



Independent review of Personal, Social, Health and Economic education

IOSH response to the call for evidence by Sir Alasdair MacDonald and provided to the PSHE Association

Consultation
Response
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About IOSH

Founded in 1945, the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) has around 34,000 individual members, including over 13,000 Chartered Safety and Health Practitioners. IOSH is Europe's largest occupational safety and health (OSH) professional body and has strong OSH links worldwide, with members in over 80 other countries. Incorporated by Royal Charter, a registered charity and international NGO, IOSH is the guardian of OSH standards of competence in the UK and provider of professional development and awareness training courses

The Institution regulates and steers the profession, providing impartial, authoritative, free guidance. Regularly consulted by government and other bodies, IOSH is the founding member and secretariat to UK, European and International professional body networks. The Institution also has a research and development fund, which is developing the evidence-base for OSH policy and practice.

IOSH has 29 Branches in the UK and worldwide including the Caribbean, Hong Kong, Middle East and the Republic of Ireland, 17 special interest groups covering communications and media; construction; consultancy; education; environment; fire risk management; food, drink and hospitality; healthcare; international; hazardous industries; offshore; public services; railways; retail and distribution; rural industries; safety sciences and aviation and aerospace. IOSH members work at both strategic and operational levels across all employment sectors and our vision is:

A world of work which is safe, healthy and sustainable

IOSH welcomes the opportunity to respond to the call for written evidence by Sir Alasdair MacDonald to assist his review into how the Government's decision to give Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education statutory status can be translated into a practicable way forward.

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Introduction

IOSH welcome the Government's decision to give Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education statutory status. We are pleased to respond to the call for written evidence by Sir Alasdair MacDonald to assist his review into how the Government's decision to give PSHE education statutory status can be translated into a practicable way forward.

As mentioned in the call for written evidence, PSHE covers issues central to young people's well-being including emotional health and well-being and safety. IOSH have been lobbying for over two years to get safety and health a mandatory part of the curriculum for young people.

To provide some context, last year alone, 229 people were killed at work, around 299,000 were injured and a further 2.1 million people suffered an illness they attributed to their employment. It has been estimated that the financial cost of workplace accidents and ill health to society – including social security payments, NHS treatments and lost taxes – totals up to £31 billion each year. Over the last decade, 61 of those killed at work were under 19 years old, over 14,447 in this age group suffered major injuries and a further 48,216 were hurt. This is a tragic waste of young lives.

Finding a solution - the Workplace Hazard Awareness Course

On the 25 June 2008, the Occupational Safety and Health All Party Parliamentary Group and IOSH hosted a seminar at the House of Commons to discuss how this loss of life and suffering can be prevented.

One way of helping achieve this is by getting health and safety taught in the nation's schools as part of PSHE. That is the reason IOSH, in partnership with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), developed the [Workplace Hazard Awareness Course](#) (WHAC) for year 10 pupils. The course is freely available to teachers and trainers and is aimed at year 10 pupils and older. Course materials can be downloaded from [the wiseup2work website](#).

WHAC gives young people a basic grounding in health and safety before they leave school. It is available free of charge to all schools and colleges and is about preparing young people for work. The aim is to help young people take a proportionate approach to health and safety to allow children to take risks while staying safe, in other words to be risk aware not risk averse. Having started the learning process off at school, employers then have a vital part to play by providing induction training and ensuring adequate supervision of young people once they get into the workplace.

Around 2,000 organisations have already registered to deliver WHAC, which was launched at Barnfield College in Luton with the health and safety minister, Lord McKenzie of Luton last year. 70,000 young people nationally in schools and colleges are taking this course, which leads to an entry level 3 qualification. Lord McKenzie has welcomed the work by IOSH and HSE to deliver this course to young people, who because of their lack of experience are more vulnerable to workplace dangers.

Also, ninety-three MPs across all parties signed up to an Early Day Motion (EDM), sponsored by Michael Clapham MP, Chairman of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Occupational Safety and Health. The EDM "Protecting Young People in the Workplace" called on the government to make WHAC (which is taught as part of PSHE) a mandatory part of the curriculum.

Integrating safety and health into Britain's education system

In addition, a Private Member's Bill, supported by the IOSH, The Health and Safety (Education and Training) Bill, was read on 22nd October by George Howarth MP (Knowsley North and Sefton East) under the Ten Minute Rule, and called for health and safety elements to be embedded throughout Britain's education system. The Bill went forward for a second reading but unfortunately on the day it was due to be read the House did not sit. IOSH will now be working to get the Bill reintroduced during the next parliamentary session.

The Bill focuses on every level of the workforce, from work experience, apprenticeships and diplomas, through to professional courses, such as teacher training and MBAs. It aims to drive up young people's health and safety skills to prevent accidents happening in the first place – protecting their wellbeing and supporting productivity. George Howarth MP explained he was introducing the Bill because he felt that education and training was the most effective tool to improve safety and health skills.

Tackling health and safety education in schools before students start their work experience reflects the vision espoused by Dame Carol Black (National Director for Health and Work) following her Review of the Health of the Working Age Population Report, that :

"Healthy workplaces need to become the expected norm," and that

"Schools, further education and higher education have a role in embedding these expectations in the next generation."

Building on new foundations that should be laid in schools, IOSH is also calling for the education system to deliver relevant health and safety elements for vocational and professional curricula, such as for architects, planners, designers, engineers, managers, doctors and teachers.

A long term strategy

In addition, IOSH's Education Group, which consists of IOSH members, some of who are teachers, curriculum advisers or safety practitioners in local authorities have emphasized the need to focus attention on KS's 1 to 4 and even possibly nursery (rising threes). Their view is that the younger children are when they learn to be risk aware, the greater difference this should eventually make to the statistics quoted above. There is a need to have a balanced transition throughout the education system and into the world of work that may take fifteen to twenty years to be fully appreciated but the potential benefits to the nation's health, wellbeing and to the economy could be substantial.

IOSH have also expressed an interest in joining the Child Safety Education Coalition, sponsored by the Department for Children, Schools and Families, being led by ROSPA and the NCB. We would like to contribute to a 'joined-up' approach to the important issue of enabling children and young people to take part in practical activities confidently both in and out of school and the Education Group have also discussed the possibility of producing further class room materials for a younger age group at Key Stage 2 to help promote risk awareness rather than risk aversion in children.

IOSH is therefore supporting the Government's announcement that PSHE should be a statutory subject in schools. The Workplace Hazard Awareness Course (WHAC) taught as part of PSHE is a practical way of preparing young people to be risk aware not risk averse and will contribute towards young people's readiness for work and contributes to the outcomes in "Every Child Matters".