

Norman Wells – The Family Champion!

A Tribute from Our Chairman, Arthur Cornell

The Family Education Trust has been privileged to have leaders with vision, insight and passion for the welfare of families and children since its inception.

Valerie Riches, the Founder Director, brought insight and determination to highlighting what was being presented to children and offered an alternative message to concerned parents and to local authorities. Robert Whelan, when Director, brought his experience from working with Civitas and communicating with the media, to the issues around the welfare of children, while defending the responsibilities and rights of parents, in a rapidly changing culture. The profile of FET was growing and becoming significant.

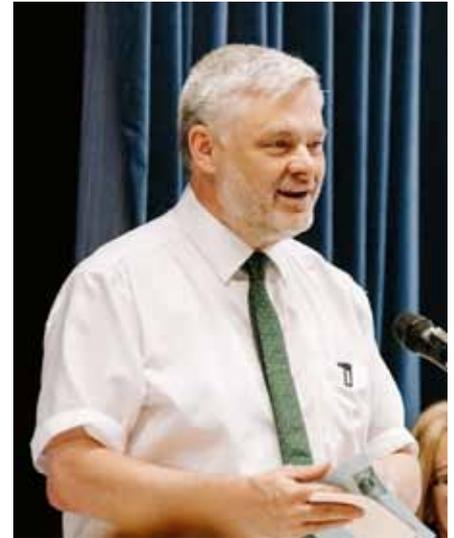
Norman Wells became our Director early in 2004 having joined Robert in 2000. The work continued to grow as responses were written to government consultations, the press asked for comments on proposed legislation, the help line to parents brought encouragement, and publications evaluated the proposals from government on Sex and Relationship Education or challenged how policy had enabled young people to be abused within a cultural context.

Government was increasingly intruding into family life and the implications of their proposals needed to be brought into the light. It was with an almost overwhelming sense of sadness therefore, that I sat at my desk at home on the 1st April and sought to come to terms with the fact that Norman had died of the COVID 19 virus.

We had shared in an online Trustees meeting just a few days before. Over the years, Norman Wells and FET became synonymous. He was a voice of reason seeking to identify the truth in relation to the best experiences for family life based on verifiable evidence, articulated with careful research and compassion. His family reflect where he stood.

At a meeting of Trustees held online later in April, there was a unanimous conviction that the legacy Norman left should be built upon. The issues we face in the culture continue to grow, whether it be the 'No fault divorce' bill Norman investigated, and in collaboration with the Coalition for Marriage, prepared a draft ready for print, or the demand to change again the law on abortion and everything in between.

The need for the contribution which FET brings to the debate is as vital as ever and we are encouraged by the number of young people engaging with our online resources managed for us by Sarah Carter.



Norman Wells

We are pleased that our Senior Researcher Piers Shepherd MA is willing to oversee the work as we take some time to rebuild the team. However, the capacity to develop and sustain our work depends very much on the continual financial support we receive.

I thank you for all you have contributed which has made the work possible. I invite you, once again, to stand with us, as we build a new season that will honour Norman's work and continue to provide evidence-based answers for the rising generations in the culture today.

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Norman Wells (1963 – 2020)

It was with great sadness that we learnt on 1 April of the passing of Norman Wells, the Director of Family Education Trust since 2004. Norman was a superb leader of our organisation and a fitting successor to Valerie Riches, who led the Trust from its early days.

Norman's involvement with FET began in the 1990s when he became aware of the developing children's rights movement and lent his support to a London childminder as she battled to win a High Court judgment in 1994 essentially defending the rights of parents to decide how best to raise their own children. FET provided advice and encouragement throughout. Norman was instrumental in the formation of Families First which sought to support this case and challenge the promotion of children's rights ideology in various aspects of family and community life.



Norman and Nicola Wells receiving the Family Life Award in 1999

Throughout the 1990s, Valerie had been searching for someone to take over the running of the Trust. After nearly thirty years, she felt it was time to hand over to someone younger. However, owing to the unusual nature of the Trust's approach to social problems, it was difficult to find the right person. There are several organisations that deal with single issues such as abortion or pornography, but the Trust's approach had always been to go behind individual problems and look at changes in society that might explain the rapid increase in particular damaging

behaviours. Founded by Dr Stanley Ellison, a specialist in preventative medicine, the Trust view had always been that prevention is better than cure. Not everyone can appreciate this, but the director of the Family Education Trust needs to be a person who thinks along these lines.

After years of searching, an opportunity presented itself in 2000. Owing to a reorganisation of the Institute of Economic Affairs, its Health and Welfare Unit, led by Dr David Green, became a separate organisation called Civitas. Civitas had done a great deal to draw attention to the problems caused by the breakdown of the traditional two-parent family, so there was an obvious affinity with FET. It was decided that Civitas and Family Education Trust would share an office, and that Robert Whelan, who was the Deputy Director of Civitas, would also become Director of Family Education Trust. There was a need for an office manager, and Norman applied for the position.

He was the perfect person for the job. He was an extremely efficient administrator, but he also had a thorough understanding of the issues we were dealing with. He also proved to be an excellent researcher and writer.

The lease on FET's office, then in Waterloo, was a short one, expiring in 2004, because the building was scheduled for demolition. The increasing activity meant that FET now needed its own full-time director, and Norman was the perfect person. He oversaw the move into the office in Whitton and quickly established himself as an efficient and popular leader. He would subsequently oversee FET's move to its current office in Ashford, Middlesex.

While Norman was by nature a quiet person, and the prospect of media work was initially not appealing to him, he quickly became a proficient communicator in both print and broadcast media. However nervous he might have felt initially, he was always a confident and impressive speaker. His sensible, unruffled manner was invaluable, especially when those who disagreed with the Trust's view tried to portray us as fanatics.

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NORMAN WELLS (1963 – 2020)

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The quality of the Trust's publications, always high, reached new levels under Norman's guiding hand. He was always alert to current trends in research and quick to contact scholars whose work seemed valuable.



After a trustees' meeting last October, Arthur Cornell, the Chairman, was discussing the long-term prospects for FET with Norman and asked if he had any ideas about a possible successor. Norman assured Arthur that there was no immediate problem, as he intended to be around for a while. The March meeting was conducted online, in view of the current public health situation. On 28 March Norman was admitted to West Middlesex hospital in a state of critical illness. He died on 1 April, a victim of the corona virus.

His loss is a lamentable one at every level and our condolences go to Nicola and their children. Norman Wells will always be remembered as the staunchest of defenders of marriage and the family, a man who was never afraid to contradict the prevailing assumptions and defy the zeitgeist. He will be greatly missed.



Norman Wells and family

Tributes to Norman Wells from FET supporters

Tributes to Norman Wells came from far and wide. Church leaders, those in education, medicine and bioethics paid compliment to his abilities as a leader and as a man:

- 'He had great integrity, warmth and a passion for the institution of marriage. He made a significant contribution in highlighting the dire outcomes of the government's negative attitudes to it and to sex education. Society has lost a quiet hero.'
- 'Clearly we have lost a brilliant man fighting a vital cause.'
- 'What a lion we have lost! A rare true saint of integrity.'
- '...quiet but always insightful, thorough and reliable in whatever he said or wrote. He was easy to admire and love.'
- 'What a great and heroic man.'
- 'Norman was a dedicated moral and family activist and he set such a good example. He also achieved so much at the highest levels in championing the righteous causes of traditional moral and family values...his wonderful legacy of sincerity and dedication lives on.'
- 'Norman was a giant of a man in so many ways...He was such a blessing to people in every sphere of his life.'
- 'A gracious, dedicated and intelligent man whom I respected and admired.'
- 'His loss will be felt acutely by so many, but his life's work will definitely live on and continue to help inform the Government and all of us for years to come.'
- 'A most honourable gentleman, kind, thoughtful and honest.'

Radical Divorce Bill continues progress through parliament

'My Lords...It is not at all the norm for me to table amendments that appear to strike at the heart of what the Government, on whose Benches I sit, are trying to achieve. It is not something that I relish in any way. However, I feel compelled to keep challenging the introduction of no-fault divorce in this country.'



Lord Farmer

These words were uttered by conservative peer Lord Farmer during the debate on the Report stage of the Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Bill. This bill, on whose second reading we reported in our last bulletin, passed its Committee and Report stages during March. The bill removes the concept of 'fault' from the divorce process, effectively allowing divorce on request and taking away any right of either party to contest the dissolution of the marriage.

In order to lessen the harmful effects of this bill, several peers introduced amendments that if accepted would have retained the ability to cite fault in or to contest the divorce process. At Committee stage, Lord McColl of Dulwich introduced an amendment that would have extended the time period during which divorce could be obtained and, in cases where only one spouse is making the case for divorce, to allow the other to suggest reconciliation with some hope of changing course.

Speaking in support of this amendment Baroness Howe of Idlicote argued powerfully that the bill:

'...currently stands as a petitioner's charter. The Bill gives the petitioner the power to suddenly announce that the marriage has broken down irretrievably, from which point there is absolutely nothing that the respondent can do to get any kind of fair hearing if they disagree...As our law,

in providing the option of marriage, gives a couple the opportunity to make a lifelong commitment, something would be very wrong if that same law allowed one party to make without any prior warning a statement of irretrievable breakdown, from which point the other party would have no kind of credible voice to express a contrary view.'

Baroness Howe herself subsequently introduced an amendment that would require the courts to take the wellbeing of any children in the family into account before granting a divorce order to end a marriage. In support of this, she stated:

In its fervour to create a good outcome for the petitioner and the busy court system...this Bill demonstrates not only a lack of regard for the respondent but a complete lack of credible regard for any children involved...My concern in tabling my amendment is that we must have the best interests of the children at the forefront of our thinking, not the objective of delivering the petitioner his divorce as quickly as possible.

In an indictment of a government that claims to be a friend to marriage and family, Conservative peer Baroness Meyer stated that the principles of the bill were contrary to her party's manifesto commitments:

...the possibility for one party unilaterally to apply for divorce is a step backwards, at odds with our manifesto commitment to strengthen families.

Lord Browne of Belmont questioned why the government persisted in promoting a bill that is bound to have disastrous effects on the welfare of children and families:

...family breakdown is now recognised as the biggest factor behind the UK's child mental health crisis. More than a third of children whose parents had split up reported poor mental health, compared with a fifth of children with parents who were still together...20% to 25% of children of divorce continue to suffer lasting social and psychological problems in adulthood, compared with just 10% of children from intact families.

Lord Browne also noted that the cost of family breakdown to the public purse is now £51 billion annually.

At Report stage, Lord Farmer introduced further amendments aimed at mitigating the harmful effects of the legislation. He openly branded the bill 'bad law, which cheapens the commitment of marriage'. The noble Lord cited research showing that:

...unilateral divorce leads to fewer marriages...and more cohabitation, precisely because it makes marriage more like cohabitation.

He also highlighted the law's possible ill effects on women:

...women are 12% worse off financially after divorce, while men are more than 30% better off.

Baroness Howe introduced additional amendments including one

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Radical Divorce Bill continues progress through parliament

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requiring the Lord Chancellor to ensure that:

‘...individuals applying for a divorce order who have children under the age of 18 are provided with a concise statement of the main findings from the relevant social science disciplines about the impact of divorce on different aspects of a child’s wellbeing.’

Regrettably, these eminently sensible amendments found little support and the relevant peers acceded to the demand that they be withdrawn. The Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Bill completed its third reading on 24 March and now passes to the Commons for consideration of Lords amendments.

Baroness Howe on withdrawing her aforementioned amendment stated:

I very much hope that this debate will be read by Members of another place and that, when this Bill goes to their House, they will apply themselves to the task of seeking to factor into the divorce process a better consideration of the best interests of children than does the current draft.

We hope so too!

•**Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Bill, Committee Stage debate, House of Lords, 3 March 2020**

•**Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Bill, Report Stage debate, House of Lords, 17 March 2020**

Latest Marriage Statistics

The Office for National Statistics released its latest figures for marriages in England and Wales in April. These revealed that marriage rates for opposite-sex couples have fallen to the lowest on record.

In 2017, the most recent year for which figures are available, there were 242,842 marriages, a decrease of 2.8% from 2016. There were 21.2 marriages per 1,000 unmarried men and 19.5 marriages per 1,000 unmarried women. Nearly 9 in 10 (88%) couples cohabited before getting married in 2017. Since 1972 the number of marriages has decreased 45%.

Given these grim statistics our government should be pursuing policies that strengthen marriage rather than legislating for ever easier divorce.

Transgender agenda sees welcome reverses

While the transgender lobby has made stunning advances in the past few years, the gender identity juggernaut appears to be slowing down having come up against unforeseen obstacles.

The first obstacle may be the present government. In 2018, Theresa May’s government consulted on Reform of the Gender Recognition Act 2004. The May government sought to further liberalise the law by ‘streamlining’ and ‘de-medicalising’ the gender recognition process, shortening the length of time under which a ‘gender recognition certificate’ may be obtained and removing the requirement for a diagnosis of gender dysphoria. Two years later the government has yet to issue any response to that consultation but states that it intends to do so before the summer.

Recent statements from spokesmen for the present government however hint at a reversal of the above policy. On 22 April, Minister for Women and Equalities Liz Truss gave evidence to the Women and Equalities Select Committee and stated that the government will soon be putting into place ‘three very important principles’:



Liz Truss

First of all, the protection of single-sex spaces, which is extremely important. Secondly making sure that transgender adults are free to live their lives as they wish without fear of persecution, whilst maintaining the proper checks and balances in the system.

Finally...making sure that the under 18s are protected from decisions that they could make, that are irreversible in the future. I believe strongly that adults should have the freedom to lead their lives as they see fit, but I think it’s very important that while people are still developing their decision-making capabilities that we protect them from making those irreversible decisions.¹

From this statement we can glean that while the government is still theoretically committed to ‘transgender rights’, it is at least willing to consider taking measures to protect male or female-specific spaces such as changing rooms and public lavatories as well as to protect vulnerable children and teenagers from making or being pressured to make drastic decisions leading to the radical alteration of their bodies.

While we cannot predict what the government’s eventual announcement will contain, this new tone of caution in their approach is to be welcomed. Currently under 18s may obtain gender reassignment surgery with parental consent and children can begin treatment with the gender identity development service after three therapy sessions without their parents’ consent.

Transgender agenda sees welcome reverses

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Treatments have included puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones. Children as young as 12 have been subjected to such treatment. If the interpretation of Mrs Truss's announcement in the media is correct, we may be able to expect an overhaul in the law in the interests of protecting children and young people.

On 4 May in response to a parliamentary question by John Hayes MP who asked 'what steps are being taken to ensure that children cannot take irreversible decisions about their gender before they are sufficiently mature to make such decisions', the government's spokesman stated:

The issue of informed consent by people under the age of 16 is currently the subject of legal proceedings and therefore the Department is unable to comment pending judicial ruling.

Meanwhile, NHS England is reviewing its commissioning position on the administration of hormone treatments to children and young people on the gender dysphoria pathway, including the evidence-base on the administration of puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones.

Further to this £1.3 million has been awarded to fund a Longitudinal Outcomes of Gender Identity in Children (LOGIC) study looking into the development of gender identity in children and young people. The study began in 2019 and is following patients over a two-year period.²

This statement, while it may seem non-committal, suggests that a rethink of the transgender agenda may be in progress in government circles.

Courts defend common sense

The trans lobby has met another barrier in the courts with two county councils being forced to withdraw harmful guidance on transgender issues. Oxfordshire County Council withdrew its *Trans Inclusion Schoolkit For Schools and Education*

Settings 2019. The 'schoolkit' had allowed pupils questioning their gender access to single-sex lavatories and changing rooms and to sleep in dormitories reserved for the opposite sex.

A 13 year old girl took the council to court arguing that the guidance violated her right to privacy. The girl argued:

Under these guidelines I have no right to privacy from the opposite sex in changing rooms, loos or on residential trips. The guidance makes me feel that my desire for privacy, dignity, safety, and respect is wrong.³

In late April the High Court ruled that the council's schoolkit was 'arguably unlawful'. There will however be a further hearing of the case in the autumn.

Warwickshire County Council has been forced to withdraw similar trans guidance. The council's *Trans Toolkit For Schools* had allowed 'transitioning' pupils to use the toilet, changing room or dormitory of their choice. 'Use the toilet you want to use' said the guidance. It also called for the installation of sanitary towel bins in all toilets regardless of sex.



The guidance, which applied to 300 schools, was successfully challenged by parents and has now been suspended and placed under review. Tessa McInnes, mother of two children in Warwickshire schools told *The Times*:

The equal rights of girls are simply discounted and disregarded in this guidance. If they express any discomfort about a male coming into their spaces, the girl is presented as transphobic and told to go and change somewhere else. It's outrageous and

defies the Equality Act 2010.⁴

Guidance on combating 'trans-phobic bullying' produced by the Crown Prosecution Service in cooperation with a teachers' union, the National Police Chiefs' Council and groups including Stonewall and Gendered Intelligence, has been withdrawn by the CPS following a legal challenge by a 15 year old girl who argued that she could be charged with a hate crime for asking a boy who identifies as a girl to leave the girls' lavatory.

Finally, there is the case of Freddy McConnell. McConnell was born a woman but following surgery now identifies as a man. Nonetheless, McConnell retained reproductive faculties, became pregnant and gave birth to a child. McConnell wished to be registered as 'father' or 'parent' of the child but was told by the General Register Office that under the law those who give birth to children can only be registered as mothers. McConnell, arguing that this was a violation of human rights, went to the High Court who rejected his case. He then went to the Court of Appeal. However, at the end of April three Court of Appeal judges ruled in favour of common sense and biological reality by asserting once again that those who give birth can only be mothers. McConnell now plans to go to the Supreme Court.

All the above rulings should be welcomed as evidence that basic biology still has some influence in British law. They also expose the legal myth that multiple gender identities enjoy protection under the Equality Act.

Notes

1. Minister for Women and Equalities Liz Truss sets out priorities to Women and Equalities Select Committee, 22 April 2020.
2. HC, Written Question 40976, answered on 4 May 2020.
3. Joe Davies, 'Schoolgirl, 13, forces council to scrap 'transgender toilets plan' in schools that said pupils should be able to use whichever bathroom they prefer', *Daily Mail*, 8 May 2020.
4. Ewan Somerville and Rosemary Bennett, Parents force council to suspend transgender advice, *The Times*, 25 April 2020.

Inventing Transgender Children and Young People

Edited by Michele Moore and Heather Brunskell-Evans, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2019, hb, 276pp, £61.99, ISBN 978-1527536388

Reviewed by Dr Julie Maxwell

This book is a collection of contributions from academics, psychiatrists, parents and young adults who transitioned as children but now question the process they underwent. An effective challenge to transgenderism as a biological reality, the book argues that it is an invented concept with no basis in neuroscience, psychology or psychiatry.



It raises concerns that gender ideology is being pushed in schools and workplaces by transgender and LGBT groups including Mermaids, Stonewall, and the Gender Identity Research and Education Society (GIRES). It expresses increasing alarm around medical treatment of children and young people who are questioning their gender identity.

Gender Ideology in Schools

Stephanie Davies-Arai and Susan Matthews write about 'gender identity' and 'queering the curriculum'.

The organisations mentioned above are advising and providing training for the police, Home Office, Equality and Human Rights Commission, Crown Prosecution Service, Prison and Probation Service, Department for Education and NHS. The existence of biological sex is denied openly in schools where the youngest children are read books which say things like 'we can't always tell if you're a boy or you're a girl' or 'babies can't talk so grown-ups make a guess by looking at their bodies'.

Books and resources advocate adult validation of a child's gender identity because only the child can truly know who they are and be happy when they are allowed to be their true self. Social transition is encouraged. In a book called *Can I Tell you About Gender Diversity?* 12-year old Kit explains that: 'when I asked people to start calling me Kit, and using he/her pronouns, this is called a social transition'. Many of the books promoted by lobby groups associate any gender non-conformity with transgender. For example, liking 'boy things' means you really are a boy, regardless of biological reality. Those who are not 'trans' are labelled 'cis' and overwhelmingly portrayed as negative! Gender ideology requires the re-definition of everyone and a 'cisgender' identity is seen as conforming to sexist stereotypes, while being trans is portrayed as the only way to express non-conformity.

The majority of pre-pubescent children who display gender dysphoria do not retain this into adolescence, yet books used in schools misrepresent this evidence by suggesting that gender identity

is unalterable. *Jamie – A Transgender Cinderella Story* says: 'Tonight Jamie had felt right for the first time and he knew this would be how things would stay'. A GIRES presentation asserts as scientific fact that gender identity is innate and shows pictures of blue brains and pink brains, encouraging children to believe that you can literally have a girl's brain in a boy's body or vice versa.

Medical transition is portrayed as a simple process to prevent unhappiness. One book states:

'Medical transition for people my age is usually hormone blockers. These stop me from going through female puberty and stop my body from developing in ways that make me unhappy'.

Stonewall directs teachers to encourage and facilitate pupils' transition without parental consent:

'...not all young people will want their parent/carers to know they are ... trans, and for staff to discuss this with parents/carers without the young persons consent would be a breach of confidentiality.'

Gender ideology in clinical practice

Academics Michael Biggs and Heather Brunskell-Evans, together with a number of clinicians, examine the treatment given to children and young people which is increasingly driven by ideology rather than evidence.

The NHS's only clinic for children and young people with gender dysphoria, the Gender Identity Development Service (GIDS), is under increasing scrutiny for its role in the invention of the transgender child. Brunskell-Evans states:

'GIDS offers physically healthy... normal children...dangerous, off-label drug treatment with lifelong deleterious consequences on the basis of a child's subjective feeling, for which there is no scientific test.'

While activist groups affect teaching in schools they also have a significant influence over clinicians, many of whom are afraid to question the ideology. Some speak out anonymously, but those who go public are silenced.

A number of clinicians have raised the concern that only an 'affirmative model' is practiced at GIDS. Children's feelings and beliefs are taken at face value rather than looking at all possible underlying issues, which should be the first step in the assessment and treatment of these children.

Concern is also raised about the use of hormone blockers in children. A child cannot give informed consent to hormone therapy because 'the medical consequences are extremely complex and a child will have little or no cognisance of a future in which he or she may come to regret lost fertility or the lack of organs for sexual pleasure'.

The use of hormone blockers was supposedly being undertaken as a study by GIDS. However the results have never been published and some unpublished results report negative outcomes including greater self-harm and more emotional and behavioural problems. What we know about hormone blockers is that almost all children that start on them progress to cross-sex hormones; despite studies showing around 85% of children with gender dysphoria will not retain it past adolescence. This effectively destroys their ability to have children and impedes the development of sexual functioning.

Gender ideology and the "detransitioners"

There are increasing numbers of young adults coming forward who, having undergone varying degrees of transition, realise that it has not brought them happiness. Three such people contributed to this book. They give their perspectives on the 'psychological rollercoaster' they went through in becoming transgender and the process of transitioning and detransitioning.

While expensive, this book is important for anyone who wants to understand the current debate around transgender children. Children deserve to be protected from destructive ideologies and unethical medical treatments. They deserve the guidance of responsible adults who make decisions based upon their long-term best interests not just on what they think will make them feel good now.

Council withdraws controversial Relationships Education programme

Warwickshire County Council's Relationships Education Programme *All About Me* introduced children to same-sex relationships and transgender ideas beginning in Reception (ages 4-5). In Year 2 (ages 6-7) pupils were introduced to 'rules about touching yourself'. While it contained detailed teaching about sex, not once in the entire programme was marriage mentioned in relation to sexual intimacy, flying in the face of the 2019 Relationships Education guidance which requires teaching about the importance of lifelong marriage.

This inappropriate content led to protest from parents, some of whom withdrew their children from school. Of particular concern was the fact that the programme fell under the banner of Relationships Education which would mean no right of parental withdrawal following the enactment of the new legal framework due to come into force in September this year.

It is welcome news therefore that in April it was announced that Warwickshire County Council had withdrawn *All About Me* 'with immediate effect.' This decision was reached following the threat of legal proceedings brought by the Christian Institute.

The Institute's lawyers argued that the Council's policy breached section 403 (1A) of the Education Act 1996 which stipulates that all pupils receiving sex education must *learn the nature of marriage and its importance for family life and the bringing up of children and must be protected from teaching and materials which are inappropriate having regard to the age and the religious and cultural background of the pupils concerned.* These principles are reasserted in the 2019 statutory guidance for Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education.

Prior to this, the Council had already

ordered an independent review of the programme. According to the Council's official record of 26 March it approved the replacement of *All About Me* with 'an information and signposting offer to schools...to support schools to meet their statutory requirements under the new Relationships & Sex Education regulations'.¹

Concerned parents expressed their relief. One parent told FET:

"We're thankful that Warwickshire County Council have withdrawn their highly controversial scheme. We hope that the challenges brought regarding these extreme materials will lead all schools to select more appropriate programmes that fulfil the requirements of the government guidance and take into account the needs of children; not imposing experimental ideologies on families."

All about Me was part of the Respect Yourself programme of Warwickshire County Council. Following campaigning by the Safe Schools Alliance and anti-porn group Click Off, including a petition against the website, the Respect Yourself website has been taken down and is currently under review.

In the aftermath of the *All About Me* debacle, Lord Maginnis of Drumglass directed the following parliamentary question to the government:

To ask Her Majesty's Government what lessons they have learnt from the criticisms of Warwickshire County Council's "All About Me" programme to deliver relationships and sex education that it included inappropriate content; what assessment they have made of whether other education authorities' relationships and sex education programmes include inappropriate content; and what steps they are taking to ensure programmes to deliver relationships and sex education in

primary schools do not include inappropriate content once it becomes a mandatory part of the curriculum in September.

The government responded:

...Schools will have flexibility over how they deliver these subjects, so they can develop an approach that is sensitive to the needs and backgrounds of their pupils...The guidance sets out that schools should ensure that they assess each resource that they propose to use and ensure that it is appropriate for the age and maturity of pupils, and sensitive to their needs. These resources must also be factually accurate.

...Schools will be expected to consult when developing and reviewing their primary school relationships education and secondary school relationships and sex education policy. Schools should also ensure that parents know what will be taught and when, and communicate the fact that parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory relationships and sex education. Schools should also ensure that, when they consult with parents, they provide examples of the resources that they plan to use...²

We must remain eternally vigilant in holding local and national government to account, ensuring that they respect the rights of parents and resist the use of age inappropriate material.

Notes

1. Warwickshire County Council – Record of Decisions made by the Leader of the Council 26 March 2020.
2. HL, Written Question 3330, answered on 5 May 2020.

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