



Choosing and Using High-Quality Resources



Working with community and specialist organisations is an essential part of a whole school approach to RSE. This guide is for primary, secondary and special schools in Wales to use to support this collaboration. It will help schools make decisions about which organisations and resources to use and how best to use them to provide high quality RSE.

There are hundreds of RSE resources available for you to download, purchase, use and adapt. This means that you do not always need to start from scratch when planning an activity or exploring a new theme. Many resources are created by specialist or community organisations who will also offer to come into your school to deliver the activities, train staff or run workshops themselves.

Not all resources and support packages are high quality however and some are created by organisations that do not support inclusive, rights-based RSE. Sometimes it can be hard to know what would and would not be a developmentally appropriate, high quality, safe and inclusive resource for your setting.



Here is a guide to help you to select and use the right resources for your context. The guide reads as a series of questions for schools to consider, based around the key principles for RSE that are set out in **the 2022 Welsh Government RSE guidance** and summarised in this resource.

Ways to use this guide

- Get together an RSE working party that includes learners and educators from across the curriculum. Together, do an audit of organisations and resources you are already using.
- Use the guide when planning an RSE event or inviting in external organisations to support your curriculum.
- Use the guide to help you adapt resources. It can help you identify what's missing or what needs to be changed to make a resource appropriate for your setting. Invite learners to help you adapt resources or create new ones for younger year groups.





INFORMED BY A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH

“Teaching and learning in RSE should be supported by a whole-school approach to RSE and this is critical in supporting learners’ well-being. This means effectively linking all aspects of school, including the curriculum, policy, staff, school environment and community to support learners in their relationships and sexuality education.”

(RSE Statutory Guidance, Welsh Government 2022)

Have you completed a whole school audit of your current RSE provision to help identify strengths, gaps and weaknesses?

Before engaging any external organisations or selecting any resources to use you will first need to audit your current RSE provision across all domains of a whole school approach. This will help you to identify what extra resource and support your school needs and to clarify the contribution that a new resource could make.

Make sure you involve students and staff in your audit and try to include parents and carers too. This will help you to map your current provision, identify gaps and to find out where the needs, questions and curiosities lie.

For more information about how to conduct a whole school creative audit see **page 140**.



Do you have an RSE policy that outlines your vision and the key principles underpinning your approach to RSE?

Every school needs a strong RSE policy that outlines the school's commitment to the guiding principles for RSE set out in the Welsh Government guidance: Whole school approach to RSE, Enabling human rights and equity through RSE, LGBTQ+ inclusive RSE, RSE as a cross-cutting theme, developmentally appropriate RSE, positive, protective and preventative RSE.

This policy can be shared and discussed with organisations to try to establish a shared vision and commitment to these principles. A school is responsible for what is taught in the school and knows its own community well. As a school you will need to be clear about the content, methods and approach to be taken by any external contributor. Having a clear and informative policy will help you do this.

How will the resource/ organisation help develop a whole school approach?

Working with community and specialist organisations is an essential part of a whole school approach to RSE. External organisations should however be used to *enhance* and not *replace* the teaching of RSE. When speaking to organisations consider what contribution they can make to how RSE is delivered across the school or to the wider school culture and/or environment. For example, through contributing to the professional development of teachers, through creating new artefacts, digital materials or other resources that can be used, reused and adapted across the school.



HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUITY BASED

'Schools and settings should discuss RSE in the context of children's rights as protected by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). A rights-based approach supported by equity should be embedded in the learning. In this way, learners develop an understanding of how rights are related to all aspects of RSE and contribute to the freedom, dignity, well-being and safety of all people. This also helps learners to understand the importance of equity, recognising the importance of rights in ensuring fair treatment for all.'

(RSE Statutory Guidance, Welsh Government 2022)

Is there evidence that the organisation who created the resource recognises and values children and young people's rights, especially those relating to sex, gender and sexuality?

Key UNCRC RSE rights to look for include:

- the right to non-discrimination (article 2),
- the right to an identity (article 8)
- the right to be heard and involved in decision-making (article 12),
- the right to access information that will allow children to make decisions about health and well-being (article 17),
- the right to experience the highest attainable health, access to health facilities, preventative health care, and family planning education and services (article 24)
- the right to government protection from sexual abuse and exploitation (article 34).

All RSE resources should recognise children and young people's right to information and should be free from discrimination and harm.



Does the resource or organisation address equity and power?

As well as recognising that children, young people and adults have rights, does the resource also consider how social inequalities and inequities prevent people from realising their rights? For example, harmful gender norms and inequities can make it difficult for girls and LGBTQ+ youth to realise their rights to relax and play or to protect them from discrimination or sexual abuse.



LGBTQ+ INCLUSIVE

'In line with the mandatory requirements of the RSE Code, RSE will be realised in a way that is inclusive in accordance with the principles of equality. This helps ensure that all learners can see themselves, their families, their communities and each other reflected across the curriculum and can learn to value difference and diversity as a source of strength. This contributes to a cohesive, fair and equitable society that equips learners with skills for life. This of course includes gender equity and LGBTQ+ inclusivity.'

(RSE Statutory Guidance, Welsh Government 2022)

Is the resource or organisation inclusive of LGBTQ+ communities?

When looking at resources, think about the images, stories, case studies and other content included. For example, make sure that the images included in the resource show a range of relationships, families and identities. If a resource is not inclusive can it be changed or adapted?

If you are unsure if an organisation is LGBTQ+ inclusive, it's a good idea to ask beforehand.

Remember that the aim of LGBTQ+ inclusive RSE is not merely to include LGBTQ+ communities but to normalise and mainstream LGBTQ+ lives and communities.

Does the resource reproduce stereotypes about LGBTQ communities?

If you are unsure what stereotypes to look out for, ask your school activist groups or student council to do an audit of the resource for you with support from members of staff.

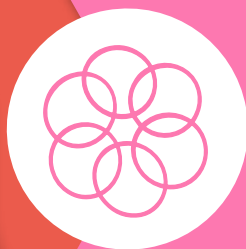
Does the resource celebrate and value the achievements of people from diverse communities?

A resource needs to go beyond diverse representation and help learners to understand the *value* of difference and diversity.

Is the resource also inclusive of different communities with respect to race, ethnicity and disability?

Again, think about the images, stories, case studies and other content included.

ITERATIVE AND PROVIDED ACROSS THE CURRICULUM



"RSE is a broad, interdisciplinary and complex area that includes biological, social, psychological, spiritual, ethical and cultural dimensions. This means that each Area of the curriculum and the range of subject disciplines within them each have a unique contribution to learning in RSE. RSE should draw on all Areas to allow learners to make connections between their learning in RSE and the wider curriculum, understanding historical, cultural, geographic, physical, political, social and technological perspectives and influences on RSE issues. This also helps avoid a 'single issue' approach where each lesson covers a different RSE issue, isolated from other learning".

(RSE Statutory Guidance, Welsh Government 2022)

Have you already mapped RSE across all Areas of Learning and Experience?

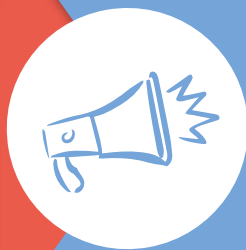
Before looking at which resources to use, first map what RSE is already being delivered across all AoLEs. Try getting your staff team together to do this so that you can get a clear picture of what is happening across all year groups and disciplines.

This will help you to map the gaps and identify where you need new resources. The **MIND THE GAP** tool on page 139 of this resource will help you do this.

Is the resource or organisation holistic in its approach?

For example, does the resource include different approaches to the topic / theme? (e.g. a mixture of historical, cultural, creative, biological, spiritual, psychological approaches)?

If not, can it be combined with a suite of resources to achieve this? To do this, you may need to use resources that are not usually labelled as 'RSE resources' such as poems, art works, adverts, news stories, research statistics, policy documents, oral histories etc.



RELEVANT, RESPONSIVE AND DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE

"Schools should include learners' perspectives to ensure relevant and responsive RSE and provide increasing opportunities for learners to help direct their learning as they progress. Learners' views about what, how and where they learn should be taken into consideration so that the RSE curriculum can truly reflect the experiences that children and young people encounter in society".

(RSE Statutory Guidance, Welsh Government 2022)

Have you carried out a creative audit to help you listen and attune to the needs, experiences and questions of your learners?

Before you start to look for RSE resources you need to first conduct an audit or review of your current provision and to ask learners what they want and need to learn about. This will help you to tune into your learners' needs and experiences and ensure that your curriculum is developmentally appropriate. See **page 140** for more information and ideas on how to conduct a creative audit.

Once you have conducted your creative audit, you will be in a position to consider whether the resource or organisation you are considering will help you to address and respond to the needs, experiences and questions that you have identified through the creative audit process.



Use these questions to guide you:

- Will the resource or organisation help you to respond to a question, need or experience identified through the creative audit? Or can it be adapted to help you do this?
- Is the resource or organisation's work appropriate to the needs of your learners in terms of the language, images and approach? Is the resource differentiated for learners with SEND or can you differentiate the learning yourself?
- Will all your learners see themselves reflected in the resource? Will they also see people, communities and experiences that are different to their own and that may help them to imagine other ways of being in the world?
- Has the resource been co-produced with children and young people? If not, has it been tried, tested and evaluated with young people? (nb. Article 12 of the UNCRC is about children's rights to an opinion and for their opinions to be listened to and taken seriously.)
- Does the resource or workshop include a reflective or evaluative activity? Or can you include one to ensure you get feedback from children and young people?
- If you or a colleague have used the resource before what feedback did you receive from children and young people? Do any changes need to be made to the resource or to how you use it?

POSITIVE, PROTECTIVE AND PREVENTATIVE RSE



“Schools should look to create safe and supportive learning environments. These help create trust and allow learners a safe space to consider learning, ask questions and express their thoughts and feelings. Practitioners should seek to present learning around RSE issues positively and meaningfully. While understanding risks and harm is an important aspect of RSE, using these as the focus for teaching about RSE issues, or focusing mainly on the negative aspects of RSE is likely to be ineffective or harmful”.

(RSE Statutory Guidance, Welsh Government 2022)

Does the resource or organisation include activities to help create a safe learning environment?

For example, have you created a classroom charter, set of ground rules or support principles. If not, can you combine the resource with other activities to help you do this first? Or request that an organisation includes this in their work?

Does the resource contain activities that encourage children and young people to share their thoughts, feelings and questions in safe ways?

For example, consider sharing things anonymously, using creative methods, historical objects, case studies and other distancing techniques.

Does the resource or organisation use affirmative and empowering images, messages and other content?

Some resources are designed to explore difficult issues such as violence, abuse and discrimination. As outlined above, it is important that resources tackling sensitive issues also include content about rights, empowerment and positive change. Otherwise, the resource can end up unwittingly reinforcing narratives that victimise or shame particular groups or communities.



Does the resource or organisation aim to empower children and young people or inspire positive social change?

Some resources are designed to explore difficult issues such as violence, abuse and discrimination. It is important that resources tackling sensitive issues also include content about rights, empowerment and positive change. Otherwise, the resource can end up unwittingly reinforcing narratives that victimise or shame particular groups or communities. Does the resource include ideas and activities to engage children and young people in social action or activism? Or does it include stories about how individuals or communities have addressed particular issues and brought about positive change? Does the resource or organisation use affirmative and empowering images, messages and other content? (see www.agendaonline.co.uk for ethical and affirmative ways to explore and represent sensitive issues with children and young people).

Is the resource or organisation factually accurate and up-to-date? Does the resource include research and evidence to support any claims that it makes?

All resources should be research-informed, and include links or references to the research or evidence that backs up any claims that it makes. Have a look and consider which organisation carried out the research, their aims and objects and the size of the sample used. Research with a small sample (i.e. a small number of participants) is still useful and valuable but should not be used to make any broad, generalised claims. See Welsh Government's guidance on using evidence and expertise.

INFORMED AND SUPPORTED BY PROFESSIONAL LEARNING



“Professional learning is a key requirement for the realisation of high-quality RSE, and should occur at a school, cluster, regional and national level. The senior leadership in schools should ensure that all practitioners contribute to the school’s RSE priorities, either through the whole-school approach, the cross-cutting element or the essential learning. Schools and settings should facilitate all practitioners’ access to professional learning that can support them to develop their confidence, knowledge and skills in RSE.”

(RSE Statutory Guidance, Welsh Government 2022)

Have you completed a creative audit with staff to assess their knowledge, confidence and skills?

Before you start selecting and using resources, it is a good idea to carry out a creative audit with staff, as well as learners. This will help to identify good practice as well as staff concerns, anxieties and gaps in knowledge and practice. Use this process to identify professional learning needs across the school to help you start to plan future learning opportunities.



Based on what you have learnt from your creative audit, will all staff using the resource be confident and able to use the resource or will they need additional support?

It may be that the resource is not appropriate for some staff to use. If this is the case, you may need to find an alternative resource or consider what support staff need moving forwards so that they can access the resources. For example, peer-teaching, peer-observation, RSE staff drop-in sessions, internal training, externally provided training.

Will there be an opportunity for staff to read and try out the resource with each other and ask questions or raise concerns?

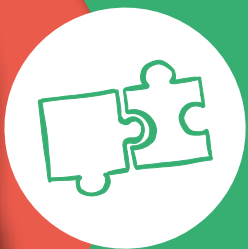
E.g. at an RSE drop-in session for staff.

Does the resource support staff to engage children and young people in discussions and respond to emerging questions?

Look for useful ‘points to consider’, discussion points or sample answers that staff can draw on to give them the confidence to lead discussions and respond to questions. If the resource does not provide this, can you create something like this as a staff team? You may also find it useful to have an anonymous questions box in the school where staff can place any questions that they find hard to answer. Make sure you have a clear process for reading and responding to all questions asked.

How can external organisations help support the professional development of staff in schools?

Remember that the role of external organisations is to *enhance* and not *replace* the teaching of RSE in schools. When inviting organisations to deliver workshops for young people in your setting, always consider how they can contribute to staff learning and development too. Can staff observe sessions? Can organisations offer a staff debrief at the end of the day? Can they signpost or share useful resources to help staff address questions and curiosities that may arise from the workshop?



ENGAGING WITH LEARNERS, PARENTS, CARERS, AND WIDER COMMUNITIES

"Schools and settings should have clear lines of communication in relation to RSE and should engage with learners, parents, carers and the wider community, offering them the opportunity to engage with learning and teaching in RSE. Communicating effectively with parents and carers on an ongoing basis is an important way to foster positive relationships in order to engage them in purposeful and meaningful dialogue. When undertaken well, this can help aid learner progression by helping parents and carers to understand how they can support learning within and outside the school environment. Schools' curricula should also recognise and reflect the needs and contexts of the communities within and beyond the school."

(RSE Statutory Guidance, Welsh Government 2022)

How will the resource or organisation help you engage with learners?

For example:

- Does the resource or organisation use interactive, creative and engaging learning techniques?
- Does the resource or organisation create opportunities to listen to children and young people's questions and concerns and respond to their experiences?
- Does the resource or organisation create opportunities for children to share their learning and experiences with other young people? E.g. through creating artwork or other artefacts / digital materials that can be shared with others, through enabling children and young people to speak out through campaigns, assemblies or other forms of activism.

Have you carried out a create audit with parents or started to engage parents in your RSE curriculum in some way?

See **page 140** of this resource for ideas about how to do this.

How will the resource or organisation help you engage with parents and carers?

For example:

- Does the resource or organisation have materials that can be shared with parents so that they are aware and informed about the learning that will take place? If not, can you create these as a staff team or RSE working group?
- Does the resource or organisation have materials for parents to support their own learning about RSE topics?
- Does the resource or organisation encourage children and young people to start conversations about their learning at home? E.g. through creating badges, stickers or other materials that they can take home to raise awareness of RSE issues and start conversations - where appropriate.
- Does the organisation offer workshops for parents as well as learners? Or is this something you can host as a school?

What materials can you create from using the resource / working with the organisation that can be shared with parents either digitally (e.g. via social media or newsletters) or at school events / parents evenings etc.?

How will the resource or organisation help you engage with the wider community?

For example:

- Does the resource / organisation help support learning about your local community and how it can support young people to access advice and information about RSE topics?
- Does the resource / organisation support children and young people to engage in community work and advocacy in relation to RSE?
- Can community organisations be invited in to contribute to sessions you are running or can you visit relevant community sites? (e.g. sexual health clinics, youth and community centres, arts centres etc)