



Terms of reference for partners

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1. Mission Statement

The Sex Education Forum is a national charity, registered in England and Wales, number 1193467.

Established in 1987, the Sex Education Forum is unique collaboration of organisations and individuals working directly or indirectly to provide high quality RSE for all children and young people in England.

Our core belief is that ALL children and young people are entitled to good quality relationships and sex education (RSE) in a variety of settings.

We identify ourselves as the leader, authority and trusted voice on RSE.

All our work on RSE is underpinned by

- A rights-based approach
- The expressed needs of children and young people
- An evidence base

Our **3 main strategic objectives** are:

1. Ensuring children and young people's right to RSE is firmly embedded into national and local government policies and is understood and supported by the public and professionals.
2. Supporting professionals to be well informed and competent to commission, plan, teach, evaluate and research RSE in partnership with parents, carers and children and young people.
3. To identify, explore and respond to new themes and at times challenging issues emerging in practice, policy and research, nationally and internationally and particularly in relation to children and young people most at risk of missing out on RSE and of poor sexual health and relationships outcomes.

1. Statement of principles and values for RSE

The Sex Education Forum believes that all children and young people are entitled to quality relationships and sex education (RSE).

How do we define RSE?

RSE is learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health. It should equip children and young people with the information, skills and values to have safe, fulfilling and enjoyable relationships and to take responsibility for their sexual health and well-being.

Who do we believe is responsible for RSE?

RSE is the joint responsibility of schools, parents, carers and communities and is an important element of children's and young people's development. The following sets out our core principles and values that underpin good quality RSE in a variety of settings.

What are the principles and values which underpin quality RSE?

The Sex Education Forum believes that quality RSE should:

- Be accurate and factual, covering a comprehensive range of information about sex, relationships, the law and sexual health, in order to make informed choices. In schools this should be part of compulsory curriculum provision;
- Be positively inclusive in terms of gender, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity, culture, age, religion or belief or other life-experience particularly HIV status and pregnancy;
- Include the development of skills to support healthy and safe relationships and ensure good communication about these issues;
- Promote a critical awareness of the different attitudes and views on sex and relationships within society such as peer norms and those portrayed in the media;
- Provide opportunities for reflection in order to nurture personal values based on mutual respect and care;
- Be part of lifelong learning, starting early in childhood and continuing throughout life. It should reflect the age and level of the learner;
- Ensure children and young people are clearly informed of their rights such as how they can access confidential advice and health services within the boundaries of safeguarding;
- Be relevant and meet the needs of children and young people, and actively involve them as participants, advocates and evaluators in developing good quality provision;
- Be delivered by competent and confident educators;
- Be provided within a learning environment which is safe for the children, young people and adults involved and based on the principle that prejudice, discrimination and bullying are harmful and unacceptable.

The Sex Education Forum has also produced a statement of commitment to 12 principles for RSE in schools. See <https://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/resources/advice-guidance/principles-good-rse>

3. Partner membership

There are three levels at which individuals and organisations can join the Sex Education Forum, as Partners, Educators or Supporters.

3.1 Partnership

Becoming a partner is open to **organisations and individuals** including

- Voluntary sector, commercial and statutory organisations
- Local, national and international organisations

Partners will be:

- Working to support RSE with children and young people (either directly or indirectly)
- In agreement with our 'principles and values statement' for RSE in a range of settings

Partners benefit from:

- Free tickets for our autumn, spring and summer remote half-day events
- Exclusive invitation to termly (3 per year) 'Partners Connect' meetings, held using zoom
- Clear [listing as a partner on our website](#) including description, web-link, logo and email address
- Your new resources, training, research promoted across our full membership and through our training
- Use of the 'Proud to be a partner' logo on your website
- Involvement in our policy work, for example attend policy networking meetings (and listed on our policy statements)
- Full membership benefits including regular bulletin, access to our web-based resources and discounts on our training courses

3.3 Educator membership

Educator membership option is ideal for schools, RSE teachers and practitioners, but will also be of interest to some national organisations. Educators are asked to indicate that they agree with the Sex Education Forum 'values and principles'. We do not publish the names of Educators and they are not listed on our policy statements.

3.4 Conditions of being a partner

The success of the Forum is dependent on the active participation of partners. Partners are able to draw upon the resources and expertise of the Forum and can gain greatly from the credibility of being part of the Forum, and of networking with other partners and members. In return all partners are expected to:

- Adhere to the Values and Principles Statement and these Terms of Reference. If a partners activities or statements are deemed to be contrary to our Values and Principles, the Chair and Advisory Group reserve the right to withdraw their membership.
- Nominate a named representative to act as the main link between the Sex Education Forum and the organisation and ensure that the Sex Education Forum staff have their correct contact information.

Partners are additionally asked to engage in Forum activities by:

- Ensuring the named representative can represent the interests, concerns and relevant knowledge of their organisation to the Forum. Representatives should have the authority to speak and act on behalf of their organisation especially in consultations.
- Reporting back and disseminating information to their organisation and other networks
- Adding a direct link from their website to the Sex Education Forum website
- Contributing as appropriate to the Forum's activities, such as:
 - *Working groups*
 - *Developing and disseminating resources*
 - *Providing information about new resources and initiatives for inclusion in the Sex Education Forum bulletins*
 - *Publicising Forum events, publications and activities*
 - *Discussions at Forum meetings*
 - *Responding to consultations*

3.4 Membership fee and payment

Our pricing structure is designed to be accessible to individuals and small organisations. Pay as you go to share the benefits with more colleagues within your organisation.

- *£199 per year provides membership benefits for the account holder and one colleague*
- *Add additional users for a fee of £35 each*

Once a new partner application has been accepted payment is made online. Fees may rise with inflation. Reminders about renewing payment are sent from 4 weeks prior to the partnership / membership expiry. Access to emails and members-only content ceases once expired.

3.5 New partners

Representatives of new partners will:

- Receive a copy of these Terms of Reference
- Be welcomed at their first meeting by Trustees and other partners to ensure they are introduced and understand the procedures of the meeting.

3.6 Replacements of Representatives

If a partner organisation changes their representative, it is the organisation's responsibility to ensure that the new representative is briefed, and that Sex Education Forum staff have been informed of the changes.

3.7 Life members

Life members have the same overall rights and membership conditions as partners; including having voting rights. They will not be asked to pay a membership fee.

Life membership status is decided at the discretion of the Trustees in the light of the proposed Life Member's expertise, contribution to the field and perspective on the work.

3.8 Application process

Applications to become a partner should be submitted to info@sexeducationforum.org.uk Completed forms are then considered by Trustees and a delegated review group.

Basic membership does not require approval or application. The process is to pay for the membership online.

3.9 Complaints and cancellation

Partners wishing to complain about any aspect of their engagement with the Forum should in the first instance contact the Chief Executive. If the matter cannot be satisfactorily resolved, the partner will be asked to formally write to the Chair of Trustees setting out details of the complaint.

Feedback questionnaires are periodically sent to partners. Partnership can be cancelled by emailing info@sexeducationforum.org.uk

3.10 Data storage

The details of partners will be stored in accordance with our [privacy policy](#). Your organisation / individual details will be promoted on our web-site (free public access) if you chose to supply these. Partners receive communications from the Sex Education Forum by email, (currently via Mailchimp and TidyHQ), and periodically from info@sexeducationforum.org.uk or lucy@sexeducationforum.org.uk

3.11 Sharing your partner benefits and copyright

We ask that you don't share members –only resources or information outside of your organisation and that you are considerate in use of the materials internally. Please always respect the copyright of the materials we produce, and if in doubt just ask!

4. Method of Working

4.1 Forum Working Ethos

The present structure of the Sex Education Forum is formal. The ethos of working together is informal and is based on principles of openness and participation. The Sex Education Forum seeks to maximise trust between partners and to facilitate full discussion of the complex and potentially sensitive issues with which it is concerned. We also seek to facilitate joint working and the sharing of expertise in the interests of good practice.

4.2 Forum Meetings

There are three annual partners-only Sex Education Forum events per year. These are carried out remotely, with all Partner representatives listed within the membership entitled to attend.

4.3 Guests

Individuals or organisations that are not members of the Forum may be invited to specific meetings. Organisations that fulfil the partnership criteria and are considering becoming a partner may also attend meetings. Both are by invitation only.

4.4 Observers

Individuals from relevant Government departments, funding agencies and other organisations associated with the Forum through projects or consultancy work may be invited to attend meetings or sit on working groups and receive regular mailings.

4.5 The Trustees

The Sex Education Forum became a charity in 2021, registered in England and Wales number 1193467. The details of the Trustees can be found [here](#). Our [governing document](#) is available from the Charity Commission. Trustees act in the interests of the Sex Education Forum as a whole and must declare any conflict of interest.

4.6 Funding

The Forum is funded from diverse sources including member fees, donations, training, projects and grants.

4.7 Working Groups

The Forum will from time to time establish working groups, which are drawn from the Forum's membership although non-members and observers may be invited to join these groups. The Working group focuses on a specific theme and reports to the Trustees.

4.10 Policy Statements

New policy statements are discussed with partners via email and a period of consultation is given for major policy activities. Policy statements are always in-line with the Sex Education Forum values and principles for good quality RSE. The Trustees agree the final statement. Once agreed, each partner may be asked to share the statement with relevant colleagues within their organisation. Policy statements are published on the website.

A Partners' Policy Group has been established to provide a regular opportunity for Partners with a policy, parliamentary or public affairs capacity to coordinate influencing activities.

4.11 Media statements

Media statements will be made available to Partners and published on the Sex Education Forum website. Partners can only speak on behalf of the Forum if invited to do so. This includes public events, conferences and in the media.

Appendix 1 – working definitions

These working definitions are designed for use in relation to the Sex Education Forum values and principles and definition of RSE. They have been developed using a variety of sources including: WHO's work definitions. http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/topics/gender_rights/sexual_health/en/index.html

Sex- Sex is the process of reproduction found in living organisms in which male and female sex cells are combined to form offspring that inherit features of both parents. This is the source of the diversity which gives organisms the potential to adapt to changing circumstances. A plant's or animal's sex is defined by the type of sex cell it produces and this often leads to specialisation into male and female reproductive roles. Sex also refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that define men and women (i.e. what is male and female) and is determined by individual's chromosomes.

Sex is commonly used to refer to sexual intercourse. In SRE the term 'sex' can be used to describe a whole range of sexual activities, including non-penetrative sex such as kissing, masturbating etc.

Sexuality- Sexuality is how people express themselves as sexual beings. It is a component of personal identity and is a rich and complex area of human experience. It has biological, physical and emotional aspects and is influenced by the interaction between these and social, economic, political, cultural, ethical, legal, historical, religious and spiritual factors.

Sexual health-Sexual health is a state of physical, emotional and social well-being in relation to sex, sexuality and sexual relationships; it is not merely the absence of infection, dysfunction or infirmity. Sexual health is promoted when people are able to have pleasurable and safer sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence, have freedom to choose their sexual and reproductive behaviour, and have accurate information and access to good, confidential health services to enable them to make informed choices. For sexual health to be attained and maintained, the sexual rights of all persons must be respected, protected and fulfilled.

Gender- Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society maintains a norm for men and women (i.e. what is considered 'masculine and feminine'). Transgender refers to individuals who are assigned a particular sex at birth but who do not identify themselves with that gender.

Sexual orientation - describes our sexual and romantic attraction to others e.g. same sex attraction (lesbian/gay), attraction to both sexes (bisexual), or attraction to the opposite sex (heterosexual).

Sexual rights- Sexual rights embrace human rights, recognized in international human rights documents, other consensus statements and some national laws. They include the right of all persons, free of coercion, discrimination and violence, to:

- the highest attainable standard of sexual health, including access to confidential sexual and reproductive health care services;
- seek, receive and impart accurate information related to sexuality;
- sex and relationships education;
- exercise care and control of their own body and other people's access to it;
- choose their partner;
- decide to be sexually active or not;
- consensual sexual relations;
- consensual marriage;
- decide whether or not, and when, to have children; and
- pursue a satisfying, safer and pleasurable sexual life, without infringing other people's rights