



National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
An Chomhairle Náisiúnta Curaclaim agus Measúnachta

Social, Personal and Health Education Curriculum Framework for Senior Cycle

Report on consultation

February 2006

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1. Introduction

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is part of the curriculum for all students in primary school and in junior cycle of post-primary education. The NCCA is currently in the process of developing the SPHE curriculum for senior cycle. As part of this curriculum development the NCCA wished to consult with those individuals, schools and organisations who have had an ongoing interest and involvement in the social, personal and health education of young people, about the proposed SPHE curriculum for senior cycle. There were two strands to this consultation process.

In the first strand copies of the draft curriculum framework together with a consultation questionnaire were circulated to all second level schools and other interested groups and individuals (see appendix 1) in early September 2005. The documents were also published on the NCCA website www.ncca.ie where those interested were invited to download the consultation questionnaire or to respond online. The consultation took place over a five-week period, concluding on 14th October 2005.

A total of one hundred and sixty-five responses were received both online and in written format. One hundred and twenty-seven responses were received from schools, the majority of them being voluntary secondary schools.

Table 1: Responses by school type

School type	Number of responses
Community and Comprehensive Schools	19
Vocational Schools and Community Colleges	29
Voluntary Secondary Schools	79
Total school responses	127

The teachers who responded represented a number of subject areas including Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), Religious Education (RE), Home Economics (HEc.) and Guidance. The remainder of responses received, came from groups and

organisations with a particular interest or brief in relation to the social, personal and health education of young people.

The NCCA considers the student voice to be an important part of the consultative process. For the second strand of the consultation, in order to facilitate the inclusion of students in the process, six schools were visited representing a variety of school type: urban, rural, single sex, co-educational and designated disadvantaged. Schools selected were identified by the SPHE Support Service, as having a well-established SPHE programme in junior cycle and an SPHE co-ordinator with whom the NCCA could plan the school visit. Parents'/guardians' permission was sought for their child's participation in the consultation. Students' permission for their involvement was also obtained. Students in class groups of approximately twenty-five were invited to comment on what they considered to be important to include in SPHE in senior cycle. The feedback received in these sessions was then used as a basis for a more in depth discussion with a focus group of five or six volunteers from the class. These conversations were recorded with the students' consent. In the focus group, students' comments and suggestions about the draft curriculum framework for SPHE in senior cycle and the factors that they considered to be important for the effective implementation of SPHE in senior cycle were also sought.

This consultation report presents an analysis of the responses received including students' feedback. The students' voice is more evident in the later sections of the report which refers to the areas of the draft curriculum framework that stimulated most of the comments and suggestions from students.

The hard data received in the consultation questionnaire was recorded on a web survey tool called Survey Monkey. The hard data included the responses made by respondents when asked to indicate their levels of satisfaction or agreement with the different proposals for the draft curriculum framework for SPHE in senior cycle. Survey Monkey allowed the responses to the questions and the statements in the consultation questionnaire to be recorded and analysed in percentages.

The comments made about the different aspects of the framework were grouped according to the different themes, for example aims, learning areas, strands,

timetabling issues, professional development. Where there was significant support for a particular issue the responses will influence the revision of the framework. In some case, individual comments brought to light new ideas or different perspectives on existing proposals and these comments will also be included for consideration in the final development of the SPHE curriculum framework in senior cycle.

The feedback received in the comment sections of each part of the consultation questionnaire was reviewed. Where these comments referred to issues already mentioned in the draft curriculum framework, but again received substantial mention in the consultation, they were recorded. Where comments and suggestions were new and/or drew attention to a particular perspective which might be considered in the final development of the SPHE curriculum framework, they have been included in this report for further consideration by the Committee. Recommendations for the revised curriculum framework for SPHE in senior cycle, under a number of headings, complete the report.

2. Introduction to the draft curriculum framework

Rationale for the inclusion of SPHE in senior cycle

There was significant support for the rationale proposed for the inclusion of SPHE in senior cycle. 96% of respondents said that it was clear and 86% said that it was realistic. The link between SPHE and health promotion was endorsed and the importance of the supportive whole school approach was emphasized. There was a suggestion that the rationale ought to include specific reference to middle and late adolescence in order to clearly accentuate the different stages of adolescence as opposed to it being understood as one uniform experience.

A number of respondents drew attention to the delicate balance between personal responsibility for health and wellbeing and the wider determinants of health and wellbeing. It was suggested that while the individual can be empowered to make choices in support of health and wellbeing, it was equally important to consider the social inequalities that influence personal health and wellbeing and the challenge for the individual to cope with these.

The development of health literacy skills received widespread endorsement with 100% of respondents agreeing that they should be developed.

The need to recognize students' rights under the legislation including equality legislation was highlighted. It was suggested that a more rights-based approach in SPHE would help students to be more aware about what they are entitled to under the law. It was argued that the development of health literacy ought to be a focus of the whole SPHE curriculum, enabling students to independently assess, critique and evaluate health information. It was stressed however, that students access information and make decisions differently from adults and these differences ought to inform how the development of health literacy is best approached in the school setting.

Reference to 'self-determination' as opposed to 'self-regulation' ought to be included in the rationale, it was suggested, in order to emphasise the more purposeful aims of

SPHE as opposed to simply engaging students in 'self-regulation' according to prescribed norms of conduct.

Finally, it was proposed that the importance of developing supportive school policy for SPHE ought to be given more attention in the curriculum framework rationale. In promoting greater self-determination and responsibility, it is essential that the relevant school policies support students' decision-making for health and wellbeing in the wider school environment.

A supportive whole-school environment

There was a mixed response to proposals about what was important in a supportive whole-school environment. However, it is worth noting that comments received did not argue against the criteria identified for a supportive whole school environment but rather emphasized the importance of a number of key areas.

- SPHE teachers should have comprehensive training and access to ongoing professional development. Teachers assigned to the subject ought to be interested in teaching SPHE and there ought to be continuity of SPHE teachers from year to year with SPHE classes. Concern was also expressed about the gender imbalance in teachers of SPHE.
- Whole staff days are essential to promote an understanding about and commitment to SPHE.
- Cross-curricular co-operation can ensure effective links with other subjects in order to avoid repetition and ineffective overlap.
- The need for SPHE subject co-ordination was emphasised.
- The physical, social and emotional environment of the school including the development of supportive policies was stressed.
- The supportive role of the pastoral care team, the chaplain, class teachers and year heads was endorsed.
- Extra-curricular activities ought to reflect the varied interests and needs of the student population.
- The important role of students' positive attitude and behaviour and the contribution of Student Councils to curriculum planning and a supportive whole-school environment were highlighted.

SPHE takes place in the context of the wider community. The forging of links with parents, community resources and support groups was stressed. Awareness of particular community issues was also highlighted. It is important, it was suggested, to encourage values relating to solidarity, community support, empathy and understanding amongst students to counterbalance the individual notion of health and wellbeing. This emphasis also should help to counteract the stigma, prejudice or blame that individuals can sometimes experience when they become unwell.

The need for students to be made aware of the role of effective financial management and its impact on areas including relationships, emotional health and wellbeing, decision-making, substance abuse and life chances was emphasized. Students' personal financial competence, it was proposed, can be seen to moderate behaviour and adversely influence one's lifestyle choices in such key areas. It was suggested that should financial education be included in SPHE in senior cycle, it would allow for cross-curricular links with Business, Home Economics and Guidance. This would, it was felt, develop key skills including critical thinking and sharing information with others within more active learning sessions.

SPHE as part of the curriculum for all students

38% of respondents indicated that the proposal that SPHE would be a ninety-hour course for all students in senior cycle was very satisfactory while 44% thought it satisfactory. There were a number of positive comments for the inclusion of SPHE in senior cycle including support for the development of health literacy, the use of outside speakers, adequate time for discussion, the use of active methodologies and the development of links with outside agencies. One respondent recommended that SPHE should be a key component of the reformed senior cycle curriculum.

However, there were a number of concerns expressed about the perceived overcrowding in the senior cycle timetable. Proposals about how schools might facilitate the inclusion of SPHE in senior cycle, given this perception of curriculum overcrowding. These included the development of a supportive whole-school environment including health promoting policies and an informed cross-curricular approach. Others suggested that rather than introduce another subject into the curriculum it would be more effective to pay attention to teaching and learning

methodologies that are focused on developing and challenging adolescent values and beliefs throughout the curriculum. The importance of comprehensive professional development was stressed yet again in this context so that teachers and schools could continue to include SPHE in senior cycle in ways other than through discrete subject time.

The preferred method of implementation for SPHE in senior cycle expressed in the comment section was almost evenly divided between the use of double and single periods. The modular approach including cross-curricular links proved to be the next most popular approach with SPHE being delivered solely in a cross-curricular fashion being a distant fourth.

Table 2: SPHE provision in senior cycle; percentage of respondents in favour of each option

Single period	Double period	Modular	Cross-curricular approach
35	34	21	10

Single period provision was supported mainly for ease of timetabling but also because this approach was less likely to impact on time allocated to other subjects. Some concern was expressed about adding to the additional pressures and demands already being felt by students in senior cycle by introducing yet another subject. One respondent suggested that many aspects of the proposed curriculum were already being provided for in RE, Science and Pastoral Care. Double periods were preferred by others because they facilitated discussion and allowed ideas to develop. The modular format was proposed by some as providing an opportunity for SPHE to be timetabled against other subjects such as RE. This approach could also, it was suggested, facilitate smaller class sizes through the generous timetabling of the different modules and would allow a more focused engagement with particular areas of learning. It was also suggested that this approach would lend itself to different teachers facilitating those aspects of the curriculum in which they were more interested. A mixture of single and double periods was proposed by a few, the double period being deemed more suitable in Transition Year and the single period option being more suited to sixth year.

Finally, there was some support for various combinations of the different approaches to implementation for many of the reasons already outlined. Cross-curricular provision of SPHE would, it was suggested, require planning and coordination. Otherwise key topics could be omitted. It would also require that information about SPHE be disseminated to all staff to facilitate effective cross-curricular planning. One respondent stressed that whichever method of implementation was adopted, the class size ought to be such that it would facilitate group work and discussion. It should allow students to critically evaluate the contradictory and inconsistent messages that they were receiving in relation to their health and wellbeing. The importance of planning for individual support and/or referral of students, should the need arise as a result of engaging with particular areas of learning in SPHE, was also emphasised.

3. Structure of the draft curriculum framework

Overarching aim for SPHE in senior cycle

The aims of SPHE were very positively received as being either suitable or very suitable (96% agreed). Comments referred to the aims as being comprehensive, appropriate, balanced, age-appropriate and relevant to students' lives. Knowledge, it was proposed, is power and early healthy lifestyle choices positively impact on future lifestyle decisions.

Aims of SPHE in senior cycle

The aims in turn, were seen to link well with the overarching aim, acknowledging peer pressure and the movement towards responsibility, independence and maturity. It was considered important that young people would develop lifeskills and, in particular, coping skills. In relation to the health literacy aim, it was stressed that students would require the necessary information including information of their legislative entitlements to make informed decisions about their health and wellbeing. One respondent proposed that this aim ought to be amended to read as follows: *to develop students' health literacy skills, including the ability to obtain, critically evaluate and act on health information in support of health and well being*. This would better reflect the concept of health literacy in requiring that students would also engage in critical evaluation. It was also suggested that the final aim in relation to the promotion of lifelong learning ought to be amended as follows: *to promote students' understanding of lifelong learning*.

The importance of students being provided with opportunities to engage in a social analysis of health and wellbeing was again stressed. It was highlighted that all students do not have the same opportunities for positive health and wellbeing and it was important that such inequalities would be understood. It was argued that where the individual can come to understand the links between social class and negative and positive health outcomes, they are better placed to make informed choices. An over emphasis on the role of the individual and insufficient attention to the wider influences in the society and the environment was to be avoided. The inclusion of an additional aim *to foster a social analysis of health and wellbeing* was proposed.

The aims, it was argued, also needed to include more specific reference to promoting respect for diversity in line with public policy including equality legislation.

One respondent, while endorsing the overarching aim and aims of SPHE, expressed concern that such aims might have little relevance for students who are essentially only in class on a part-time basis and who miss school on a regular basis. Whether such students could afford the time for SPHE in the present points system was questioned.

Others suggested that the aims could only be achieved in the event of SPHE being properly resourced and teachers provided with training. The aims were seen by some as being ambitious and would depend on students having been exposed to the complete SPHE programme at junior cycle. There was a suggestion that the overarching aim might be amended as follows: *to enable students to make choices for health and wellbeing*. Another respondent suggested that the words 'informed choices' be used. Finally, it was suggested that the final aim in relation to life long learning be clarified and perhaps considered for inclusion elsewhere.

Areas of Learning

The five areas of learning and associated learning outcomes were very positively received. It was stressed that planning for teaching and learning within SPHE ought to facilitate the integration of aspects of the five areas of learning where appropriate, for example, lifestyle decisions in relation to substance use, their implications for students' mental health, relationships and sexual health and wellbeing.

There was some concern expressed that elements of the proposed content in the five areas of learning were already covered in Religious Education, Physical Education and Home Economics. However, it was suggested by others that effective learning could be maximized where there was cross-curricular cooperation with teachers in planning to address shared topics using contrasting approaches and emphases.

A small number of respondents supported the inclusion of a specific section which would address the transition from home to the workplace and/or college, issues in relation to part-time employment, responsibilities, rights and the law.

Strands

The three strands received almost complete approval (99%). While the different strands might be weighted differently at different times in the teaching and learning, they could, it was suggested, flow naturally into each other. They would allow a single integrated approach to the five areas of learning. It would be important that students would be aware of and understand the three strands from the outset and that each of the strands would run through each area of learning in SPHE.

The absence of any specific reference to spiritual health and wellbeing in the strands was noted by a small number of respondents. It was proposed also that *the emotional and social strand* might be better referred to as the *emotional and relationship health and wellbeing strand* given that social health and wellbeing is essentially understood as relating to personal relationships.

Again, the importance of dealing sensitively with issues relating to personal and group health and wellbeing was emphasised given the influence of the wider determinants that impact on individual's health and wellbeing. It would be important that each of three strands would make reference to those wider determinants which impact on individuals' health and wellbeing. This could, it was proposed, be included as one of the sample foci in each of the three strands. Students should be asked to reflect on what happens in their community/school that supports/hampers their health and wellbeing and that of others in this context? The suggestion was that such engagement could provide ideas for projects where students would initiate change in support of health and wellbeing in aspects of the school/community setting.

Areas of learning and associated learning outcomes

Mental health

The proposed learning outcomes in mental health were positively received with 95% of respondents agreeing that they were excellent or good. The particular emphasis on positive mental health was endorsed. This emphasis would, it was suggested, support students in taking responsibility for their mental health. The importance of addressing spiritual health as an integral part of mental health was again stressed in this context.

The significant impact of factors outside the school on mental health was emphasised. Working in collaboration with parents and the community in support of positive mental health was seen as the way forward.

A concern was expressed that understanding learning difficulties and disabilities, both mental and physical, ought to be included in the health literacy section of mental health. Students in particular, suggested that understanding learning difficulties and disability would help them to understand and empathise with people with these particular life experiences. It would also allow them to address bullying in these situations, which they suggested can happen out of fear of the unknown, for young people.

Bereavement and loss were mentioned in both the student consultation and the questionnaire responses as an issue that needed to be specifically addressed under mental health. Students wanted to understand the stages of bereavement and loss including how they might support themselves and each other in times of bereavement and loss.

I had a friend and like his best friend died and I had not a clue what to do... or what to say to him ... we need to know what to say, how to support, how to actunderstanding how others are feeling.

(Student)

One organisation referred to the importance of the section on mental health as providing an important framework to examine the implications of stigma, homophobic bullying and harassment in the lives of lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) youth. The importance of a whole-school approach in this and other areas of mental health was stressed. Students need to know where to access help when they need it. It was noted that LGB youth are entitled to be open about their sexuality and the law now prohibits harassment against LGB youth. It was emphasised that where they do experience harassment, they are entitled to expect immediate and effective action. The importance of a supportive whole-school environment was endorsed by others for similar reasons including the provision of a support network for students within the school.

Students should have someone that they could go to...it should be like part of SPHE but not in the class, someone that they could go and talk to and not go straight back to their parents.

(Student)

One organisation referred specifically to the reality of male suicide as a predominantly young male phenomenon. There was a need, they suggested, to work with young men in the area of mental health, in addressing their needs from their own perspectives.

Opportunities for students to examine the continuum of mental health, mental ill health and mental illness were welcomed. This could, it was felt, include the de-stigmatisation of mental ill health; the acceptance and tolerance of those affected by mental ill health and mental illness and the relationships skills to interact respectfully with these people:

Like we have this shelter behind us run by the Health Board and they all look out of it and like ok what should we do?...you never get a chance to think about what you do or how you feel...you don't know whether to talk to them or should you just leave them alone?

(Student)

Some respondents also recommended that students might critically examine those policies which promote the practice of people living with mental ill health and mental illness in the community.

Recommendations and implications for this section of the framework

In SPHE in senior cycle, students' engagement with mental health issues emphasises the importance of students taking responsibility for their mental health. The supportive whole-school environment can make an important contribution to facilitating students making healthy decisions, e.g. work/study balance, dealing with bullying, effective communication structures, recognising effort and achievement. Arising from the consultation, the following issues should be considered in the revision of this section of the framework:

- the inclusion of specific learning outcomes on bereavement and loss and the development of coping skills in this context

- reference to the role of teachers in promoting positive mental health in the whole school environment to be included in the rationale for mental health on page 14 of the draft framework
- the inclusion of a learning outcome in the health literacy section which encourages students to examine the care of people with mental ill health and mental illness in the community
- opportunities for students to develop their understanding of learning difficulties and disability
- spiritual health as a central element in the development of positive mental health.

Gender studies

The learning outcomes included in gender studies were found to be either excellent or good by a large majority (88%) of the respondents. Interestingly, it was not one of the areas identified in the first part of the student consultation as being important for inclusion in SPHE in senior cycle. However, when the proposed framework was outlined to the students in the focus groups, there was support for its inclusion. Students accepted that males and females have different health and wellbeing profiles and that there were also significant differences and needs within same sex groups.

In the comments received in the consultation questionnaire, the inclusion of gender studies was seen as providing a journey towards greater empathy between the sexes. While it was seen by one respondent as being more challenging in the single sex school setting, and possibly not as effective in this setting by another, gender studies was highlighted by a small number of respondents as being particularly important in the single sex settings. There was one suggestion that it might be more effectively addressed in an integrated fashion across the five areas of learning. Others felt that it was an area that needed specific, focused attention particularly in the context of our multi-cultural society and the resultant wide range of gender related issues.

Both sexes, it was suggested, take responsibility for their health and well being in different ways, including how they access health services. One questionnaire respondent proposed that it was important to look at the roles ascribed to males and females and the implications for educational attainment, social and family life. Another

respondent requested that students would learn about how gender roles have changed over time and that they are culturally relative. Another respondent was keen that students would consider the different ways boys and girls work in school. The need for both sexes to explore these and other health and wellbeing issues, including their experience of peer pressure about gender issues was stressed. However, the importance of exploring gender related matters in a manner which was positive and relevant to the lives of young people was emphasized:

The emphasis ought to be on tolerance and acceptance rather than on emphasizing similarities and differences

(Questionnaire response)

...like boys get involved in stuff and you tell them that's stupid and they get involved anyway...we might be able to understand them better and they might understand us

(Female student)

The liberating experience for both male and female students when their understanding of gender and gender stereotyping was more developed was commented upon in this questionnaire response:

Young people are under intense pressure to assume sharply polarized gender roles. Straying outside these sharp boundaries can be a major trigger for anti gay and anti- trans gendered harassment and violence

(Questionnaire response)

It was argued that young people ought to:

develop the confidence not to feel threatened if they or others wish to develop qualities and identities that transcend traditional gender roles...

(Questionnaire response)

Another respondent commented that

I think it will create a freedom if students realise the social influences on sex role and stereotyping, the role of the media

(Questionnaire response)

In addition, it was suggested that in gender studies, students ought to examine the experience and the effects of gender based violence and abusive/bullying behaviour in school and at home. It was proposed that students need, not only to understand the

concept of power which can underpin such harmful relationships but they should also know when and where to get help, should the need arise. An understanding of power in relationships might allow, it was suggested, the complexities of relationships to be more fully explored.

Some students mentioned homophobic bullying in the focus group:

...like a lot of boys go on 'ya you're gay' so its good that we look at that area (homophobic bullying) – like loads of boys are afraid of being gay or called gay so it would be better if they were more aware of it and they would not be so scared

(Student)

One respondent proposed that in gender studies students should also be encouraged to examine the female poverty trap including the experience of many single female parents and the impact of poverty on their educational opportunities and health.

As is the case in mental health, the importance of the whole school setting in promoting maximum involvement of both sexes in school life was emphasised by one respondent. It was felt that the role of the school in demonstrating good practice in relation to gender issues ought to be included in the rationale for gender studies. There was also a proposal that the final aim for gender studies *to examine how different males and different females support or hinder their own and other's effective participation in education* to be amended to also include *adult life or life after school*.

A response by one organisation drew attention to the value and challenges of examining gender roles and the fact that some of this material has been included in the *Exploring Masculinities Programme*.

Finally, there were two respondents who expressed their particular concerns about the inclusion of gender studies in SPHE in senior cycle. One individual respondent felt that *it emphasises points that don't need to be* and viewed it more as *a hindrance*. The second respondent was concerned about ensuring that *bland phrases* such as *lifestyle choices and gender stereotyping etc are not hijacked to promote politically correct anti-denominational value systems*.

Recommendations and considerations for this area of learning

Arising from the consultation, the following issues should be considered in the revision of this section of the framework:

- the rationale for gender studies on page 15 ought to include reference to the importance of the schools demonstrating best practice in relation to gender related issues
- the fifth aim for gender studies ought to be reconsidered in light of the proposed changes suggested, that is, the inclusion of *adult life or life after school*
- the question about which area of learning bullying and in particular homophobic bullying might best be addressed in, requires further careful consideration. It will be necessary to decide whether it is in this area that opportunities for students to examine the abuse of power in bullying relationships and its effects is best placed.
- the particular experience of female poverty and the inclusion of this issue in gender studies
- learning experiences which encourage students to examine the limitations of narrow gender stereotyping.

Substance use

There was almost complete approval in the responses (92%) and in the student consultation for the inclusion of substance use as an area of learning. The questionnaire responses and student focus groups clearly show that substance use is considered to be part of the reality of students' lives in senior cycle more so than at junior cycle. In each of the six schools visited, substance use was put forward as being the single most important area of learning to be included in senior cycle SPHE. Information about the different substances, understanding peer pressure and developing coping skills all received significant support. While some adult respondents commented that it was too late to address substance use in senior cycle, student themselves felt strongly that substance use was a significant issue for this age group both for themselves, their friends and their communities:

Its around the time when we come into senior cycle that we begin to be introduced to drugs more. Like when you are younger, you would not know that many people outside your own group. When you are older, you get to know

more people through what ever so it is good to know the side effects and what could go wrong. Like alcohol is seen as a harmless drug and young people might see other drugs in the same light – need to know the risks and know the consequences. If they had more information, they could change their decisions and cope with peer pressure.

(Student)

The importance of learning to deal with peer pressure came up repeatedly in both strands of the consultation:

Peer pressure is probably one of the most important (issues) because it comes into play in nearly everyone of these...like sexual decisions, alcohol, drugs, like even domestic violence...

(Student)

...peer pressure has to do with all of these coz young people go drinking coz it is their friends that want them go and want them to do drugs and have sex coz its the cool thing to domakes them feel like they are older if they are having sex or drinking ...they are more adult grown up things

(Student)

Students in senior cycle have greater levels of autonomy in their lives and thus, it was suggested, there is a greater need for them to critically examine the choices that they are making in relation to substance use. In particular, it was recommended that they examine:

...the link between alcohol consumption and working long hours outside school to fund the habit leading to poor study habits and poor school attendance
(Questionnaire response)

It was considered important to include information about personal safety for themselves and others in relation to substance use and abuse:

...coz of safety coz someone being drugged and raped- like someone having something put in their drink...like knowing how to stay safe when they are out ...and a lot of domestic violence is fuelled by alcohol so there can be problems at home....like someone in your family becomes violent after drink, like people need to know how to cope with that, if we can talk about it, it wont lead to other problems for themselves

(Student)

The opportunity for students to understand the responsible use of legal drugs received particular mention. It was suggested by one respondent that over-the-counter drugs

designed for positive health are often abused. Students ought, therefore, to examine their own attitudes and values in relation to their use of such substances.

While one questionnaire respondent proposed that

...we need to be careful that this (substance use) is not presented as lifestyle choice but as a behaviour which will have heavy social and personal consequences, the responsible use of substances and what constitutes the harmful use of substances should be weighed up against that fact that some substance use is illegal...

(Questionnaire response)

students themselves, emphasized the importance of acknowledging the reality of students' varying involvement with substance use and their need to make their own informed decisions in relation to substance use:

Students might already be taking drugs in fifth year, so you need proper information about what will happen if they keep on going not just what would happen if you started drugs coz they might already be in too deep – they need like help about where they could go if they are doing stuff, - not just kinda *no, don't do drugs* but what would happen if they keep doing drugs

(Student)

Young people want to have this debate for themselves.

It was also recommended that students ought to examine local and national strategies to tackle supply and availability of street drugs. Community issues also need to be considered. Students ought, it was suggested by some questionnaire respondents, be made aware of the specific facilities for treatment and rehabilitation of young people with substance abuse problems. The involvement of outside agencies in making students aware of these community supports was considered to be an important element of substance use education.

Students can turn to substance abuse in an effort to cope emotionally and to manage stress. One agency argued that this can be a particular problem for LGB youths who are experiencing particular challenges in their lives at this time. Opportunities to heighten self-awareness and to develop alternative healthy coping strategies were recommended.

Recommendations and considerations for this area of learning

Arising from the consultation, the following issues should be considered in the revision of this section of the framework:

- further consideration needs to be given to how students would be encouraged to identify and develop coping strategies for living with a family member or a friend who abuses substances
- specific mention of over the counter drugs in the first learning outcome ought to be considered
- the inclusion of a specific learning outcome which requires students to identify and develop healthy coping strategies to deal with emotional difficulties and stress situations
- students' participation in part-time work and the implications for their choices about substance use, specifically in relation to alcohol use and abuse
- the inclusion of up to date, and in particular Irish resources.

Relationships and sexuality education

Almost all of the respondents (93%) to the consultation questionnaire considered the learning outcomes included in relationships and sexuality education (RSE) to be either excellent or good. Some students and a small number of respondents to the consultation questionnaire recommended that the problematic and negative in RSE ought not be over emphasized but rather it was:

...important to emphasis that sex and sexual relationships are normal and there ought to be learning outcomes that were positive about sex and sexual activity

(Questionnaire response)

The importance of developing cross-curricular links with subjects which address areas common to RSE, such as Religious Education, Biology and Home Economics, was highlighted. Despite the broad support for the learning outcomes identified for RSE, a number of challenges were identified. The concerns of parents of students in Catholic schools were given specific mention by one respondent:

Some parents in some schools may be uncomfortable with these outcomes and consider them inappropriate and not in keeping with Catholic ethos

(Questionnaire respondent)

Another respondent expressed their concern about the importance of denominational norms and family values and

...the fact that some agencies with official approval are best kept from pupils in denominational school such as those who wish to promote abortion, contraceptives and the morning after pill/politically correct lifestyles. Much valuable time and resource money could be spent on methodologies which undermine family values

(Questionnaire response)

An additional concern referred to SPHE teachers teaching RSE:

Outside the remit of the skills of teachers – could open a can of worms, e.g. sexual harassment, parenting – is this our role?

(Questionnaire response)

In contrast, students voiced their particular need for RSE to be included in senior cycle SPHE for a number of reasons:

...and there's so many people our age who are having sex, who are sexually active and they don't realize that you don't have to have sex with somebody to get STIs .. its not just that person has it ...anyone could have them...

It can have a big effect on your life when you are older, you might not be able to have kids ...even though you don't want them now...when you're older, you might not be able towe have to be more confident about going in and getting tested...like we should learn more about preventing STDsalso being able to say 'no'

(Student)

Students wanted information about contraception and STIs:

Sex and contraception coz that's something we are all coming across now – know what precautions to take to protect ourselves- we need to know about STIs and the effects that all different ones have...

(Student)

They were also concerned with peer pressure:

Like, looking at the pressures from peers to be sexually active, like if you were going out with someone for a while and you felt pressured to do it ...pressure like that...If you were being pressured about sex, like who would you go to talk about it ...

(Student)

While there were numerous positive comments about the inclusion of RSE, for example, *all very important and essential for today's teenager – personal life plan, body image, concept of love and being in love, contraception, STIs/HIV*, there was also a

specific concern expressed by one questionnaire respondent that this area of learning leaned disproportionately towards developing understanding rather than developing specific lifeskills in support of, for example, negotiating in relationships. There was also a call for more specificity in what ought to be included in RSE for all students at senior cycle:

The specific learning of knowledge, skill and competences to be delivered to students is not spelt out. It remains vague and aspirational. The apparent discretionary nature of the lessons does not correct this tendency. The specific learning that evidence indicates are crucial for students relate to contraception and protection against STIs. It is not just what it is but how to access it and use it effectively

(Questionnaire respondent)

In addition, this questionnaire response emphasized that the evidence suggests that contraception is most effectively addressed, linked with the specific services in the community involved with the sexual health and wellbeing of young people. Given the discretionary/enabling nature of the curriculum framework, the importance of some sort of monitoring/accountability not solely reliant on students' engaging in self-assessment was recommended by this organisation. There was also the additional challenge to be addressed where students had not had RSE addressed adequately as part of junior cycle SPHE.

In the section on sexual and reproductive health, the importance of students knowing what to do and where to get help in the event of unwanted/unplanned pregnancy was emphasised. One questionnaire respondent emphasised the need for open discussion

...enable students to discuss lifestyle choices about sexual activity – arguments for delaying sexual activity and consequences of being sexually active for themselves and their personal relationships

(Questionnaire response)

In one response to the consultation, there was concern expressed that sex can often be equated with sexual intercourse only. This should, it was suggested:

... be avoided and replaced with the term *sexual activities*. Also rather than suggesting to students that they critically examine the arguments for delaying sexual intercourse, students might be asked to consider what sexual activities that they wished to delaythere are choices to be made.....important not to

be perceived to be reducing sexuality to one heterosexual act only by holding it out as the only act of sexual expression to be prized.

(Questionnaire response)

Another respondent expressed the belief that RSE tended towards being too politically correct and:

...should more directly address the extreme pressure placed on youth to be sexy or sexually available? Arguments for delaying sexual activity and

....especially the different consequences sexual behaviours have for men and women ought to be included.

(Questionnaire response)

The topics of sexuality and sexual orientation attracted a number of comments which can inform the development of RSE in senior cycle. It was proposed by one respondent that RSE ought not to emphasise heterosexuality and heterosexual marriage as the only one expression of sexuality: There were, it was proposed:

...young people in danger of being excluded from an SPHE programme in RSE including gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, abused or those from non-monogamous relationships, those of different ethnicity, class and gender

(Questionnaire response)

With specific reference to lesbian and gay young people, one agency proposed in its response that given the invisibility of LGB young people in previous RSE programmes, it was recommended that it was important to include explicit mention of the health, safety and relationship needs of school going LGB young people.

...assuming members of the class may be lesbian or gay is an essential element of RSE as it raises the question as to what the experiences and circumstances of such young people might be and how they might be helped and not harmed through an RSE learning process

(Questionnaire response)

There was also a similar concern expressed about family diversity:

...there are other types of family other than the married heterosexual family that are healthy strong family forms

(Questionnaire response)

While one questionnaire respondent proposed that the topics of parenting and sexual harassment might be included in a new area of learning, others endorsed their inclusion. In one organisation's response, it was suggested that the inclusion of parenting

... may help young men to tease out the long term consequences of young pregnancy and the fact that unmarried fathers have no constitutional recognition as guardians and it can lead to a lifetime of struggle for unmarried fathers...

(Questionnaire response)

The particular needs of students who might not complete senior cycle education or those who might be experiencing learning difficulties in acquiring the necessary skills ought, it was felt, be specifically addressed in the curriculum for SPHE in senior cycle.

In relation to health literacy, it was proposed that not only should students examine the moral, social and cultural issues that impact on sexual behaviour and relationships, they should also consider the relevant legislation.

Both students and adults, particularly in the context of RSE, emphasized the importance of the relationship between the SPHE teacher and the students.

You can make as many changes as you want but it is just not going to work unless teachers are shown how to put it across properly ...teacher is the most important part there... We should be treated like adults...it needs to be two sided

(Student)

Recommendations and consideration for the this area of learning

Arising from the consultation, the following issues should be considered in the revision of this section of the framework:

- the importance of not always presenting RSE in a problematic and negative context
- the role of parents and supportive school policies
- students want information about contraception and STIs and they also want to learn to cope with peer pressure
- there ought to be greater specificity about what students will cover in RSE
- greater emphasis on students developing specific lifeskills in RSE

- sex should not only be equated with sexual intercourse
- RSE should recognize the possible presence of LGB young people in the class addressing their needs and experiences with equal importance
- the particular needs of students who may not complete senior cycle
- the legislation as it applies to sexual relationships and sexual harassment
- the importance of the role of the teacher-student relationship.

Physical activity and nutrition

There was almost unanimous (96%) support for the learning outcomes in physical activity and nutrition. There was some suggestion that there might be too much overlap with other subjects, in particular with Physical Education and Home Economics. There was also some concern about physical activity as an area of learning that would be classroom based. However physical activity and nutrition were considered by some questionnaire respondents, as being an important and often forgotten area of the curriculum for all students. Careful cross-curricular planning would be needed to address the potential problem of ineffective overlap.

It was proposed that under the topic of self-awareness, students ought to explore the concept of internal motivation in an effort to understand those people who, while they might have all the information, do not choose to make healthy decisions for themselves. It was also suggested that students should be asked to consider the impact of their involvement in part-time work on their physical activity participation and nutritional choices. In order to promote physical activity, there was a suggestion that there should be equal amounts of theory and actual opportunities to be physically active.

The area of nutrition, it was proposed, ought to address the role of advertising and how it influences lifestyle choices including the pressure to adopt quick fix approaches to weight reduction. Students should be asked to consider their physical activity/nutritional balance. It was argued that there should be specific learning outcomes that place particular emphasis on shopping, budgeting, and nutrition planning skills.

Students themselves identified this as a specific concern:

Like the nutrition part, I'd like to know what to eat and stuff ...its real dear to get nice food and I'd like to know what to get that would be good for you ...when and how we should eat

(Student)

A number of questionnaire respondents expressed concern that teachers might not feel that they had the expertise to deal with subjects such as eating disorders and body image. The importance of professional development for teachers was stressed once again in this context.

Recommendations and considerations for this area of learning

Arising from the consultation, the following issues should be considered in the revision of this section of the framework:

- the role of the media in lifestyle choices about physical activity and nutrition
- critical evaluation of 'fad' diets and the growing popularity of elective cosmetic surgery
- the important role of internal motivation in support of health and wellbeing
- the link between body image, self image and self esteem
- the importance of students' understanding the physical activity - nutrition balance
- the role of part-time work, students' use of discretionary income and the impact on lifestyle choices about physical activity and nutrition
- the development of the practical skills of shopping, budgeting, and dietary planning.

Core learning outcomes in each area of learning

There was no consensus about what ought to form the core learning outcomes in each area of learning. At the conclusion of the consultation, many of the learning outcomes had been identified by the different respondents as possible core outcomes. For this reason, no manageable number emerged for any area of learning. It will be necessary therefore, to explore whether the choice of learning outcomes ought to be at the complete discretion of the school, SPHE teachers and students or whether there are a

number of core learning outcomes with which students ought to be expected to engage or are entitled to know.

Proposed additional areas of learning for inclusion in SPHE in senior cycle

A number of additional areas were proposed. Some of these additional areas of learning have already been referred to earlier in the report, for example, eating disorders, the impact of part-time work on lifestyles decisions, bereavement and loss education. The following are those additional areas of learning were proposed by respondents without any comment about how they might enhance the overall learning experience in SPHE:

- time management and organisation: work-life balance including consideration of many students' commitments to part-time work
- leaving home and school: the practical and emotional considerations
- study skills linked to coping strategies for senior cycle
- driver awareness/responsibility
- dealing with disabilities/understanding disabilities /interacting with people with disabilities
- practical planning for teenage parenthood.

In addition to these, particular mention was made of the importance of the intercultural dimension of SPHE. The importance of students having an opportunity to consider the possibilities, the demands and challenges of living in a more multi-cultural society was emphasised.

4. Assessment of SPHE at senior cycle

Assessment of SPHE as part of the formal examination system

While the feedback received in this consultation was overwhelmingly positive regarding the framework itself, opinion was divided on the proposal to include assessment of SPHE in the formal assessment processes for Leaving Certificate certification.

There were eight respondents who made supportive comments about assessment in SPHE being linked to the formal examination system.

SPHE would have a greater status if it were part of the formal examination structure.

(Questionnaire response)

Really excellent form of reflection and learning and so in tune with experiential learning methodologies in SPHE. I really like it

(Questionnaire response)

It was an approach to assessment that could be moulded and shaped by the students giving them more responsibility for their learning.

(Questionnaire response)

This approach promotes personal responsibility and is potentially empowering.

(Questionnaire response)

Sounds good, promotes personal responsibility and is potentially empowering

(Questionnaire response)

However, the majority of respondents were concerned about assessment in SPHE if it were to be part of the formal examination system. A small number of questionnaire respondents questioned the need for any form of assessment in SPHE.

No assessment is the way to go

(Questionnaire response)

We strongly disagree with any form of assessment for SPHE. To discuss this would defeat our purpose in the course. There would be no time to deal with the concerns of students that often come out in class, if trying to complete a course for assessment

(School response)

...we are not in favour of examining students in personal responses, relationships, values and attitudes.

(School response)

Why do they have to be assessed?...we are facilitators helping and guiding our students through these areas of learning...In our school, we have been doing a lifeskills programme for 5th and 6th years for a long time...It has never been assessed and that's what makes it different for students. It is relaxed, informal and most of all relevant and not academic.

(School response)

Others expressed their concerns about assessment in SPHE being part of the formal examination system.

If assessment becomes part of the formal examination system, the subject will not be able to adapt to meet schools needs at a particular time ...students are stretched enough with the current senior cycle assessment...

(Questionnaire response)

It was suggested that SPHE is concerned with real life experiences and students should be able to enjoy their participation in SPHE without the stress of yet another deadline. There was also concern that the status that might be gained for SPHE by being part of the formal examination system would be less valuable because of the potential negative impact of more formal assessment on the trust, support and confidentiality in the SPHE class. This, it was felt, would not be an appropriate trade off. Particular mention was made of the importance of respecting students' privacy in relation to the assessment task if students were to be encouraged to be honest and forthcoming.

It would therefore remain up to students to select what they wish to include in their personal reflection task.

(Questionnaire response)

A number of respondents to the consultation questionnaire believed that assessment of SPHE should be school based and could take a variety of formats.

It would be difficult to adequately assess the kind of skills, values and attitudes addressed by SPHE that pupils and teachers are able to assess in school, in the formal examination

(Questionnaire response)

The personal reflection task should work well with students. Multiple choice questionnaires could also help focus students on materials covered

(Questionnaire response)

Personal reflection task will encourage students to engage in ongoing reflective practise in SPHE

(Questionnaire response)

Another respondent suggested that students might be asked to identify a number of key skills, for example, assertiveness and listening skills that they wished to develop during the year. Students, in consultation with their teacher, could rate their progress at different points during the year. Other assessment strategies proposed included, journal writing, class presentations, project work, action plans, reports, reflections and teacher-student conversations.

There was also concern that students' learning in SPHE may not become apparent to them, their peers or their teachers until some time later and therefore the chosen assessment strategy might not be able to acknowledge students' learning in SPHE.

The challenge of whichever assessment strategy is chosen will be that it will ensure that the process nature of it (SPHE) is appreciated and understood and that it is not just seen as a product

(Questionnaire response)

Assessment of learning using the SPHE Personal Reflection Task

In the draft curriculum framework, assessment is presented as an integral part of teaching and learning in SPHE. The framework includes two kinds of assessment: assessment for learning practices at each point of the experiential learning cycle and assessment of learning using the SPHE Personal Reflection Task which would take

place at the completion of an area of learning and/or the completion of the course. While the previous sections show concerns about assessment of SPHE in the Leaving Certificate, over three quarters (79%) of the respondents thought that this approach to assessment was either satisfactory or very satisfactory.

Among the positive comments received were suggestions that the SPHE personal reflection task would allow students to take more responsibility for their learning, foster a more positive attitude to learning, be more teacher and student friendly, allow class work to be more focused, and include opportunities for students to engage in ongoing reflection. The fact that SPHE is already assessed successfully in this way in the Leaving Certificate Applied and at third level was also highlighted.

However a number of concerns were identified in relation to using the SPHE Personal Reflection Task. In addition to the concerns previously identified, respondents raised questions about how the task would be graded. They suggested that reflection/reporting is adequately carried out in the class already. It was proposed that life is the ultimate test of personal, social health and wellbeing. There were concerns that students' engagement with the SPHE Personal Reflection Task might erode teaching time and that the curriculum might subsequently become diluted. It was however proposed, that the SPHE Personal Reflection Task might be an optional assignment which, when completed satisfactorily, would be formally included in the formal recognition of senior cycle education.

Other assessment strategies were suggested including

- a questionnaire at the end of each module for evaluation purposes
- school-based examinations based on the area of learning being covered
- multiple choice paper and/or projects
- exploring IT methodologies for producing personal development and reflection portfolio
- portfolio and interview modelled on the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme
- keeping a journal which could include the personal reflection task.

Given the number of negative comments about SPHE being formally assessed, it is more likely that these were suggestions for school-based assessment.

Finally in response to the question whether assessment of learning in SPHE ought to be part of teaching and learning within the school or part of the formal examination system, responses received were 75% in favour of assessment in SPHE being part of teaching and learning within the school and 25% quarter of the respondents preferring it to be part of the formal examination system. It is interesting to note here that the students in the focus group meetings did not mention assessment in SPHE and the importance of formal recognition for SPHE in senior cycle. Curriculum relevance and a proactive teaching and learning environment were their main priorities.

Recommendations and considerations for assessment of SPHE

The responses on assessment indicate a number of issues for consideration in the revision:

- Teachers will need professional development for the personal reflection task.
- Time will be needed for the assessment
- The inclusion of assessment on the Leaving Certificate may need to be separated from the examination
- The new senior cycle reforms will afford some possibilities for the assessment of SPHE.

Respondents' concerns about formal assessment diminishing the value of the SPHE learning experience ought to inform how the issue of assessment of SPHE is progressed.

5. Planning the SPHE curriculum at senior cycle

There was general agreement that the considerations for planning in SPHE in senior cycle were acceptable. However, there were a number of concerns about the implementation of SPHE in senior cycle. Many of these concerns had been highlighted earlier in the response questionnaire but they were reiterated again in this section. These included

- the importance of SPHE co-ordination, including planning time, particularly given the increased numbers of teachers who will be involved in SPHE in senior cycle
- cross-curricular co-operation in relation to common themes
- repeated concerns about the already crowded curriculum in senior cycle; how to accommodate SPHE on the timetable
- the need to emphasise the social and personal health and wellbeing message throughout the curriculum and the whole school environment including policy formulation
- the inclusion of the student voice in planning SPHE; balancing the needs and interests of different students.

One respondent suggested that the learning outcomes in the draft curriculum framework were too numerous and ought to be refined. Another commented that

The discretionary nature of lessons in RSE may mean that crucial aspects are missed due to teacher embarrassment or conservative schools ethics reflected in the school policy.

(Questionnaire response)

Finally, there was concern that the proposed learning outcomes in mental health as an area of learning might prove too demanding for the teacher.

School resources required for the implementation of the draft curriculum framework

There were a number of common themes running through the comments made in this section of the consultation questionnaire. Comments made referred mainly to the SPHE teacher, current demands on the time-table at senior cycle, the importance of a supportive whole school environment, the need for small classes and support for the teaching of SPHE.

The SPHE teacher ought, it was proposed, be comfortable with the different areas of learning and have a good level of empathy with students:

SPHE teachers should have a good relationship with students and the ability to use less formal teaching methods...

(Questionnaire response)

Interestingly, students concurred:

You have to have someone that knows what they are talking about coz if you are going into a room, you have to be prepared to talk about sex, there should be a course provided for them...

Handouts don't work, teachers need to be confident themselves...

You can make as many changes as you want but it is not going to work unless teachers are shown how to put it across properly...the teacher is the most important part here

(Students)

SPHE teachers ought to be properly trained, positive and committed to SPHE. SPHE ought not to be simply *a time table filler* for teachers, it was suggested by one questionnaire respondent.

Five questionnaire respondents and a small number of students suggested that personnel other than teachers would be better placed to facilitate SPHE in senior cycle.

Its much easier for a young person to discuss issues such as substance use/relationships and sexuality education with a stranger than with a teacher who they see everyday

(Questionnaire response)

However, the majority of comments focused on the personal and professional supports needed by SPHE teachers undertaking senior cycle SPHE. These included the support of the Principal and the Board of Management, SPHE co-ordination, (preferably as a post of responsibility), opportunities to attend SPHE in-service, planning time for SPHE teachers, the development of supportive school policies and whole staff involvement in the development of SPHE in the school. A small number of questionnaire respondents also expressed interest in a more formal qualification in the teaching of SPHE.

...a recognised diploma

(Questionnaire response)

... an SPHE diploma, not just days here and there...

(Questionnaire response)

Questionnaire respondents emphasised the importance of a suitable space for teaching SPHE, adequate teaching resources including a suitable textbook/workbook, an SPHE website, access to relevant agencies and organisations in the community who are familiar with the school and overall, the need for small classes in SPHE. The importance of small class sizes featured repeatedly in the questionnaire responses and in the student focus groups.

Teaching time to facilitate small class groups is vital. Thirty senior cycle students in SPHE is a waste of time...

(Questionnaire response)

...provide extra resources to make smaller classes possible where SPHE has some chance of being successful

(Questionnaire individual)

Split into smaller groups so that everyone gets to speak...in a smaller group everyone gets to speakbeing one out of ten is different that one out of thirty...

(Student)

There were varied comments made about how much time ought to be allocated on the timetable for SPHE by both students in the focus group and respondents to the questionnaire.

In junior, we only had forty minutes and it wasn't enough. It was good like but there was only so much you could do with that time

(Student)

Timetable – a major review of the timetable would be needed to fit two periods per week in an already full timetable. SPHE is not replacing anything so where would it fit?

(Questionnaire response)

Class size was an issue of greater concern than the allocation of time to SPHE in senior cycle.

Students prioritised an SPHE curriculum that was relevant to young people's lives as being their first priority with adequate time on the time table being their second priority for what was important for the successful implementation of SPHE in senior cycle.

6. Additional comments

In the section on additional comments, the importance of students being introduced to SPHE properly in junior cycle was highlighted, in preparation for their participation in senior cycle SPHE. The need for teacher guidelines similar to those provided in junior cycle SPHE was requested. The significant contribution of the SPHE Support Service at junior cycle was acknowledged and the need for such ongoing support for SPHE in senior cycle was endorsed.

Finally, there were two contrasting viewpoints put forward by two questionnaire respondents. In the first one, it is proposed that what schools value will

...be shown in the time and the time slot allocation, the resources in terms of both person power and materials and the support we offer to our teaching staff including their training and time for planning.

(Questionnaire response)

In contrast, the second respondent suggested that

...It is too simplistic to expect the school to be the place to correct all the ethical, social and other ills of a politically correct dominated societal model...

(Questionnaire response)

7. Conclusions

The draft curriculum framework for SPHE in senior cycle was very positively received. The fact that the proposed curriculum for SPHE does not lay the responsibility for health and wellbeing solely with the individual and the school but rather recognises that communities and public agencies also play a significant role was welcomed. The importance of recognising these key external influences is essential if the SPHE curriculum is to be seen as empowering the individual in making informed and realistic decisions for health and wellbeing.

It would appear from the responses received, that the challenge of setting up and maintaining the supportive whole-school environment considered essential for the successful implementation of SPHE, continues to be an issue for schools. The following issues were prioritised for consideration by respondents to the consultation questionnaire:

- Support of school management for SPHE teachers, their ongoing professional development, voluntary teacher allocation to SPHE, favourable timetabling, opportunities for cross-curricular co-operation and working in partnerships and finally for SPHE co-ordination as a post of responsibility
- School policies which are supportive of the health and wellbeing of the school community and are developed in a collaborative manner
- Ongoing professional development for whole school staff and SPHE teachers
- Small class sizes
- Suitable classroom space for teaching SPHE.

Schools and SPHE in particular provide an important setting for students to develop their understanding about what is important for health and wellbeing. On the one hand, it is important that students acquire health knowledge to make informed decisions. It is equally important that teaching and learning in SPHE promotes a climate of enquiry and recognises the importance of students having a socially informed understanding of health knowledge (Wright and Burrows 2004). It takes time and a variety of active, experiential methodologies to support students to develop towards this level of understanding. Students have much to learn from each other through their different

experiences and differing values, attitudes and values. This shared learning can be facilitated through the range of methodologies that SPHE teachers have become more skilled in, in junior cycle. It also takes time and small class sizes to ensure that the quality of the relationship between the teacher and students is developed. The quality of this relationship has been found to be significant to students feeling involved and it also contributes to enhancing their feelings of wellbeing and health (Samdal et al 1998). The extent to which this type of relationship can be developed with class sizes of twenty five or more is questionable. It is therefore essential that students are facilitated in small class sizes for double class periods to allow the best possible learning environment to be cultivated in support of SPHE.

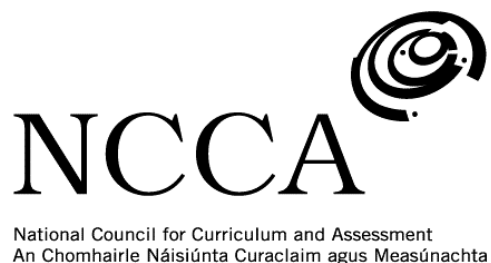
The changing nature of Irish society towards an increasingly multi-cultural society and the implications for SPHE were highlighted in the consultation. It is important that what is taught as well as how it is taught in SPHE is given particular consideration in this context. The different cultural values, attitudes and behaviours that students, from a wide variety of backgrounds, bring to our schools is important. Consideration ought to be given to each area of learning and how it can include opportunities for consideration of intercultural health and well-being issues.

There was one extensive submission urging the inclusion of financial literacy as a separate strand in senior cycle SPHE. Opportunities to look at the role of part-time work, how students use their financial resources and the impact of these choices on their personal and social health and wellbeing can be considered in each of the five areas of learning.

Assessment of SPHE has proven to be a complex issue for participants in the questionnaire responses. While the assessment of SPHE was supported, respondents saw difficulties with its inclusion in the Leaving Certificate examination in whatever form. It is clear that the forthcoming senior cycle reforms will offer new means for including SPHE in the certification and new possibilities for assessment.

In conclusion, the NCCA would like to thank all the individuals, groups and organisations who took the time to respond to the consultation questionnaire. We

would also like to acknowledge the important contribution that the students in the six schools made with their enthusiastic and thoughtful insights.



Draft Social, Personal and Health Education Curriculum Framework for Senior Cycle

Report on student consultation

March 2006

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1. Introduction

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is now part of the curriculum for all students in primary schools and in the junior cycle of post-primary schools. The NCCA is currently preparing the SPHE curriculum at senior cycle. As part of the curriculum development process, the NCCA values students' thoughts and opinions on the draft curriculum framework. The education officer for SPHE visited six schools and sought the opinions and suggestions of senior cycle students in relation to the draft curriculum framework for SPHE in senior cycle. Each of the schools visited had a well established SPHE programme in junior cycle including an SPHE co-ordinator. The NCCA was assisted by either the SPHE regional development officer or the health promotion officer for SPHE in the particular region.

2. Methodology

Working with either a full class group of transition year or fifth year students (20 – 24 students), in a circle formation, students were asked about what they considered to be the most important/interesting modules in junior cycle SPHE and why.

Having recorded the feedback, students responded individually to the following question

In senior cycle, the most important area to include in SPHE would be.....because.....

Each student, in turn, was invited to say what they had written and why. Responses received to this question were then used as the basis for the discussion in the focus group that followed. Five/six students were asked to volunteer from the main class group to participate in the focus group session.

Focus Group Session (5-6 students)

Students were given an outline of what their peers had prioritised as being important to include in SPHE in senior cycle, in the class group session. Each student was asked to comment on whether they agreed or disagreed with these suggestions and why. Students were then given a brief overview of the draft curriculum framework for SPHE at senior cycle including the learning

outcomes in one area of learning and the draft proposals for assessment in SPHE. Students were then invited to respond to the proposals in the context of the feedback that had come from the whole class group. Finally, students were invited to make comments about what they would consider important for the successful implementation of SPHE in senior cycle.

The design of the student consultation was informed by a workshop given by the National Children's Office to the NCCA about best practice in consulting children. The following considerations informed the design of the consultation:

- Students' permission to participate in the consultation is sought in addition to the school's and the parents/guardians' permission.
- Students understand what the consultation is about and how their contribution will inform the work
- Students are guaranteed anonymity in the report
- Students receive a copy of the report to which they have contributed.

With the students' agreement, the focus group session was audio-taped to allow the authentic voice of the students to be used in the write up of the report

3. Findings

Substance use and relationships and sexuality education were identified, by students across the six schools, as being the most important areas to address in SPHE in senior cycle.

Substance Use

In each of the schools, substance use was identified as being the most important area to include in SPHE in senior cycle. To be effective, students emphasised that substance use education ought not to operate on the presumption that students were not currently using and abusing substances. Planning for teaching and learning ought to recognize that one approach would not fit the needs and experiences of all students. Students explained that students use and abuse substances in different ways. They wanted information about the different substances, both legal and illegal and hard and soft drugs:

Students might already be taking drugs in fifth year, so you need proper information about what will happen if they keep on going not just what would happen if you started drugs coz they might already be in too deep – they need

like help about where they could go if they are doing stuff, - not just kinda no don't do drugs but what would happen if they keep doing drugs...

...like there should be several ways of doing it- not just by the book , like you could have somebody from every kind of a group, from pioneers to other groups, someone with a different story, like more than being told not to drink – like we are doing it so it is more important to think about how we can do it safely – like not to be going binge drinking, not to drink too fast, not eating so that you will get drunk quicker — you should really know about how to take care of yourself and what to do like if your friends are really drunk

...the important think is that you are just not being told, don't take drink, don't take drugs, they expect you then not to read on coz you'll say I'm not going to, but that just doesn't happen – you need to get to make up your own mind, that it is not just telling you what to do

Students proposed that the more informed they were, the better they would be able to cope with peer pressure which they identified as being a particular problem in this and other areas in adolescence:

...at least know what you are taking- like if you had more facts, you could go like, no, I am not going to take it – especially if people are putting pressure on you, oh, no nothing will happen you, at least you should be more sure and you could say no...

Students were concerned about their personal safety and that of others. The issue of substance abuse related violence including domestic violence also came up a number of times:

...someone being drugged and raped, like someone having something put in their drink...like knowing how to stay safe when they are out ...and a lot of domestic violence is fuelled by alcohol so there can be problems at home....like someone in your family becomes violent after drink, like people need to know how to cope with that, if we can talk about it, it wont lead to other problems for themselves

Relationships and sexuality education (RSE)

RSE was identified as the next most important area to include in SPHE in senior cycle. While students in one school referred to the specific term, RSE, other students wanted to know more about sex education, teenage pregnancy, STIs (sexually transmitted diseases) including where to go to get help and tested. Students wanted to know about safe and unsafe sex, about contraception and how to use it properly. They were concerned about teenage pregnancy and dealing with peer pressure to be sexually active:

Like, looking at the pressure from peers to be sexually active, like if you were going out with someone for a while and you felt pressured to do it, and he had already done it with someone else and he wanted to keep up with that ...like who would you go to talk to?

They were interested in discussing all of the options including adoption and abortion. Students acknowledged the relationship between substance use/abuse and sexual health. They were also concerned about sexual violence and wanted to know more about where to go and what to do in the event of it happening to themselves or to their friends:

RSE – its relevant to people our age... it is good to do RSE in school as well as at home as everyone will know then what is going on, they will all have the same information

You have to know about it, it is the time in our lives when we start developing and changing so if we can find out about STIs and developing relationships, we can be more aware of the consequences of our actions... its a lot easier for students who can talk about it , like you might find it difficult to talk about it, but in school and you are in a group with lads your own age, its easier.

Students spoke about the changing nature of their relationships at this stage including relating to parents and peers in a different way. One group mentioned in particular the challenges of dealing with split parenting. They wanted to understand parenting and the responsibilities and expectations involved. The importance of building communication skills and trust received particular mention.

While students themselves did not identify sexuality and sexual orientation as particular topics for inclusion in SPHE in senior cycle, there was general acceptance of the importance of addressing these issues:

There should be something about gay and lesbian ... some people are completely against it

Finally, some students spoke about the value of mixed classes for RSE while also recommending separate classes for sexual health education. In planning these classes, students stressed that the importance of the material being relevant to students' lives:

stories used were often not realistic, we need ones we can relate to, they need to have detail, including side effects and consequences.

Mental health

While only one group of students identified mental health as a specific area of learning, topics which are addressed in mental health were mentioned as the next most relevant areas which should be included in SPHE at senior cycle. These topics feature on the continuum of mental health, mental ill health and mental illness. Students suggested that they would welcome opportunities to explore areas including stress management, study – life balance, self harm, depression/suicide, mental health supports, bereavement including separation and divorce:

...depression coz there is a lot of depression with exams coming up to leaving cert because there is so much pressure being put on you and you just don't know what to door if you lost a family member and you just don't know what to do...

...if your friend is depressed, how to deal with it...like if you try to find out and you end up in a fight, you don't know the reasons why and she wont tell you and it just gets worse

..like the balance between study and your real life...we need some help setting it up for ourselves, the transition form junior to senior

...lads need to know where to get help coz one out of four people have mental health issues, they might not know how to get themselves cured and they suffer then all by themselves – like at this time we are under more pressure and if we

had lessons about what we could do, lads might be more likely to go a talk to someone, their parents or whoever, there might not be as many suicides especially male suicides

... important that lads know that they have other things going on for them, that it isn't the end of the world if one thing falls apart

I had a friend and his best friend died and I had not a clue what to do , or what to say to him

In particular, students wanted to know more about the skills of dealing with loss, knowing how to act and what to say in support of others.

Students were concerned about bullying, how it could be defined and when *messing* might more accurately be termed bullying. Students felt strongly that bullying was something that affected people both now and later on in college and in their working lives.

Additional areas for consideration

In response to the overview of the draft curriculum framework for SPHE in senior cycle, students identified a number of additional topics which they considered important to include:

- Discrimination: looking at difference in their peer group, exploring different cultures in terms of their social and personal mores, understanding racist behaviour
- Learning difficulties: understanding learning difficulties and other disabilities, behaving respectfully
- Coping with cancer: lifestyle choices and cancer; coping with cancer; supporting those with cancer
- Eating disorders; anorexia, bulimia, obesity – signs and symptoms; supporting friends, knowing how to support and where to get support
- Future plans/careers: Looking to the future, what's the plan? Dealing with pressure around others choices
- Relationship violence: Child and sexual abuse, domestic violence, how to support self and others dealing with such situations

Making SPHE work in senior cycle

When asked to prioritise the following in terms of their importance for the successful implementation of SPHE in senior cycle, students did so as follows:

Consideration	Priority
Relevant to young peoples' lives now and in the future	1 st
Enough time on the timetable	2 nd
Seen as important by teachers	3 rd
Recognised as part of the formal certification of leaving certificate	4 th

It is interesting to note that students did not consider the subject status that might accrue to SPHE, were it to be included in the formal certification of senior cycle as being of any importance. Throughout the student consultation, it was interesting to note the extent to which students prioritised *how* SPHE would be taught in senior cycle over considerations of content. The following quotes exemplify where their concerns lay:

You have to have someone that knows what they are talking about...

Handouts don't work, teachers need to feel confident themselves...they should have support...they have to deal with all this stuff

You can make as many changes as you want but it is just not going to work unless teachers are shown how to put it across properly...the teacher is the most important part here

We need to think about the place we have health education in and maybe have one specific teacher that is comfortably

In junior we only had 40 minutes and it was'nt enough...there was only so much you could do in that time

Smaller groups...we learnt very little in big groups

The whole curriculum here ...it's grand when you are talking about it but I was in a class for one and half years and we had 30 in the class, it didn't work out but if it is done properly, it can be really good

SPHE: proving support for young people

Students proposed that SPHE in senior cycle would not only provide knowledge and information but would also provide support for students coping with the challenges of substances abuse:

*...Its good in SPHE to be able to sit in a group of people and to be able to talk about things ...its good when I can feel that it is not just me...someone else feels like that too, its not just me, at least there is someone else there...I'm not alone
When we are talking in a group in SPHE we learn alot about people and we don't go around telling everyone, its easier to relate, to someone, to know that they are not alone in what is going on in their lives.*

4. Conclusions

The outcomes of the student consultation are important for a number of reasons: firstly, students appear to strongly support what is proposed in the draft curriculum framework for SPHE in senior cycle. In particular, they consider the inclusion of substance use, relationships and sexuality education and mental health to be of particular importance. Students have identified additional areas of learning as being important to include in SPHE in senior cycle. They include bereavement, discrimination, understanding learning difficulties, coping with cancer, eating disorders, future plans/careers and relationships violence including domestic violence.

Students emphasised the importance of teaching and learning in SPHE being relevant to their lives now and in the future. They stressed the need for sufficient class time for SPHE and the SPHE teacher seeing the subject as being important. Students identified the need for teacher training and support for teachers in delivering SPHE. The proposal to externally assess SPHE in order to include it in the formal certification of senior cycle education was of little concern to students in comparison to the importance they placed on the role of the SPHE teacher and how SPHE is taught.

The views of the students have been incorporated into the main consultation report on the draft curriculum framework for SPHE in senior cycle. This report is available on the NCCA website, www.ncca.ie. The consultation findings will inform the final stages of the development of the SPHE curriculum framework for senior cycle.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge the commitment and enthusiasm that school management, SPHE co-ordinators and most importantly the students brought to the consultation process.

Thank you.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Student consultation materials

SPHE Consultation on the draft curriculum framework for SPHE in senior cycle

School	Type	Consultation Date
School 1	All boys	Thursday, 20 th October 2005
School 2	Co-education, urban	October 2005
School 3	Co-education, rural	October 2005
School 4	Co-education, urban	October, 2005
School 5	All girls	October 2005
School 6	Designated disadvantage	November 2005

Six schools were identified for the NCCA consultation about the draft curriculum framework for SPHE in senior cycle. Each of the schools chosen had a well established SPHE programme in junior cycle and an SPHE co-ordinator with whom the student consultation could be organised.

It was agreed with the National Support Service for SPHE, that either the regional development officer or the health promotion officer for SPHE would act as co-facilitators in the student consultation in their area.

Invitation letter to Principal

Dear Principal

Further to our recent telephone conversation, I am writing to formally invite _____ school to participate in the consultation process that the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) is carrying out in relation to the draft curriculum framework for Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) in senior cycle.

As we discussed, the NCCA views consultation with students about their opinions in relation to the proposals for SPHE in senior cycle, as an important element of the current consultation. A small number of schools have been identified where the NCCA proposes to talk with senior cycle students to ensure that the 'student voice' is included in this consultation process.

I am very grateful for your interest in participating in this student consultation. In my capacity as education officer for SPHE, I propose to visit your school on _____, the provisional date discussed with you for the visit. I would like to meet with students for two separate sessions. In the first session, I propose to work with a class group in order to hear students' views on what they perceived to be important modules in SPHE in junior cycle. I will also ask them to identify those modules which they consider, ought to be developed in SPHE in senior cycle. Using the information that I collect from the class session, I then propose to meet with four to six students from the class group to further 'unpack' comments and observations made in the first session.

While these are my own thoughts on a format for the visit, this is subject to discussion with the school as I would like to ensure that the visit is mutually beneficial for all concerned. There are arrangements relating to the format of the visit and to practical matters (rooms, equipment) which, with your agreement, I would like to discuss with you or your representative as soon as possible. I will follow up this letter with a phone call to arrange such a meeting in the next few days.

Prior to the visit, I will forward a resource pack containing brief reading material for circulation to those students who will be participating in the consultation sessions. Following the visit, I will compile a short report based on the outcomes of the consultations with all schools. The report will be made available to the participating schools by early December 2005.

Again, I want to thank you for facilitating the NCCA with this consultation with your students. As the statutory body charged with advising the Minister for Education and Science on

developments in curriculum and assessment, the NCCA believes that it is important to consult directly with students about proposed developments in education which directly impact on their experience of schooling. These student consultations can help us ensure that the development of the SPHE curriculum in senior cycle can be informed by the realities of students in schools.

I look forward to consulting with your students in this context.

Yours sincerely,

Parental consent to audio-tape consultation meetings

Date

Consultation on Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) in Senior Cycle

Permission to audio-tape student consultation meetings

at

Name of school

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) advises the Minister for Education and Science on curriculum and assessment for early childhood education, primary and post-primary schools. At present, the NCCA is engaged in consultation with schools and organisations about the draft curriculum framework for Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) in senior cycle. The NCCA wishes to include students in this consultation process in an effort to ensure that the curriculum framework is relevant to students.

Students in _____ have studied SPHE in junior cycle and will therefore, be in a position to offer their comments and suggestions on proposals for the development of SPHE in senior cycle. In order to accurately include comments and suggestions made by students in the consultation process and to facilitate the preparation of a consultation report, it is proposed to audio-tape the conversations with the students. Students will not be identified by name or by their school in the report.

I would be delighted if your son/daughter could participate in the consultation process. Please contact Majella O'Shea or Ger Halbert at the NCCA (01 7996400) if you have any questions or would like to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely,

Ger Halbert

Education Officer for SPHE

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
Consultation on Social, Personal and Health Education in Senior Cycle

Consent Form for Student Consultation Sessions to be audio-taped

It is planned to audio-tape the consultation sessions with students about the draft curriculum framework for Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) in senior cycle. The recordings will be used to assist the compilation of the Consultation Report and other NCCA documents. The students' contributions will be anonymous in any NCCA documents and the individual schools will not be identified.

Please contact Majella O'Shea or Ger Halbert at the NCCA, 01 7996400, if you would like to discuss your son or daughter's participation.

Name of school: _____

Address of school: _____

I consent to my son/daughter _____ (student's name) being audio-taped by the NCCA for the purposes described in the letter overleaf. _____ or

I would prefer that my son/daughter _____ would not take part in the consultation.

Signed: _____ (Parent/Guardian)

Date: _____

Please return this completed consent form to the school for collection by the NCCA. Thank you.

Student consent to audio-tape consultation meetings

**Draft Curriculum Framework for SPHE in senior cycle
Student Consultation
(Name of School)**

Dear Student,

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) advises the Minister for Education and Science about the school curriculum, what is taught in schools and how it is assessed. At the moment, the NCCA is consulting with schools and organisations about the draft curriculum framework for SPHE in senior cycle (Transition Year, fifth and sixth year).

SPHE has been part of your curriculum in junior cycle and the NCCA believes that you are in a position to offer comments and suggestions on the proposals for SPHE in senior cycle. Your feedback can help ensure that SPHE in senior cycle is developed in a way that is relevant for students. We would like to invite you to participate in the consultation process for one/two class periods.

The NCCA proposes to audio-tape part of our conversation with the students. This will allow us to include a selection of your comments and suggestions in the final consultation report. Students will not be identified by name or by their school in the report.

The consultation report, together with all of the other feedback we receive, will be used to inform the development of SPHE in senior cycle. Schools and students involved in this consultation will receive an overview of the consultation when it is completed.

The NCCA would be delighted if you would agree to participate in the consultation process. If you have any questions about the process, please ask the teacher in your school who is organising this consultation on behalf of the NCCA.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Anne Looney
Chief Executive

Student consent to participate in consultations

**National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
Draft Curriculum Framework
for Social, Personal and Health Education in Senior Cycle
Student Consent Form**

Name of school: _____

Address of school: _____

I _____ agree to participate in the SPHE consultation process being organised by the NCCA. I understand that part of the session will be audio-taped for the purposes described in the letter.

or

I _____ choose not to take part in the SPHE consultation.

Signed: _____ (Student's signature)

Date: _____

Please return this completed consent form to the organising teacher. Thank you.

Appendix 2 Consultation materials

Letter to school Principals

Date

Dear colleague,

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) is developing a curriculum framework for Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) in senior cycle. SPHE is now part of the curriculum for all students in primary schools and in the junior cycle of post-primary schools. The draft curriculum framework sets out proposals for SPHE in senior cycle. Its development to date, has been guided by the NCCA course committee for SPHE and responses received to the discussion paper on Social, Personal and Health Education in senior cycle in October, 2003.

We are currently conducting a consultation on the SPHE draft curriculum framework that seeks the views of principals, SPHE co-ordinators, SPHE teachers and other members of staff who may wish to contribute to the consultation process. I am pleased to enclose the *SPHE Draft Curriculum Framework* and *Consultation Questionnaire* for your consideration. The document has also been disseminated to health boards, statutory and non-statutory organisations and groups involved in the social, personal and health education of young people. The outcome of the consultation process will assist the NCCA in finalising the SPHE curriculum framework for senior cycle students.

I would be grateful if you would complete the enclosed questionnaire and if you could ask the SPHE team and other interested teachers to respond also. Completed questionnaires should be returned to the NCCA by **Friday, 14th October, 2005**. The document and questionnaire are also available to download or can be completed on line, through the NCCA website, www.ncca.ie

While I appreciate that this is a very busy time of the year for you and your staff, the NCCA values feedback from principals, SPHE co-ordinators and teachers for the development of SPHE in senior cycle education. In this light, I would appreciate if you would take the time to offer your views on the draft curriculum framework for SPHE and I look forward to your response.

Thank you very much for your continued support for the work of the NCCA.

Yours sincerely

Dr. Anne Looney
Chief Executive

Letter to individuals and organisations

Date

Dear colleague,

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) is developing a curriculum framework for Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) in senior cycle. SPHE is now part of the curriculum for all students in primary schools and in the junior cycle of post-primary schools. The draft curriculum framework sets out proposals for SPHE in senior cycle. Its development to date, has been guided by the NCCA course committee for SPHE and responses received to the discussion paper on Social, Personal and Health Education in senior cycle in October, 2003.

We are currently conducting a consultation on the SPHE draft curriculum framework that seeks the views of school principals, SPHE co-ordinators, SPHE teachers and relevant organisations and groups. I am pleased to enclose the *SPHE Draft Curriculum Framework* and *Consultation Questionnaire* for your consideration. This document has been widely disseminated to second level schools, health boards, statutory and non-statutory organisations and groups involved in the social, personal and health education of young people. The outcome of the consultation process will assist the NCCA in finalising the SPHE curriculum framework for senior cycle students.

I would be grateful if you would offer the views of your organisation on the *SPHE Draft Curriculum Framework* by completing the enclosed questionnaire. Completed questionnaires should be returned to the NCCA by Friday, 14th October, 2005. The document and questionnaire are also available to download or can be completed on line, through the NCCA website, www.ncca.ie

While, I appreciate that there are many demands on your time, the NCCA values feedback from organisations and groups such as yours for the development of SPHE in senior cycle. In this light, I would appreciate if you would take the time to offer your views on the draft curriculum framework for SPHE and I look forward to your response.

Thank you very much for your continued support for the work of the NCCA

Yours sincerely

Dr. Anne Looney
Chief Executive

Appendix 3 Consultation Mailing List

The following schools, individuals and organisations were included in the NCCA consultation about the draft curriculum framework for SPHE in senior cycle.

- All second level schools
- NCCA Council members
- NCCA Senior Cycle Committee
- NCCA SPHE Course Committee
- SPHE Support Service at junior cycle

Organisations

Treasa Leahy	SPHE RDO, Dublin
Ciaran Mc Donnacha	DESS, University of Limerick
Vincent Maguire	Director, JLO Scheme
Tony Mahon	Director, Laois Education Centre
Patricia Mannix- Mc Namara	Education Department, University of Limerick
Mary Martin	SPHE RDO, HSE North East
Ray Mc Carthy	City of Cork VEC
Sr. Olive Mc Conville	Mercy Education Centre
Liam Ó Gógáin,	Parent Equality
John Mc Cullagh	Church of Ireland General Synod Board
Lee Mc Curtain	National Educational and Psychological Services
Seamus Mc Dermott	Director, Monaghan Education Centre
Dr. Gerry Mc Namara	School of Education Studies, DCU
Bernadette Mc Hugh	Navan Education Centre
Luke Monahan	Centre for Education Studies, Marino Institute of Education
Una Monaghan	Institute of Technology, Tralee, Co. Kerry

Prof. Carol Fitzpatrick	Family and Adolescent Centre
Mr Mike Power	Family and Adolescent Centre
Michael Brogan	Youth Health Centre, Cork,
Teresa Mc Ellhenney,	Health Promotion Department, HSE, Cork
Ruby Morrow	Church of Ireland Training College, Dublin
Anne Marie Sheehan	National Educational Psychological Service
Dr. Abbey Hyde,	School of Nursing and Midwifery, UCD
Dr. Paula Mayock	Children's Research Centre, TCD
Dr. Liz Kiely,	Department of Applied Social Studies, UCC
Mary Mc Donald	SPHE Co-ordinator, PCSP
Anne Marie Callery	Health Promotion Service, North West
Frances Shearer	RSE Development Officer
Maureen Bowen,	Equality Department, DES
Mary T Cleary	Amen
Brian Sheehan	Gay/HIV Strategies
David Doyle	Patre
Myra Barry	Childrens' Hospital, Temple Street
Beatrice Barry Murphy	Health Promotion Officer, HSE, South Eastern Region
Richard Boyce	Director, Tarbert Education Centre
Dr. Sinéad Breathnach	School Development Planning Initiative
John Carr	General Secretary, INTO
Dr. Kiely	Chief Medical Officer, DHC
Sr Maria Clegg	Loreto Education Officer
Marie Cody	Director, Kilkenny Education Centre
Dr John Connolly	Irish Association of Suicidology
Eamon Cooney	Education Officer, Co. Louth VEC
Mary Cooney	Health Promotion Officer, HSE Mid West
Michael Crowley	Director, Bandon Education Centre
Francis Grennan	Dundalk Education Centre
Ollie Grace	SPHE RDO, Wexford
Tom Geary	University of Limerick

Tom Cullen	Co. Wexford VEC
Dr. Teresa Doyle	Education and Enterprise Support Unit
Paul Fields	St Mary's Academy
Aileen Fitzgearld	SPHE RDO, Cork/Kerry region
Eamon Fitzgearld	Co. Kerry VEC
Sharon Foley	Crisis Pregnancy Agency, Dublin
Padraig Griffin	Education Centre, Carrick on Shannon
Sean Hanley	Cavan Education Centre
Billy Hannon	Tuam Education Centre
Maria Harrington	Health Promotion, HSE Southern Area
Fiona Hartley	City of Dublin VEC
John Hayden	HEA
Ray Henry	City of Dublin VEC
Don Heron	West Dublin Education Centre
Pat Higgins	Wexford Education Centre
Dr. Mary Holahan	Rotunda Sexual Assault Unit
Dr Ann Hope	Alcohol Advisor to the Minister
Seamus Hogan	St Paul's College, Raheny
Prof. Aine Hyland	Vice President, UCC
Prof. D.G. Irvine	Education Department, UCG
Anne Kellegher	Kildare Education Centre
Kyran Kennedy	Clare Education Centre
Maureen Mulvihill	Irish Heart Foundation
Brendan Murphy	DES
Collette Murphy	Athlone Education Centre
Niamh Murphy	Waterford Institute of TechnologyT
Cairiona Ni Chulota	Tralee Education Centre
Eilin Ni Luing	Dingle Education Centre
Denis O' Boyle	Castlebar Education Officer
Sr. Margaret O'Brien	Mercy Education Centre
George O'Callaghan	JMB
Seamus Ó Canáin	Blackrock Education Centre
Joseph O'Connell	Limerick Education Centre
Edel O'Donnell	Health Promotion, HSE, Western Area

Nollaig O'Grady	SPHE RDO, Limerick
Kevin O'Hagan	SPHE RDO, HSE, Midlands
Karen O'Mullane	Health Promotion, Wexford
Ancilla O'Reilly	Health Promotion, HSE, Dublin
James O'Rourke	Patrician Brothers' Provinciate
Tomás Ó Seaghdha	European Secondary Schools Heads' Association
Brendan O'Sullivan	De la Salle Provincialate
Carol O'Sullivan	Mary Immaculate College
Maura O'Sullivan Ryan	National Certificate for Exercise and Fitness, UL
Sean Ó Thuma	Thurles Education Centre
Ted Owens	Co. Cork VEC
Martin Philips	Co Wicklow VEC
Sheilagh Reaper-Reynolds	Health Promotion, HSE, Tallaght
Dr. Alan Ringland	I.T. Tralee
Dr Michael Shevlin	Education Department, TCD
Dr. Mark Morgan	St Patrick's College, Drumcondra
Prof. D. Swan	Education Department, UCD
Martha Sweeney	SPHE RDO, HSE, Western Area
Anne Walshe	Health Promotion, HSE, North East
Alan O'Neill	South East Mens' Network
Daniel Desmond	National Parent Teacher Alliance
Joe Whelan	Health Promotion, HSE, Midlands
Billy White	SPHE RDO, HSE, North West
Maureen Wilson	Health Promotion, HSE, East Coast Area
Catherine Woods	Department of Sports Science, DCU
Ian Mc Mahon	YMCA
Eleanor Petrie	Co-operation of Minority Religions and Protestant Parents' Association Alan Mulligan (COMPASS)
Joyce Ryder	COMPASS
Patricia O Malley	COMPASS

Geraldine Perkins	Federation of Catholic Brothers and other Catholic Schools Parent Councils (FED CBS)
Vincent Brett	FED CBS
Gerard O Reilly	FED CBS
Jim Jackman	Parents Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools (PACCS)
Humphrey O Riordan	PACCS
Margaret Donohue	PACCS
Pat Murphy	PACCS
Joe Kennedy	National parents Association of Vocational Schools and Community Colleges (NPAVSCC)
Rose Tully	NPAVSCC
PJ Garvan	NPAVSCC
Patricia Forde-Brennan	NPAVSCC
Connie Carolan	PACCS
Maureen Connolly	NPAVSCC
Alan Gilbert	COMPASS
Holy Faith Education Office	
Irish Vocational Education Authority	
ASTI	
CORI	
Barnardos	
Association of Community and Comprehensive School	
ISPCC	
Ograi Chorcai	
Alliance for Sexual Health	
Irish Family Association	
Union of Students in Ireland	
National Suicide Review Group	
Gay Health Network Ireland	

National Childrens' Office
Irish Medical Organisation
National Womens' Council
Institute of Guidance Counsellors
Victim Support Group
Higher Education Authority
National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals
Union of 2nd Level Schools
Mental Health Association
Aware
National Committee for Development Education
National Youth Federation
Transition Year Support Service
Irish Cancer Society
Teachers' Union of Ireland
Cork Social and Health Project
Teacher Education Section, DES
Crisis Pregnancy Agency
Suicide Resource Office HSE North West Area
Irish Cancer Society

Individuals

Dr Kevin Lambe
Alan O'Neill
Pat Cummins
Roger Eldridge
Frank Mc'Carthy
Sr. Eilis McGrath
Dominic McQuillan
Paddy Mulcahy
Phyl O'Connor
Mary Williamson
Irene Fitzgerald
Anne Gribbin
Joe Kenny

Appendix 4

List of submissions

Aine O'Neill	St. Fergal's College, Rathdowney, Co. Laois.
Alison Ward	Dunmore Community School, Dunmore, Co. Galway.
Alison Dye	PACT, 15 Belgrave Rd., Rathmines, Dublin 6.
Alma Kavanagh	Seamount College, Kinvara, Co. Galway.
Amanda Mullins	St. David's C.B.S, Artane, Dublin 5.
Ann Irwin	Coláiste Choilm, Ballincollig, Co. Cork.
Ann Marie O'Brien	Pobalscoil Iosolde, Palmerstown, Dublin 20.
Ann Orla Fahy	Presentation College, Athenry, Co. Galway.
Anne Stokes	Comeragh College, Carrick-on-Suir, Co. Tipperary.
Ardel Osburn	
Bernie Murphy	Wexford Vocational College, Wexford.
Betty Murphy	Sanford Park School, Ranelagh, Dublin 6.
Bríd Hughes	St. Wolstan's Community School, Clare Rd., Celbridge, Co. Kildare.
Bríd Ní Chomchúir	Scoil Mhuire, Baile Átha Na Ghaorthaidh, Maigh Chromtha. Co. Chorr
Bridget Smith	Ardee Community School.
Brenda Bermingham	St. Colmcille's Community School,
Brian O'Donnell	St. Columba's College, Co. Donegal.
Brid Ni Labhradha	Coláiste Chroi Mhuire Gan Smal, An Spidéal, Co. na Ghaillimhe.
Bridie Gallagher	Elphin Community College, Co. Roscommon.
Carol Merrick	C.B.S. Secondary School, Charleville, Co. Cork.
Carol O'Sullivan	Mary Immaculate College, South Curricular Rd., Limerick.
Caroline O'Brien	Holy Child School, Military Rd., Killiney, Co. Dublin.
Catherine Connolly	
Catriona Fallon	St. Mary's College, Ballisodare, Co. Sligo
Celine Rogers	Ardscoil La Salle, Raheny, Co. Dublin.
Charmaine Coyne & Jamie	
Lawlor	St Patrick's Community College, Naas, Co. Kildare.
Christy Tynan	St Gerard's College, Castelbar, Co. Mayo.
Claire Dunlea	North Monastery Secondary School, Cork.
Claire Lane	
Claudia Franham	Eureka School, Kells, Co. Meath.

Claudia Tierney	Mount Anville Secondary School, Dublin.
Clonkeen College	Clonkeen Road, Blackrock, Co. Dublin
Colette Felming	Dept. of Health Promotion, National University of Ireland, Galway
Colette Brophy	Community College, Dunshaughlin, Co. Meath.
Colette Fleming	Dept. of Health Promotion, N.U.I.G.
Crisis Pregnancy Agency	Crisis Pregnancy Agency, 4th Floor, 89-94 Capel Street, Dublin 1.
David Hegarty	National Congress of Catholic Secondary Schools Parent Association
Deirdre Kelleher	
Deirdre O'Leary	C.B.S. Secondary School, Mitchelstown, Co. Cork.
Dolores Caffey	St. Killian's Vocational School, New Inn, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway.
Dr Brian O'Connor	
Dr Charmaine Clarke & Dr	
Marain Faughan	Safefood, Food Safety Promotion Board, Cork.
Eddie Mc Grath	Abbey CBS, Tipperary .
Edel Fiona Mulligan	Holy Family Secondary School, Newbridge, Co. Kildare.
Edel Greene	Education Department, NUI, Maynooth.
Edith Byrne	Sandford Park School, Ranelagh, Dublin 6.
Eileen Cunningham.	Donahies Community School.
Eithne Mc Kenna	Community School, Castlecomer.
Elaine Kelly Conroy	St David's Secondary School, Greystones, Co. Wicklow.
Eleanor Doherty	St Joseph's Secondary School, Abbeyfeale, Co. Limerick.
Elma Nerney	Elphin Community School, Elphin, Co. Roscommon.
Emer Hallihan	St. Mary's Secondary School, Mallow, Co. Cork.
Eoin Collins	Gay and Lesbian Equality Network
Eva Burke	SPHE Co-ordinator, Ard Scoil Rís, North Curricular Rd., Limerick.
Fintan Mc Namara	C.B.S., Brunswich St., Dublin.
Fiona Collins	Presentation College, Bray, Co. Wicklow.
Fiona O'Sullivan	St. Jarlath's College, Tuam, Co. Galway.
Fr Martin McCormack	Salesian College, Palliskenry, Co. Limerick.
Francis Shearer	Drumcondra Education Centre, Drumcondra, Dublin 9.
Coláiste na Coirbe, Br.	
Thuama, Gaillimh	
Geogina Branagan	St Dominic's High School, Santa Sabina, Sutton, Dublin 13.
Gerald Hand	Castleblaney College, Co. Monaghan.

Geraldine Ruane	Jesus and Mary Secondary School, Crossmolina, Co. Mayo.
Gillian Henderson	St. Kevin's Community College, Durlavin, Co. Wicklow.
SPHE teachers	Good Counsel College, New Ross, Co. Wexford.
	SPHE Co-ordinator, St. Dominic's Post Primary School, Kylemore Rd
Hazel Foran	Balleyfermot, Dublin 10.
Ide Mulcahy	The National Children's Office
ISPCC	Irish Society For the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, Dublin 2.
Jarleth Donnellan	St. Columba's College, Stranorlar, Co. Donegal.
Jennifer O' Donoghue	Millstreet Community School, Millstreet, Co Cork.
	Newpark Comprehensive School, Newtown Park Avenue, Blackrock, Dublin.
Jenny Crampton	Dublin.
Jim O'Connor and Sue Barrett	Vocational College, New Ross, Co. Wexford.
Jim Jackman	National Parents' Council, PP PACCS
Joanne Ryall and Tracy Blake	Loreto College, St Stephen's Green, Dublin.
Joe Kenny	St. Murdoch's College, Ballina, Co. Mayo.
John Hennebry	Good Counsel College, New Ross, Co. Wexford.
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Linda Dunne	Salerno Secondary School, Salthill, Galway.
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Maria O'Keefe	CBS High School, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary.
Marian Ahern	Loreto Secondary School, Kilkenny.
Marian Crowley	Laurel Hill College FCJ, Limerick.
Marian Mc Caugley	Mount Sackville Secondary School, Chapelizod, Co. Dublin.
Mary Barrett	Loughrea Vocational School, Loughrea, Co. Galway.
Mary Cooney	Health Promotion, HSE, Mid-Western Area
Mary Enright	Kilmuckridge Vocational College, Gorey, Co. Wexford.
Mary Gill	St Patrick's Community College, Naas, Co. Kildare.
Mary Horan	Mount Mercy College, Cork.
Mary Kent	Colaiste Eanna, Ballyroan, Rathfarnham, Dublin 16.
Mary Lynch	St. Mark's Community School, Tallaght, Dublin.
Mary Rogan	St Josephs Secondary School, Navan, Co. Meath.
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Una Kirk	Scoil Uí Mhuirí, Dunleek, Co. Louth.
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