



## EVIDENCE

# **PE2225: Urgent Independent Safeguarding Review and Temporary Suspension of Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood (RSHP) education in Scotland 10 November 2026**

## **NASUWT evidence to the Scottish Parliament Public Petitions Committee**

NASUWT's submission to the Scottish Parliament Public Petitions Committee sets out the Union's views on the key issues which should be explored by the Committee in its scrutiny of PE2225: Urgent Independent Safeguarding Review and Temporary Suspension of Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood (RSHP) education in Scotland.

NASUWT's evidence is informed directly by serving teacher and headteacher members and also by the work of its representative committees and consultative structures, made up of practising teachers and school leaders working in the education system.

**For further information, parliamentarians may contact:**

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**NASUWT  
The Teachers' Union**

## Introduction

1. NASUWT does not agree with the calls for an urgent independent safeguarding review and temporary suspension of Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood (RSHP) education in Scotland. The Union therefore does not support petition PE2225 and further believes that this petition is un-evidenced and intentionally incendiary. More details are set out below.
2. At NASUWT Scotland Conference 2026, the following supportive Scotland Officers motion was passed:

*Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood (RSHP) Education*

*Conference notes the publication of the updated statutory Guidance on the Delivery of Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood (RSHP) Education in Scottish Schools.*

*Conference welcomes the new thematic outcomes, which will apply to all schools and education settings and should be included across the curriculum.*

*Conference agrees that we need:*

- i. a consistent approach and guaranteed support for all schools;*
- ii. a national focus on Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood (RSHP) education; and*
- iii. appropriate Personal and Social Education (PSE) delivery and implementation.*

*Conference calls on the Scotland Executive Council to campaign for:*

- a. exemplification, practical advice and training for teachers;*
- b. workload audits to ensure implementation of the updated guidance does not become a workload driver;*

- c. *the role and responsibility of the local authority in respect of the RSHP curriculum to be clearly set out;*
  - d. *guidance and support for schools around the issues facing children and young people from online influences;*
  - e. *the impact of the updated RSHP guidance to be evaluated within five years of publication, and appropriate steps put in place to adapt, continue and develop this work;*
  - f. *evaluation to be against success criteria discussed and agreed with NASUWT and which also considers the impact on learners; and*
  - g. *the Curriculum Improvement Cycle to embed the new thematic outcomes.*
3. NASUWT believes that all children and young people should be able to benefit from a broad, engaging and relevant RSHP programme of study. Teachers must have the guidance, support and resources they need to teach RSHP effectively. This support should include access to relevant professional learning and development opportunities and, where appropriate, the ability to draw on external sources of advice and expertise.
4. The NASUWT Scotland manifesto calls on the incoming government to:
- ‘provide a consistent approach and guaranteed support for all schools to tackle gender based violence, including a key focus on Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood (RSHP) education and appropriate Personal and Social Education (PSE) delivery and implementation.’*
5. In addition to supporting work to tackle gender based violence, the Union believes that the recently issued guidance can also provide a vehicle to help embed LGBT Inclusive Education across the curriculum, as it is now explicitly placed within statutory guidance – and this supports the work of the LGBT Inclusive Education working group.

6. As context, back in November 2018 the LGBTI Inclusive Education Working Group report to the Scottish Ministers made a number of recommendations:

*‘That the Scottish Government develop National Guidance which clearly states expectations regarding LGBTI inclusive education and signposts teachers in any school in Scotland towards supporting resources. This links directly to this Working Group’s recommendation regarding the update of Conduct of Relationships, Sexual Health, and Parenthood Education in Schools (RSHP) (2014) Guidance below.*

*‘That the existing “Conduct of RSHP” Statutory Guidance (2014) is updated to use a ‘thematic outcomes’ based approach[2]. These outcomes will cover various themes relating to LGBTI equality and inclusion, including:*

- a. Understanding LGBTI terminology and identities;*
- b. Representations of LGBTI people and their relationships in ways which seek to deliver understanding and equality;*
- c. Recognising and understanding homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia within school and their impact on wider society;*
- d. Tackling homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia[3] within school and their impact on wider society;*
- e. Understanding prejudice in relation to the LGBTI community and an awareness of the history of LGBTI equalities movements; and,*
- f. An understanding of respect, privacy and consent.*

*‘That this updated guidance is prioritised by the Scottish Government and delivered in the shortest possible timeframe, and in a manner that does not delay the implementation of this Working Group’s other recommendations.*

*‘That the outcomes included within this updated guidance apply to all public schools in Scotland. The guidance may be followed by independent schools.*

*‘That the Scottish Government and COSLA work in partnership with relevant organisations and agencies to support effective and consistent local implementation of this updated guidance.*

*‘That the impact of the updated Conduct of RSHP guidance is evaluated within five years of publication, and appropriate steps put in place to adapt, continue and develop this work. This should be evaluated against agreed success criteria and the impact on LGBTI learners considered.’*

7. Then in January 2019, as part of the PSE review, the following recommendation was made and accepted by Scottish Government:

*‘The Scottish Government, working with key partners in local government and the third sector, will ensure that the forthcoming review to update the existing guidance available to schools “Conduct of Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood Education in Schools (2014)” includes appropriate guidance to ensure that consent education is age and stage appropriate and reflects the issues that are facing children and young people, especially from online influences.’*

8. While concerns from NASUWT relating to structure and length of the national guidance remain, and have been communicated to government, the recent update is, overall, a positive in that there are thematic outcomes by key topic which hopefully mean they will be reflected in learning contents.
9. The big policy call for a long time from NASUWT and many other partners has been around helping with consistency of RSHP learning and also providing clearer support for staff when curriculum making in the area. It is hoped that the Curriculum Improvement Cycle may assist with this policy intervention, though this will require intention and is not automatic.
10. The petitioner in this instance wafts around vague, un-evidenced concerns regarding RSHP education. The website <https://rsdp.scot/> provides open

and transparent information to anyone who wishes detailed provision on the approach to RSHP in Scotland. The Union considers that teachers, as highly skilled professionals registered with the GTCS, are well placed to deliver age-appropriate learning across all ages and stages. Equally, every school and local authority has detailed safeguarding processes and procedures and teachers will undergo regular professional learning via their employer on safeguarding.

11. The Union is concerned that a small minority of respondents to this petition, many of whom may not even reside in Scotland nor have any connection with Scottish schools, are utilising far right narratives and disinformation to seek to undermine Scotland's schools, curriculum and teachers. NASUWT can see no reason why further time or public money should be directed towards such an unfounded and illegitimate petition and therefore recommends this petition is closed.