



Key competencies for teaching Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE), including Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

Why do PSHE and RSE matter?

The kind of social and emotional learning students gain through high quality PSHE and RSE can have a significant impact upon their future prospects, including their health (Langford et al, 2014), relationships (Goldfarb and Lieberman, 2021) and academic performance (Durlak et al, 2011). The 2025 RSHE Guidance (DfE England, 2025) highlights 'skilled delivery' as a guiding principle. As PSHE educators, we have the opportunity to develop our skills and so make a real difference in young people's lives.

Why measure specific competencies for PSHE?

All teaching roles require subject knowledge and the skills involved in forming connections with students, engaging them and enabling them to learn. PSHE, including RSE, requires additional and specific skills because it involves the discussion of topics that are often sensitive for students, and sometimes also for teachers. It is therefore particularly important that PSHE educators have the skills to create an atmosphere of trust and curiosity without judgement. Teaching PSHE well requires a combination of specific, evidence-based attitudes, skills and knowledge, and ongoing professional development to ensure that educators are able to deliver relevant, inclusive, accurate, high-quality lessons.

Some PSHE and RSE educators are experienced specialists, teaching in school or as professional educators, keen to continually improve their practice. Many teachers will be new to PSHE, with specialisms in other subjects; for these teachers it may be helpful to reflect upon and further develop competencies they don't necessarily use as much in their main subject teaching. Educator competencies exist internationally for aspects of RSE and PSHE (e.g. WHO 2017, UNESCO 2018) but relatively few teachers hold qualifications that have focused on these specific attitudes, knowledge and skills. This is why we have developed a competency-measuring tool that we hope will help with your CPD no matter what your starting position is, so you can build your confidence and proficiency in your teaching of PSHE, including RSE.

How can I use this educator competency-measuring tool in my CPD?

We have tried to create a tool that can be used flexibly so you can adapt it for your own needs, regardless of your level of experience.

We hope it will be used **supportively rather than judgementally** and have described suggestions for use in a couple of scenarios below.

1. **Non-PSHE specialist looking to improve how they cope with PSHE teaching, including RSE:**

- Non-specialist looks through the competency framework and rates their current confidence in each area.
- PSHE/RSE lead looks at these ratings and suggests how they can support this teacher with the skills that they most feel the need to develop.
- PSHE/RSE lead uses the framework to advocate for any training and/or preparation time the non-specialist teacher may need.

2. **Experienced PSHE educator looking to develop their career:**

- Experienced educator looks through the competency framework and rates their current confidence in each area.
- Line manager discusses any training needs to further develop specific areas the specialist has identified as important for career development.
- Educator and line manager work together to identify where the experienced educator may be able to share good practice with less experienced teachers, perhaps through some in-house training.
- Educator and line manager work together to showcase how these specialist skills are beneficial for particular roles within the setting, e.g. pastoral leadership or training of other teachers.

<p>PSHE educator competency framework</p> <p>Educators can use this tool for self-assessment to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify areas in which they may need support or training, • aid them in approaching managers with their support/training needs 				
<p>Attitudes</p> <p>Overview: Commitment to PSHE, respect for integrity and understanding of boundaries, open-mindedness and respect for others</p>				
	I am.....	Status	Notes	Next steps
1	Willing and motivated to deliver PSHE (including RSE, if relevant)	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident about this <input type="checkbox"/> Need a bit of support with this <input type="checkbox"/> Need training in this		
2	Aware that my own experiences, attitudes and behaviour can influence the way I educate learners.	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident about this <input type="checkbox"/> Need a bit of support with this <input type="checkbox"/> Need training in this		
3	Willing to reflect on, and support others to reflect on, personal opinions and beliefs related to PSHE topics, including RSE.	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident about this <input type="checkbox"/> Need a bit of support with this <input type="checkbox"/> Need training in this		
4	Committed to treating all people with respect and dignity, with special reference to the protected characteristics (Equalities Act 2010)	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident about this <input type="checkbox"/> Need a bit of support with this <input type="checkbox"/> Need training in this		
5	Willing to examine and question harmful sexual and gender norms, injustices, vulnerabilities and practices.	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident about this <input type="checkbox"/> Need a bit of support with this <input type="checkbox"/> Need training in this		
6	Willing to examine and question the different ways that faith and religion can shape experiences related to PSHE and RSE topics.	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident about this <input type="checkbox"/> Need a bit of support with this <input type="checkbox"/> Need training in this		
7	Committed to the values behind comprehensive and inclusive RSE (see Sex Education Forum 10 principles and values).	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident about this <input type="checkbox"/> Need a bit of support with this <input type="checkbox"/> Need training in this		

8	Strongly in support of the belief that sexuality is a natural, healthy, and valuable part of being human.	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident about this <input type="checkbox"/> Need a bit of support with this <input type="checkbox"/> Need training in this		
9	Determined to challenge any acceptance of sexual and gender-based discrimination or violence, and to encourage learners to understand why such acceptance is problematic.	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident about this <input type="checkbox"/> Need a bit of support with this <input type="checkbox"/> Need training in this		
10	Committed to protecting the privacy of children and young people (and where relevant, the privacy of colleagues, parents and carers), while being aware of my safeguarding responsibilities.	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident about this <input type="checkbox"/> Need a bit of support with this <input type="checkbox"/> Need training in this		
11	Responsive to parents' and carers' questions and concerns about sexuality education and am prepared to address them with respect and reasoning using evidence-based information.	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident about this <input type="checkbox"/> Need a bit of support with this <input type="checkbox"/> Need training in this		
12	Determined to actively seek views of learners, colleagues, parents and carers, and to developing my own practice in response to their views and feedback.	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident about this <input type="checkbox"/> Need a bit of support with this <input type="checkbox"/> Need training in this		
13	Committed to regularly looking ahead to what I'll be teaching next, so that I am adequately prepared and can ask for support ahead of time if I need it.	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident about this <input type="checkbox"/> Need a bit of support with this <input type="checkbox"/> Need training in this		
14	Recognise the value of keeping up to date with developments in RSE/PSHE and relevant child psychology, so that my teaching is as helpful and relevant as possible. (This may be via sharing good practice within school or local networks, additional reading or training, for example).	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident about this <input type="checkbox"/> Need a bit of support with this <input type="checkbox"/> Need training in this		
15	Keenly aware of the importance of keeping up to date with the relevant details of legislation such as statutory RSHE, KCSIE and school-based policies, such as Safeguarding policies.	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident about this <input type="checkbox"/> Need a bit of support with this <input type="checkbox"/> Need training in this		
	<i>Additional attitude we should include?</i>			

Skills				
Overview: Ability to create and maintain a safe, an inclusive and enabling learning environment, to use interactive teaching and learning approaches, to communicate effectively, to reflect on beliefs and values.				
	I can...	Status	Notes	Next steps
1	Create and maintain a learning environment in which young people feel safe and able to voice their opinions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident about this <input type="checkbox"/> Need a bit of support with this <input type="checkbox"/> Need training in this		
2	Establish and effectively use rules for classroom interactions about respect, confidentiality and intrusive or personal questions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident about this <input type="checkbox"/> Need a bit of support with this <input type="checkbox"/> Need training in this		
3	Respond appropriately to questions from learners that may be provocative or challenging.	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident about this <input type="checkbox"/> Need a bit of support with this <input type="checkbox"/> Need training in this		
4	Select and use a wide range of teaching approaches, including appropriate interactive and participatory techniques.	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident about this <input type="checkbox"/> Need a bit of support with this <input type="checkbox"/> Need training in this		
5	Critically select, create and use appropriate resources that deliver accurate information and balanced viewpoints.	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident about this <input type="checkbox"/> Need a bit of support with this <input type="checkbox"/> Need training in this		
6	Communicate with young people, parents and carers in a non-judgemental way.	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident about this <input type="checkbox"/> Need a bit of support with this <input type="checkbox"/> Need training in this		
7	Discuss PSHE topics, including RSE, in an age and development-appropriate way.	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident about this <input type="checkbox"/> Need a bit of support with this <input type="checkbox"/> Need training in this		
8	Differentiate for individual pupils and identify relevant interventions to meet the PSHE needs of any pupils with SEND within the groups I teach.	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident about this <input type="checkbox"/> Need a bit of support with this <input type="checkbox"/> Need training in this		

9	Use LGBTQ+ inclusive approaches when teaching.	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident about this <input type="checkbox"/> Need a bit of support with this <input type="checkbox"/> Need training in this		
10	Use inclusive approaches when teaching that are mindful of young people's different cultural and economic backgrounds.	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident about this <input type="checkbox"/> Need a bit of support with this <input type="checkbox"/> Need training in this		
11	Teach without imposing my personal views and beliefs.	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident about this <input type="checkbox"/> Need a bit of support with this <input type="checkbox"/> Need training in this		
12	Model good practice for the promotion of healthy choices, for example the avoidance of scare tactics, which are known to be unhelpful.	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident about this <input type="checkbox"/> Need a bit of support with this <input type="checkbox"/> Need training in this		
13	Review lesson plans and resources with trauma-informed practice in mind, ensuring that they are appropriately distanced and use appropriate language to reduce triggering sensitivities, as well as recognise when students may need advanced warning of lesson content, alongside opt-out pathways and signposting to support.	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident about this <input type="checkbox"/> Need a bit of support with this <input type="checkbox"/> Need training in this		
14	Recognise when a safeguarding issue is arising and deal with it appropriately, seeking advice and support from the relevant staff/managers/DSLs.	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident about this <input type="checkbox"/> Need a bit of support with this <input type="checkbox"/> Need training in this		
15	Recognise and admit the limitations of my knowledge and competence, and recognise when I need to refer to other professionals and/or ask for additional training.	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident about this <input type="checkbox"/> Need a bit of support with this <input type="checkbox"/> Need training in this		
	<i>Additional skill we should include?</i>			

Knowledge				
Overview: Knowledge about different RSE/PSHE approaches and their impact, of relevant legislation and policies, of the material I need to teach in RSE/PSHE. Basic knowledge of child development, health promotion and psychology.				
	I know...	Status	Notes	Next steps
1	That there is sound evidence for the positive effect of PSHE on young people's lives (see page 1 and also the Sex Education Forum briefing: RSE the evidence).	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident about this <input type="checkbox"/> Need a bit of support with this <input type="checkbox"/> Need training in this		
2	The relevant legislation and safeguarding guidance (for example Sexual Offences Act (2003); Equalities Act (2010); Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act (2013); Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, Serious Crime Act 2015; the latest Keeping Children Safe in Education; Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, or subsequent updates to these documents).	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident about this <input type="checkbox"/> Need a bit of support with this <input type="checkbox"/> Need training in this		
3	About current experiences of children and young people relating to mental health, sexual health, LGBTQ+ identity, racism, relationships and abuse, evidenced for example by Ofsted's report on sexual harassment and sexual abuse in schools (2021) and Sex Education Forum's annual Young People's RSE Polls.	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident about this <input type="checkbox"/> Need a bit of support with this <input type="checkbox"/> Need training in this		
4	About school policies relevant to the education setting or organisational context (for example the RSE policy, safeguarding policy, behaviour and anti-bullying policy), to ensure my teaching is compatible with these policies.	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident about this <input type="checkbox"/> Need a bit of support with this <input type="checkbox"/> Need training in this		
5	Enough about child development (healthy physical, emotional and sexual development) to ensure my approach is appropriate and not harmful.	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident about this <input type="checkbox"/> Need a bit of support with this <input type="checkbox"/> Need training in this		
6	Enough about physical and emotional changes through puberty and adolescence to enable me to teach about these topics and also understand how they impact classroom behaviour.	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident about this <input type="checkbox"/> Need a bit of support with this <input type="checkbox"/> Need training in this		
7	Enough about basic psychology, emotional and mental well-being in the context of relationships to enable me to teach about these topics and also understand how they impact classroom behaviour.	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident about this <input type="checkbox"/> Need a bit of support with this <input type="checkbox"/> Need training in this		

8	Enough about peer pressure and peer influence to understand how to use this positively in my teaching, as well as helping young people recognise the potential for negative influence.	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident about this <input type="checkbox"/> Need a bit of support with this <input type="checkbox"/> Need training in this		
9	Enough about the role of cultural and social influences on human sexuality to be able to teach about and respond sensitively to questions on this.	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident about this <input type="checkbox"/> Need a bit of support with this <input type="checkbox"/> Need training in this		
10	Enough about developments in online behaviour, new Apps and media trends to incorporate this into my teaching, to keep it relevant.	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident about this <input type="checkbox"/> Need a bit of support with this <input type="checkbox"/> Need training in this		
11	Enough about support systems within and beyond the school(s) to enable me to follow through appropriately on my Safeguarding responsibilities.	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident about this <input type="checkbox"/> Need a bit of support with this <input type="checkbox"/> Need training in this		
12	Enough about the topics I'm asked to teach about to ensure that I can understand and explain the resources I'm using and also answer most questions from young people or parents/carers, even if I do have to look a few things up from time to time.	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident about this <input type="checkbox"/> Need a bit of support with this <input type="checkbox"/> Need training in this	Specific topics where support is needed:	
	<i>Additional knowledge we should include?</i>			
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References:

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