

CYPE(6)-09-22 - Paper to note 10

At the meeting on the 24 March, Parentkind agreed to provide a written response to the questions that were unasked.

Response received on 11 April:

To what extent is a lack of appropriate education, awareness and understanding a factor in some young people's unhealthy attitudes towards issues associated with relationships and sexuality?

There are certainly gaps in what schools teach and support young people with, and the lived experience of young people represented in our research findings. For example, while 70% of parents reported that their child's school had an inclusive environment, this leaves 30% who don't feel that schools are doing enough to allow young people to feel supported and nurtured.

Similarly, Parentkind research results point to a mean age of 11 when it comes to experiencing pressure to constantly engage with social media. This highlights the eye-opening fact that there will be a sizeable chunk of children younger than 11 who feel a pressure to engage in platforms that, in most cases, simply were not designed with their safety and healthy development in mind. What this means, is that a balanced view of social media and the impact it can have would need to be a feature of education around the age of 11, if not before.

How might the teaching of Relationships and Sexuality Education under the new Curriculum for Wales improve things?

Parentkind welcomes the work done around Curriculum for Wales, and in particular the commitments made toward parental participation and consultation. In reality, however, a multi-agency and cross-departmental approach needs to be taken. When it comes to relationships and sexuality, of course education has a key role to play, but that work must be supported by actions and interventions in healthcare provision and the media landscape. Quite simply, we mustn't expect teachers to be able to solve issues that reflect how we live as a society at large. Parentkind, of course, is not best placed to advise in those spaces, but we would point to our recommendation at committee to orchestrate a communications campaign focussing on sexual harassment and abuse taking place online.