's participation; there is a need for improved communication and prior consultation; parents should have prior knowledge of lesson content; there must be visibility of content and improved communication; there is a need for open consultation and for greater transparency of lesson plans, videos and slides; prior disclosure of lesson material enables parents/carers to make informed decisions.

127. The school is already taking steps to address this issue. [REDACTED] states that [REDACTED] [REDACTED] proposes to write to parents/carers to inform them when students will be starting the RSE units and providing a brief overview of the topics to be covered with a link to the website and the policy document. If parents wish to meet to look through the resources and discuss the context, then this will be supported. [REDACTED] also suggests that, if a pre-recorded video of the PSHE and RSE advisory curriculum could be produced by the Department, it would help the community to understand the rationale behind the curriculum and, if used by all schools, would provide a consistent message across the Island.

128. Having considered, for example, the Years 7, 8 and 10 content of the RSE Advisory curriculum, the investigators agree that the "Learning Intentions" listed amount to a limited overview or outline of the actual lesson content which is delivered. It does not necessarily give a clear indication of the nature and content of the "live" lesson. The evidence suggests that this is also influenced by the experience, personal teaching styles and discretion of the individual teachers. The investigators are not qualified to comment on the suitability of the actual lesson content (and this is outside their terms of reference), save to say that they accept the importance of RSE and note that the Scottish model was introduced after a period of consultation, research, and external review. They are, however, persuaded that the considerable adverse comment and speculation which led to the unfortunate events that unfolded could have been avoided by an improved scheme of communication and external access to lesson material. It would be for the Department to consider how best to implement such a change, but methods might include a link from the advisory curriculum to the lesson content and the supporting materials for each listed learning intention. This would be supported by individual communication to each parent/carers, in advance of the commencement of RSE, to alert them to the gateway to the curriculum and the supporting information and to the option

to withdraw their child from the RSE curriculum or parts of it. Additionally, the investigators support [REDACTED] suggestion of the creation of an overarching video presentation which explains the curriculum, what will be taught to each age group and the rationale for RSE, possibly by reference to the Scottish research and the Children's Commissioner report (see paragraph 29 above) to address the reasoning for delivering certain topics at specific ages. Either or both resources would assist parents/carers in making fully informed decisions about the inclusion of their child in RSE lessons. A further possibility would be to utilise information leaflets, home learning activities and texts as in Scotland.

129. A further recurring theme which arose from the interviews, principally from the teachers, was the issue of training in the delivery of PSHE and, particularly RSE.

130. [REDACTED] evidence is that some degree of training is available. This consists of links to UK government training materials and access to documents and resources through SharePoint. [REDACTED] also offers bespoke training to schools and there were RSE focussed workshops during October and November 2022. The majority of the [REDACTED] however, commented that very little, if any, training in the delivery of RSE is available. The impression gained by the investigators is that teachers in QEII are assigned to RSE teaching primarily based on having spare capacity in their timetables. Not all the teachers assigned in this way would have chosen to teach RSE topics and not all of them are entirely comfortable with teaching the subject but, commendably, endeavour to do so anyway to the best of their ability. Having been assigned RSE lessons and given access to the lesson plans and other teaching materials, the teachers appear to then be left largely to their own devices as to how the actual lessons are delivered. Some teachers undertake their own research and even develop their own materials. Inevitably, the method and content of delivery will then vary depending on the teacher's experience, their respective teaching styles, their interpretation of the materials, their assessment of the varying abilities and maturity of the class and their personal willingness or enthusiasm to engage with the subject or topic. There was evidence that, on occasions, teachers were asked to deliver the subject to classes they had little previous contact with.

131. Children are entitled to expect their education to prepare them for life. PSHE education (including RSE) should prepare children to be well-rounded and confident adults. It is therefore vital that PSHE is taught well. At the core of PSHE is safeguarding. Children need to learn about healthy and unhealthy relationships, staying safe (including online) and dealing with difficult issues. The investigators therefore feel that all teachers should receive better and more thorough training on how to deliver the RSE advisory curriculum in a way that provides children with the knowledge they want in an age-appropriate way. Those teachers with an interest in the subject should be encouraged to specialise in RSE in the same way as they do in their primary subject. The training needs to be regular, high-quality, and connected to external specialised services. In the view of the investigators, training is vital to prepare teachers to deliver and discuss the more challenging or sensitive topics in the curriculum in an age-appropriate and safe manner.

132. The investigators also support the proposal that, going forward, RSE in QEII be delivered by a smaller, committed (and well-trained) group of teachers whose motivation is the desire to deliver this important subject as opposed to having spare capacity in the timetable. Given comments to the effect that the subject is not assessed or examined and is given insufficient prominence and importance in the curriculum with the consequence that it is not taken as seriously as it should be by the students, the investigators agree that the role of [REDACTED]

133. The investigators recognise the likely staffing and budgetary considerations that would inevitably arise from implementation of change in line with these observations but repeat that the teaching of PSHE has safeguarding at its core.

134. A further recurring theme arising [REDACTED] was that of the age-appropriateness of the RSE lessons delivered to Years 7 and 8. [REDACTED] expressed a fundamental objection to the school's obligation to promote equality for "those with the protected characteristics of sexual orientation, gender reassignment .." (RSE Advisory Curriculum). The genuinely held views of the parents at all points of the spectrum ranged from those parents who consider the content to be entirely age-appropriate and whose children are comfortable with what is being taught, through to parents (and some teachers) who recognise that the more sensitive topics and

terminology have to be taught but feel that these topics are being delivered [REDACTED] children at too early an age, and then through to the parents who object to the delivery of much of the curriculum and would like to see it amended significantly. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] what they describe as the promotion of “*gender ideology*”. There is a link to the earlier theme of communication, consultation, access to materials leading to informed decision making. The implication is that, unless the curriculum is changed, the [REDACTED] from the RSE lessons.

135. As previously stated, the investigators are not professionally qualified to make observations as to the suitability of the lesson material or about the age groups to which such material should or should not be delivered. This is, in any event, outside the terms of reference. Equally, the investigators are unable to comment about the claim made by several parents that the curriculum is suggestive of “*gender ideology*” which either should not be taught in schools at all or at least not to young people in Years 7 and 8. The present curriculum, based as it is on the Scottish model, has been introduced following extensive consultation, research, and expert advice from appropriate professionals. In short, Education Scotland expresses the view that the learning is entirely appropriate to the age groups receiving it. There is [REDACTED] available evidence as to why certain lessons are delivered to certain age groups. Clearly, the aim is likely to be to strike a balance between the recognition that young people can be exposed to pornography from dangerous, inaccurate, and misleading sources from an increasingly early age and between the receipt of RSE in a safe and trusted learning environment at the appropriate age, which expert evidence says is before a young person is sexually active. In “*Relationships and Sex Education: The Evidence*” (November 2022), a publication of the Sex Education Forum (details at Appendix 26), it is said that independent, peer-reviewed, and published research from a wide range of academic and credible sources nationally and internationally demonstrate that RSE contributes to improved physical and mental health for children and young people. Specifically, when they have received RSE, young people are more likely to seek help or speak out; more likely to practice safe sex and have improved health outcomes; more likely to have consented to first sex, and for first sex to happen at an older age; more likely to have an understanding of digital safety in regard to



relationships and sex; more knowledgeable and aware of discrimination, gender equity and sexual rights; and less likely to be a victim or perpetrator of sexual violence.

136. Those parents who are supportive of the RSE curriculum [REDACTED] argue that the RSE lessons benefit all children and urge that the curriculum be recommenced as soon as possible, but they also respect the right of other parents who disagree to exercise their option of withdrawing their children from the lessons. They should do this rather than fighting to change a curriculum which is advantageous to the majority. If the Department continues to be satisfied that the existing curriculum continues to be age-appropriate, the investigators agree that steps can be taken to recommence the curriculum, provided that all parents/carers are informed in advance and have prior access to the full lesson content to enable them to make informed decisions about their child's participation. This is the most manageable way to approach the situation which has arisen. This does not, of course, include Relationships Education or Health Education.

## F. Executive Summary of Section E

137. To enable parents/carers to make informed decisions regarding the delivery of RSE to their children, the investigators would support an improved scheme of communication from the school to parents/carers regarding all forthcoming RSE delivery, including the provision of external access to lesson plans and other supporting material.

138. A smaller group of teachers with a personal commitment to RSE delivery should be encouraged to specialise in the subject and this group should receive better, thorough, regular, and high-quality training.

139. The extensive work that was undertaken in Scotland prior to the introduction of RHSP and other academic research points to the conclusion that the RSE Advisory curriculum followed at QEII is age appropriate. Training will ensure a consistent and age-appropriate method of content delivery. The school should revert to the *status quo ante* the pausing of the curriculum in February 2023, save that prior transparency of lesson content will enable parents/carers who object to the content to opt to withdraw their children from some or all the RSE lessons.

140. Consideration should be given to changes to the organisational structure of the school to reflect the significance of the PSHE curriculum and to give it equality with other subjects. The current dual roles of [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] should be split so that one individual is the sole curator of PSHE delivery.

21 July 2023

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