Sex and relationship(s) education: an examination of England's and Northern Ireland's policy processes

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Declaration

I hereby declare that, except where explicitly stated, the work presented within this thesis is original and completely my own.

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Abstract

This thesis presents the first in-depth 'home international' comparison examining England's and Northern Ireland's policy processes with regard to making sex and relationship(s) education a statutory component of their national curricula for secondary schools. Drawing on policy network analysis, advocacy coalition and political decision-making literature more broadly, this study focuses on how policy actors in both regions conceptualise the debate around sex and relationship(s) education. It extends the 'values in sex education' discussion and focuses on the specific values informing policy discussions, as well as those embedded within/excluded from relevant policy texts, and the centrality of power around who or what groups are influential in shaping policy.

Informed by a social constructivist epistemology and utilising a mixed method, case study design, this study's data include Northern Ireland Assembly and Westminster Parliament *Hansard* transcripts, relevant legislation and statutory policy texts, and semi-structured interviews with 32 elected representatives, civil servants, third sector representatives, academics and local school practitioners. Employing thematic and content analysis to each text, a framework was created for both the England and Northern Ireland cases to determine how policy actors in both countries approach sex and relationship(s) education and the values driving policy development arguments. Cross-case comparisons indicate that SRE policy-making in England is primarily made through a closed, 'top down' policy strategy with the authoritative power of the ruling government overshadowing the perceived reputational power of those within the larger SRE policy network. Meanwhile Northern Ireland adopts a more open, partnership sharing, 'ground up' policy strategy toward RSE with relatively little influence from Members of the Legislative Assembly within the policy-making process.

This study's findings offers a new conceptual framework for understanding the different factors that shape the sex and relationship(s) education policy-making systems within both countries and provides a tool for possible policy learning in these countries more widely.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACF	Advocacy Coalition Framework
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ARK	Access Research Knoweldge
BME	Black and Minority Ethnics Groups
CCEA	Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment
DCSF	Department for Children, Schools and Families
DENI	Department of Education, Northern Ireland
DES	Department of Education and Science
DfE	Department for Education
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
DH	Department of Health under the Coalition Government
DHSSPSNI	Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, Northern Ireland
DoH	Department of Health under the former New Labour Government
DUP	Democratic Unionist Party
ELB	Education and Library Board
ETI	Education and Training Inspectorate
fpa	Family Planning Association
fpaNI	Family Planning Association, Northern Ireland
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HPA	Health Promotion Agency
HPANI	Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland
HSCB	Health and Social Care Boards
LA	Local Authority
LEA	Local Education Authority
LLW	Learning for Life and Work
MLA	Member of the Legislative Assembly, Northern Ireland
MP	Member of Westminster Parliament
NCB	National Children's Bureau
NHS	National Health Service
NIA	Northern Ireland Assembly

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms (contd.)

NIC	Northern Ireland Curriculum
NISRA	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
PD	Personal Development
PDMU	Personal Development and Mutual Understanding
PHA	Public Health Agency
PRB	Population Reference Bureau
PSHEE	Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
QCDA	Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency
Quango	Quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisations
RSE	Relationships and Sexuality Education
SDLP	Social Democrat and Labour Party
SEF	Sex Education Forum
SEU	Social Exclusion Unit
SHIN	Regional Sexual Health Improvement Network
SRE	Sex and Relationships Education
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infections
TPIAG	Teenage Pregnancy Independent Advisory Group
TPU	Teenage Pregnancy Unit
UKYP	United Kingdom Youth Parliament
WHO	World Health Organization

Chapter 1: Introduction to the thesis

1.1 Introduction

Sex and relationship(s) education policy and its implementation in schools has generated much debate in many countries over the past decade or more in the media, in Parliaments and other fora, and it remains a contentious issue. As Pilcher (2005) states, "Its seemingly inherently contentious character is formed by a constellation of the myriad borders it straddles, including between local and central government, between public and private, between teachers and parents, between health and education and morality, and between established and rising 'generations'" (p.168). There is growing evidence (Kirby, 2001; Schubotz et al., 2003; SRE External Steering Group, 2008; Teenage Pregnancy Independent Advisory Group [TPIAG], 2010; Local Government Association, 2013) that school-based sex and relationship(s) education is one of the key ways of improving the sexual knowledge and health of young people. While young people prefer their parents to be a primary source of information "significant numbers of young people (40%) report getting little or no information from them" (DCSF & DoH, 2010: 19). This is most "especially the case for boys and young men" (DCSF & DoH, 2010: 19). In addition, a recent study of 3,334 English secondary students aged 13 to 17 found that over 60% of the students would prefer to learn about sex at school, making schools the number one preferred source of information over other sources such as one's parents, friends or the media (Newby et al., 2012: 240).

Furthermore, a number of experts have called for the development and implementation of comprehensive statutory Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) within England's National Curriculum to ensure significant improvements are made to the sexual health and wellbeing of young people (DiClemente, 2001; SRE External Steering Group, 2008; Macdonald, 2009; UNESCO, 2009; DCSF & DoH, 2010; TPIAG, 2010; UNAIDS, 2013). While policy documents and reports use a wide range of terms such as 'sex education', 'sexuality education' and either adding or detracting the 's' to 'relationships', within this thesis the term 'sex and relationship(s)' is used to describe school-based sex education in general terms. When discussing or referencing a specific programme capital letters are used to signify as such, for example Northern Ireland's Relationships and

Sexuality Education (RSE) or England's SRE.

Previous UK studies regarding sexuality and sex and relationship(s) education have concentrated on issues such as the sexual attitudes and behaviours of people in Northern Ireland (Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland [HPANI], 1994, 2000; Schubotz et al., 2003; Rolston et al., 2004) and England (Johnson, Wadsworth & Field, 1994; Johnson et al., 2001; Halstead & Waite, 2001; Wellings et al., 2001; Westwood & Mulan, 2006), the quality and content of SRE (Maxwell, 2006; Strange et al., 2006), student views and preferences about how SRE should be taught (Measor et al., 2000; Strange et al., 2003; Coleman & Testa, 2007; Newby et al., 2012) and on how students develop their own sexual identities through meaning-making at schools (Quinlivan & Town, 1999; Redman, 2001; Kehily, 2002; Haywood & Mac an Ghaill, 2003; Renold, 2004; Allen, 2007). However, there has been little focus on the values and background knowledge that underpins the conceptual framework informing current sex and relationship(s) policy-making in England and Northern Ireland.

Conflicting values, especially religious or more broadly moral values, can often times be blamed for a lack of consensus on policy-making at the national, local and institutional level – especially for policies regarding an arguably contentious subject such as teaching sex and relationship(s) education in schools (Pilcher, 2005). Within the UK, Northern Ireland's culture has been described as being different from its neighbouring UK counterparts with regard to people's sexual attitudes and practices, arguably due to its history of deep-routed religious divide (Schubotz et al., 2004). However, in Northern Ireland where the majority of secondary students attend religious or 'faith' schools, Personal Development – the Northern Irish equivalent to PSHEE – is already statutory within the Northern Ireland Curriculum (NIC) for both primary and post-primary schools. Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) – the equivalent to England's SRE – is one statutory component taught within the Personal Development curriculum. Yet in England, where religion seems generally to be less central to the workings of today's education system, and where the majority of secondary students attend non-religious or non-faith based schools, PSHEE and therefore many aspects of SRE are not a statutory part of the National Curriculum.

On October 23, 2008 the former New Labour Government released a ministerial statement declaring that PSHEE was to become a statutory part of the English National Curriculum for both primary and secondary schools. This was followed up with a clause in the original wording of the *Children, Schools and Families Bill*, which proposed that all PSHEE was to become statutory. However, agreement could not be reached (especially with regard to making SRE statutory as part of the wider process of making PSHEE statutory) among Members of Westminster Parliament in the shortened parliamentary time available in the run up to the 2010 General Election and ultimately the PSHEE proposal within the *Bill* was removed before it was passed (8 April 2010). The current Conservative/Liberal Democrat Coalition Government does not intend to make PSHEE and the non-biological aspects of SRE statutory (Truss, 2013).

This study therefore examines how those involved in policy development approached the statutory placement of SRE in the National Curriculum for England between 2008-2013 and RSE in the Northern Ireland Curriculum between 1999 and 2013. It also identifies the specific 'values' embedded within and driving school-based policy and policy-making discussions of this time. This study investigates which individuals or groups had the 'power' to influence and control the sex and relationship(s) education policy-making processes and explores the policy-making models both countries have taken towards their respective SRE and RSE curriculums. Through these analyses it should become clearer what has been conducive to policy-making in RSE and the reasons why attempts to make SRE fully statutory in England have been so challenging.

The motivation behind, and main focus of, this research study developed organically from my initial academic background in journalism and media communications and an interest in how young people receive messages regarding their own sex, gender, sexuality and initimate relationships from the media, as well as other sources. This starting point led me to want to understand how education policy-making processes directed what information and opportunities young people have through schools to become educated around sex and relationships. As an American, who was raised and educated in the United States, I was curious to examine how countries within the UK dealt with what is an extremely contentious issue in my home country. The final focus for the PhD was then shaped by the three major gaps found within education social policy literature: (1) a

detailed focus on sex and relationship(s) education policy-making in the UK and what factors shape this process, (2) an in-depth examination of how RSE policy-making in Northern Ireland has been made and (3) a 'home international' comparison of SRE in England and RSE in Northern Ireland and how policy actors within both countries conceptualise the policy debate. My position as an 'outsider' – having no personal experience of SRE in England or RSE in Northern Ireland, nor connection to either country's education systems – has been a strength, I believe, as it has enabled me to approach the research questions and collect data with an open curiosity.

1.2 Shaping the problem

The rate of unplanned teenage pregnancies in the UK has been widely cited as being the highest in Western Europe (Social Exclusion Unit [SEU], 1999; UNICEF, 2001; Wellings et al., 2001; Avery & Lazdane, 2008; Office for National Statistics [ONS], 2013) and second only to the United States within the wider Northern world. UK national surveys affirm that over one-quarter of the population of young people are sexually active before reaching the age of sixteen (Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency [NISRA], 2001; Wellings et al., 2001; Currie et al., 2008; ONS, 2013). In England alone, there were 38,750 reported conceptions to young women aged between fifteen and seventeen (inclusive) in 2008, with 7,123 reported conceptions that same year for young women between the age of thirteen and fifteen (inclusive) (Teenage Pregnancy Unit [TPU], 2008). Furthermore, new episodes of sexually transmitted infections among young people have increased over time (Health Protection Agency [HPA], 2008; Public Health England, 2013).

There are potentially adverse health, economic and educational consequences if young people become parents at a young age. Research evidence shows that not only are teenage mothers less likely to finish their own compulsory schooling, but they are also more likely to be a single parent living in poverty whereby their unplanned child(ren) is/are more likely to be at "increased risk of poverty, low educational attainment, poor housing and poor health" (DCSF & DoH, 2010: 16) and is/are more likely to have a "lower rate of economic activity in adult life" (DCSF & DoH, 2010: 16). Some commentators have challenged this largely negative view of the consequences of becoming parents at a young

age (Kirkman et al., 2001; Chase & Knight, 2006).

A number of factors have been found to be linked to teenage sexual attitudes and behaviours such as participation and attainment in school (Wellings et al, 2001; Bonell et al., 2006; DCSF & DoH, 2010; TPIAG, 2010), early onset of puberty (He et al., 2004), and social influences in terms of values held by family and peers (Sieving et al., 2006). Many would argue that investing in reducing teenage pregnancies would have a long-term cost-benefit for the state (DCSF & DoH, 2010).

It has been suggested that providing young people with comprehensive advice and support through a collaboration between parents, schools and health professionals (Kirby, 2007), as well as making sexual and reproductive health services easily available and user-friendly (Santelli et al., 2004) is central to reducing teenage pregnancy. This evidence is supported by young people's views, such as those elicited by Testa and Coleman (2007) where students felt that outside of their families, school was where they preferred to learn about sexuality and sexual health. Multiple studies also suggest that listening to and responding to young people's sex and relationship(s) education preferences is important in order to raise positive levels of sexual health (Measor et al., 2000; Strange et al., 2003; Newby et al., 2012).

Researchers and the government alike have identified inadequate school-based sex and relationship(s) education as a main contributor to UK young people's poor sexual health knowledge (Department for Education & Employment [DfEE], 2000; Mellanby et al., 2001; UNICEF, 2001, UK Youth Parliament [UKYP], 2007; SRE External Steering Group, 2008; DCSF & DoH, 2010; TPIAG, 2010). Young people support this assessment about inadequate SRE within schools; for example, the 2007 UK Youth Parliament Survey found that approximately 40% of the 21,000 plus young people surveyed described the SRE they had received in school as 'poor' or 'very poor', while only 33% rated it as 'average' (UKYP, 2007). Westminster and its devolved governments developed public health plans to tackle teenage pregnancy and STI rates during the first decade of the 21st century, as well as sexual health more broadly. Specific to England and Northern Ireland, this included the development and implementation of the ten-year National Teenage Pregnancy Strategy (SEU, 1999) and the National Strategy for Sexual

Health and HIV (DoH, 2001) in England and the Sexual Health Promotion: Strategy and Action Plan in Northern Ireland (Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety Northern Ireland [DHSSPSNI], 2008). Alongside these education initiatives additional factors such as the implementation of the National Healthy School Standard (DfEE, 1999) have led to a significant focus on young people's health and wellbeing, often using schools as the central point for delivery.

Since the implementation of these public health plans and initiatives, reports have been published with findings that young people in the UK are experiencing first sex at an earlier age (Population Reference Bureau [PRB], 2000; UNICEF, 2001; DoH, 2002), with the current average for first sex being 15.6 (15 for boys and 16 for girls) in Northern Ireland (Schubotz et al., 2004) and 16 for the rest of the UK (Wellings et al., 2001). Despite these reports, however, the 2010 Teenage Pregnancy Strategy report stated that since the Strategy began in 1999 "there has been steady progress to the point where [England] has the lowest under 18 conception rate for over 20 years" (DCSF & DoH, 2010: 4) and that "the under 18 conception rate has fallen by 13.3 per cent with births to under 18s down by almost 25 per cent" (DCSF & DoH, 2010: 4). It has been argued though that the fall in teenage conception rates is not due to equal access to sexual health information but because of the increased health of those from white majority ethnic backgrounds (Tripp & Viner, 2005; Coleman & Testa, 2008; Fernandez et al., 2008).

1.3 England: devolution and educational context

Devolution within the United Kingdom represents the transferring of certain administrative powers from the central Parliament at Westminster to the devolved bodies and administrative offices within Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (Deacon, 2010). The Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh and the National Assembly for Wales were granted devolution in 1998, while the Northern Ireland Assembly received its fully devolved powers in December 1999. The English population (according to mid-2013 population estimates) represents 84% of the total 64.1 million people living in the UK (ONS, 2014), and out of the 650 MPs represented at Westminster 533 act for English constituencies. Representation for England is significantly larger than the UK's other constituent nations' representation within UK Parliament (i.e. Scotland 59 MPs, Wales 40 MPs and Northern

Ireland 18 MPs). However, unlike the overt presence of religious political leaders (such as Protestant clergymen) within the Northern Ireland Assembly and the acceptability of religion in Northern Irish politics more broadly, the only spiritual leaders (priests, bishops, clergymen) with political positions within Westminster (out of its active total of 780 members) are the twenty-six senior bishops of the Church of England (also called the Lords Spiritual) found within the House of Lords (Westminster Parliament, 2014).

English attempts to gain their own devolved powers have been unsuccessful despite arguments that "people in numerous English towns, cities and councils have their own distinct identities as strong as any national one" (Deacon, 2010: 240). When the *Regional Assemblies (Preparations) Act 1993* was passed at Westminster, potentially giving England political devolution to specific regions (electing regional chambers but as a step-by-step process), the northeast region of the country was the first to vote in 2004 with a resounding negative vote of five-to-one against devolution "in effect kill[ing] off English devolution" (Deacon, 2010: 241). The *Greater London Authority Referendum* is the closest legislation to devolution England has got, which permits London boroughs to directly elect an assembly and mayor for London (initiated in 2000).

With regard to education, this is managed at both the national and local level. In England education legislation is enacted by the UK Parliament, where the central government develops national policies and Local Authorities (LAs) and individual schools are required to put into practice and administer nationally developed policies within the local community schools. At the highest government level, the Secretary of State for Education controls the public education system in England and is appointed by the Prime Minister and is further supported by three Ministers of State and two Parliamentary Under-Secretaries. The Department for Education (DfE) is the central government office responsible for planning and monitoring the education service in England and publishes statutory Acts (required by law), circulars and guidance to schools while LAs help assist with the implementation of legislation and other regulations. It was the *Education Act of 1902* that established LAs (then LEAs) that were to assume responsibility for both primary and secondary education for all schools. Under the *Local Government Act 2000* decisions relating to education within local authorities shifted from a committee-based model to that of an executive model whereby within each LA power is shared by the local

authority executive, overview and scrutiny committees or panels and the whole council (Local Government Act 2000, 2000a, 2000b).

However, the role of LAs vis-à-vis education has changed significantly in the past decade, which has important consequences for SRE. Under the Coalition Government the schools system in England has encountered sweeping reforms through the passing of education legislation and the Government's White Paper entitled *The importance of teaching* (DfE, 2010). Through the *Academies Act 2010* and *Education Act 2011* the Government has pushed for the development of more Academies and Free schools (outside of local authority control) with the forethought that the relationship between local authorities and the education sector will "increasingly move to [that of] a strategic commissioning and oversight role" (DfE, 2010: 65). Through these *Acts* local schools have been given increased freedom and day-to-day control of their own running (including whether to prescribe to the National Curriculum).

England's three phases of education, as developed through the *Education Act 1944*, are: primary (students aged five to eleven); secondary (eleven to fifteen – later changed to sixteen); and sixth form/further education (sixteen to eighteen). Additionally, under the *Education Act 1996*, there are four Key Stages (much like that found in Northern Ireland): Key Stage 1 (students aged five to seven); Key Stage 2 (students aged seven to eleven); Key Stage 3 (students aged eleven to fourteen); and Key Stage 4 (students aged fourteen to sixteen). There are four types of state-maintained schools that receive funding from local authorities and must follow the National Curriculum as well as be inspected by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) – a non-ministerial government department that functions as the inspection body for all English schools. These state-maintained schools include: LA-managed community schools (formerly called county schools); Foundation and Trust schools (many of which were formerly grant-maintained) owned either by a governing school body or trustees; Voluntary-aided schools (mainly religious or 'faith'-based); and Voluntary-controlled schools that are similar to Voluntary-aided but run by LAs. While public education within England is largely provided within 'maintained' schools (Holt et al., 2002), private schools (also known as independent schools) set their own admissions and curriculum, and must be registered with the Department for Education and monitored either by Ofsted or another agreed upon

inspectorate by the Secretary of State (Directgov, 2009).

While Northern Ireland's system of education is seen as 'unique' for continuing to maintain a strongly encouraged non-comprehensive, grammar school system, England is the only other education system within the UK not to reach 100% comprehensive education for all. A 'comprehensive' school refers to one that does not select students based on academic ability or social circumstance (Paterson, 1998) and "offer[s] a full, all-round education for all … [where] the content of education [is] a common curriculum offered equally to all" (Simon, 1997: 26). Out of England's 3,310 state-funded secondary schools (Department for Education [DfE], 2011a), only 164 (5%) are state grammar schools (National Grammar Schools Association, 2014) with students sitting for the eleven-plus exam for entrance in certain local authorities. Wales and Scotland reached 100% comprehensive schools (excepting independent schools) by the mid-1980s (Phillips, 2003).

Furthermore, a distinct difference between students who attend English schools and those in Northern Ireland is that the great majority, 82% of the 3,262,635 students enrolled in secondary schools in England, attend a school with no religious character (DfE, 2011a). And while only a minority of students attend religious or 'faith'-based schools in England (roughly 18%), there is a greater presence of other faiths outside of the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church than that found in Northern Ireland. Along with the Church of England and the Roman Catholic church, students are also enrolled in other Christian faith schools, Jewish schools, Muslim schools and schools that adhere to the Sikh religion (DfE, 2011a).

1.4 Northern Ireland: devolution and educational context

This section provides only a brief introduction to the historical and current political, socio-religious and education context of Northern Ireland, as is relevant to the issues of sex and relationship(s) education. There is considerable literature about the 'Troubles' (McKittrick, 2001; Hennessey, 2007; Prince, 2007), the peace process through the *Anglo-Irish Agreement* and the *Good Friday Agreement* (Edwards & Bloomer, 2008; Barton & Roche, 2009) and the religious/political divide among the different political parties found

within Northern Ireland (Hennessey, 2005; Bruce, 2007). What follows is a summary of some of the key historical developments in Northern Ireland that act as a backcloth to understanding sex and relationship(s) policy-making – the focus of this study.

Understanding Northern Ireland and its political and social structure is complicated as the country is in "many ways part of two states" (Dunn, 2000: 85): Ireland and the United Kingdom. In 1801 Ireland (as a whole) joined the United Kingdom by the *Act of Union*; however, a continuation of blood feuds between Irish nationalists (predominantly Catholic supporters of a united Ireland) and those loyal to the Crown (predominantly Protestant supporters of a union with Britain – the geographical island comprising of England, Scotland and Wales), along with the increasing prospect of a civil war, led England to grant Ireland its independence as the Irish Free State in 1921 (Jones, 2006a). After the "*Government of Ireland Act 1920* partitioned Ireland and offered Home Rule to both the North and South" (Kavanagh et al., 2006: 336), twenty six predominantly Catholic southern counties formed the new Irish State (later in 1949 leaving the Commonwealth to become a Republic) while the United Kingdom retained control over six largely Protestant counties found in the north governed by a Unionist-dominated parliament at Stormont (Kavanagh et al., 2006). The counties of Antrim, Armagh, Down, Londonderry, Fermanagh and Tyrone collectively make up what today is known as Northern Ireland.

After the partition of Ireland, however, the northern province was left with a divided population that retained two different loyalties (nationalist and unionist) and identities (Catholic and Protestant) (Tonge, 2006). The deeply ingrained conflict between religion and national identity in the history and continued development of Northern Ireland has made its politics quite distinctive (Kavanagh et al., 2006). Religion is seen to be treated more seriously in Northern Ireland than in the other countries that make up the UK (Connolly, 1990) and is profoundly intertwined within Northern Irish society's social and political life in a variety of ways. One can argue that the prominence of the religious divide within this region was most notably seen during the period known as the 'Troubles'. The 'Troubles' can be classified as the three decades between the late 1960s until the peace process of the *Belfast Good Friday Agreement* in May 1998. During this 'troubled' time political and military (paramilitary) violence took place between Irish

Republicans and Ulster Loyalists as the Catholic Nationalist minority residing in the North felt discriminated against by the Protestant Unionist majority and continued to challenge the position of Northern Ireland within the UK. Between 1969 and 1989 approximately "2,750 people died in the Troubles, including over 400 members of the British army, 177 soldiers of the Ulster Defence Regiment, 254 police officers and 1,848 civilians, including terrorists" (Connolly, 1990: 1).

Following the *Good Friday Agreement* power was devolved to the Northern Ireland Assembly (NIA) in December 1999, which meant that each of the main political parties would have to 'power share' within any future Northern Ireland government (Jones, 2010) but would still be subject to direct rule under Westminster Parliament. The NIA is led by a First Minister and is comprised of 108 Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) – six members from each of the eighteen constituencies within the North, and who are elected every four years by the inhabitants of Northern Ireland (NIA, 2010). The role of an MLA, as defined by the NIA, is to "pass laws and examine policy on transferred matters like health, education, the environment, social work and housing" (NIA, 2010). The Northern Ireland Assembly has been suspended numerous times since 1999 due to periods of political and violent disagreements. The longest period of suspension was between 14 October 2002 and May 7, 2007 when all powers were transferred back to Westminster Parliament.

Religion in Northern Ireland is still overtly part of public life and politics. Approximately 93% of the Northern Irish population in 2011 identified themselves as either being or having grown up Catholic, Protestant or another Christian faith (NISRA, 2012: 2). Previous research shows that Catholics are the most frequent churchgoers with 68% of Catholics attending Mass regularly (at least once a month) and 56% attending at least once a week (NILTS, 2005). The Catholic church, however, is not as overtly active within political party politics as Protestant religious leaders are, for no priests hold any political positions within the parties most associated with Catholic membership such as Sinn Féin and the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), whereas the most prominent unionist party of the last few years, the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), was led by Reverend Ian Paisley of the Free Presbyterian Church until 2008 (Mitchell, 2008).

Religion has also significantly shaped education in Northern Ireland – where education "has always been a political and cultural tool" (Dunn, 2000: 87). As early as the 1830s, Ireland had developed its own national system of elementary education (Raffe et al., 1999), and even at that point religious divisions are argued to have seeped through the education system (Bell & Grant, 1977). These divisions continued to be evident during the development of Northern Ireland's education system after its partition from Ireland in 1920.

Education now falls underneath one of the devolved powers given to the NIA where public education is administered centrally by the Department of Education under the advisement of the Minister for Education, and locally by five Education and Library Boards (ELBs). ELBs resemble local education authorities (LEAs) as found (until recently) in England and Wales, and have responsibilities such as providing curriculum support, educational welfare services, the "assessment and statementing of children with special educational needs, and appointing staff members within controlled schools" (O'Callaghan & Lundy, 2002: 18). While LEAs (now known as Local Authorities more broadly – LAs) in England and Wales are run by elected local representatives, legislation within Northern Ireland states that local district councils cannot nominate more than two-fifths of an ELB's members (O'Callaghan & Lundy, 2002). Given the region's religious and political divisions, this legislation was developed to ensure that one political (religious) party would not have a majority control over any one individual education authority. Therefore, each ELB is represented by a broad representation of: "members from the local district councils; persons representing the interests of transferors; representatives of the trustees of maintained schools; and persons deemed to be suitable by reason of their interest in the services for which the ELB is responsible" (O'Callaghan & Lundy, 2002: 18).

One of the most distinguishing features of the Northern Irish education system is its structure around the widespread segregation of students by religion (Byrne & McKeown, 1998; Dunn, 2000; O'Callaghan & Lundy, 2002), by academic ability through grammar school selection (Raffe et al., 1999; Dunn, 2000; Phillips, 2003) and by gender through same-sex schools (Dunn, 2000). The Northern Irish curriculum is defined in terms of five Key Stages covered over twelve years of compulsory education starting with children at

age four (with nursery provision provided to those as young as three years old) and continuing until the age of sixteen. Following this, students can choose either to enter the labour market or continue studying either at school or in a further education institution. Compulsory education for Northern Irish students starts one full year prior to those students enrolled within any of the other three UK education systems. Primary school in Northern Ireland begins with a Foundation Stage (4 to 5 year olds), then Key Stage 1 for students aged five to seven, followed by Key Stage 2 for those aged eight to eleven. Key Stage 3 is when students transfer from primary to post-primary schools and is for pupils aged eleven to fourteen; while the final Key Stage, Key Stage 4, comprises students aged fourteen to sixteen years old.

There are five main categories of schools that provide education for each Key Stage in Northern Ireland, with each type of school being controlled by differing management committees who also have the responsibility to employ teachers. These schools include: (1) Controlled or otherwise known as 'State-controlled' schools (e.g. nursery, primary, special, post-primary and grammar) that are under the management of its own Board of Governors and the ELB for the area; (2) Maintained otherwise known as 'Catholic-maintained' schools (e.g. nursery, primary, special and post-primary) that are managed by its own Board of Governors and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS); (3) Voluntary (grammar); (4) Integrated (primary and post-primary) that provide a religiously mixed-environment for Protestants and Catholics; and (5) Institutions of Further and Higher Education that are directly managed and usually owned by trustees.

At the post-primary school level voluntary grammar schools exist where pupils at age eleven take an aptitude test (usually administered by the specific grammar school being applied to) to gauge 'academic ability' and possible acceptance. During the 2013-14 academic school year a total of 62,634 students attended a grammar school compared to 81,339 students enrolled at secondary non-grammar schools (DENI, 2013a). The Catholic Church has in large part been seen as the main instigator seeking to maintain segregated education, arguing that inadequate attention to religious education and the Church's values would be provided within integrated schools (Mitchell, 2008).

Census data shows that in 2011, approximately 41% of the Northern Irish population identified itself as Catholic, while 36% self-identified as Protestant (NISRA, 2012). There is a strong Catholic presence within post-primary education as 47% of the 143,973 students in Northern Ireland attend either a non-grammar Catholic-maintained or Catholic-managed grammar school (DENI, 2012b). State-controlled schools, which most Protestant students attend (although the schools are not directly run by the Protestant church) (Phillips, 2008), enroll 30% of post-primary students. Whether by choice or because there are significantly less controlled or grant-maintained integrated schools only 6% of post-primary students attend a purposively religiously-mixed school (DENI, 2012b).

The main qualification, curriculum and assessment authority for Northern Irish schools is the Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) established in April 1994 while the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) is the sole body in charge of inspecting the quality of teaching and training in Northern Ireland. The Council for Catholic Maintained Schools under the *Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989* was given responsibility for all Catholic-maintained schools. At the local institutional level, school governing bodies and headteachers handle their own management and school administration.

1.5 Rationale for the study

Missing from within education social policy literature is a focus on sex and relationship(s) education policy-making and what factors shape this within the UK. Research has consistently focused on school-based SRE quality and content (Maxwell, 2006; Strange et al., 2006), young peoples' sexual identity formation while at school (Kehily, 2002; Renold, 2004; Allen, 2007), as well as the sexual attitudes and behaviours of young people (HPANI, 2000; Wellings et al., 2001; Schubotz et al., 2003; Westwood & Mulan, 2006) and their sex and relationship(s) education preferences (Strange et al., 2003; Coleman & Testa, 2007; Newby et al., 2012). However, there is a lack of discussion pertaining to the complexity of the policy-making process informing current sex and relationship(s) education policies – including an in-depth exploration of those given access to policy-making, examination of the different arguments that have shaped

policy discussions as well as the specific values informing policy actors' arguments pushing/resisting policy changes. Although this will be developed in greater depth in the next chapter, it is nevertheless important to emphasise that a focus on these gaps is necessary in order to better understand the overall position of sex and relationship(s) within wider national curriculums and why certain aims and objectives are embedded within policies while others remain excluded.

In addition, currently no academic literature provides an in-depth 'home international' (Raffe, 1991) exploration specifically comparing Northern Ireland and England's sex and relationship(s) education policy processes; such research is important in order to understand both the different factors that shape education policy-making systems within the UK and how each system's processes have the potential for learning about policy. Within the last two decades, 'home international' comparisons have 'gained ground' (Raffe, 1998: 592) among academic researchers, within UK government departments and quangos – albeit more informally for the latter two (Raffe, 1998) – as being regarded as having a noteworthy value for education policy (Raffe, 1991; Coffield, 1994; Young et al., 1995; Delamont & Rees, 1997; Phillips, 2003). As a previous chairman of the National Commission on Education once said, "Those searching for ways of improving education in one part of the United Kingdom often need look no further than to other parts of the United Kingdom for useful models" (Walton, 1993: xii). Many researchers have ignored the unique characteristics that each political and education system within the UK has, and instead have either solely focused on England or have treated England, Great Britain and the UK as synonymous (Raffe et al., 1999). This is unhelpful because those within the UK as well as those abroad, especially "policy-makers in the European Commission and other supra-national organisations cannot assume that all the member states are homogeneous; they must allow for the diversity within the UK as well as the differences between the UK and other countries" (Raffe et al., 1999: 20).

Along with filling this gap in the literature, England and Northern Ireland were also chosen as the focus for this study for three key reasons. First, England was chosen because of its stationary presence within most UK and Great Britain comparative studies and because the English population represents 84% of the total UK population (ONS, 2014) and has the most represented (533) MPs within the UK Parliament. Alternatively,

Northern Ireland was chosen because it has been regularly neglected from within UK-wide 'home international' comparisons (primary examples are the 1990, 2000, and 2010 Nastal reports) (Raffe, 1998; Raffe et al., 2001) and is the smallest country within the UK (comprising rougly 3% of the UK population) and has the least number of MPs in Westminster (18).

Second, given that attitudes toward sex and relationship(s) education may be linked to social and religious locatedness, it is interesting to examine how those involved in the policy development process as well as the wording of actual guidance and legislative texts in relation to sex and relationship(s) education compare across these two countries. Within Northern Ireland the predominance of religion in structuring public life is arguably more visible than its UK counterparts (Connolly, 1990), and within its education system religion does, at least at a first glance, appear to be salient in understanding policy and practice given that most students' education is structured by religion (Byrne & McKeown, 1998; Dunn, 2000; O'Callaghan & Lundy, 2002). As previously noted, the overwhelming majority of secondary students in Northern Ireland attend religious schools, whereas only 18% of students enrolled in English secondary schools attend a school with religious character (DfE, 2011a). For those English students who do attend a faith-based school, there are, as pointed out earlier, options outside of the Christian faith.

Lastly, England and Northern Ireland were decided upon because the political decisions around the statutory/non-statutory status of SRE and RSE occurred around the same time period. This is particularly of interest because although the DfE in England has been viewed as the 'lead department' (Raffe et al., 1999: 12) setting the tone for education across the UK (Raffe et al., 1999), Personal, Social Health and Economic education (PSHEE) and comprehensive SRE remain non-statutory in England while in Northern Ireland, Personal Development (and subsequently comprehensive RSE) is already statutory within the National Curriculum for both primary and post-primary schools.

Until the election of the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition Government in May 2010, the previous Labour Government had been moving towards making PSHEE statutory. The support and opposition to making PSHEE (and as a result SRE) statutory in both the previous and current Parliamentary term make further examination of the policy-

making process critical, especially to try and understand why it continues to be such a contentious and drawn-out process. Tracing how Personal Development became statutory in a country often assumed to be morally more conservative and the impact this has had on the teaching of RSE may garner some interesting lessons which may inform the debate within England.

1.6 Research aim and questions

This thesis aims to develop a framework for examining the various policy-making processes in relation to making sex and relationship(s) education a statutory component in the Northern Irish and English national curricula.

To support the examination of the above aim, the following research questions informed the study:

1. What debates have taken place within the policy-making process and how do these appear to have influenced current national legislation and statutory policy texts in England and Northern Ireland?

2. What approaches did national policy actors take toward sex and relationship(s) education and its statutory placement within the national curriculum?

3. What values informed the approaches taken?

4. Who or what group(s) or stakeholder(s) are trying to influence policy?

5. What type of decision-making model do England and Northern Ireland draw upon to develop sex and relationship(s) education policy?

1.7 Organisation of the thesis

This section details how this thesis is structured and offers a brief examination and description of the subsequent chapters. Leading on from this first chapter which introduced the problem and background knowledge needed to understand the rationale for this research, Part I of this thesis – Chapters Two through Four – provides the theoretical

framework that is used to structure the empirical analysis undertaken in Chapters Six through Eight to analyse England's SRE and Northern Ireland's RSE policy-making processes.

Chapter Two reviews literature pertaining to schools being seen as sites for sexual health promotion while specifically analysing the Northern Ireland RSE and England SRE context, as well as what young people in the UK have said about current sex and relationship(s) education within schools. Chapter Three focuses on the conceptualisation of the term 'policy' and how policy can be understood – from suggested policy to published policy and to policy enactment at the national and local secondary school institutional level. Policy is described as both a process, a set of values, text and discourse. Chapter Four provides an account of various decision-making models that have been developed as frameworks for not only better understanding policy-making but the distribution of power within this process as well. It focuses, in particular, on the exercise and distribution of 'power' at the 'macro' level by examining rational-choice theory, the incremental model, pluralism and elitism, before describing how the concept of 'policy network' and 'advocacy coalition' are drawn upon to describe the 'meso' level approach utilised within this study's data analysis. The chapter additionally discusses the usefulness of combining parts of policy network analysis and the Advocacy Coalition Framework (Sabatier, 1988) together to: (1) determine the policy actors within England's SRE and Northern Ireland's RSE policy network and (2) better understand the relationships and interactions among policy actors within each country's respective policy network.

Part II of the thesis outlines the methodological approach taken by the research. It is comprised of Chapter Five and outlines the ontological and epistemological position taken by the research, describes the methods used in the conduct of the research and discusses the methodological issues that are raised by these choices. The chapter begins by describing how an idealist ontological and social constructivist epistemological approach were drawn upon before discussing my use of an inductive and deductive research strategy and multiple methods. Chapter Five then discusses this study's selected data sources, the use of thematic textual analysis, content analysis as well as a 'home international' comparative approach. The chapter concludes by reviewing the ethics of

such a study and provides a general summary of possible issues and limitations of the approach taken for this research.

Part III of this thesis presents the study's research findings and analysis. It forms the empirical basis of this study and is comprised of Chapters Six and Seven. Chapter Six presents the England case and presents the SRE Approaches Framework for understanding how policy actors in England conceptualise the debate around SRE. The specific values driving SRE policy development are explored as is the network of relationships developed among policy actors engaged within SRE policy debates and how these have changed over time. 'Power' to influence/change policy is examined. Chapter 7 presents the Northern Ireland case whereby policy-making is examined through a specific focus on Northern Ireland's current statutory RSE policy – an area largely absent within social policy literature. It considers the key policy developments made and the type of policy-making process adopted that led to Personal Development (and subsequently RSE) being made statutory across both the primary and secondary Northern Ireland Curriculums. It draws attention to the specific groups and individuals influencing policy and explores the specific values embedded within statutory policy and policy-making discussions.

Lastly, Part IV offers this thesis' final discussion and concluding comments. Chapter Eight provides a 'home international' comparison of the sex and relationship(s) education policy processes adopted by England and Northern Ireland. It addresses what has been conducive to policy-making in RSE, while PSHEE and the non-biological aspects of SRE have remained non-statutory and a contentious issue in English education policy-making. The thesis concludes by discussing the main findings and contribution to research that it makes.

PART I: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Chapter 2: Schools and sexual health promotion

2.1 Introduction

Within the UK, education policy has often been at the forefront of political party campaigns and highlighted as a priority (Chitty, 2004); recall, for instance, Tony Blair's slogan during the 1997 election which identified 'education, education, education' as one of its top three priorities for a New Labour government.

Many academics and politicians have long debated what the purpose of education should be, more specifically the role of schools in this process (Lawton, 1975; Aldrich, 1996; Chitty, 2004). According to Professor Richard Aldrich, education "is so important and so all-pervasive that it is almost impossible to define" (Aldrich, 1996: 1). Richard Peters (1966) argues that "education involves the intentional transmission of what is worthwhile" (p.35) and "to raise questions about its 'aim' is to invite clarification of and concentration on what is worth while in the enterprise" (p.35). Peters uses the term 'worthwhile' – meaning some knowledge is more valuable than others. For some commentators schools should fulfill several roles – including the promotion of physical wellbeing and children's "socialisation and moral education" (Winch & Gingell, 2004: 17). Aggleton, Dennison and Warwick (2010) argue that "schools have been promoted as beacons for the engagement of entire communities in health-related work and activities" (p.1).

Schools in their basic sense are institutions intended to inspire and support cognitive development and behavioural change (Adamson et al., 2006) while preparing students for life (Winch & Gingell, 2004). Many have argued that schools represent an important potential resource to support and promote both young people's general and sexual health (McKay, 2000; DHSSPSNI, 2008), especially with research showing that parents, themselves, feel ill-equipped to discuss sexual health topics with their own child(ren) (DCSF & DoH, 2010) and prefer others such as teachers to do so (Aggleton & Campbell, 2000). Therefore, this raises questions regarding the role of schools within sexual health

promotion. For starters, what does it mean to be a sexually educated young person? What does that look like? And is it the responsibility of schools to teach sex and relationship(s) education and, if so, what is needed in order for this to be successful?

International and national documents have drawn on multiple interpretations and working definitions to describe what the term 'sexual health' means. The World Health Organization's (WHO) definition, seen by many as holistic and sex-positive, states that sexual heath is:

> A state of physical, emotional, mental and social wellbeing in relation to sexuality; it is not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or infirmity. Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence. For sexual health to be attained and maintained, the sexual rights of all persons must be respected, protected and fulfilled. (WHO, 2006: 5)

The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in Northern Ireland (DHSSPSNI) is one example of an organisation that has adopted the WHO's sexual health definition (DHSSPSNI, 2008: 1). However, while the Coalition Government's 2013 *Framework for sexual health improvement in England* (DH, 2013) – that supersedes the *National Strategy for Sexual health and HIV* set forth under the former New Labour Government – frequently cites the importance of 'good sexual health', the policy fails to provide any definition as to what the Coalition believes 'good sexual health' looks like. While the policy does acknowledge that "good sexual health is important to individuals" (DH, 2013: 2) and that "individuals should be able to live their lives free from prejudice and discrimination" (DH, 2013: 4), it omits a focus on the particular importance of 'emotional', 'mental' and 'social wellbeing' (as stated in the WHO's definition).

Additionally, the *Framework* written by the Department of Health (DH) does not mention the need for sexual health to be approached in a 'positive' manner nor that sexual health can be 'pleasurable'. Focus is on 'reducing inequalities' (DH, 2013: 4) – although the *Framework* lacks specification as to what specific 'inequalities', increasing 'informed and responsible choice' (DH, 2013: 4) through sexual consent and reducing risk and harm by providing preventative interventions to reduce the rate of sexually transmitted infections

(STIs), HIV and AIDS, unwanted pregnancies (especially among teenagers) and abortions (DH, 2013: 4). It could be argued that the Coalition Government has taken a more sex-negative approach, emphasising services to avoid the risk of unintended pregnancy, illness or disease. Furthermore, while the WHO's sex-positive definition recognises 'sexual relationships' as well as 'safe sexual experiences', possibly outside of committed relationships, the DH cites the importance of 'stable' and 'loving, healthy relationships' – arguably promoting sex only within 'committed' relationships.

What is being discussed here is that similar to the DH, schools may also shy away from adopting a comprehensive sexual health framework or developing a clear definition of what 'good' sexual health looks like when forming and implementing its education curriculum. The English National Curriculum states that every state-funded school must provide a broad and balanced curriculum that "promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society" (DfE, 2013a: 4) and "prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life" (DfE, 2013a: 4). While the National Curriculum does not explicitly use the term 'health' or 'wellbeing', these two aims do place mental and physical development as well as 'being prepared for later life' as a statutory educational responsibility of schools.

Within English schools, teaching about sexual health is usually done within the statutory science National Curriculum and within Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) – a learning component typically found within the non-statutory Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHEE) curriculum. Other nomenclature for sexual health and sex and relationship(s) education in the UK include Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) and Personal Development (PD) in Northern Ireland, Personal and Social Education in Wales and Sex Education under the Healthy Living curriculum in Scotland. Statutory SRE policy laid out within DfEE 2000 asserts that schools have a responsibility to teach about sexual health because SRE "is essential if young people are to make responsible and well informed decisions about their lives" (DfEE, 2000: 3) and PSHEE "help pupils develop the skills and understanding they need to live confident, healthy and independent lives" (DfEE, 2000: 3). Within non-statutory PSHEE guidance, the DfE acknowledges that "PSHE is an important and necessary part of all pupils' education" (DfE, 2013c: para 1) and that "all schools should teach PSHE" (DfE, 2013c: para 1). The

Department furthermore states that a school's PSHEE programme should "equip pupils with a sound understanding of risk and with the knowledge and skills necessary to make safe and informed decisions" (DfE, 2013c: para 3).

These stated 'values' are similarly represented within the wording of the statutory *Education (Curriculum Minimum Content) Order (Northern Ireland) 2007* that lays out the compulsory requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum. One main difference found between the two curricula though is that, unlike the English National Curriculum, Northern Ireland's asserts that a student's emotional development is important. For it states that the National Curriculum from Foundation to Key Stage 4 must be:

> A balanced and broadly based curriculum which promotes the spiritual, emotional, moral, cultural, intellectual and physical development of pupils at the school and thereby of society; and prepares such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life by equipping them with appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills. (Article 2, Schedule 2, Part 1)

The next two sections looks in more depth at the specific sex and relationship(s) education contexts in both England and Northern Ireland, specifically outlining the policy context from a historical perspective.

2.2 England: Sex and Relationships Education (SRE)

From the late nineteenth century onwards, school-based sex and relationship(s) education in England has been the frequent subject of political debate and religious discussion as well as the focus for government intervention. Tracing the origins of sex and relationship(s) education in schools provides a historical context which facilitates a better understanding of the values and arguments currently being debated today. This section briefly traces the origins of SRE and the development of this subject area within English schools as well as the statutory framework within which SRE sat leading up to the latest guidance document still in use today, which was published by the then Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) in 2000.

In the late nineteenth century, stress was placed upon the importance of teaching 'hygiene', or 'health', as "the most effective strategy through which to improve both the

physical and the sexual moral health of 'the Nation'" (Pilcher, 2005: 154; see also Mort, 1987; Weeks, 1989). From 1928 till 1977 The *Handbook of Suggestions on Health Education* was the main source of guidance used by teachers and others concerned with child health and education. The *Handbook* was praised by the Chief Medical Officer to the Board of Education as being "part of the necessary equipment of every teacher" (George Newman qtd in Board of Education, 1928: 3). However, it was only in the fourth edition of the *Handbook* (published in 1956 during a Conservative Government) that any specific mention of human sexuality and reproduction was made. In this fourth edition, a full chapter was devoted to sex education, entitled 'School and the Future Parent'.

In the fifth edition of the *Handbook*, published in 1968 during a Labour party-controlled Parliament, the need for schools to teach about sex because of the "certain physical and emotional stresses … that did not exist for former generations" was highlighted (DES, 1968: 99). The social change of the 1960s and '70s appears to have driven forward the development of sex education (Pilcher, 2005: 161). Additionally, the fifth edition highlighted the need to include within the health curriculum teaching on contraception (i.e. condom use), the birth control pill (positioned alongside the broad term contraception and "largely restricted to married women" (Pilcher, 2005: 161)) as well as venereal diseases (specifically gonorrhea and syphilis) (DES, 1968: 114-116). In the final edition the *Handbook* (published in 1977 under a Labour Government), the relevant chapter changed its title from 'School and the Future Parent' to 'Sex Education'.

In the final edition of the *Handbook*, schools were advised that both sexes learn about male and female puberty, venereal diseases and contraception, masturbation and homosexuality. Likewise, it was suggested that students should learn about the pleasurable aspects of having sexual intercourse, a topic that had been entirely absent in prior editions.

During the administration of the 1979-1997 Conservative Government, government policy on sex education was analysed and intensely debated and for the first time, national legislation around sex education in schools was passed. The first piece of government legislation to mention sex education was the *1981 Education (School Information) Regulation*, which asserted that "local education authorities and school

governors had to publish information as to the manner and context of sex education"
(Pilcher, 2005: 165). Five years later, the *Education (No2) Act of 1986* took control away
from local education authorities and placed the responsibility for publishing a school
policy on sex education with school governors and teachers. The *Education (No 2) Act*
explicitly gave schools the right to choose not to provide any form of sex education. For
schools providing a programme of sex education, the *Act* stated that lessons had to be
taught "in such a manner as to encourage those pupils to have due regard to moral
considerations and the value of family life" (Education (No 2) Act 1986, s. 46).

Local education authorities received the *Circular 11/87* (DES, 1987) clarifying what the
Education (No 2) Act had specified that sex education should address. Counter to the
prescription of the 1977 *Handbook of Suggestions on Health Education* that students
should learn about homosexuality, *Circular 11/87* stated that "there is no place in any
school in any circumstances for teaching which advocates homosexual behaviour, which
presents it as the 'norm', or which encourages homosexual experimentation by pupils"
(DES, 1987: para 22). Furthermore, the *Circular* cautioned teachers that "giving an
individual pupil advice without parental knowledge or consent would be an inappropriate
exercise of a teacher's professional responsibilities, and could, depending on the
circumstances, amount to a criminal offense" (DES, 1987: para 26).

Following *Circular 11/87*, *Section 28 of the Local Government Act of 1988* stated that
local authorities should not "intentionally promote homosexuality or publish material
with the intention of promoting homosexuality" (Local Government Act 1988, s.28
(1)(2A)(1a)) nor "promote the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of
homosexuality as a pretended family relationship" (Local Government Act 1988, s.28
(1)(2A)(1b)). As Mac an Ghaill (1996) states, this *Act* was an exceedingly symbolic piece
of legislation because while *Section 28* did not directly apply to school-based sex
education, "the overall message given by *Section 28* of the *Act* served to intensify
teachers' self surveillance in the area of sex education" (p. 299; also see Thomson 1993).
The *Act* did, however, state "that nothing in sub-section (1) above [in reference to
teaching about homosexuality] shall be taken to prohibit the doing of anything for the
purpose of treating or preventing the spread of disease" (Local Government Act 1988,
s.28 (1)(2A)(2)).

The *Education Reform Act of 1988* placed upon the Secretary of State the 'duty' to establish 'a complete National Curriculum' and to specify its 'attainment targets' and 'programmes of study' (ERA 1988, s. 4.2(a-b)). In addition the *Act* gives the Secretary of State the 'power' to "revise the Curriculum whenever he considers it necessary or expedient to do so" (ERA 1988, s. 4.1(b)). Green (1998) states that particular features of sex education, including HIV and AIDS, were "included within the Science Curriculum in 1991 (DES, 1991) and, although limited in scope, schools were [likewise] statutorily required to teach these" (p.69). Other non-compulsory areas of sex education were left to the discretion of school governors.

The *Education Act of 1993* required secondary schools to provide sex education outside of the National Curriculum and while the specific content of such a programme was not detailed in the *Act*, schools were told to teach about STIs, HIV and AIDS (Education Act 1993, s. 241.2(a-b)) and advised that they still needed to observe *Section 46* within the *Education (No 2) Act of 1986* which asserted having "due regard to moral considerations and the value of family life". The *Education Act of 1993* also amended *Section 17* of the *Education Reform Act 1988* by inserting an 'Exemption of sex education' clause which stated that a parent had the right to withdraw their child(ren) from part or all of the sex education programme "except so far as such education is comprised in the National Curriculum" (Education Act 1993, s.241.3(17.A)), i.e. the content included in the statutory Science curriculum. This was the first mention of parental rights, in regards to the right to withdraw a child from all or part of school-based sex education. This *Act* also specifically provided the reference to where a parent's right to withdraw his or her child from sex education stopped. Both primary and secondary schools additionally had the responsibility of producing up-to-date written statements of their sex education policies and have copies readily available for parents free of charge (Education Act 1993, s. 241.5(a-b)).

The Department for Education issued *Circular 5/94* in May 1994 advising about the statutory requirements on sex education following the *Education Act of 1993*. However, noticeably absent from this circular (unlike *Circular 11/87*) was a specific mention about dealing with homosexuality (or not). In 1996, the *1996 Education Act* consolidated prior sex education-related legislation to which the "SRE elements in the *National Curriculum*

Science Order across all key stages [became] mandatory for all pupils of primary and secondary age" (National Children's Bureau, 2003).

From 1997 until its dissolution on April 12, 2010, the Labour party was in government with a parliamentary majority. The switch to a Labour Parliament from a long period of Conservative reign "raised the hopes of advocates and campaigners for children's rights who had for many years argued, largely unsuccessfully, for sex education policies which responded to the sexual health needs of young people" (Monk, 2001: 271). The Labour Government responded by commissioning a teenage pregnancy report by the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU). The SEU's *Teenage Pregnancy Report* was published in July 1999 and "it drew attention to the fact that highest rates of teenage conception and birth in Western Europe were to be found in the United Kingdom" (Warwick, Aggleton & Rivers, 2005: 235). A national 10-year plan to reduce the rates of teenage pregnancies was put in to place following the *Report* and the Teenage Pregnancy Unit as well as an independent national advisory group were established (Warwick, Aggleton & Rivers, 2005).

The Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) issued new guidance to schools in July 2000 (DfEE, 2000). The *Sex and Relationship Education Guidance* (DfEE, 2000) took into account the revised 1999 National Curriculum, the implementation of a new Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) framework in 1999 (later changed to PSHEE in 2009 after the phrase 'economic wellbeing and financial capability' was added to guidance texts) and the SEU's Teenage Pregnancy Report. The Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA) described the aspects covered by PSHE education as being:

> Central to a person's wellbeing and include nutrition and physical activity; drugs, alcohol and tobacco education; sex and relationships education; personal wellbeing; safety and risk; careers education; work-related learning; and economic wellbeing and financial capability. (QCDA, 2009)

Furthermore, the DfEE's *Guidance* outlined in greater detail the definition of SRE and how it should be taught within schools. Additionally, the *Guidance* moves from using the term 'sex education' to incorporate 'relationships', thus becoming 'Sex and Relationships Education' or SRE. Issues such as delaying first sex, contraception, and "how [young

people] can access local sources for further advice and treatment" (DfEE, 2000:10) are identified as needing to be covered in SRE, as well as learning 'skills' such as how to manage one's emotions and "recognise and avoid exploitation and abuse" (DfEE, 2000: 5). The *Guidance* states that:

> Sex and relationship education should contribute to promoting the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at school and of society and prepar[e] pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. (DfEE, 2000: 4).

This *Guidance*, however, was non-statutory. This meant that the only those topics covered in the Science curriculum, specifically HIV/AIDS, were in fact statutory elements of SRE.

Over the past decade, additional non-statutory guidance documents have been developed, to support schools to teach SRE in an arguably more comprehensive way. These documents include: (1) Ofsted's *Not yet good enough: personal, social, health and economic education in schools* report that describes characteristics of outstanding and inadequate PSHEE (and subsequently SRE) and how schools can evaluate the quality of their own programmes (Ofsted, 2013); (2) the DfES (2004) *Sex and Relationship Education – Schools' Responsibilities Factsheet* stating how schools should address SRE post the repeal of '*Section 28*'; (3) Ofsted's 2002 *Sex and Relationships Education in Schools Report* that asserts what good SRE practice should be; and (4) the former Labour Government's *Review of Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) in Schools Report* conducted by an external committee commissioned by the Government to "take forward the commitment in *The Children's Plan* to: 'Review the delivery of Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) in schools'" (SRE External Steering Group, 2008: 'Foreword'). The review issued its recommendation in 2008 that "PSHE should be made a statutory subject in all 4 key stages, with statutory content (for secondary schools) based on the non-statutory programmes of study for 'personal wellbeing'" (SRE External Steering Group, 2008: Ch.1, No.1). With regard to SRE, the review's *Report* asserts that "there needs to be stronger focus in SRE on 'relationships' and the skills and values that young people need as they progress through childhood and adolescence, into adulthood" (SRE External Steering Group, 2008: 'Foreword').

Following this review, on October 23, 2008, Jim Knight (then Minister of State for Schools and Learners) released a ministerial statement (Knight, 2008c) declaring that, after extensive review and assessment, PSHE was to become a statutory part of the English National Curriculum for both primary and secondary schools. Sir Alasdair Macdonald was commissioned by the Government after this announcement to review how best to go about implementing PSHE and within his published *Independent Review of the Proposal to Make Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) Education Statutory* outlined twenty specific headline recommendations – of which the first was that "PSHE education should become part of the statutory National Curriculum, in both primary and secondary phases" (Macdonald, 2009). A clause was drafted within the original wording of the *Children, Schools and Families Bill* that proposed that all of PSHEE was to become statutory; however, this met with opposition within Westminster that ultimately resulted in the *Bill* passing without the inclusion of the PSHEE proposal. In June 2010 as a part of the *Academies Bill*, there was another attempt to make PSHEE a statutory subject within the National Curriculum, but, again, the PSHEE amendments were not passed within the *Bill* after policymakers had reservations that the proposed amendments would only apply to Academy schools and not to all schools.

The 2010 general election saw a change of government to a Conservative and Liberal Democrat Coalition. The current Coalition (especially Conservative peers) have made it clear that the government does not intend to legislate on PSHEE or change current statutory SRE policy (the DfEE's 2000 guidance). On 29 November 2010 then minister Nick Gibb announced that the Coalition was not going to include SRE within its National Curriculum review but that the government did intend to conduct an internal review of PSHEE – which would include looking at SRE (Gibb, 2010). The Coalition did not launch the review until 21 July 2011 and Nick Gibb asserted within the Government's *PSHE Education Review Remit* that "the Government has already ruled out making PSHE education as a whole a statutory subject within the National Curriculum" (DfE, 2011b: 4) and the Coalition Government "has no plans to change the law on sex education or parents' right to withdraw their child from sex education" (DfE, 2011b: 4). The review concluded and its findings were published over two years later on 21 March 2013 (Truss, 2013; DfE, 2013b). PSHEE and therefore the non-biological aspects of SRE were to remain non-statutory.

However, while PSHEE remains non-statutory under the Coalition Government, small developments are occurring. For example, the DfE (2014) states within its mandatory timeline (regarding the 2014 launch of the Coalition's National Curriculum) that all state-funded schools "must publish their school curriculum by subject and academic year, including their provision of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE)". Additionally, Lord Nash – Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools – published a letter to Members of the House of Lords on 24 January 2014 stating that: (1) the DfE is developing a new expert subject group on SRE and PSHEE chaired by the Chief Executive of the PSHE Association to liaise with specialists and "develop and produce new resources where necessary" (Lord Nash, 2014: 2), (2) the DfE emailed all schools on 15 January 2014 citing SRE and PSHEE guidance drafted by the PSHE Association as being helpful tools for schools to draw on to develop their programmes and (3) supplementary guidance produced by the PSHE Association, the Sex Education Forum and Brook to complement the DfEE's 2000 guidance would be "welcomed" and "drawn to schools' attention" once published (Lord Nash, 2014: 3).

This section has endeavoured to outline the origin of sexual health education within English schools. This contextualisation of the legal and policy framework of SRE in England informs the subsequent sections of this thesis which will examine the values pertaining to sexual health education from debates within the UK Parliament and those involved in the SRE policy-making process (January 2008 until May 2012).

2.3 Northern Ireland: Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

There is a lack of social policy literature pertaining not only to the history of, but also the policy process informing, RSE policy-making in Northern Ireland. Therefore, while this section's discussion of RSE cannot provide the same historical breadth as found within the description of SRE in England, the section will outline what is known about the current RSE context.

Rolston, Schubotz and Simpson (2005) have argued that there is a lack of evidence to either prove or disprove suspicions that sex education within Northern Ireland is radically different – due to its geographical and historical context – from that of the other UK

countries. They posit that the scarcity of information around sex education signifies "the status of public debate about sex in Northern Ir[ish] society; such debate is rare outside occasions of moral panic" (Rolston et al., 2005: 218). Yet, since September 2007 Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) for primary students as well as Learning for Life and Work (LLW) for post-primary students – where RSE is a component of both areas of learning – have been a statutory requirement within the Northern Ireland Curriculum (*The Education (Curriculum Minimum Content) Order (Northern Ireland) 2007*). The Northern Ireland Curriculum (NIC) is equivalent to the National Curriculum in England. RSE does not hold a statutory status per se within current education legislation; however, because CCEA and Department of Education, Northern Ireland (DENI) guidance documents pertaining to RSE are linked with the compulsory requirements of statutory PDMU and LLW, schools are expected to teach the RSE curriculum (McConky, 2010).

Focusing on secondary school, the curriculum for Learning for Life and Work (LLW) concentrates on four specific yet separate elements: Employability, Local and Global Citizenship, Personal Development, and Home Economics (the latter taught only within Key Stage 3). Within the Personal Development component, 'Self Awareness', 'Personal Health' and 'Relationships' are the three key statutory concepts explored – with each concept having its own statutory requirements. For example, under the 'Personal Health' concept one statutory requirement is that students should "explore the concept of health as the development of a whole person" (CCEA, 2007a: 46), while under 'Relationships' one statutory requirement is to "explore the implications of sexual maturation" (CCEA, 2007a: 46).

However, while the curriculum uses the term 'sexual maturation', it does not statutorily state what 'implications' or the exact content that should be taught, but instead offers non-statutory guidance and suggestions that topics such as fertility, contraception and sexual health. By not assigning specific content to statutory key concepts and learning requirements provides a school with the flexibility to design and implement its curriculum around how its governing and teaching body interprets these aims, as well as how to achieve these targets while still keeping with the ethos of the school. CCEA (2007b) states that LLW was made a statutory part of the Northern Ireland Curriculum

because "research indicated a need for closer links between the curriculum and the development of skills and capabilities necessary for life and work" (p.2) and that it is necessary for students to be taught Personal Development "if they are to withstand the social, cultural, academic and workplace pressures in their lives" (p.28).

Compared to school-based sex and relationship(s) education within England and Wales (Pilcher, 2005) and other European countries such as Finland (Hosie, 2004) and the Netherlands (van Loon & Wells, 2003), RSE within Northern Irish schools is fairly recent. DENI published its first sex education framework for state-controlled schools in *Guidance Circular 1987/45* in 1987. While most Catholic-maintained schools taught (and many still do today) 'Education for Love' – a RSE programme from the Catholic moral viewpoint – *Guidance Circular 1987/45* states that each state-controlled school must have a written policy on sex education and that copies are to be given to parents (DENI, 1987). The guidance additionally maintains that "sex education should be taught in a sensitive manner which is in harmony with the ethos of the school and in conformity with the moral and religious principles held by parents and school management authorities" (DENI, 1987).

Following *Guidance Circular 1987/45*, the *Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989* made school-based sex education (the term used within education documents – see, for example, *Guidance Circular 1987/45*) a statutory component of the compulsory Science Programme of Study and the non-statutory Health educational (cross-curricular) theme of the NIC. Under this *Order* the only subject within the NIC that a student could be withdrawn from was Religious Education. However, *C&A/Briefing/1256* published by DENI in September 1992 asserted that the health education cross-curricular theme was to be compulsory for P1 to Form 4 students (now Key Stage 1-3) as well as to Form 5 (now Key Stage 4) students the following September in 1993 (DENI, 1992). Coincidentally, earlier that year (1992), the Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland (HPANI) undertook a study investigating parental attitudes towards sex education and found that while parents felt responsible for teaching RSE to their child(ren), many felt uncomfortable doing so (HPANI, 1992).

In 1994 the then Northern Ireland Curriculum Council (today the CCEA) and the HPANI published the *Health Promoting School: A Guide for Teachers* as a guidance to assist schools with how to better promote student health (HPANI, 1994). The HPANI further conducted a study on parents' and schools' views on RSE and found that approximately 72% of both parents and teachers agreed that they are equally responsible for teaching RSE to children; however, although 65% of post-primary schools surveyed had a written policy on RSE, 68% of primary schools surveyed did not (HPANI, 1996). It was not until 2001 that both primary (CCEA, 2001b) and post-primary (CCEA, 2001a) schools received guidance from the CCEA outlining how to approach school-based RSE.

While Personal Development and aspects of RSE are now statutory within the Northern Ireland Curriculum (as well as within the Science Curriculum), evidence has not always supported this arguable proactive approach to teaching RSE within schools. In 1996, for instance, the HPANI surveyed parents and teachers and found that homosexuality and abortion were two subjects most likely not to be found within school RSE curricula because these were subjects parents would wish to have excluded. The lack of discussion about abortion and homosexuality within classrooms could be linked to the slow process in relation to legislation legalising homosexuality and abortion within Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland did not legalise homosexuality until after a case was won against it at the European Court of Human Rights in 1982, placing Northern Ireland's legalisation fifteen years behind England and Wales (Rolston et al., 2005). Additionally, Northern Ireland has yet to legalise abortion even though it has been legal within the rest of the UK since the implementation of the Abortion Act of 1967 (Lee, 1995).

While Northern Ireland's education system is dominated and therefore divided by religion (i.e. Catholic-maintained and predominantly Protestant populated state-controlled schools), past research has suggested a high level of conservatism not only throughout the whole education system but also in relation to how RSE is taught – heavily influenced by traditional Christian moral viewpoints and where churches have power over policy development (Rolston et al., 2005; McAleavy & McCrystal, 2007). Yet, despite these socio- and political contextual issues, since 2007 Personal Development has been a compulsory area of learning for both primary and post-primary students. The next section

in this chapter provides insight into young people's perceptions of sex and relationship(s) education in the UK.

2.4 Young people in the UK: perceptions of sex and relationship(s) education

It has been argued that "it is vitally important for health promotion programmes and interventions to begin from a realistic understanding of young people's perceptions, beliefs, experiences and needs" (Aggleton, Ball & Mane, 2000: 216; Lawrence et al., 2000; Strange et al., 2002; Newby et al., 2012) because young people speak plainly and understandably about what can help them (Blake, 2008). Engaging young people to assess their needs and then developing and implementing sex and relationship(s) education programmes that contain what they define as relevant will more likely garner student engagement with delivered sex and relationship(s) education messages since young people will find them relatable (Allen, 2008).

According to CCEA in Northern Ireland (2001b), "A programme which remains unchanged from year to year is unlikely to meet the changing needs of pupils" (p.12). Additionally, England's current SRE policy emphasises that each school's policy should reflect student voices because "listening and responding to the views of young people will strengthen their confidence and self-esteem" (DfEE, 2000: 7). Such a view about the role of young people in shaping sex and relationship(s) education positions them as sexual subjects. This section reviews what is currently known about what young people in the UK say about school-based sex and relationship(s) education. It focuses more specifically on the sexual attitudes and experiences of young people in Northern Ireland and England and their suggestions towards improving sex and relationship(s) education within schools.

There have been a small number of local or regional studies conducted within Northern Ireland pertaining to sexual health and sexuality. These include a focus on the views of teachers and parents about RSE (HPANI, 1996; Loughrey, 2002), the sexual attitudes and lifestyles of young people (Northern Health and Social Services Board, 1999; HPANI, 2000; Cairns, 2001; Loughrey, 2002; NISRA, 2002a; Schubotz et al., 2002, 2003), the overall sexual health of young people (specifically first sex, unplanned pregnancy and STIs) (HPANI, 1994; DHSSPSNI, 2000, 2002; NISRA, 2002a; Rolston et al., 2004) and

the quality and content of RSE (Loughrey, 2002; Schubotz et al., 2002, 2005). Moreover, the voices of Northern Irish young people have frequently been absent from UK 'home international' comparisons – most noticeably, for example, from perhaps the largest Britain-wide 'home international' studies to date: the Nastal-1, Nastal-2 and Nastal-3 reports.

In 1994 the first Britain-focused National Surveys of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles (Nastal) report was published (Johnson et al., 1994) through the partnership of the Centre for Sexual Health & HIV Research, the National Centre for Social Research and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. A second Nastal (Nastal-2) was conducted between 1999 and 2001. Additionally, a third Nastal survey, 'Nastal-3', interviewed 15,000 adults aged from 16 to 74 between 2010 and 2012 and published its first findings on 26 November 2013 (The Lancet, 2013). "The 1994 British survey was acknowledged as the largest and most detailed survey of sexual behaviour undertaken anywhere in the world" (Rolston et al., 2004: 192).

Within each of the three Nastal surveys participants were asked a series of questions relating to his or her sexual health and behaviours, including the ways in which he or she first learned about sexual matters (e.g. the Internet, lessons at school, friends of a similar age, etc.), how or from whom one would have liked to have learned more about those sexual matters, as well as identifying things he or she felt they ought to have learned more about but did not. While findings to these questions have yet to be published for Nastal-3 (as of June 2014), the Nastal-2 survey (11,161 respondents aged 16-44 years) highlighted that young people cited school-based sex and relationship(s) education as their primary source of information about sexual matters (Wellings et al., 2001), with "an increase in the proportion of men aged 16 to 24 years reporting school lessons as their main source of sex education" (Wellings et al., 2001: 1847) since Nastal-1.

Likewise, a 2011 survey researching the political views, experiences of schooling, sexual health and other social issues of 16-year olds in Northern Ireland found similar results. The *Young Life and Times Survey 2011* conducted by Access Research Knowledge (ARK) Northern Ireland – a collaborative social science research partnership between Queen's University Belfast and the University of Ulster – asked 1,435 young people

similar sexual health questions to those employed by the Nastal reports. For instance, young people were asked to identify the various ways they got information about sexual matters, the specific outlet in which he or she received the most helpful information, as well as how one would have preferred to get information on sexual matters (ARK, 2011a). Schools were not only cited the most by participants (89%) as being one of the places through which they received information about sexual matters (ARK, 2011a), but young people also named schools as being their number one preferred site from which to get information on sexual matters as well as the source from which they have received the most helpful information (ARK, 2011b). Young people cited their school (89%), friends (77%) TV or radio (48%) and mother (47%) (ARK, 2011a) as the main places through which they received information about sexual matters. 42% of young people identified their schools as providing the most helpful information, followed by friends (18%) and then their mother (12%) (ARK, 2011b).

However, the findings from the *Young Life and Times Study 2011* are in contrast to two research studies published in Northern Ireland in 2002 – the Catholic ACCORD sponsored *Beliefs, Attitudes and Experiences of Pupils, Parents and Teachers about Relationships and Sexuality Education in Post-Primary Catholic Schools in Northern Ireland* (Loughrey, 2002) and the joint University of Ulster and fpa Northern Ireland study entitled *Towards Better Sexual Health* survey (Schubotz et al., 2002). These two studies found that while young people cited schools as the 'preferred' source for sex and sexual health information, unlike those surveyed within the 2000 Nastal, 'friends' were the main source of information (73% in Loughrey, 2002 and 81% of those surveyed in Schubotz et al., 2002). It is likely that the results of the *Young Life and Times Survey 2011* reflect the fact that RSE provision was only developed more comprehensively during the first decade of the twenty-first century – with Northern Ireland's current statutory RSE policy published in 2001, Personal Development made statutory within the Northern Ireland Curriculum for all schools in 2006 and further statutory minimum content being laid out in secondary legislation in 2007.

Like the findings of both Accord's report and the *Towards Better Sexual Health* survey, a later study conducted by Coleman and Testa (2007), analysing the SRE preferences of an ethnically diverse sample of fifteen to eighteen year old students in Greater London,

likewise showed that of 3,007 respondents, 64% of female respondents and 56% of male respondents identified schools as their preferred source of information, followed by 'other sources' (i.e. magazines and the Internet), friends, and then (lastly) family. However, Rolston, Schubotz and Simpson (2005) argue that just because young people choose schools as "the most desirable venue for sex education, this choice of itself does not reveal whether the quality of sex education as experienced by the respondents is actually high" (p.621).

In general, a large concern among students within both countries has been that their schools have not provided sufficient time to 'talk' within the classroom about sex and relationship(s) issues and for open discussions to be facilitated (Loughrey, 2002; fpa, 2007; UKYP, 2007). As one young female respondent states, "If you watch a video, [teachers] do not really talk about it, because it's a taboo subject. They should really try to get us talking. We'd get a different perspective that way" (fpa, 2007: 10). Young people also state that there are certain topics they either feel they are not receiving enough information about or that they specifically are interested in discussing further: (1) information about 'safer sex'; (2) relationships and emotions; (3) sexual behaviours; (4) sexual orientation; and (5) starting sex and relationship(s) education earlier.

'Safer sex' issues include how one puts a condom on (UKYP, 2007), contraception (Forrest et al., 2004; Coleman & Testa, 2007) and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) (Forrest et al., 2004). The 2007 UK Youth Parliament SRE survey of over 21,000 English young people between the age of eleven and eighteen found that despite the *2000 DfEE* stating schools should "inform young people about condom use and safer sex in general" (p.17), "55% of all 12-15 year olds, and 57% of girls between the ages of 16-17 had not been taught how to use a condom" (UKYP, 2007: 4). Furthermore, while approximately 55% of all respondents did state they were taught about teenage pregnancy, 43% overall had not received any teaching about intimate relationships within their school SRE programmes (UKYP, 2007).

Within Northern Ireland, Loughrey's (2002) earlier study too had respondents stating that "if they are going to tell you how to do it, then you need to know about how to be safe" (Loughrey, 2002: 25) and that "they do not talk about the emotional side of things"

(Loughrey, 2002: 25) and that "the whole thing about relationship failure, we need to do stuff on that" (Loughrey, 2002: 25). Questionnaire data from an English study on what young people would like from their SRE revealed that out of 4,353 secondary school students aged thirteen to fourteen years old, 52% of girls and 49% of boys stated that they wanted to know more about sexual feelings, relationships and emotions (Forrest et al., 2004). "For boys this was the fourth most popular, after STDs, HIV and where to go to access advice" (Forrest et al., 2004: 345). Other students wanted to know, "If you ask a boy out and he is more popular than you is he more likely to say no?" (Forrest et al., 2004: 345) and "How long should you be courting someone before you indulge in oral and anal?" (Forrest et al., 2004: 345).

Additionally, young people in the UK are interested in being taught about sexual behaviours outside of vaginal sexual intercourse such as masturbation (Schubotz et al., 2002; Coleman & Testa, 2007), orgasms and wet dreams, oral and anal sex (Forrest et al., 2004) and how to make sex more pleasurable (Coleman & Testa, 2007; fpa, 2007; UKYP, 2007). Students complain that sex and relationship(s) education is too heterosexually-oriented (Schubotz et al., 2002; fpa, 2007; Martinez & Emmerson, 2008; Formby, 2011) and is "largely irrelevant for gay and lesbian young people" (fpa, 2007: 7). One seventeen year old self-identified gay respondent within a one-to-one interview spoke of being expelled from school for three days after asking his teacher "how do gay people have sex?" and the teacher replying "you should know" and had the respondent go to the school main office where the headmistress remarked the same "you should know" (Rolston et al., 2005: 225). Rolston, Schubotz and Simpson (2005) analysed the respondent's expulsion as a result of the "breach of unspoken agreement between students and teachers not to bring up 'contentious' issues and not to ridicule teachers or [a] school's ethos" (p.225).

While young people are generally supportive of the need for sex and relationship(s)-related work, some schools argue against delivering such provision, usually because of concern around parental objections. This is despite the fact that much research with parents supports the role of schools in providing SRE/RSE (Aggleton & Campbell, 2000). Evidence from the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy (DCSF & DoH, 2010) illustrates that "young people (95%) and parents (82%) support the proposal that SRE become a

statutory part of the National Curriculum" (p.13) in England. An earlier survey conducted by the Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland (1996) entitled *Sex Education in Northern Ireland, Views from Parents and Schools*, also found support, albeit less than in England, from parents (72%) as well as teachers (66%) for Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) to be seen as a shared, joint responsibility between the home and school environments.

This section's discussion of students' perceptions on sex and relationship(s) education and their suggestions for improving provision highlight that regardless of religion and ethnicity, both Northern Irish and English students have been dissatisfied with their sex and relationship(s) school programmes received to date. This evidence highlights that, with the sustained, relatively high rates of teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, reports of coercive and abusive experiences among young people, and support from parents and young people for school-provided sexuality education – this remains a critical issue over which policy-makers and educators need to concern themselves with.

The following chapter focuses on conceptualising 'policy' and the various ways 'policy' can be understood. A focus on policy-making is important given that evidence from English and Northern Irish young people suggests that SRE and RSE is not only supported and believed to be needed, but young people view SRE and RSE as being a vital part of their broader education.

Chapter 3: Conceptualising policy

3.1 Introduction

The term 'policy' is ambiguous with many competing definitions (Harman, 1984; Hogwood & Gunn, 1984; Turner, 1997; Blakemore, 2003; Bell & Stevenson, 2006; Spicker, 2006; Jones, 2010). It is additionally not uncommon for analysts to use the term 'policy' to describe "very different 'things' at different points" (Ball, 1993: 10) within their own analyses. However, Bell and Stevenson (2006) argue that the term 'policy' is "too broad to be confined to a single, pithy definition" (p.14) for its meaning would lose its "breadth and complexity" (p.14); instead, they recommend drawing upon multiple definitions in order to better understand the nature of policy analysis.

Some describe policy as being a 'product' or a 'means to an end'. For example, Harman (1984) describes policy as an attitude or viewpoint arising in "response to a problem or issue of conflict, and directed towards a particular objective" (p.13), while Jones (2010) states that policy is "a set of ideas and proposals for action culminating in a government decision" (p.486). Furthermore, Blakemore (2003) asserts that the outcomes of policy are the "aims, goals, or statements of what ought to happen" (p.10). Others view policy as a form of action or inaction with policy being "whatever governments choose to do or not do" (Dye, 1984: 1) or as "any course of action (or inaction) relating to the selection of goals, the definition of values or the allocation of resources" (Codd, 1988: 235).

Chapter Three provides a brief introduction to how one can better understand the term 'policy' and illustrates the concept of policy and policy development as a process, policy as a set of values, as well as policy being represented by texts and broader discourses to be enacted at the national as well as local secondary school institutional levels. These key concepts have driven the interpretation of England's and Northern Ireland's sex and relationship(s) education policy-making processes presented within this thesis.

3.2 Policy as a process

Ball (1994) describes policy as being "both text and action, words and deeds, it is what is enacted as well as what is intended" (p.10). "Policy development is not a neat process in

which educational leaders simply digest policy from above and translate it into practice in the institution" (Bell & Stevenson, 2006: 18), instead it is still being made and remade as it is being implemented (Bowe, Ball & Gold, 1992). Policymaking as a process is not something that happens exclusively within higher government but is something that also happens 'down here', more specifically at the local and institutional level (Bell & Stevenson, 2006). Those involved in educational policy and its development represent a multi-layered system that can stretch from the local to global level (Lingard et al., 2005). Rein (1983) finally rationalises policy as "embodying the results of barter, compromise, accommodation, and the judgment of what is politically desirable after most of the interests affected by the policy have had their say" (p.119).

In the UK public policy problems may arise from its multi-level governance structure. The once unitary Westminster-focused system of government – where public policy was made by a small number of groups and individuals in London – has become a divided semi-federal system of multi-level governance with distributed power and authority (some might argue among elites and elite groups) over policy development (Moran, 2005). Moran (2005) argues that "problems of authority, coordination, control over resources, and battles for turf" (p.427) illustrate how devolution among the UK countries has altered power within the policy-making system. Policy development should therefore be seen not as a linear process but as a ongoing one; most especially around areas that have been devolved such as education and health.

Some analysts and academics agree that the process of policy development is best understood as a cycle (Easton, 1953, 1965a, 1965b; Hogwood & Gunn, 1984; Bowe, Ball & Gold, 1992; Ball, 1993, 1994). Researchers have developed various frameworks and models to describe what essentially does (or does not) happen during policy development (Easton, 1953; Jenkins, 1978; Hogwood & Gunn, 1984; Hill & Bramley, 1986; Burch & Wood, 1990; Bowe, Ball & Gold, 1992; Ball, 1993). Burch and Wood (1990) propose that policy-making involves three stages: initiation, formulation and implementation. Easton (1953, 1965a, 1965b) instead outlines a system approach where political activity is analysed in terms of a system containing a number of processes that must remain in balance for the policy process to continue. This 'balance' is maintained by analysing processes in a sequential order.

Meanwhile, Hogwood and Gunn (1984) have developed an arguably more complex decision-making framework where they maintain that the policy-making process consists of nine definitive stages: (1) deciding to decide (issue search or agenda-setting); (2) deciding how to decide (or issue filtration); (3) issue definition; (4) forecasting; (5) setting objectives and priorities; (6) options analysis; (7) policy implementation, monitoring and control; (8) evaluation and review; and (9) policy maintenance, succession, or termination (Hogwood & Gunn, 1984: 4). Lindblom and Woodhouse (1993) argue, though, that "deliberate orderly steps … are not an accurate portrayal of how the policy process actually works. Policy-making is instead a complex interactive process without beginning or end" (p.11).

This thesis adopts the policy cycle approach developed by Bowe, Ball and Gold (1992), further extended by Ball (1993), because it recognises that the government, state, LEAs/LAs, ELBs and individual schools are dissimilarly empowered over time throughout the policy process. Bowe, Ball and Gold's (1992) policy cycle model also "draw[s] attention towards the work of policy recontextualisation that goes on in the schools" (p.19). Their policy cycle (Figure 1) is depicted as multifaceted and they argue that education policy is a process rather than a simple product.

Figure 1: The context of policy-making
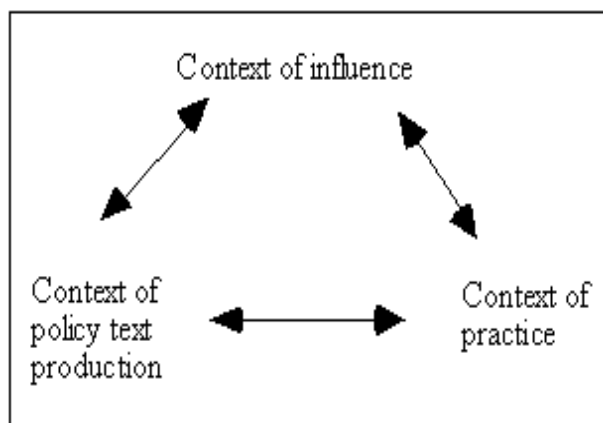
Source: Bowe, Ball and Gold, 1992: 20

Bowe, Ball and Gold (1992) argue that policy development occurs through a continuous cycle made up of three primary policy contexts that represent action – influence, policy

text production and practice. This is a heuristic representation of the policy process. Although each context influences the other in an on-going fashion, the first context – the context of influence – describes where policy is initiated and policy discourses are constructed. Specifically in relation to education policy, the context of influence is concerned with how "interested parties struggle to influence the definition and social purposes of education, what it means to be educated" (Bowe, Ball & Gold, 1992: 19). Second, the context of policy text production refers to the evolution of policy through texts such as legal texts and policy documents. Thirdly, the context of practice focuses on how policy is received, interpreted and enacted through its implementation within the "arena of practice to which the policy refers" (Bowe, Ball & Gold, 1992: 21). Ball (1993) extended the cycle to include a more explicit division between 'policy as text' and 'policy as discourse'.

This thesis views the policy process as 'messy' where those involved in policy decision-making and policy development encounter constant struggles. Bowe, Ball and Gold's (1992) policy cycle model, unlike Easton (1953, 1965a, 1965b) and Burch and Wood's (1990), acknowledges more the "negotiations, bargaining, competition and co-operation" (McNay & Ozga, 1985: 1) involved with policy-making. "Policy is not done and finished at the legislative moment, it evolves in and through the texts that represent it, texts have to be read in relation to the time and the particular site of their production" (Bowe, Ball, & Gold, 1992: 21). Thus, the policy cycle model rejects Easton's (1953, 1965a, 1965b) assertion that there is one prescribed sequential order that keeps policy-making 'balanced', and does not see policy-making as a simple linear process in the way Burch and Wood's (1990) three step process of initiation, formulation and implementation model understands it. The next section briefly describes how policy contexts can be understood as a set of values before analysing the concepts of both 'text' and 'discourse' as representations of policy.

3.3 Policy contexts as a set of values

Values have been described as "permeat[ing] every phase of the [policy-making] process (Malen & Knapp, 1997: 433), with policy disputes "often centring on what (or whose conceptions of values) will prevail" (Malen & Knapp, 1997: 429), for "conflicts over

policy represent struggles between opposing value sets" (Bell & Stevenson, 2006: 23). In developing policy, the "process of identifying alternatives, assessing them and selecting a best option involves value judgments" (Malen & Knapp, 1997: 433). Halstead and Reiss (2003) point out that there are many differences of opinion about what is meant by the term 'values'. Trying to universally define what constitutes a 'value' is challenging given that:

> People disagree, for example, over whether values have universal validity, or apply within particular cultures or traditions; whether values must be shared or are simply a matter of personal preference; whether there is a difference between private and public values; and whether there are any overarching principles by which conflicts between values may be resolved. (Halstead & Reiss, 2003: 5)

More broadly, values have been defined as *preferences* of "what we either like or dislike" (Warnock, 1996: 46) and as being *personal* in that they are "beliefs, attitudes or feelings that an individual is proud of, is willing to publically affirm" (Raths et al., 1966: 28). In addition, values have been referred to as *standards* for judging things (Shaver & Strong, 1976) or the social standards and ideas that are greatly important within a specific social group or culture (Blakemore, 2003). Values both present a lens to observe the world and supply a moral compass to which one's actions and responses are shaped (Begley 2004). Furthermore, values have been described as "those things (objects, activities, experiences, etc.) which on balance promote human wellbeing" (Beck, 1990: 2).

Halstead and Reiss (2003) find Warnock's values definition to be problematic. They maintain that 'values' refers to something "more fundamental than 'preferences'" (Halstead & Reiss, 2003: 5) and argue that the use of 'we' implies that values are 'shared' – which is not always the case. Therefore, this thesis adopts the conceptualisation of values that Halstead and Reiss (2003) adapted from Halstead and Taylor's (2000) earlier work. Thus, values are broadly viewed as:

> Principles and fundamental convictions which act as general guides to behaviour; enduring beliefs about what is worthwhile; ideals for which one strives; broad standards by which particular beliefs and actions are judged to be good, right, desirable or worthy of respect. (Halstead & Reiss, 2003: 5)

Within education social policy literature there are also discrepancies over how best to categorise values into 'sets'. As Haydon (2006) states, "It is much easier to draw up a list of examples than it is to give a general account of what kind of thing a value – any value – is" (p.35). For example, values are recurrently categorised in relation to the ideologies from which they are developed – such as "liberal, Catholic, democratic or humanist values" (Halstead & Reiss, 2003: 6; Kemmis et al., 1983; Hoepper et al., 1996; Gilbert, 2004; Jones, 2007, 2011a) – or on the "basis of the different disciplines or departments of life to which they belong" (Halsted & Reiss, 2003: 6) – for example, "political, economic, spiritual moral, social, cultural, artistic scientific, religious, environmental or health-related values" (Halstead & Reiss, 2003: 6; Donnellen, 1994; Lenderyou & Porter, 1994; Taylor, 1998; Blake & Katrak, 2002). However, regardless of how one categorises values, there is a shared belief that values lie at the centre of understanding education policy and its developmental process (Easton, 1953; Kogan, 1975; Malen & Knapp, 1997; Bell & Stevenson, 2006). As Bell and Stevenson (2006) state, "It is through values that policy develops" (p. 9).

Kogan's (1975) study on education policy-making describes policy as "the operational statements of values – 'statements of prescriptive intent', 'the authoritative allocation of values', 'programmatic utterances'" (Kogan, 1975: 55). Prunty (1985) similarly echoes Kogan (1975) by arguing that:

> The authoritative allocation of values draws our attention to the centrality of power and control in the concept of policy, and requires us to consider not only whose values are represented in policy, but also how these values have become institutionalised. (Prunty, 1985: 136)

This draws attention to the importance of not neglecting to consider policy actors' own values "which help them decide what is good or bad, desirable or undesirable" (Anderson, 2011: 132) when developing policy. However, if policy is to be perceived as the 'operational statement of values' as labeled by Kogan, it must be recognised that values are constantly being challenged with "ensuing conflicts ebbing and flowing" (Bell & Stevenson, 2006: 16) which mean that "values are constantly being shaped, formed and re-formed" (Bell & Stevenson, 2006: 23). As Bell and Stevenson (2006) point out, "policy therefore can be seen as *both* operational statements of values, *and* as the capacity

to operationalise values through the ability to exert influence" (p.23; *italics* in the original) during the policy development process. This means that policy is not only shaped by values but that these values continue to be contested and reformulated during the process of developing policy. It has been argued though that "polic[ies] only represent the values of the interest group that poses the authority in policy-making, although it often presents itself as universal, generalised and even commonsensical" (Rui, 2007: 250). The values represented within a policy, therefore, are not to be seen as a consensus of opinion among those whom participated in its policy development (Ball, 1990).

Regarding sex and relationship(s) education policy-making, it has been argued that "what lies behind every disagreement over sex education is a conflict of values" (Halstead, 1998: 232). This is perhaps not surprising, given that both education and social policy literatures have emphasised the important role policy actors' values play in shaping not only the policy process, but policy texts as well. For example, policy has been described as "a web of decisions and actions that allocate values" (Easton, 1953: 130), and a "course of action (or inaction) relating to the definition of values" (Olssen et al., 2004: 71). Some academics have even labeled the sex and relationship(s) education policy-process as 'morality politics' (Tatalovich & Daynes, 1988; Mooney & Lee, 1995; Vergari, 2000; Arsneault, 2001). Morality politics being defined as involving "conflict over the authoritative legitimisation of one set of rights or values over another" (Vergari, 2000: 292) and/or when "at least one advocacy coalition involved in the debate defines the issue as threatening one of its core values" (Mooney, 2001: 4). However, Halstead (1998) suggests that six main categories of values are threaded within sex education: (1) socio-economic values, (2) health-related values, (3) values related to liberal education, (4) children's values, (5) cultural values and (6) religious values (pp. 247-250). And yet, he acknowledges that the six value categories are not all mutually exclusive or 'clear cut' (Halstead, 1998: 250), again showing the complexity of trying to not only define but also frame values into sets or categories.

As previously suggested, values are not only played out within the policy development making process but also contested and shaped by policy texts (Bell & Stevenson, 2006). The next section therefore briefly describes policy as being represented through texts.

3.4 Representing policy through text

"Policy is not done and finished at the legislative moment, it evolves in and through the texts that represent it" (Bowe, Ball & Gold, 1992: 21). In this sense, policy is regarded as a product or outcome of the policy development process – the product being written text. Policy as text understands policies to be complex encoded representations that are shaped through resistance, negotiation and debate (Bowe, Ball & Gold, 1992; Ball, 1993, 1994; Bell & Stevenson, 2006). Ball (1994) argues that policy as text calls attention to the manner in which policies are introduced as written and then interpreted after being read. Policy texts are "fraught with the possibility of misunderstanding, texts are generalised, written in relation to idealisations of the 'real world' and can never be exhaustive" (Bowe, Ball & Gold, 1992: 21). This relates to the context of influence cited within the policy cycle discussed in Bowe, Ball and Gold's (1992) context of policy-making. The central argument is that "policy is not simply received and implemented rather it is subject to interpretation and then 'recreated'" (Bowe, Ball & Gold, 1992: 22) as each practitioner will confront a policy differently due to his or her own "histor[y], experiences, values, purposes and [vested] interests" (Bowe, Ball & Gold, 1992: 22).

However, what are policy texts? Ozga (2000) regards policy texts as being any "vehicle or medium for carrying or transmitting a policy message" (p.33). Ball (2008) provides further detail by describing policy texts as including:

> Documents and speeches that 'articulate' policies and policy ideas, which work to translate policy abstractions … into roles and relationships and practices within institutions that enact policy and change what people do and how they think about what they do. (Ball, 2008: 6)

In the context of Northern Ireland and England, the translation of educational policy into national legislation produces texts in the form of either a Statutory Rule in Northern Ireland or an Act either specific to one UK region (e.g. England) or bound to the entire UK. Additional non-statutory and statutory guidance documents pertaining to the curriculum are also circulated through civil service departments, Local Education and Library Boards (Northern Ireland), local authorities and LEAs (England), curriculum assessment councils, and individual schools.

Bowe, Ball and Gold (1992) stress that there are two important aspects to remember about policy texts: first, "the ensembles and the individual texts are not necessarily internally coherent or clear" (p.21) and second, "the texts themselves are the outcome of struggle and compromise" (p.21). Bowe, Ball and Gold (1992) are highlighting that policy and policy texts have not only multiple authors but also multiple readers – which produces significant spaces within which misinterpretations and contradictory usage of terms among various policy texts can be made. Furthermore, Ball (1994) emphasises that both the writers and readers of texts shape policy at the strategic, organisational and operational level. Those who write policy texts, for instance, cannot control whether readers will interpret the intended original meaning of a text as such (Bowe, Ball & Gold, 1992; Ball, 1993). Therefore, "parts of texts will be rejected, selected out, ignored, deliberately misunderstood, responses may be frivolous, etc." (Bowe, Ball & Gold, 1992: 22) by those reading a specific text. Ball (1993) additionally argues that "texts are not necessarily clear" (p.11) and can leave room for multiple interpretations since:

> Policies do not normally tell you what to do; they create circumstances in which the range of options available in deciding what to do are narrowed or changed. A response must still be put together, constructed in context, off-set against other expectations. All of this involves creative social action not robotic reactivity. (p.12)

As described earlier, Ball (1993) implies that policy is not merely received and then implemented; rather the text is subject to a reader's interpretations and then 'recreated'. Rizvi and Kemmis (1987) strengthen this point by discussing how those at the local school level read education policy. For:

> Those who participate in a programme at the school level will interpret it in their own terms, in relation to their own understanding, desires, values and purposes, and in relation to the means available to them and the ways of working they prefer. In short, all aspects of a programme may be *contested* (original emphasis) by those involved in a programme, moreover, a programme is formed and reformed throughout its life through a process of contestation. (Rizvi & Kemmis, 1987: 21)

This section has endeavored to illustrate the continuous process of policy development after the actual text has been written. For policy texts continue to be read, interpreted, and recreated during its implementation, whereby it is re-implemented regularly over space

and time. As Bowe, Ball and Gold (1992) state, "policy texts are not closed, their meanings are neither fixed nor clear, they 'carry over' of meanings from one policy arena and one educational site to another [and are] subject to interpretational slippage and contestation" (p. 83). The next section approaches how policy and policy texts are framed by discourse.

3.5 Policy as discourse

This section describes 'policy as discourse' (Ball, 1993) within the policy development cycle. Discourse has been described as being "concerned with communication and refers to talk, conversation and dissertation" (Garratt & Forrester, 2012: 10). It refers to the "ways in which things are discussed and the argumentation and rhetoric used to support what is said" (Legge, 1995: 326, 2). Analysing discourses within policy is important because policies "embody meaning and social relationships. They constitute both subjectivity and power relations" (Ball, 1990: 17). Discursive structures (concepts, language, rules of logic) are often overlooked yet contain both cognitive and normative elements that establish what those involved in policy development understand and articulate; hence, which policy ideas they are more likely to adopt (Campbell, 2002). Focusing on the discourses emanating from policy actors and embedded within policy texts is important, for:

> The discourses of the more powerful groups in society are more likely to be influential and gain legitimacy, often gaining support in the form of legislation, while the perspectives of subordinate groups are marginalised. (Garratt & Forrester, 2012: 11)

Discourse embodies the concepts and ideas related to policy, and the development of communication and policy formulation that assist with producing and implementing said ideas (Schmidt & Radaelli, 2004). Approaching policy as discourse involves seeing knowledge and power as intertwined (Foucault, 1991). Ball (1993) makes the argument that, despite the potential for multiple interpretations and reformulations of policies, the concept of policy as discourse is key because it allows us to understand why policy is often implemented so uniformly – as the discourses around policy limit the extent to which it can be interpreted. Drawing on the work of Foucault (1971, 1974, 1977), Ball (1993) additionally maintains that within ensembles – or collections of related policies –

discourses provide a boundary within which notions of 'truth' and 'knowledge' are formed. According to Foucault (1974), discourses are:

> Practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak ... Discourses are not about objects; they do not identify objects, they constitute them and in the practice of doing so they conceal their own invention (p.49)

The features that form such discourses are not value neutral, but instead reproduce the structural balance of power in society, for "discourses are what can be said, and thought, but also about who can speak, when, where and with what authority" (Ball 1993: 14). Similarly to Ball, Kress (1985) describes discourses as establishing a set of statements "that will define, describe, delimit, and circumscribe what is possible and impossible to say with respect to [a certain area of social life], and how it is to be talked about" (p.28). Discourses are both socially and politically constructed in order to develop a system of relationships among various objects and practices, while providing (subject) positions which social agents can recognise (Howarth & Stavrakakis, 2000). They encapsulate the understanding of words and statements and how these can be utilised; thus constructing "certain possibilities for thought" (Ball, 1993: 14). Additionally, discourse orders and constructs words and meanings in certain ways and in doing so excludes others as "meanings thus arise not from language but from institutional practices, from power relations, from social position" (Ball, 1990: 18).

Policy discourse, thus, can illuminate the specific factors or forces influencing sex and relationship(s) education, as "the relationship between knowledge, language and power is central to analysis of discourse" (Mackenzie, 1999: 85). Therefore, with this understanding, policy has, above all, a discursive effect, whereby it restricts the possibilities for outside thought and as a result restricts responses to change; for policy as discourse "may have the effect of redistributing 'voice'" (Ball, 1993:15), whereby those given access to speak with authority are assembled from a series of exclusions (Anderson, 2003: 3). From this perspective policy development is merely a struggle over meaning and viewing policy and policy development as discourse "is a way of indicating the significance of power relations in framing interpretations of policy texts" (Taylor et al., 1997: 28). Therefore, analysing policy texts (including debates, statutory legislation, and statutory and non-statutory SRE and RSE guidance documents) provide real opportunities

for policy learning as to what discourses are currently shaping how SRE and RSE are characterised.

The next chapter reviews literature pertaining to policy-making processes and offers an account of the range of policy decision-making models developed as theoretical frameworks not only for understanding the policy-making process but how to conduct policy analysis as well.

Chapter 4: Theorising the policy-making process

4.1 Introduction

This thesis adopts the view that policy is not just a product or action, nor that it only involves those within government, but instead is both a product and a "continuous and contested" (Bell & Stevenson, 2006: 2), intricate process (McNay & Ozga, 1985; Bowe, Ball & Gold, 1992; Ball, 1993; Turner, 1997; Moran, 2005; Bell & Stevenson, 2006) through discursive frames in which its development results from "negotiations, bargaining, competition and co-operation" (McNay & Ozga, 1985: 1) among individuals and various groups. Policy development takes place through a process consisting of a variety of stages at different levels, whereby individuals and groups attempt to develop policy that will benefit their own interests (Bell & Stevenson, 2006). They must, however, simultaneously contend with the "competing values and [the] differential access[es] to power" (Bell & Stevenson, 2006: 2) of others involved within this same process.

This chapter focuses on social policy literature that theorises the process of public policy-making. It does not offer a comprehensive overview of educational policy-making in the UK, but it does provide three important aspects relevant to accomplishing the aim of this study. First, the chapter provides a brief introduction to the role of the 'state' and 'government' as sites of policy development and the concept of 'power'. Next, in order to better interpret and understand British politics and the distribution of power and power relationships at the 'macro' level, the following four models are reviewed: rational-choice theory, the incremental model, pluralism, and the elite control model. Lastly, as this study recognises and accepts that a multitude of actors external to the state are involved in and influence the policy-making process, the interactions and relationships between these 'meso' level policy actors – e.g. third sector interest groups, research and academic institutions, media outlets – and state actors are discussed. Specifically, policy networks, policy network analysis and advocacy coalition literature is drawn upon.

4.2 The 'state' and 'government' as sites of policy development

This section briefly explores and defines the 'state' and 'government' as systems shaping the educational state and establishes the definition of the concept of 'power' that supports the analysis found within this thesis. Theorists assert that analysing the exercise and distribution of 'power' is key to examining policy-making processes (Laswell, 1950; Lukes, 1974; Foucault, 1981).

State policies are said to have two roles: to attempt to produce an "improvement in human welfare or to develop services (which it might or might not do effectively)" (Blakemore & Griggs, 2007: 133) and to "enhance the power of the political leader, government department or minister responsible for the policy" (Blakemore & Griggs, 2007: 133). The state can be argued as serving the role of 'mediator' within the policy-making process, whereby it has to some degree the 'power' to control not only what does and does not get placed on the policy agenda, but also available policy choices to choose from and potential policy outcomes to be discussed (Taylor et al., 1997: 30; also Offe, 1975). In order to better illustrate the models of policy decision-making (found within the next section) a brief explanation of power must be given, as any analysis of the policy process "needs to be grounded in an extensive consideration of the nature of power in the state" (Hill, 1997: 13). The term 'power' is applied in a myriad of ways in various contexts, through differing perspectives and for several purposes (Foucault, 1978; Weeks, 2000; Lukes, 2005).

There are many concepts of power that fit on various points of a continuum. For example, some argue that power is hierarchical and unbalanced (Emerson, 1962), while others view power as being negotiated (Dahl, 1986) or even shared amongst many different people or groups (Freire, 1996). However, it is argued that at the centre dividing these varying concepts of power is whether power is viewed as being exercised through social structures such as a ruling-class (i.e. Marxism) or through individual social relations (Weber, 1947). For the purposes of this study 'power' is understood drawing upon French philosopher Michel Foucault's (1978) broad assertion that "power is everywhere" (p.93). As sex and relationship(s) education policy-making is produced through a continuous and contested process involving many different individuals and groups with varying degrees

of social connections, resources and capital, this study acknowledges that SRE and RSE policy-making power is exercised among both individuals and groups (at the national and local level) as well as between structures having different distributions of power and power relationships at the 'macro' societal level (e.g. the state and government).

Viewing power as being employed by and flowing between both individuals and structures is important for Foucault (1990) who rejects any concept of power emanating from a single source – such as power being superimposed upon an individual or group from an elevated (e.g. the ruling class) or a central source such as the state (p.92). For "power ... [is] something that circulates, or rather [is] something that functions only when it is part of a chain" (Foucault, 2004: 29). Power is seen as existing through the relations between individuals or groups of individuals; whereby, power is the identifying feature of the inequalities between these and through larger societal structures. Foucault (2004) further states that power is "exercised through networks and individuals do not simply circulate in those networks; they are in a position to both submit and exercise this power" (p.29). Therefore, Foucault (2004) is implying that "power passes through individuals" (p.29) with the distribution of power changing at any given time.

In the context of UK education, the government and state are two central characters involved in influencing the system (Blakemore & Griggs, 2007). There is, however, not a general consensus on how to define 'government' (Bochel & Bochel, 2004; Blakemore & Griggs, 2007), its 'power' or how power and influence are exerted (Bochel & Bochel, 2004). One understanding is that the government is simply the combined views of the majority of MPs in the House of Commons and those in the House of Lords (Alcock, 2003). Blakemore and Griggs (2007), however, argue that government "involv[es] an intricate web of relationships" (p.134) between the Prime Minister and his or her Cabinet (known as the 'core executive'), senior civil servants and government ministers, as well as between the various bodies comprising the UK government (i.e. Westminster Parliament, Scottish Parliament, the Welsh Assembly and the Northern Ireland Assembly). Others have argued that central government, likewise, encompasses that described by Blakemore and Griggs, but additionally extends beyond the civil service to include the armed forces and the Metropolitan police (Bochel & Bochel, 2004).

Although the government has overall power and responsibility for the activities of the state, the 'state' is a larger entity that includes public servants (including for instance teachers, doctors and civil servants who implement policies), local government and local bodies (e.g. school governing bodies), and quangos (quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisations) (Blakemore & Griggs, 2007). Quangos are coordinated by central government (for example by the DfE or DENI) to manage and/or finance a specific task (Blakemore & Griggs, 2007). In the case of education, examples include the qualification, curriculum and assessment authorities such as Ofsted in England and CCEA in Northern Ireland, but also the Sex Education Forum (part of the National Children's Bureau). The 'state' has also been more broadly described as consisting of "institutions within which public power is located, and through which public power is exercised" (Lavalette & Pratt, 1997: 12).

When referring to the 'educational state', this, therefore, is the overall collection of sites and agencies involved with developing, running, managing and regulating the education system (Ball, 1990). This educational management and regulation is sometimes performed by "quangos, appointed bodies, intermediary agencies and even, in the case of examinations, by quasi-commercial organisations" (Ball, 1990: 20). Although the government essentially shapes policy (itself informed through consultation with experts and interested parties), "what actually happens on the ground is often determined by the effectiveness of civil servants at the national level, or by the amount of cooperation with central government departments shown by local officials or by professionals such as teachers" (Blakemore & Griggs, 2007: 135). Jones (2006b) identifies the following influences on policy factors which constrain the government and state: financial resources, political support, competence of key personnel, time, timing, coordination, personality factors, geographical factors, international events (pp.607-08).

As the central focus of this thesis is to examine and make sense of the sex and relationship(s) education policy-making process in both England and Northern Ireland, it is imperative to consider the models used to describe the role, exercise and distribution of power within decision-making at the 'macro' level of the state. The next section reviews some of the dominant theories regarding policy power by comparing four models of policy decision-making.

4.3 'Macro' level models of decision-making power

Theorising the policy-making process and analysing policy involves thinking not only about the state and its role in policy development, but also the nature of power and the distribution of power within the state (and across the wider society) to make policy decisions (Hill; 1997; Marsh & Stoker, 1995). Social policy literature uses the concept of 'policy styles' (Richardson, 1982; Cairney, 2008; Greer & Jarman, 2008; Birrell & Heenan, 2013) which focuses on "the way that governments make and implement policy" (Cairney, 2008: 350). For example, policy styles can be understood as policy being led from a 'top down' or 'ground up' approach, which offers an indication of where the distribution of power (Lijphart, 1977, 1999; Cairney, 2008) lies within the policy-making process.

A 'top down' approach to policy-making involves central government mandating a policy and then imposing it and an agenda for its implementation onto local community-level policy actors (e.g. local education authorities, regulating bodies, local schools), with little input and influence from third sector interest and community-level groups (Cairney, 2008: 357). A 'ground up' policy style, instead, involves "local, regional, and national [policy] actors in the planning, financing, and execution of [a] governmental [or] non-governmental program" (Sabatier, 1986: 32; Hjern et al., 1978). Birrell and Heenan (2013) state that:

> Majoritarian governments tend to produce a concentration of power at the centre and encourage top-down government, whilst power-sharing arrangements in government tend to diffuse power and also encourage the pursuit of consensus in policy-making [or ground-up policy]. (p.766)

Policy-making in the UK, most especially within England, has been described as being majoritarian and 'top down' (Lijphart, 1977, 1999; Greer & Jarman, 2008) from Westminster Parliament. However, some argue that it is wrong to generalise all UK policy-making as being 'top down' (Richardson et al., 1982; Kriesi et al., 2006; Cairney, 2008), as devolution has given each devolved government the opportunity to develop its own policy style (Cairney, 2008) and governments can adopt contrasting policy styles for different policy areas (Larsen et al., 2006; Birrell & Heenan, 2013). It is also argued that devolution has brought "a more participatory ethos in general to policy-making through

public participation, accessibility to decision-makers and extensive formal consultation" (Birrell & Heenan, 2013: 766; McGarvey & Cairney, 2008; Keating et al., 2009; Arnott & Ozga, 2010). Regarding Northern Ireland, with its compulsory power-sharing model of decision-making due to MLAs being elected on a Proportional Representation basis – "ensuring a representative cross-section of parties in the [NIA]" (Carmichael & Osborne, 2003: 213) – not only will there always be a coalition Government but "power is dispersed across parties, encouraging the formation of coalitions based on common aims" (Cairney, 2011: 211).

Larger societal-level or 'macro' level models and perspectives on the exercise of power by and within the state (regardless of if policy is made through a 'top down' or 'ground up' approach) can be presented in a variety of ways; this section briefly discusses rational-choice theory, the incremental model, pluralism and the elite control model. Each of the four models provides a different 'lens' to view the process of making policy. This examination provides the tools to appreciate the various notions of the distribution of 'power' specifically relating to the state and policy development, and will be used to help inform this thesis' analysis of which form of decision-making model best describes SRE policy-making in England and RSE in Northern Ireland.

Theorist Herbert Simon (1957), a key advocate of the rational choice model, argues that when analysing decision-making, one must look at "the process of decision as well as the processes of action" (p.1). Rational choice theory approaches politics with a viewpoint that people are rational beings that behave in a logical sequence of stages (Janis & Mann, 1977; Burch & Wood, 1990; Zey, 1992; Jones, 2006b; Kavanagh et al., 2006). The stages of this theory are often represented differently across different writings, with some publications suggesting four stages and others detailing more than ten. Janis and Mann (1977) present one example that when faced with multiple choices, decision makers arrive at a reasoned decision through the following seven stages:

> (1) Thoroughly canvass[ing] a wide range of alternative courses of action, (2) survey[ing] the full range of objectives to be fulfilled and the values implicated by the choice, (3) carefully weigh[ing] whatever they know about the costs and risks of negative consequences …, (4) intensively search[ing] for new information relevant to further evaluation of the alternatives, (5) correctly assimilat[ing] and tak[ing into] account any new information or expert judgment to which they are

exposed, (6) re-examin[ing] the positive and negative consequences of all known alternatives, and (7) mak[ing] detailed provisions for implementing or executing the chosen course of action (p.11).

One of the most problematic aspects of the rational choice approach is that this theory is underpinned by the assumption that decisions are made through a logical series of steps one must take (Lindblom & Woodhouse, 1993), whereas "in practice, the reality is normally far more complex" (Bochel & Bochel, 2004: 32). Additional criticisms of rational choice theory include: it is nearly impossible to assess all possible consequences (Simon, 1957; Burch & Wood, 1990); policy-makers do not always have complete information (Kavanagh et al., 2006); and the information that they do have may be "insufficient, irrelevant, too complex and too abundant" (Zey, 1992: 11). Furthermore, rational choice theory assumes that institutions function efficiently, whereas "effective action in pursuit of goals is difficult and often impossible because of unexpected or uncertain events internal and external to the [institution]" (Zey, 1992: 25).

In comparison, the incremental model (typically associated with Charles Lindblom and an extension from pluralism) does not see policy-makers as rational but suggests that they are trying to cope with (Bochel & Bochel, 2004; Jones, 2006b) or 'muddle through' (Lindblom, 1959) problems rather than necessarily solve them (Burch & Wood, 1994; Bochel & Bochel, 2004). The incremental model highlights the "extent to which policy-makers tend to stick with the known, the accepted, the familiar and the manageable" (Bochel & Bochel, 2004: 34), as well as keeping policies close to the status quo (Lindblom & Woodhouse, 1993).

Additionally, as governments hardly ever have the resources or the time to apply a rational choice model to decision-making – if even possible, Moran (2005) argues that policy actors "typically do what we all do in our private lives: just plump for the nearest available short-term choice" (p.417). However, incrementalism has been met with some criticism. One charge against it is that incrementalism assumes that "society is sufficiently fair and just to satisfy all of its citizens" (Burch & Wood, 1990: 31), therefore not requiring the status quo to be challenged. In addition, incrementalism views the policy process as involving a plurality of policy actors – both at the 'macro' and 'meso' levels – with power being distributed equally across all parties involved (McAuley, 2003). Yet, in

reality many would argue that those involved in policy development are not representative of all society (Etizoni, 1967) and "power is skewed in favour of certain groups and in particular in favour of big business" (Bochel & Bochel, 2004: 36). Within the incrementalism approach, problems are also only dealt with when they arise (Bochel & Bochel, 2004) with decision-makers focusing primarily on how to fix presenting problems and therefore neglecting to look ahead (Bochel & Bochel, 2004).

A dominant theory within UK politics and policy-making is that of pluralism (Bochel & Bochel, 2004). Pluralism is described as being "closest to popular and 'common sense' views of how government *should* act and how policies *should* be made in a democratic society" (Blakemore & Griggs, 2007: 135; *italics* in the original). Pluralist theory focuses on the claim that in Western industrialised societies power is not dominated by a ruling class (Dahl, 1961) but broadly disseminated among numerous groups that create a "multiplicity of channels of influence" (Bochel & Bochel, 2004: 50), whereby "no single organisation will come to dominate the political system" (Kavanagh et al., 2006: 24). Power lies within the ideas, interests and demands made within final policy decisions rather than within specific institutions like Parliament or government departments (Burch & Wood, 1990; Kavanagh et al., 2006). This suggests that the government is held in check because power is widely diffused in society beyond the state and government and includes external sources such as parental lobby groups, teacher unions, corporate executives, etc. (Blakemore & Griggs, 2007). "Government might initially set the agenda, but must constantly respond to demands from the social groups and economic influences that surround it" (Blakemore & Griggs, 2007: 136).

Pluralists have different views about the role of the state and government institutions in policy development. For example, some view the policy process as being dominated by multiple groups who have access to 'speak policy' and make decisions within a policy network, whereby the state and government simply act as a 'referee' between these groups and even the larger society (Marsh & Rhodes, 1992; Heywood, 2002). Burch and Wood (1990) consider policy decision-making to be a game and describe three separate pluralist views in relation to the role of government: as in charge of setting rules and ensuring 'fair play' among groups involved with decision-making, as acting as the official 'referee' between groups by keeping balance and settling disputes, or as a player in the

game "because government is itself an interest (or a collection of interests) and may also be expected to ensure a balance of interests (which means that it may need to represent minorities)" (p.43).

Criticisms of pluralist theory include: first, that it pays too much attention to the role of 'groups'; second, pluralists exaggerate groups' ease of access to decision-making processes; third, pluralists focus on the observable behaviour of groups; and finally, economic and professional groups are assumed to have advantages over other groups (Kavanagh et al., 2006: 25). Furthermore, Bachrach and Baratz (1963) contend that the pluralist approach neglects to acknowledge that groups or an individual – through rejecting issues or problems from the policy-making agenda – can also exercise power.

The fourth main framework for understanding decision-making power is the elite control model or elitism. Elitism derives from Vilfredo Pareto (1935) and Gaetano Mosca's (1939) work and provides one of the oldest explanations for viewing the distribution of power within decision-making of the state. While other models, such as pluralism, generally view power as being divided among various groups and that those external to the state and government have the potential to influence policy-making decisions, the elite control model argues quite the opposite. As asserted by Burch and Wood (1990), "The institutions of government and the associated ideas of accountability to, and control by, the public are no more than a façade" (p.45). Power is concentrated within government and state institutions where lay citizens have little or no say in policy decision-making (Kavanagh et al., 2006). This "effectively maintains control in the interests of the few, against the real interests of the majority of the population" (Burch & Wood, 1990: 46). That is, the state favours and makes decisions that serve the interest of powerful minority groups.

Elites or elite groups are described as being comprised of highly influential members of prime professional, governmental and business organisations who typically possess the same social backgrounds, were schooled in the same select universities and likewise are engaged within similar social circles (Blakemore & Griggs, 2007). The elite control model suggests that elites group together to control each main government institution, while having little accountability to those without elite status (Blakemore & Griggs,

2007). Bochel and Bochel (2004) point out that the elite control model "makes the assumption that shared background implies a shared consensus of values among those in important positions" (p.66); yet it is important to note that the elite decision-maker need not necessarily uphold the class interests of their own background. However, this model lacks significant clarification of not only the source of 'elite' power but also an explanation of how an 'elite' or dominant group retains its power (Heywood, 2002).

The four above mentioned 'lenses' to viewing the distribution of power in policy-making inform the next section's 'meso' level focus on the relationships among and decision-making processes between policy actors, and will be drawn upon to shape the study's discussion pertaining to the power to influence England's SRE and Northern Ireland's RSE policy processes.

4.4 ' Meso' level approach to policy-making

While looking at the policy process from a 'macro' level lens involves focusing on the state, its distribution of power and its relationship with society, 'meso' level analysis can be described as having a central focus on the interactions between and relationships among policy actors (individuals and interest groups both governmental and non-governmental) within a specific policy-making process (Marsh & Rhodes, 1992; Daugbjerg & Marsh, 1998). While there are undoubtedly varying definitions of what constitutes a 'macro' or 'meso' level of policy analysis, the interpretation from Marsh and Rhodes (1992) and Daugbjerg and Marsh (1998) most closely relate to the definition of 'meso' adopted for the purpose of this study.

This section describes how the concept of both 'policy network' and 'advocacy coalition' can be drawn upon to think about and describe the manner and structure of both England's SRE and Northern Ireland's RSE policy-making processes. The section first provides a brief historical account of the notion of 'policy networks' before discussing how policy network analysis (Wasserman & Faust, 1999; Adam & Kriesi, 2007) and the Advocacy Coalition Framework (Sabatier, 1988; Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993, 1999) can be employed as useful tools to not only determine the relevant set of policy actors given access to policy-making (in this case to SRE and RSE policy), but also mapping the

linkages and patterns of relationships between those with membership in each policy network (Waarden, 1992; Kriesi et al., 2006; Fischer, 2011).

The term 'policy network' became prolific within social policy literature following criticism of Lowi's (1969) 'iron triangle' concept to describe American policy-making. The 'iron triangle' model links the central government, Congressional Committees and third sector interest groups in a triangular fashion highlighting the interconnected and interdependent relationships among these three entities and, thus, presenting a 'closed-off' system or structure to policy-making. Not supporting this arguably 'institutionalised' or 'elitist' approach and instead viewing policy from a pluralist perspective, Heclo (1978) – still focusing on American politics – introduced the 'issue network' model. As opposed to policy-making being made within a 'closed' subsystem, Heclo (1978) views government representatives, third sector interest groups and lobbyists with specific interest in a particular policy area as interacting and forming relationships to create an 'issue network'. However, Rhodes (1997) argues that legislative committees are not as active within British policy-making as is found within the US, and that "it makes much more sense to talk of a relationship between the department, the regulatory agency and interest groups" (p.35; see also Dowding, 1995; Klijn, 1997; Marsh, 1998).

The main difference between 'network' and 'non-network' models used to explain the policy process is that a social network explanation includes "concepts and information on [the] *relationships* among units in a study" (Wasserman & Faust, 1999: 6). Rhodes and Marsh (1992) explain that recognising policy being made within a policy network links 'micro-level' policy analysis – specifically the "role of interests and government in relation to particular policy decisions" (p.1) – with 'macro' level analysis interested in "broader questions concerning the distribution of power within contemporary society" (p.1). While Heclo (1978) argues that an issue or policy network supports a pluralistic power structure to policy-making, it is argued that there is very limited evidence to support that a plurality of groups are engaged within and given access to policy-making contexts (Marsh & Rhodes, 1992: 263). The policy network metaphor instead, according to Marsh and Rhodes (1992), suggests that "Britain is the product of an elitist power structure" (p.263); policy networks are typically exclusive, whereby only a select and limited number of individuals or groups "enjoy privileged access to policy-making,

shaping both the policy agenda and policy outcomes" (p.263).

Social policy literature typically contextualises 'policy networks' in one of three ways: as a metaphor to describe the actions of those engaged in policy-making (Dowding, 1995; Börzel, 1998; Wasserman & Faust, 1999; Manning, 2002), as a theory for conducting policy analysis (Jordan & Schubart, 1992; Marsh & Rhodes, 1992; Parsons, 1995) and as a "prescription for reforming public management" (Rhodes, 2006: 426). However, just as 'macro' and 'meso' level policy analysis have been criticised for being too broadly defined, so to has the concept of policy networks. Thatcher (1998) asserts that the "concept of policy networks appears so general that it is almost meaningless" (p.401). However, despite its multiple definitions and criticisms policy network analysis is still a well-used approach for analysing the policy-making process (Parsons, 1995).

In order to make policy network analysis a less broad and unwieldy concept, Wasserman and Faust (1999) formalised a set of procedures to analyse a policy network's structure. Broadly, these procedures include (but are not limited to): specifying the boundaries of the system; collecting data to achieve a complete set of the policy actors engaged in the network as well as the patterns of relationships among said policy actors; and identifying coalition structures within the network (Wasserman & Faust, 1999). Fischer (2011) adds that policy network analyses may also include a focus on the "intensity of collaboration" (p.33) or "distribution of power" (p.33) within and among coalitions.

Extending policy network analysis and focusing on 'policy change', the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) was developed by Sabatier (1988) and further developed with Jenkins-Smith (1991, 1993, 1999). According to the ACF, policy actors within a network can be seen as being "aggregated into a number (usually one to four) of 'advocacy coalitions'" (Sabatier, 1998: 103), with each coalition composed of both governmental and non-governmental individuals and groups who both "(a) share a set of normative and causal beliefs and (b) engage in a non-trivial degree of coordinated activity over time" (Sabatier, 1998: 103). Like policy network approaches the ACF views policy-making as a continuous policy cycle (John, 1998). There are four main features to this framework: (1) a time perspective of a decade or more is needed to understand policy change; (2) concentrating on the interactions of policy actors within a policy subsystem is

the most useful way to think about policy change over time; (3) a subsystem is assumed to be intergovernmental with membership extending to academics and journalists; and (4) policies can be "conceptualised in the same manner as belief systems (i.e. as sets of value priorities and causal assumptions about how to realise them" (Sabatier, 1988: 131).

There are believed to be two paths that lead to policy changes and belief changes: external perturbations or shocks to a policy subsystem (such as a change of government or changes in socio-economic conditions and technology) and/or policy-oriented learning (Sabatier & Weible, 2007: 198). Policy-oriented learning involves "altering one's thoughts, belief system, policy actions and objectives due to increased knowledge and experience" (Sabatier, 1988: 133). The institutional affiliation of each policy actor is not as important as the belief systems to which he or she prescribes (Sabatier, 2007: 5; Sabatier, 1993). The ACF organises the belief systems of each coalition of actors or larger advocacy coalition into a three-tiered hierarchical structure: deep core beliefs, policy core beliefs and secondary beliefs (Sabatier & Weible, 2007: 194-196). However, critics of the ACF argue that it places too much emphasis on the stability of advocacy coalitions (Schlager, 1995) and policy actor values and beliefs that in turn the ACF neglects to acknowledge theories of power and policy actors acting in their own self-interest (Parsons, 1995: 202).

Within this study SRE and RSE policy-making is recognised as taking place within the broader structure of an SRE and RSE policy network that is embedded within the larger education policy domain. 'Policy network' is used as a generic label to mean the cluster of state and private policy actors (Jordan & Schubert, 1992) who all have an interest in SRE in England or RSE in Northern Ireland and form relationships, share or compete for resources, as well as have the "capacity to determine policy success or failure" (Peterson & Boomberg, 1998:8; see also Rhodes, 1988; Thatcher, 1998; Kriesi et al., 2006). Regardless of whether a policy actor's institutional affiliation, all those involved in a country's policy network are considered participating members because of having a specific "interest in what policy is chosen" (Thatcher, 1998: 406) and its policy outcome. Within both the broader SRE and RSE policy network, advocacy coalitions will be defined as will its sub-group coalitions of actors.

That is, within a network there might be two main advocacy coalitions (e.g. Comprehensive SRE and Abstinence-Only SRE). Within each advocacy coalition further 'sub-groups' may be found comprised of individuals (e.g. academics, parliamentarians, journalists) and representatives from interest groups that have formed a coalition around a specific core policy belief (e.g. a specific faith-base or health perspective). At the same time, individual policy actors can be active within an advocacy coalition but also independent from any sub-group coalition found within the broader SRE and RSE network. Policy network and ACF literature is drawn from here because the tools/suggested methodologies it offers will help to describe and visualise the complexity, power struggle and structure to which SRE and RSE policy has been and is made.

4.5 Concluding comments

As mentioned the UK has one of the highest rates of unplanned teenage pregnancies in Western Europe (Social Exclusion Unit [SEU], 1999; UNICEF, 2001; Wellings et al., 2001; Avery & Lazdane, 2008), UK young people are becoming sexually active at a younger age (Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency [NISRA], 2001; Wellings et al., 2001; Currie et al., 2008), and new episodes of STIs among young people have increased over time (Health Protection Agency [HPA], 2008). School-based sex and relationship(s) education in the UK has been identified by researchers, the government and young people as being inadequate and a main contributor to young people's poor sexual health knowledge (DfEE, 2000; Mellanby et al., 2001; UNICEF, 2001, UKYP, 2007; SRE External Steering Group, 2008; DCSF & DoH, 2010; TPIAG, 2010). With schools being potentially positioned as "beacons for the engagement of entire communities in health related work and activities" (Aggleton, Dennison & Warwick, 2010: 1), it seems appropriate that a study should be undertaken to better understand the sex and relationship(s) education policy process in the UK – including the distribution of power to make policy decisions, those allowed membership in policy networks and the belief systems (or values) driving the interactions of and relationships between policy actors competing to ultimately influence policy.

As policy is seen not only as text but also as a set of values and enforcing certain discourse(s), textual analysis of policy texts (including debates, statutory legislation and

sex and relationship(s) education school guidance documents) and interview data from relevant policy actors will be drawn on to understand what policy strategies and values are currently shaping how SRE and RSE are characterised. Such an analysis also provides potential insight into what has been conducive to making RSE statutory in Northern Ireland.

PART II: METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Chapter 5: Research design and methodology

5.1 Introduction

This chapter positions the research ontologically and epistemologically and describes the methods used in the conduct of the research. Section 5.2 explains the thesis' general methodological orientation, including the idealist ontological and social constructivist epistemological approach taken. Next, the chapter explains how an inductive research strategy and 'home international' comparative design emerged as the most appropriate for this thesis due to its aims and theoretical background. This discussion is further continued in Section 5.4, which describes the qualitative multi-method approach used to elicit different sets of people's narratives and understandings on not only SRE and RSE, but the overall policy-making process in order to examine the similarities and differences between these. The principal methods of data collection – textual analysis of documents found within the Westminster Parliament and Northern Ireland Assembly *Hansards*, legislative, statutory policy and departmental texts, and semi-structured interviews – are described. The fifth section concerns the analysis of the data, which involved analysing the SRE policy process in England and RSE policy process in Northern Ireland as two separate comparable cases, the use of inductive and deductive thematic analysis, as well as a small-scale content analysis of the different narrative texts and semi-structured interview transcripts examined. Section 5.6 reviews the ethical concerns raised through this research, while the chapter's final section touches upon the possible issues and limitations to this thesis' methodological approach – including issues pertaining to the use of documents and comparative studies, the validity of interviews and my own personal reactivity.

5.2 General ontological-epistemological orientation

Drawing upon discussions from both Crotty (1998) and Blaikie (2007; 2009) pertaining to research paradigms and the various meanings and perspectives found within research processes, this section discusses how idealist and social constructivist approaches are

drawn upon within this thesis to understand the SRE and RSE policy development processes within England and Northern Ireland. This section also details why other approaches are not as appropriate to achieve this study's aim.

Ontology is concerned with 'what is' (Crotty, 1998: 10) and ontological assumptions are "assumptions made about the nature of the social reality that is [being] investigated" (Blaikie, 2007: 12). Blaikie (2009) additionally describes that ontological assumptions "make claims about what kinds of social phenomena do or can exist, the conditions of their existence, and the ways in which they are related" (p.92). These assumptions fall under two opposing, yet mutually exclusive categories: realism and idealism.

In simple terms, a realist ontology argues that natural and social phenomena have some form of external reality that is independent of those whom observe it, whereas the idealist ontology argues "whatever is regarded as being real is real only because we think it is real; it is simply an idea that has taken on the impressions of being real" (Blaikie 2007: 16). As this study is concerned with how those involved in developing and implementing SRE and RSE policy not only understand and define the policy-making process but also SRE and RSE – a topic which is often discussed by drawing on a values framework (Cibulka & Myers, 2008; Fernandez et al., 2008) – the idealist ontology is arguably the more appropriate approach to this subject matter. More specifically, this study adopts a perspective idealist framework (described by Blaikie, 2007: 17) because policy actors' varying constructions of reality are viewed as being "just different ways of perceiving and making sense of an external world" (Blaikie, 2007: 17). Although the assumption of an external world is traditionally rooted within realist theory, it has been argued that "perspective-based realities are still in the realm of ideas" (Blaikie, 2007: 17).

It can get 'blurry' trying to separate and define one's ontological approach from one's epistemological ways of thinking as "ontological and epistemological issues tend to merge together" (Crotty, 1998: 10). However, Crotty (1998) provides a simplified definition to this complex issue. He states that one's epistemology is grounded within philosophical thinking that "establish[es] what kinds of knowledge are possible – what can be known – and criteria for deciding how knowledge can be judged as being both adequate and legitimate" (Crotty, 1998: 8). Out of the three basic epistemological

assumptions – objectivism, constructionism and subjectivism – the constructionist approach provides the most appropriate epistemological position to understand the 'knowledge' presented in this thesis.

Objectivism views an 'object' or 'thing' as having intrinsic meaning, whereby "all observers should discover the same meaning, the same truth" (Blaikie, 2007: 19) about said 'object' or 'thing'. To achieve this study's aim, policy actors' 'understandings' of both the SRE and RSE policy-making process, what SRE and RSE should teach and achieve, as well as the factors or forces driving/hindering/extinguishing policy development and change were sought. An objectivist approach would not be appropriate, as the focus of this study is on interpreting 'understandings' that are articulated through texts and narratives. A constructionist approach, on the other hand, suggests that there is not one true or valid interpretation or 'understanding' of an issue, and that SRE and RSE meaning emerges from policy actors' interactions between each other and through how each policy actor relates to other's understandings of SRE and RSE, whereby "the subject [policy actors] and object ['understandings' of SRE and RSE] emerge as partners in the generation of meaning" (Crotty,1998: 9).

Unlike the objectivist and constructionist approaches, the subjectivist rejects the view that an 'object' or 'thing' makes a contribution to its own meaning (objectivist) or that "out of an interplay between subject and object" (Crotty, 1998: 9) meaning is constructed. Subjectivism states it is the observer who imposes meaning on an 'object' or 'thing' though not through any interaction with the 'object' or 'thing' being observed. The subjectivist view is not appropriate for this study because people are born into and grow up within a world where 'meanings' and 'perspectives' towards SRE and RSE are already present (social construction); therefore, people are not 'creating' their own understanding nor discovering one 'infallible' truth about SRE and RSE, but instead each person will *construct* meanings and understandings towards SRE and RSE by engaging with and interpreting the world around them.

Therefore, this study does not approach the examination of 'understandings' on SRE and RSE (policy-making) as being simply dormant within us waiting to be discovered by the researcher, or that scholars should 'create' their own understandings free from external

influences and interactions. This study adopts a constructionist epistemology asserting that everyday knowledge is derived from "people having to make sense of their encounters with the physical world and other people" (Blaikie, 2007: 22). However the "process of meaning-giving can be seen as either an individual or a social activity" (Blaikie, 2007: 22). Constructionism has two branches: constructivism and social constructionism. Constructivism refers to the mind 'constructing' meaning to an object through cognitive processes, while social constructionism denotes "intersubjectively shared knowledge, meaning that is social rather than individual" (Blaikie, 2007: 22; see also Schwandt, 1994: 127).

This comparative study draws on the social constructivist perspective to constructionism (as a broader epistemology), as those involved in the policy-making process are believed to construct meaning and their own understandings of and values towards SRE and RSE in different ways, even though the same phenomenon is being discussed or debated. The social constructivist perspective "shifts the focus from knowledge as a product to knowing as a process" (Ültanir, 2012: 196-197). This thesis recognises Gomm's (2009) assertion that "all human knowledge is cultural knowledge, produced collaboratively by social beings in particular social, economic and political relations at a particular historical moment" (p.332). Thus, all meaningful reality should be seen as being dependent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between one another and each individual's own perceived world, and developed and communicated within an essentially social context (Crotty, 2009: 42).

Given the nature of this thesis' research questions, the use of both an inductive and deductive research strategy was regarded as being most appropriate. An inductive research strategy aims to explain the "characteristics of people and social situations, and then determine the nature of the patterns of the relationships, or networks of relationships, between these characteristics" (Blaikie, 2007: 9). This similarly relates to this study's aim of identifying 'who' is allowed membership in the SRE and RSE policy-making network and finding patterns among policy actors that seem to be most influential within SRE and RSE policy development – possibly showing how power is distributed within the policy process. An inductive research strategy is also appropriate given that this thesis identifies and compares the similarities and differences found among the approaches taken and

values threaded within policy actor arguments as to what SRE and RSE's placement within the national curriculum should be and what each programme should teach and achieve against the values embedded within (and excluded from within) current SRE and RSE policy.

A deductive strategy works in the reverse order to an inductive approach in that "it begins with a pattern, or regularity, that has already been discovered and established, and which begs an explanation" (Blaikie, 2007: 9). It has been described as a 'trial and error process' (Blaikie, 2009: 19) and is generally associated with the realist ontology and epistemology of falsification. Although this study initially started from a 'ground up' position – collecting and analysing data to find patterns – the second stage of analysis was influenced by a deductive strategy in order to extend examining of the issue through drawing on concepts already developed within the literature. For instance, after inductively identifying a variety of value positions held by policy actors, this analysis was augmented by examining how values set types mentioned within social policy literature (e.g. educational, social, economic) might support the further development of how values inform SRE/RSE policy-making.

The retroductive strategy was not thought appropriate for this study because its explanations are achieved by "locating the real underlying structure or mechanism(s) that is/are responsible for producing the observed regularity, and identifying the context in which this happens" (Blaikie 2009: 19). This was not the aim of this study. Retroduction is used to explain regularities within the data by trying to discover what has produced them, which involves building a hypothetical model and testing that model to see if it holds up. It adopts a critical realist ontology and typically uses the epistemology of neo-realism.

Lastly, the fourth research strategy, abduction, is used to describe and understand social life in terms of actors' motives and understandings. Unlike the other strategies, abduction is also closely linked to idealism and constructionism. However, this study aims to do more than understand policy actors' 'policy-making motives' and understandings of SRE/RSE (as an abductive strategy would call for), the thesis is also seeking to identify other factors that shape and influence the policy process: external shocks, who has been

given access to contexts where policy is made, distribution of power within a policy network, decision-making model adopted, policy actor values, and so forth.

5.3 Research strategy and design

This is an empirical research study with a 'home international' comparative design employed to explore the similarities and differences between England's SRE and Northern Ireland's RSE policy process with regard to making each country's respective subject area statutory. In the spirit of Bryman (2008), with regard to a comparative approach this thesis implies that "we can understand social phenomena better when they are compared in relation to two or more meaningfully contrasting cases or situations" (p.58). A comparative design within a qualitative research strategy, such as this study's, can be argued to take the form of a multiple-case study. For as Bryman (2008) states, "essentially, a multiple-case (or multi-case) study occurs when the number of cases examined exceeds one" (p.60). By comparing multiple cases a researcher can improve theory building by better understanding the circumstances in which a theory will or will not hold (Eisenhardt 1989; Yin, 2003).

Just as the four football teams of the UK (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) have been called 'home internationals', so to have comparative studies contrasting issues related to the countries within the UK (Raffe, 1991; 1998, 2005; Raffe et al., 1999; Raffe et al., 2001; Phillips, 2003; Raffe & Byrne, 2005). The four political and education systems within the UK are (to a degree) interdependent (all three devolved governments are answerable to UK Parliament and implement UK policy) and each are likewise restricted by UK factors such as the economic and labour markets (Rees & Istance, 1997; Raffe et al., 1999) and cross-border flows of students and graduates (Rees & Istance, 1997). Because of these interdependencies a home international comparison may provide more transferable lessons for education policy and practice (Raffe et al., 1999, Raffe, 2005). As Raffe has argued:

> It is harder to draw [policy and practice] lessons from comparisons with overseas countries because of wide differences in the education and training systems and their social, economic and cultural environments. (Raffe, 2005: 3)

It has been argued that comparing policies from separate countries are "at best, a source of lessons to be learnt rather than of policies to be borrowed" (Raffe, 1998: 591; also Keep, 1991; Finegold et al., 1992, 1993).

Furthermore, another advantage of doing home international comparative research is that home international comparisons "support several kinds of policy learning" (Raffe, 2005: 3) such as: helping to understand one's own system better; clarifying alternative policy strategies; comparing the impact of alternative policy strategies; helping one understand policy issues by observing greater variation; and helping one to understand the processes of educational change (Raffe, 2005: 3, 4). This type of learning may be useful in the light of UK devolution in order to assess similarities and differences among the systems (Phillips, 2003) and whether there is more 'disunification' (Delamont & Rees, 1997) in the UK.

While this study does quantify some of the data analysed (e.g. types of data reviewed; changes in the number of specific types of parliamentarians engaged in policy discussions over time; frequency with which specific concepts, arguments or value examples are referenced), the methods of data collection and analysis of this multi-method study are chiefly qualitative in nature as the emphasis is on words (spoken and written). This focus on language is used to describe the social relationships among policy actors, whom interviewed policy actors believe to be 'influential' in the policy process and the meanings and values policy actors assert are driving policy decisions within the policy-making process and ultimately influencing policy texts. As Bryman (1988) states, "the way in which people being studied understand and interpret their social reality is one of the central motifs of qualitative research" (p.8). Qualitative approaches can focus on both the qualities and characteristics of narratives. Miles and Huberman (1994) argue that:

> Qualitative data, with their emphasis on people's 'lived experience', are fundamentally well suited for locating the meanings people place on the events, processes, and structures of their lives: their "perceptions, assumptions, prejudgments, presuppositions" (van Manen, 1977), and for connecting these meanings to the social world around them. (p.10)

Given the research aim, and the idealist ontology and social constructionist epistemological approach taken for the study, this study's predominantly qualitative nature is appropriate in order to answer this study's research questions.

5.4 Selection of data sources and sampling

This study applies a qualitative multi-method approach to elicit different sets of people's narratives and understandings of SRE and RSE and conducts a 'home international' comparison examining the similarities and differences between these to better understand the overall SRE and RSE policy-making process. A multi-method approach uses a number of techniques and procedures to gather data. Data were collected through multiple means, including: online web searches; emailing and cold calling SRE and RSE policy actors; reviewing education policy documents published by Westminster Parliament and its departmental agencies and housed within the Newsam Library and Archives located within the Institute of Education; and conducting face-to-face and telephone interviews with those active in SRE and RSE policy-making.

This section is divided into three sub-sections that detail the selection of data sources and sampling strategy used for this study:

- 5.4.1 *Westminster Parliament and Northern Ireland Assembly* Hansards;
- 5.4.2 *Legislative, statutory policy and departmental texts*; and
- 5.4.3 *Interviews with policy actors*.

These three main sources of data were selected as the best means to:

- Help identify relevant policy actors within both the SRE and RSE policy network;

- Bring attention to the process behind SRE and RSE policy-making and the 'distribution of power' within each process;

- Highlight the specific values driving SRE and RSE policy debates and subsequent legislation and policy;

- Illuminate any changes that have occurred within England's SRE policy-making process (e.g. parliamentary participation; distribution of power within the SRE policy network; shifts in values and priorities promoted) that might explain why PSHEE and the non-biological aspects of SRE remain non-statutory within the National Curriculum for England; and

- Learn more about the RSE policy-making situation in Northern Ireland and what has been conducive to statutory policy-making.

5.4.1 *Westminster Parliament and Northern Ireland Assembly* Hansards

Westminster Parliament's *Hansard* is the official report describing word-for-word happenings within both Houses of Parliament, Standing Committees and a few of the Select Committees. It is published daily and includes records of votes, written answers to questions asked within the *Question Book* and written ministerial statements covering the preceding day. A final version is drafted and published at the end of each week. *The Official Report*, or *Hansard*, for the Northern Ireland Assembly functions much the same as Westminster's *Hansard* and publishes transcripts of Assembly sittings, Committee meetings and written ministerial statements.

Hansard reports serve as a primary source of data for this study because the reports provide as close to a verbatim account of what senior policy actors have said about SRE and RSE within official discussions and debates as is possible. Additionally, through the process of examining published discussions within Parliamentary debates, Committee meetings, and various other documents in *Hansard*, additional Committee or legislative documents – which can be used to analyse the policy process, such as relevant legislation and guidance documents – can be identified.

It is important to note that while *Hansard* is as close to a verbatim report as possible it is partially edited "in accordance with terms of reference drawn up by a Select Committee in 1907 and reproduced in 'Erskine May', the authoritative source on parliamentary procedure" (qtd on Hansard-Westminster, 2010). *Hansard* is:

A full report, in the first person, of all speakers alike, a full report being defined as one 'which, though not strictly verbatim, is substantially the verbatim report, with repetitions and redundancies omitted and with obvious mistakes corrected, but which on the other hand leaves out nothing that adds to the meaning of the speech or illustrates the argument'. (Hansard-Westminster, 2010)

To access relevant discussions pertaining to SRE within Westminster, the Westminster Parliament *Hansard* was searched online through the UK Parliament website (www.parliament.uk). The England case specifically focuses on the time frame of 1 January 2008 until 30 June 2013 because during this time significant SRE policy developments and major changes both in policy and within the political system occurred. These developments and changes included:

(1) Increased discussion within Parliament around making SRE statutory;

(2) The former Labour Government announcing – after commissioning evidence-based research on PSHEE/SRE and conducting an *external* SRE review – that PSHEE (and SRE) was to be made statutory starting in 2011;

(3) The political system 'shock' of changing from a Labour-led to a Conservative/Liberal Democrat Coalition government;

(4) The majority Coalition partner (i.e. Conservative party) opposing statutory PSHEE/SRE provision and 'deleting' PSHEE and SRE clauses drafted within Bills regardless of the fact that its minority Coalition partner (i.e. the Liberal Democrat party) supported statutory reforms; and

(5) The current Coalition conducting an *internal* PSHEE review that resulted in PSHEE and the non-biological aspects of SRE continuing to remain non-statutory in the National Curriculum for England.

Although the England case chapter discusses SRE policy and policy-making until June 2013, weekly *Hansard* searches of parliamentary debates and written questions asked/answered by parliamentarians concluded on 1 January 2013 so that final data analysis procedures and the write-up process could begin. However, significantly important policy developments that were published after this cut-off date (e.g. the DfE's

PSHE review concluding report (Truss, 2013; DfE, 2013b) and the Coalition's announcement that a new expert subject group on SRE and PSHEE chaired by the Chief Executive of the PSHE Association is in the process of being developed (Lord Nash, 2014) have been included within this study's data analysis, just not counted within the search result figures found within this thesis' appendices.

On the main page of the Parliament website a 'search' box is provided where one can key in a specific word, name or phrase. Clicking the 'search' button the resultant 'search results' page offered the option of undertaking an 'Advanced search'. Using the 'match ALL of these words' and the 'exact phrase' search boxes, as well as configuring the 'date search' option so that results would be pulled for the time frame analysed, phrases such as 'sex and relationships education', 'sex and relationship education', 'sex education', 'PSHE' and 'SRE' were keyed in and searched. As of late 2012 these advanced search options are no longer available. After keying in a word or phrase into the 'search' box the resultant 'search results' page instead suggests 'filters' (e.g. 'Parliamentary Business', 'Education', 'MPs, Lords & offices', 'Get involved') to narrow down the options presented.

Regardless of the type of search (i.e. 'Advanced search' or 'Filter') taken, each separate 'word' and 'phrase' search displayed results pertaining to the House of Commons and Lords *Question Book*, ministerial statements, Select and All-Party Committee meeting discussions and published documents, written evidence, reports, minutes of evidence, and the debates within both Houses found within the Westminster *Hansard* (viewed within Table 1).

Table 1: Westminster Parliament **Hansard** *search word results for the SRE in England case*

Search word of phrase	Number of results found
PSHE	488
Sex and Relationships Education	447
Sex education	417
SRE	121
Sex and Relationship Education	37

After reading each individual suggested text to ensure its relevancy to this study and dismissing duplicate findings a total of 214 separate and relevant policy-making contexts (e.g. questions within the *Hansard Question Book*, debates within Parliament chambers, motions drafted, committee meetings, etc.) were selected to represent this study's England case *Hansard* data.

Similarly, in Northern Ireland, published RSE discussions and debates of the Northern Ireland Assembly and its Committees can be found within its *Questions for Answer*, *Weekly Answers Booklet* and *The Official Report* (also called *Hansard*). These were accessed through the Northern Ireland Assembly's online website (http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/). The Northern Ireland case specifically focuses on the time frame of December 1999 (the period of Northern Ireland's first devolved government) until June 2013. During this time frame important RSE policy developments occurred, perhaps most significantly the four-year (November 1999-December 2003) curriculum review that resulted in Personal Development (the equivalent to PSHEE in England) becoming statutory within the Northern Ireland Curriculum for all age groups and, subsequently, the passing of the *Education (Curriculum Minimum Content) Order 2007* that legislates the minimum content that must be taught within PD (including RSE-related elements). Although the Northern Ireland case investigates RSE policy and policy-making until June 2013, weekly *Hansard* searches for this case also concluded on 1 January 2013 so that final data analysis procedures and the write-up process could begin. However, important RSE-related policy developments that have occurred after 1 January 2013 (e.g. DENI's letter to schools on 14 January 2014 stating it had commissioned CCEA to review current RSE policy, identify gaps in provision and to develop further resources if necessary (DENI, 2014)) have been mentioned within this thesis, just not counted within the search result figures and *Hansard* text analyses.

Using the 'Advanced search' function on the main page of the Northern Ireland Assembly website, words and phrases such as 'Relationships and Sexuality Education', 'Relationship and Sexuality Education', 'RSE', 'Personal Development' and 'sex education' were typed in and used as search terms. These separate 'word' and 'phrase' searches delivered substantially fewer 'hits' (seen within Table 2) than the online SRE searches from the Westminster Parliament website. However, from this Northern Ireland

Assembly search, minutes of proceedings, committee research papers, and committee minutes pertaining to RSE debates and discussions were found.

Table 2: Northern Ireland Assembly **Hansard** *search word results for the RSE in Northern Ireland case*

Search word of phrase	Number of results found
Personal Development	157
Relationships and Sexuality Education	19
Sex education	19
RSE	12
Relationship and Sexuality Education	9

After checking each suggested texts relevancy and excluding duplicates, a total of 39 relevant RSE policy contexts were selected to represent this study's Northern Ireland case *Hansard* data.

It is important to note that since this study's last *Hansard* search on 1 January 2013 the Northern Ireland Assembly website has been re-structured, and instead of the 'Advanced search' option a 'dropdown box' allowing for more specific searches (e.g. 'Full site', 'Education', 'Legislation', 'Official report') has been added, as well as an option to find more detailed information on Assembly Questions (e.g. search by question type, session period, mandate, committee member) and Plenary Business. Therefore, others trying to replicate this study's online search through the NIA's *Hansard* might find significantly more or perhaps fewer 'hits' using the search terms and phrases utilised during this study's data collection period.

Although the Northern Ireland Assembly was granted its devolved powers on 2 December 1999, it has since experienced four suspensions with its last suspension lasting from 14 October 2002 until its powers were restored on 8 May 2007. During this last suspension, Personal Development (of which RSE is a subject component) became statutory within the Northern Ireland Curriculum for both primary and post-primary schools on 19 July 2006. As powers were transferred back to Westminster Parliament

during this time period, the Westminster Parliament website was therefore searched using the 'Advanced search' function to explore discussions pertaining to RSE from 1 January 1998 (a full year before the transfer of power to the Northern Ireland Assembly) with the last search occurring on 1 January 2013.

Using the 'match ALL of these words' and the 'exact phrase' search boxes, the words and phrases 'Relationship and Sexuality Education', 'RSE', 'sex education in Northern Ireland', 'RSE in Northern Ireland', 'Relationships and Sexuality Education' and 'Relationships and Sexuality Education in Northern Ireland' were typed and searched on the Westminster Parliament website. Table 3 shows the search result findings from this method.

Table 3: Westminster Parliament **Hansard** *search word results for the RSE in Northern Ireland case*

Search word of phrase	Number of results found
RSE	142
Relationship and Sexuality Education	13
Sex education in Northern Ireland	4
RSE in Northern Ireland	0
Relationships and Sexuality Education	0
Relationship and Sexuality Education in Northern Ireland	0

Again, each individual search result was checked to ensure relevancy and duplicate findings were discarded. While 142 search results were found using 'RSE' as the search term, the large majority, 137 result findings, were in reference to the RSE Consulting Firm or Royal Society of Edinburgh who both use the acronym RSE. In total five relevant and non-duplicated search results regarding RSE in Northern Ireland were found – two written questions and answers within the House of Commons *Question Book* and one Memorandum published by the House of Lords. Overall, there were fewer findings pertaining to RSE discussions and debates within both Westminster Parliament and the Northern Ireland Assembly combined than there were SRE discussions and debates in Westminster Parliament alone.

5.4.2 Legislative, statutory policy and departmental texts

May (2001) asserts that documentary analysis is important given that documents have the capacity to reflect but also construct social reality. Documents can be used as "sources of evidence" (Prior, 2010: 112) to gather information pertaining to how specific individuals, groups, communities or cultures "make sense of the world" (McKee, 2003: 1). Therefore, using documents as a source of data is helpful because of the 'bias' that can be revealed within each text (Abraham, 1994; Bryman, 2012). That is, documents "cannot be regarded as providing objective accounts of a state of affairs" (Bryman, 2012: 551) and should be examined using Scott's (1990) four criteria for assessing documents: authenticity; credibility; representativeness; and meaning (p.6). To achieve this study's aim and answer the proposed research questions within this thesis, Bills and Drafted Bills before the Northern Ireland Assembly and Westminster Parliament, Acts of Parliament (a law enforced in all areas of the UK where it is applicable) and Statutory Rules enforced by the Northern Ireland Assembly, as well as statutory guidance and policy documents and correspondence issued to, as well as developed by, each country's education department, local education authorities and regulatory agencies regarding the teaching of SRE and RSE were identified and analysed.

To identify current education legislation and statutory SRE policy documents provided to schools within England, as well as any published documents that may reveal insight into the overall SRE policy-making process, the following websites were accessed and searched: Westminster Parliament; the National Archives (which publishes all UK legislation); Teachernet.gov.uk (since dissolved); Ofsted; the then Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF); the current Department for Education (DfE); and the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (closed by the Coalition Government on 31 March 2012 as part of wider education reforms). The specific search terms used included 'sex education', 'Sex and Relationships Education', 'SRE', 'PSHE', and 'Sex and Relationship Education'.

The following documents were found through the above mentioned searches and form this study's analysed sample of relevant SRE education legislation and policy documents relating to the SRE policy process and current SRE provision in English schools: the

statutory National Curriculum for England (under the former Labour Government as the Coalition Government's National Curriculum had not yet been finalised at time of analysis), the *DfEE Sex and Relationship Education Guidance* published in July 2000 (the current statutory SRE policy for schools as of February 2014), and the original wording and progression of the PSHEE and SRE clauses within the *Children, Schools and Families Bill* (received Royal Assent on 8 April 2010) and the *Academies Bill* (received Royal Assent on 27 July 2010) .

Online web searches identified additional relevant SRE texts (outside Westminster Parliament's *Hansard*) to aid in not only the identification of relevant SRE policy actors within the SRE policy network, but also to help contextualise the broader SRE policy process (and any changes that occurred post the 2010 change of government). The subsequent texts were also analysed: *The Children's Plan* (DCSF, 2007); the SRE External Steering Group's *Review of SRE in Schools Report* (SRE External Steering Group, 2008); the DCSF's *Government Response to the Report by the Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) Review Steering Group* (DCSF, 2008); the DCSF's *Your child, your schools, our future* report (2009); Sir Alasdair Macdonald's *Independent review of the proposal to make PSHE education statutory* report (2009); a PSHEE consultation report published by the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA, 2009); the DfE's White Paper entitled *The importance of teaching* (2010); the DfE's *PSHE Review Remit* (DfE, 2011); and the DfE's PSHEE review summary report (DfE, 2013b).

A similar online search was conducted to access RSE-related legislation within Northern Ireland, statutory RSE policies distributed to schools, as well as documents providing insight into the process that led to statutory Personal Development (and therefore the non-biological aspects of RSE) to become statutory within the Northern Ireland Curriculum for primary and post-primary schools. Using 'sex education', 'Relationships and Sexuality Education' and 'RSE' as search terms, the official websites of the Northern Ireland Assembly (NIA), the Department of Education, Northern Ireland (DENI), the Northern Ireland Curriculum (NIC), and the Council for Curriculum Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) were explored. As a result of this exploration the following key documents were found: DENI's *Circular 2001/15 Relationships and Sexuality Education*

(RSE) outlining the Department's statutory policy for all schools; the current legislative framework for the Northern Ireland Curriculum (i.e. *The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 2006*) and *The Education (Curriculum Minimum Content) (NI) Order 2007* – outlining the minimum content that must be taught under each 'Area of Learning' within it; proposals and consultation/summary reports highlighting the process of the Northern Ireland Curriculum review (CCEA, 2000, 2001c, 2002, 2004) that led to Personal Development becoming statutory for all Key Stages; and correspondence between CCEA and DENI regarding curriculum changes relevant to Personal Development (and therefore RSE) (CCEA, 2003a-e, 2004; Kennedy, 2003; Gardiner, 2004).

5.4.3 Interviews with policy actors

Interviews can be a "powerful tool for eliciting rich data on people's views, attitudes and the meanings that underpin their lives and behaviours" (Gray, 2004: 213). As May (2001) states, "Interviews yield rich insights into people's biographies, experiences, opinions, values, aspirations, attitudes and feelings" (p.120). To build on as well as conduct a 'cross-check' of the findings found within the textual data collected, a number of interviews were conducted with policy actors identified as being key figures involved in SRE and RSE policy-making. Ethical approval was sought and approved by the Institute of Education. The central policy actors interviewed for this study were identified through the process of analysing the relevant SRE and RSE *Hansard*, legislative, statutory policy and departmental texts (previously mentioned), as well as through utilising a 'snowball' sampling approach.

'Snowball' sampling means that initially a specific policy actor was purposively interviewed and from this interview additional relevant policy actors to the study were further identified either on the recommendation of the interviewee or the interviewer identifying individuals or relevant groups the interviewee cited during the conversation. The 'snowball' sampling method was chosen for this study because it has been recommended as being particularly useful when trying to focus on networks of individuals (Bryman, 2012: 424; Coleman, 1958; Sørensen, 2003; Noy, 2008) as it can: (1) highlight the interrelationships between those in the network studied (Noy, 2008); (2) indicate the power relations among not only those sampled but others within the larger

network (Noy, 2008); and (3) help identify changes within network membership as policy actors constantly move in-and-out of the network (Sørensen, 2003).

Interviews open up the possibility of exploring in more depth the understandings, values and views of policy actors central to the SRE and RSE debate, and present the opportunity to examine how discussing these issues in a different context – in the more intimate setting of an interview where anonymity was possible (if chosen by the interviewee), when compared to a public, highly scrutinised environment within government processes – might yield different or additional data. Using a semi-structured interview approach allowed me to touch on many issues within the questioning, while at the same time permitting the interviewee to have some power in guiding the discussion and to express answers to questions in a more open way. Interview questions were developed based on the identification of themes and patterns – e.g. 'approaches', 'values', 'relationships' – found within the data analysis of each country's *Hansard* text, education legislation, and relevant SRE and RSE statutory policies and departmental documents.

A broad definition of 'policy actor' is adopted within this thesis. It is understood that SRE and RSE policy is not just determined by elected representatives, but also civil servants, academics, local authority and school practitioners, and importantly, special interest groups (in particular, representatives of third sector organisations). For both the SRE and RSE cases I emailed each potential interviewee an invitation letter outlining why I was contacting him or her and the importance of his or her voice being represented within the research. I also explained in the initial email that I would be willing to meet them on any date, at any time and at a location that was most convenient to them. An information leaflet and the set of questions I would be exploring within the interview were also attached to the email. *Appendix A* (p.324) offers an example of an initial invitation letter emailed to a parliamentarian known to be active within SRE policy discussions, while *Appendix B* is a letter outlining the interview schedule to be used with SRE policy actors, while *Appendix C* is the participant information sheet sent out to RSE policy actors in Northern Ireland.

For the England case in this study, I developed my potential sample following an analysis of SRE-related debates, committee meetings and parliamentary questions posed, as well

as a list of the people and organisations whose evidence policy actors drew upon to inform their SRE policy arguments – as identified within the Westminster Parliament *Hansard*. I initially approached 29 specific individuals and interest groups known to be active within SRE policy-making – see *Appendix D* – to take part in this study. 19 of those 29 individual policy actors and groups accepted and were interviewed between October 2011 and March 2012. Nine of the initially identified individuals and groups did not respond to my initial email, telephone call to his or her office nor follow up email. Furthermore, one policy actor, Liz Carter of the Church of England National Society and a member of the 2008 Labour-led SRE Review Steering Group, did initially agree to participate pending approval from her Chief Education Officer. However, I received an email five days later from Dr Rob Gwynne, Head of School Strategy for the National Society, explaining that Ms Carter would not be able to participate because "it poses complications for us as it is inappropriate for officers to express opinions or ideas on sensitive topics where policy is developed and expressed at senior clerical level" (Gwynne, 2011). Table 4 lists the SRE policy actors interviewed for this study's England case.

Table 4: SRE policy actors interviewed for this study

Policy actor's name	Affiliation	Stance on statutory SRE
Anonymous representative	Board of Deputies of British Jews	Anti-statutory
Anonymous representative	Board of Deputies of British Jews	Pro-statutory
Simon Blake	Brook	Pro-statutory
Maeve McCormack	Catholic Education Services	Anti-statutory
David Kesterton	Family Planning Association	Pro-statutory
Clare Laxton	Family Planning Association	Pro-statutory
Philip Davies, MP	House of Commons	Anti-statutory
Diana Johnson, MP	House of Commons	Pro-statutory
Lord Bishop Peter Forster	House of Lords	Anti-statutory
Baroness Joyce Gould	House of Lords	Pro-statutory
Lord James Knight	House of Lords	Pro-statutory
Baroness Doreen Massey	House of Lords	Pro-statutory
Lord Stewart Sutherland	House of Lords	Straddles the debate
Baroness Joan Walmsley	House of Lords	Pro-statutory
Stuart Cowie	Life	Anti-statutory

Niall Gooch	Life	Anti-statutory
PSHEE Subject Advisor	London Local Authority Advisor	Pro-statutory
Gill Frances	National Children's Bureau	Pro-statutory
Jan Campbell	PSHE Association	Pro-statutory

As can be seen in Table 4, at the parliamentary level – five members of the House of Lords (one of whom is a former Schools Minister), one House of Lords Bishop and two Members of Parliament (one a Labour MP and one a Conservative) were interviewed. In addition, 10 third sector representatives representing seven different third sector organisations, as well as one local authority from a London borough contributed to the England case.

In order to better understand the RSE policy-making process in Northern Ireland the Westminster Parliament and Northern Ireland Assembly *Hansards* were examined. Unlike English PSHEE and SRE searches within the Westminster Parliament *Hansard*, there were significantly fewer PD and RSE findings through this mode of data collection (i.e. 39) and only 15 parliamentary-level policy actors were found to have participated in PD/RSE policy discussions during the 13 year time frame investigated for the Northern Ireland case. Three Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) were contacted to take part in this study, only one responded and accepted. Therefore, the majority of the Northern Ireland case interview sample was identified and approached through utilising 'snowball' sampling.

I initially contacted 19 individuals and groups involved in, or having knowledge of, Northern Ireland's RSE policy-making process. A full list of those contacted can be found in *Appendix E*. In the end, 14 active RSE policy actors – shown in Table 5 on the next page – were interviewed between May and July 2012 and inform the Northern Ireland case presented in this thesis. The RSE policy actors interviewed included: a former Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA); a curriculum advisor for DENI; the Chief Executive of fpaNI; two sexual health coordinators for two differing health trusts; a principal researcher (and academic) of Northern Ireland's first major study into the sexual attitudes and behaviours of young people; two Education and Library Board (ELB) representatives; three local school teachers in charge of Personal Development and RSE;

and three representatives from Love for Life – an external RSE provider that delivers programmes to over 30,000 young people across the Republic and North of Ireland each year.

Table 5: RSE policy actors interviewed for this study

Policy actor's name	Affiliation
Dr Dirk Schubotz	Academic / Researcher
Joanna Gregg	Belfast Health & Social Care Trust
Sharon Lawlor	Department of Education, Northern Ireland
Personal Development Advisor	Education & Library Board
Personal Development & Pastoral Care Advisor	Education & Library Board
Dr Audrey Simpson, OBE	Family Planning Association NI / Academic
Dr Richard Barr	Love for Life
Judith Cairns	Love for Life
Graham Hare	Love for Life
Dawn Purvis, MLA	Northern Ireland Assembly
Health Representative	Southern Health & Social Care Trust
Principal	Boys, Catholic high school
Student Support Officer	Boys, Catholic high school
Vice-principal & Pastoral Care Director	Co-ed, state-controlled high school

The high the response rate for participating in the study was unexpected, given these could be assumed to be 'hard-to-reach' elite policy actors. However, most of the pro-statutory PSHEE/SRE supporters, senior parliamentary officials and special interest groups responded positively to my initial email within 48 hours of my having sent it. One possible explanation for this might be that I was open and transparent in my initial email about the specific questions I wanted to explore during the interview. Another reason is likely to be that many of the participants are actively involved in this debate and so are likely to have felt passionately about it. Additionally, many RSE policy actors explained during their interview that they had been eager to participate because Northern Ireland's RSE story has received little focus from researchers, especially around the processes of RSE policy-making.

Interviews for both cases were either conducted face-to-face or by telephone at the convenience of the interviewee. Interviews were scheduled to last 45 minutes each, with some lasting up to an hour and 45 minutes and the shortest interview lasting 35 minutes. Face-to-face interviews for each English parliamentarian took place either in the House of Lords, one's parliamentary office located in ?? house or at the Institute of Education. Interviews with interest group representatives took place either at their organisation's main office or by telephone. I met with Dawn Purvis, a former MLA in Northern Ireland at the Healing through Remembering office in Belfast – a charity for which she is a board member. Each interview (except for one, where the interviewee requested it not be) was audio tape-recorded so that I could focus more intently on what each interviewee had to say during the meeting. Brief notes were taken during each interview in a notebook documenting concepts or thoughts to probe an interviewee further on, as well as key points of importance in case technical issues with the audio recorder occurred.

Most interviews took on a teacher/student dynamic, where the interviewee viewed me as a 'curious outisder' that needed to be 'taught' the historical and present context regarding SRE and RSE policy-making and the specific arguments peppering policy debates and why he or she took the position that they did. Interviewees provided lots of examples and, at times, analogies involving American politics and sex education in the United States (where I am from) thinking this method would better help me understand their point. Discussions flowed fluidly – regardless of stance (i.e. pro-statutory/non-statutory) toward SRE or RSE, national (e.g. parliamentarian) or local level position and advocacy agenda (e.g. 'faith-based', 'health', 'young people and rights'). During the interviews, participants engaged with the questions in a meaningful way – developing their arguments in greater depth than often the case when speaking publically on the issue in parliament or the press. The perception that I was a non-thretening,'curious outsider' was perhaps why I encountered little, if any, resistance from those interviewed. I was not viewed as holding any one particular position toward either SRE or RSE.

I word-for-word transcribed the audio tape recordings and each interview transcript was password encrypted on my own personal computer. To ensure as much anonymity as was possible, names, demographic and identifying characteristics of the local authority employee in charge of PSHEE within a London borough, as well as the two ELB

representatives and three PD and RSE schoolteachers in Northern Ireland, were excluded from within this thesis. The individuals and groups specifically named within this thesis gave me permission to do so either during the interview or in subsequent discussions or correspondence.

5.5 Method of data analysis

Ritchie et al. (2003) state that "making sense of [one's] data relies, in part, on the method or tool that is used to order and categorise [them]" (p. 219). There are many computer-assisted data analysis software packages (e.g. NVivo, SPSS, ATLAS.ti, MAXQDA) available to help researchers structure and control data. However, after weighing the benefits and disadvantages of using such programmes, the more traditional, manual approach (e.g. note taking, highlighting, using notecards, cut and pasting, mapping etc.) was taken. In order to manage and synthesise this thesis' data gathered from multiple sources, the Framework approach (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994) – a qualitative matrix-based analysis method developed in the 1980s by the National Centre for Social Research (Ritchie et al., 2003: 219) – was used. This approach is comprised of five stages: familiarisation with the data; identification of a thematic framework; indexing; charting and mapping; and interpretation. Bryman (2012) describes that when utilising Framework:

> The idea is to construct an index of central themes and sub-themes, which are then represented in a matrix that closely resembles an SPSS spreadsheet with its display of cases and variables. The themes and sub-themes are essentially recurring motifs in the text that are then applied to the data. The themes and sub-themes are the product of a thorough reading and re-reading of the transcripts and fieldnotes that make up the data. This framework is then applied to the data, which are organised initially into core themes, and the data are then displayed in terms of sub-themes within a matrix and for each case. (p.579)

The Framework approach was chosen because it "facilitates rigorous and transparent data management" (Ritchie et al., 2003: 220) such that each stage can be systematically conducted while also allowing the researcher to "move back and forth between different levels of abstraction without loosing sight of the 'raw' data" (Ritchie et al., 2003: 220). Furthermore, utilising an approach like Framework increases a study's reliability as it follows a "well defined procedure,[making] it possible to reconsider and rework ideas

precisely because the analytical process has been documented and is therefore accessible" (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994: 177).

As thematic analysis is a fundamental component of the Framework approach, both inductive and deductive thematic analysis were applied to each piece of data utilised within this study, and a small-scale qualitative content analysis (where possible and appropriate) was conducted. In addition, key concepts discussed within this thesis' Review of the Literature – such as ways of viewing policy (e.g. as a process, set of values, non-objective text, discourse), 'macro' level decision-making power, and 'meso' level approaches to understanding the policy process such as policy networks (Wasserman & Faust, 1999; Adam & Kriesi, 2007) and the Advocacy Coalition Framework (Sabatier, 1988; Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1991, 1999) – were drawn upon more broadly as theoretical frameworks to help interpret key findings. This section is divided into three sub-sections that provide greater detail on the data analysis methods utilised for this study: *'Home international' comparative case study*, *Thematic textual analysis*, and *Qualitative and qualitative content analysis*.

5.5.1 'Home international' comparative case study

Case study designs within educational research have been widely used as well as assessed and scrutinised (Merriam, 1988; Anderson, 1990; Bassey, 1999; Yin, 2009). Case studies can be used as a valuable tool to provide "detailed, intensive knowledge about a single case or number of related cases" (Robson, 2011: 79). They are multi-perspectival analyses (Tellis, 1997). Miles and Huberman (1994) state that a:

> Case-oriented approach considers the case as a whole entity, looking at configurations, associations and effects *within* the case – and only then turns to a comparative analysis of a (usually limited) number of cases. (p.176)

As each country (or system) within the UK is more profoundly interdependent (e.g. fiscal policy, regulatory systems, economic and labour forces, cross border flow of students) and their contexts are more similar than separate nation states (Raffe et al., 1999: 17), "comparisons of the different UK systems may be easier to interpret and the practical lessons easier to draw" (Raffe, 1998: 592). In addition, Raffe et al. (1999) argue that

"home international comparisons are more likely to generate conclusions that have direct implications for policy, [policy learning] and practice" (p.21) than other international comparisons.

That England and Northern Ireland have some interdependence is important given that comparative case study research, as a method, has been criticised for failing to recognise that in some cases it is quite difficult or even impossible to collect comparable data for analysis, thus generating false comparisons and analyses (Crossley & Broadfoot, 1992). However, one could argue that even if this interconnectedness did not exist, comparing the similarities and differences between these two differing systems has more potential to offer a wider picture on education policy-making processes than does solely studying one of these systems (e.g. SRE policy-making process in England) in isolation. Another criticism of case studies research pertains to its level of generalisability (Cohen & Manion, 1989; Simons, 1996; Bryman, 2012), specifically, answering the question of 'How can a single case possibly be representative so that it might yield findings that can be applied more generally to other cases?' (Bryman, 2012: 69). The findings from the analyses conducted within this study are not assumed to be generalisable to all education policy-making processes within England and Northern Ireland, just to SRE in England and RSE in Northern Ireland being studied. As Stake (1994) states, "The purpose of a case study is not to represent the world but to represent the case" (p.245).

While each country's sex and relationship(s) education policy-making processes were approached as two separate cases initially, during the final stage of analysis the mixed strategy approach of 'stacking comparable cases' (see Miles & Huberman, 1994:176) was used to compare and contrast the key findings found within both England's SRE and Northern Ireland's RSE case. The objective of conducting this 'home international' comparison was to better understand both the SRE and RSE policy-making process, identify key factors driving policy development within the two cases, and to "understand how they are qualified by local conditions, [to thus be able to] develop more sophisticated descriptions and more powerful explanations" (Miles & Huberman, 1994: 172) as to what has been conducive to RSE policy-making in Northern Ireland, while PSHEE and the non-biological aspects of SRE remain non-statutory for all key stages and a contentious issue within English politics. This analysis is important given that:

> The differences among the UK systems are not just a nuisance and a problem to be coped with. They are also an opportunity for research (Bell & Grant, 1977; Smith, 1983), a source of empirical and theoretical challenges and of lessons for policy and practice. (Raffe et al., 1999: 10)

Furthermore, case study designs are argued to be helpful tools in generating and contributing to rich, detail-oriented understandings of policy contexts (Ragin, 1989; Creswell, 1994; Simons, 2009; Yin, 2009).

5.5.2 Thematic textual analysis

In keeping with the method adopted by the Framework approach (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994), thematic analysis was the primary method used to analyse the data collected for the purposes of this study. Thematic analysis seeks to identify 'codes' ("tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled" (Miles & Huberman, 1994: 56)) within the text and narratives collected that are to be applied to the whole dataset, in order to make visible patterns within the data (e.g. patterns between ideas, arguments or concepts). According to Gibson and Brown (2009) thematic analysis has three main aims: examining commonalities, examining differences and examining relationships (pp.128-129).

To become more familiar with the data and to separate the data into two separate cases (i.e. the SRE policy-making process in England and RSE policy-making process in Northern Ireland cases), multiple photocopies were made of each individual SRE and RSE *Hansard*, legislative, statutory policy and departmental text, as well as transcribed interview transcript. Each text was viewed as a being a narrative describing policy actors' understandings and views of SRE and RSE and the policy-making process, therefore, initial readings of each text for both cases was done without looking for predetermined or assumed themes to be embedded within the data. Instead, I took on a more interpretive and reflexive role in analysing the data (Mason, 2002) and focused on becoming more familiar with the ideas, concepts, representations and meanings illustrated within each text.

After multiple read-throughs I began marking the texts with inductive, empirical (extracted from the text) codes (e.g. For the England case: school responsibility, childhood innocence, parental rights; For the Northern Ireland case: school responsibility, self-confidence, partnership sharing) to begin identifying possible themes and begin to examine relationships between them. Codes illustrated either exact words or phrases extracted from the texts or were developed using words or phrases that 'summed up' what the key issues, concepts and themes being debated appeared to be.

Moving past this first-level of coding I then began "group[ing] the summaries into a smaller number of sets, themes or constructs" (Miles & Huberman, 1994: 69) known as pattern coding. I continued to read each text altering/modifying codes as data familiarity and new ideas emerged. Recurring themes, issues and concepts were organised and grouped under broader, higher order categories or 'main themes'. This means that for each group of patterned codes, a word or brief phrase was identified or generated (main theme) stating the meaning shared in all instances of that specific set of codes. These main themes served as the thematic framework for which I not only sorted the data but also created a master index of codes for both the England and Northern Ireland cases. Following Ritchie et al.'s (2003) suggestion on how to construct an index, I started by "identifying links between categories, grouping them thematically and then sorting them according to different levels of generality so that the index had a hierarchy of main and subthemes" (p.222). An excerpt from this master index as well as a more detailed step-by-step extended discussion specifying the exact process I took to identify a thematic framework for this study and the inductive and deductive processes I used to select and analyse data can be found in *Appendix F*.

In order to more clearly visualise the data and start the analytic process each 'main theme', its identified 'sub-theme(s)', and a string of text (across each analysed transcript) or key points that represented examples of each (providing reference back to the original text) were mapped and charted on large poster boards representing both the England and Northern Ireland cases. The 'interpreting' stage began and involved me exploring and comparing policy actors' arguments while trying to describe/extract/find associations between the views, perceptions and accounts of those who have engaged in relevant policy discussions. Using the indexed transcripts, constructed charts and maps, and

written research notes, the patterns and connections among each were compared and contrasted. This analysis similarly unearthed the following patterns for both the SRE in England and RSE in Northern Ireland cases that largely inform this study's research questions: specific approaches policy actors take toward SRE/RSE; repetitive arguments that seem to drive policy actors' positions toward SRE/RSE; value examples underpinning policy actor arguments within *Hansard* texts and those interviewed for this study and threaded within legislative and statutory policy texts; and recurring names of policy actors (individuals and groups) stated as being engaged within and influencing SRE/RSE policy development.

To help simplify and make sense of the initial collected data pertaining to 'values', these data were re-organised and then re-coded largely drawing on apriori (Gibson and Brown, 2009) or deductive codes inspired by social policy literature that has explored values more broadly (Selmes & Robb, 1993; Halstead, 1996a, 1996b; Taylor, 1998; Haydon, 2006) and values in sex and relationship(s) education policy-making and practice (Halstead, 1998; Reiss, 1998; Halstead & Reiss, 2003). The interpretations are articulated in the findings chapters 6-8.

5.5.3 Qualitative and quantitative content analysis

Although thematic textual analysis was the primary data analysis method utilised for this study, during the 'interpreting' stage of the England case it became apparent that it would be helpful to conduct a second separate layer of analysis focusing on the content and frequency of certain patterns found within the data. For example:

- The type (e.g. MP, Lord or Baroness, MLA), political party affiliation and instances of involvement of parliamentarians active within SRE policy-making;

- The frequency with which certain advocacy agendas (e.g. Health, Faith-based, Education), specific value examples and value statements, as well as similar arguments pertaining to SRE are referenced;

- Quantifying not only the number of examples attached to each 'value set type' but also the frequency with which specific value examples are cited;

- Shifts within parliamentary discussions post- the 2010 change from a Labour-led to Conservative/Liberal Democrat Coalition Government – for instance, whether there have been more or fewer debates, written and oral questions asked in the *Hansard*, and ministerial statements pertaining to SRE; whether representatives from one political party have dominated SRE parliamentary discussions over others; as well as if changes have occurred in the number of MPS and Lords/Baronesses actively engaged in SRE policy development (as seen in the *Hansard* data).

That is to say, to better understand both the SRE and RSE policy-making process it was deemed essential to have not only some idea of the type of policy actors (e.g. parliamentarian, school practitioner, third sector organisation representative) engaged in policy development and his or her main policy advocacy agenda (e.g. Health, Education, Faith-based), but also the frequency of which specific approaches, values and individuals or groups (recurring patterns found within the thematic analysis of each case) are most commonly threaded through or referenced in the analysed sources of data and, in some instances, whether these have changed over time. Therefore, content analysis was chosen to act as a tool to aid in addressing the research questions of this study.

Content analysis examines both the content and context of a text (Spencer et al., 2003: 200) and is thought to be a flexible method to analyse textual data (Cavanagh, 1997). It seeks to "quantify content in terms of predetermined categories and in a systematic and replicable manner" (Bryman, 2012: 290) which, in the case of this study, included "counting the frequency and sequencing of particular words, phrases or concepts" (Miles & Huberman, 1994: 49n) within each individual text in both the England and Northern Ireland case. There are many techniques in which content can be grouped, which Guest et al. (2012) state can include:

> Responses or descriptions or explanations that are similar; things that have cause-and-effect relationships; things that relate hierarchically or through webs of meaning; and disparate explanations of life events. (p.64)

As this study is informed by documents and interview data, Patton's (1990) recommendation that inductive and deductive content analysis should be undertaken was

adopted within the analysis of both the England and Northern Ireland case. This was done to generate a vigorous account of both the SRE and RSE policy-making process. While content analysis is traditionally associated with quantitative methods (e.g. experimental, survey and questionnaire research), qualitative content analysis focuses on systematically analysing and deconstructing written and verbal texts such as this study's sources of data (Mayring, 2000; May 2001; Bryman, 2012). This method of analysis has been described as "maintaining the systematic nature of content analysis for the various stages of qualitative analysis, without undertaking over-hasty quantifications" (Mayring, 2004: 266). Qualitative content analysis is not limited to being used only as a 'counting' or statistical measure, for it can include using qualitative data to identify, count and compare findings (Damschroder et al., 2005; Forman & Damschroder, 2008) or alternatively analyse qualitative data without any use of quantification (Mayring, 2000; Patton, 2002; Forman & Damschroder, 2008).

5.6 Possible issues within, and limitations of, the approaches taken

As with any research project, a researcher's own construction of meaning, methodology and chosen data collection methods have consequences in relation to the validity and reliability of the study. I understand that my social constructivist approach warns me to be "suspicious of my own assumptions about how the world appears to be" (Burr, 2003: 3) and that the "categories with which we as human beings apprehend the world do not necessarily refer to real divisions" (Burr, 2003: 3). I also acknowledge that my knowledge is derived from exploring the current policy-making process and provision of both school-based SRE and RSE, and that my understandings of these policy-making processes and what SRE and RSE should teach and achieve are only a reading (Redman, 1998) of the collected and analysed data instead of stark empirical truth. Therefore, it is also understood that others reading this work will make their own active appropriations of it by interpreting the data whereby they create their own readings and interpretations.

Regarding validity, or the 'trustworthiness' and 'precision' of the research and its findings, Hammersley (1992) states that "an account is valid or true if it represents accurately those features of the phenomena that it is intended to describe, explain or theorise" (p.69). The validity of this study's data collection, analysis and findings are

strengthened not only by the use of a multi-method approach but also through the gathering of multiple responses, sometimes from people in the same 'positions' but in different contexts, as well as sampling a varied range of policy actors engaged in the field. Using a multi-method approach offers the opportunity to 'triangulate' the data. Triangulation is argued to be a process for establishing the validity of findings and is sometimes assumed that one's interpretation and findings will have greater validity if the data are collected through different sources and using different methods yet still joined to provide the same results (Patton, 1980). Triangulation also aids in clarifying meanings by recognising the various ways in which a phenomenon is understood (Flick, 1998; Silverman, 1993; Stake, 2000).

When discussing the reliability of a research study, some describe that one's research findings and evidence must be 'trustworthy' (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), 'dependable' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) and 'consistent' (Hammersley, 1992). Alternatively, Seale (1999) considers sound reliability and replication to be achieved through reflexivity and by "showing the audience of [the research study] as much as is possible of the procedures that have led to a particular set of conclusions" (p.158). Data collected for this study were managed, synthesised and systematically carried out by following the five stages of the 'Framework' approach (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994). Using such a clearly defined approach enables another researcher to replicate this study using the same (or similar) data, as well as allows readers of this thesis to follow the process taken to make sense of the data (and therefore develop their own views on whether they would have carried out procedures, coding, interpretations, etc. the same way).

Additionally, while collecting, synthesising and interpreting this study's data, I was aware of the importance of my own personal reflexivity, or personal reactivity (Golby, 1994). Blaikie (2007) describes that "the activities involved in constructing knowledge occur against the backdrop of shared interpretations, practices and language; they occur within our historical, cultural and gendered ways of being" (p.23). I recognized that my own background,– being an upper middle-class, white educated female from the USA whose only real form of school-based sex education was being told what male and female reproductive organs were – will inevitably be incorporated into my own construction and interpretation of the collected and analysed data.

With regard to personal reactivity when analysing interviews, one should keep in mind that an "interview is literally an inter-view, an inter-change of views between two persons conversing about a common theme" (Kvale, 1996: 44). It is also important to note that not only the researcher and interviewee, but every participant interviewed for a study will define the subject of the interview discussion in a particular way (Kitwood, 1977). Therefore, interview data collected for this study were examined as being *accounts* or interpretations, and although it is important to acknowledge the essentially performative nature of interviews, attention was still paid to the plausibility of each account or the ways in which each participant selected particular things to say.

Miller and Dingwall (1997) further criticise the validity of data collected through interviews. They highlight that an interview is not a simple conversation but a "deliberately created opportunity to talk about something that the interviewer is interested in and that may or may not be of interest to respondents" (Miller & Dingwall, 1997: 59). This factor may be less crucial in this research because of the people being interviewed. Each policy actor interviewed has had some form of engagement (albeit some people or groups more than others) within the SRE or RSE policy-making process and, therefore, has some expertise in the field and is used to arguing for a certain approach or understanding of SRE or RSE. Therefore, not only is it likely that some participants approached the interview as an opportunity to re-state their position and agenda, but he or she was likely to be relatively comfortable in doing so. The greatest threat to reliability may have lain in getting each policy actor to move beyond the rehearsed arguments made in parliamentary discussions, media opportunities and policy briefings, and to instead to encourage the articulation of less structured and perhaps more personal views on the issues discussed.

5.7 Review of ethical concerns

Ethical principles are important to ensure high quality research and to reduce the risk of harm toward both a study's participants and researcher. Ethical guidelines outlined by the British Educational Research Association (BERA) in its published *Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2011)* were adhered to throughout this study, more specifically, that educational research should always be conducted with "an ethic of respect for: the

person, knowledge, democratic values, the quality of educational research and academic freedom" (p.4).

Documents and semi-structured interviews with policy actors are the two main sources of data for this study. The following types of documents were analysed: texts found within the Westminster Parliament and Northern Ireland Assembly *Hansards*; legislative documents; statutory policies issued to schools; and departmental (e.g. DfE, DENI, CCEA, Ofsted) correspondence and published texts. Each aforementioned type of document is considered a 'public' document and under the *Freedom of Information Act* is open to those outside of government to access and review. It is well known that the Westminster Parliament and Northern Ireland Assembly *Hansard*s are responsible for recording verbatim reports of all parliamentary proceedings, whereby each speaker is recorded in the first person, and that all reports are published and available for public access. Therefore, neither oral nor written consent was sought to name these specific policy actors and their specific arguments, contributions, etc. found within the *Hansard* data within this thesis, as it is understood that the content of *Hansard* texts is open to public review and scrutiny.

In keeping with BERA's guidelines, great effort was made to ensure that I operated with respect and responsibility towards each policy actor who participated in an interview for this study. This included gaining voluntary informed consent, being open and honest about the research and how research findings would be disseminated, ensuring participants were aware that he or she could withdraw at any time from the study (pre- or post- interview) without having to give any reason, and if one wished to stay anonymous I would anonymise their contribution as far as possible. However, especially those well known for their participation in SRE and RSE policy-making, the limit of anonymity that could be guaranteed, given the small network of people involved in discussions, was discussed with participants. I offered to use pseudonyms and change identifiable names, places and events if the policy actor stated he or she wished to remain anonymous. Furthermore, those participants who particularly stated concern about anonymity within their interviews were offered the opportunity to review quotes selected to be included within this thesis. However, this was only done if the participant specifically stated to me

that he or she wished to review any of his or her possible contributions prior to publication.

With regard to harm, every effort was taken to minimise the impact that contributing to this study might have on the participants. In terms of protecting a participant's reputation, interviewees were assured that their testimony would not be distorted or falsified and that I would transcribe each interview audio recording verbatim. Committed to working within the *Data Protection Act (1988)*, all paper-based data collected – including my handwritten notes, each 'working transcript' and chart, as well as audio-recorded interview tapes – were kept in a locked file cabinet, while all electronic data (audio files, transcripts) were securely stored and password encrypted on my own personal home computer. I also attempted to reduce the impact participation might have on interviewees by being as flexible as possible and scheduling interviews at a time and location most convenient to each policy actor. No monetary incentive was given. Instead, interviewees gained an additional channel through which to express their views (i.e. knowing this thesis would be printed and possibly read by others in the field) and access to this thesis' findings and analysis which he or she could potentially use to continue to explore SRE and RSE policy-making practices and current policy developments, as well as where his or her's institution's arguments fitted within the overall debate.

PART III: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Chapter 6: The 'SRE policy-making process in England' case

6.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses this study's aim of better understanding the national-level policy process in England with regard to making SRE a statutory component within the National Curriculum. The policy process involves a multi-layered set of elements that interact over time including: various policy actors, a specific context of time, a specific policy domain (e.g. health, education, economic), a range of political media to debate policy (debates within Parliament chambers, committee meetings, *Hansard Question Book*), and the various values, beliefs and interests driving policy actors to participate within policy-making (Sabatier, 2007). Therefore, "given the staggering complexity of the policy process, [one] must find some ways of simplifying the situation in order to have any chance of understanding it" (Sabatier, 2007: 4). The England case of this study is organised into four main sections:

- 6.1 *Introduction*;
- 6.2 *The national SRE policy debate (January 2008 – June 2013)*;
- 6.3 *Policy change: from New Labour to a Coalition Government*; and
- 6.4 *Concluding comments*.

After this introductory section, the first analysis offered within the chapter – *The national SRE policy debate (January 2008-June 2013)* – focuses on the debates that have occurred at a national level with regard to SRE policy. Four sub-sections structure this discussion and tackle each of the research questions posed by this study:

- 6.2.1 *How national policy actors approach SRE in England*;
- 6.2.2 *Values and SRE policy-making*;
- 6.2.3 *Policy actors and alliances within the SRE policy process*; and
- 6.2.4 *Power within the SRE policy-making process*.

The second main analysis the chapter focuses on – *Policy change: from New Labour to a Coalition Government* – takes a deeper look at some of the shifts and 'changes' that occurred within the SRE policy-making process pre- and post- the 2010 change of government. It is anticipated that such a focus will explain the Coalition Government's rejection of policy initiated under the previous government to make PSHEE/SRE statutory. The section is formed of three sub-sections:

- 6.3.1 *Shifts in parliamentarian involvement within the SRE debate*;
- 6.3.2 *New Labour's values and policy approach to PSHEE/SRE*; and
- 6.3.3 *The Coalition's values and policy approach to PSHEE/SRE.*

Lastly, the chapter provides concluding comments to the 'SRE policy-making process in England' case and raises a number of questions that require further examination in the final chapter of this thesis when a comparative approach to England's SRE and Northern Ireland's RSE policy-making process will be taken.

6.2 The national SRE policy debate (January 2008 – June 2013)

This first main section of the chapter investigates the approaches, arguments, negotiations and alliances, as well as values (all identified through thematic analysis of the data) that national policy actors have put forward between 2008-2013 in order to influence the definition, purpose and overall policy around whether PSHEE/SRE should become a statutory component within the National Curriculum for England. The term 'national policy actor' includes parliamentarians, third sector representatives, faith-based organisations, academics, etc. who have been actively engaged with trying to influence policy within Westminster Parliament. Two types of primary data are drawn on: (1) parliamentarian debates, written questions and answers, and committee meeting notes and reports found within the Westminster Parliament *Hansard* and (2) national policy actor responses to questions asked during face-to-face and telephone interviews.

The type and amount of England *Hansard* data pertaining to PSHEE/SRE reviewed can be seen in Table 6, while a more detailed list of the England *Hansard* debate broken down by year can be found in *Appendix G*. Face-to-face and telephone interviews were

conducted with eight parliamentarians, ten third sector representatives representing seven different third sector organisations, and a local authority in a London borough. All interviewees are known to have been (and most currently still are at the time of writing) involved within the PSHEE/SRE policy debate and process.

*Table 6: Type and amount of **Hansard** data reviewed according to parliamentary House*

	House of Commons	House of Lords
Written Questions	72	4
Answers to Written Questions	68	4
Oral Questions	7	5
Oral Answers to Oral Questions	6	5
Debates over Oral Questions	4	5
Debates involving PSHEE/SRE	7	10
Memorandums	2	0
Committee Minutes of Evidence	3	0
Committee Meetings	0	1
Committee Reports	2	0
Notice of Motions	3	0
Written Statements	0	2
Written Ministerial Statements	2	2

6.2.1 How national policy actors approach SRE in England

This sub-section tackles the first research question of the study by presenting a way of understanding the different types of arguments that have shaped discussions at the national parliamentary policy-making level in relation to SRE and therefore PSHEE policy (as SRE is invariably integrated into broader discussions of PSHEE). Such an analysis is important because not only does policy-making consist of hundreds of policy actors but, given the confounding interconnectedness of the policy process (Sabatier, 2007), analysing policy actors' arguments (describing the problem, its causes and how best to implement a solution) within policy debates, committee meetings, proposed legislation, etc. is one way of trying to understand the nature of the policy process.

Next, this sub-section will examine the second research question, through the development of an 'SRE Approaches Framework' (Table 7) created for the purposes of

this study. Through an analysis of primary data, the SRE Approaches Framework presents the key arguments made by policy actors, which in turn extends our knowledge of the particular positions taken toward and specific values informing the SRE debate. Understanding how policy actors conceptualise the debate around SRE and the degree to which their arguments overlap, seek to come into conversation with one another and so forth offers important insights into the fundamental disagreements that have existed for almost a decade around whether SRE should become a statutory component of the National Curriculum under the wider umbrella of PSHEE.

First, the various approaches identified within the SRE Approaches Framework will be introduced to offer some detail about the nature of the SRE debate. The sub-section will then present three policy actor case studies (drawing on both interview and *Hansard* data) to illustrate in more depth how arguments found within each case show the framework 'at work', while also exploring how policy actors' SRE arguments are constructed and (at times) interlinked.

6.2.1.1 The SRE Approaches Framework

The SRE Approaches Framework (Table 7) was developed and inspired by three main influences: (1) the structural formation and layout of Jones' (2011a) sexuality education discourse exemplar (pp. 377-380); (2) Jones' (2011a) suggestion that international research lacks in-depth consideration of "the sexuality education approaches promoted by [education] policies" (p. 370); and (3) the qualitative matrix-based analysis method developed by the Centre for Social Research (i.e. the 'Framework' approach) to manage and synthesise data (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994). While Jones' (2011a, 2011b) research focuses on categorising sexuality education discourses around education orientations (e.g. conservative, liberal, critical or post-modern), the SRE Approaches Framework developed by this study seeks to use newly collected and analysed data which presents the main approaches and values informing policy actors' arguments and ultimately the SRE policy-making process within England.

Drawing upon the five-stages of the Centre for Social Research's Framework approach (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994), inductive thematic analysis was undertaken (generating codes

from the raw data) to identify patterns within the data, whereby these identified patterns and relationships were then used to inform the SRE Approaches Framework (hereafter referred to as the Framework) presented in this sub-section. Codes such as 'right of the child', 'listening to young people', 'teenage pregnancy' and 'opt-out' were generated from the data and through persistent reviewing and re-reviewing of the data, patterns linking codes together (e.g. types of values) became more apparent.

Through this analysis, it appears that national policy actors tend to approach SRE from at least one (although usually several) of seven identified main approaches. These main approaches are:

(1) Protection;

(2) Right of the child;

(3) Right of the parent;

(4) Role of schools;

(5) SRE in the National Curriculum;

(6) Age appropriate SRE; and

(7) Content.

Within each main approach, there are multiple arguments and debates that policy actors tend to draw on when defending their positions toward SRE. In many cases, policy actors share the same approaches or arguments within an approach, but through their own interpretations (or values) arrive at contradicting positions towards SRE and its statutory/non-statutory status within the curriculum. As policy actors appear to draw upon more than one approach, as well as apply several arguments to influence SRE policy, it is more helpful to view a policy actor's position toward SRE as the result of an interwoven network of approaches and arguments. To make reading easier, the name of each approach is initially **bolded** within this sub-section. Quotations and references cited within this sub-section are from *Hansard* or primary interview sources.

Table 7: The SRE Approaches Framework

Main approach	Argument(s)	Debate (within argument)	Value set type
Protection	Through SRE	The more young people know, the more they understand; Enables one to be more resistant to: early sex, unplanned teenage pregnancies, violence in relationships, STDs, HIV and AIDS, misinformation from one's peers and media sexual socialization; Parents state they don't feel able or comfortable talking to their child(ren) about SRE.	Cultural; Health; Intellectual; Rights-based; The Self
	From Loss of Innocence	Schools teach too much, too soon; SRE puts sexual ideas into young people's heads which leads to experimentation; Increased sex education in schools has led to increased rates of unplanned teenage pregnancies; SRE classroom materials contain images that are too graphic for young people.	Cultural; Health
Right of the child	UNCRC	UN Convention on the Rights of the Child does not undermine the rights of parents; Children and young people have a right to: develop their own beliefs, to freedom of thought, to express themselves, easy access to health information and health services, to an education.	Educational; Health; Intellectual; Rights-based
	Right to information	PSHEE/SRE is an entitlement; Not all children come from stable homes or have parents that are able/willing to discuss PSHEE/SRE; Right to have easy and equal access to knowledge and information regarding one's own health and wellbeing; Parents should not be able to withdraw their child(ren) from PSHEE/SRE – especially if the child does not want to be withdrawn; Parental opt-out is an anomaly as parents have the right to withdraw their child(ren) up to the age of nineteen, yet the legal age of sexual consent is sixteen.	Educational; Health; Intellectual; Rights-based; The Self
	Right to be listened to	Must listen to and involve young people in the planning and delivery of PSHEE/SRE to ensure it is relevant to their lives and experiences; Over 21,000 UK young people responded to a 2008 UKYP survey stating: SRE is an entitlement and no school should be able to opt-out (including primary, faith and academies), 40% of young people cited the SRE they had received as 'poor' or 'very poor', while 43% stated they had not been taught about relationships at school and want to.	Educational; Intellectual; Rights-based; Social; The Self
Right of the parent	Responsibility of parents	To instill values in their child(ren); To be the primary educators of their children; If the Government wants parents to take responsibility for their child(ren) then it has to give them that responsibility; Parents should not be able to 'farm out' to the state their own responsibilities.	Economic; Family; Political; Rights-based

Table 7: The SRE Approaches Framework (contd.)

Main approach	Argument(s)	Debate (within argument)	Value set type
Right of the parent (contd.)	Right to be listened to	Parents do not send their child(ren) to school to have the values of the teachers instilled in their child(ren); Schools should involve/listen to parents when developing their curriculums; Parents have the right to decide what is right for their children, not governments or politicians; Parents know their children and their developments best; Young people don't have the kind of experience, wisdom and even cognitive abilities to make good judgments as they are still developing; Schools should not be usurping a parent's role and neither should the government.	Educational; Political; Rights-based
	Right to withdraw child from SRE	Parents have the right to control what information is given to their children about SRE and the 'facts of life'; Perhaps change to where parents 'opt-in' rather than opt their child(ren) out of PSHEE/SRE.	Educational; Political; Rights-based
Role of schools	Responsible for teaching SRE	Role of school is to step in for the interest of the child; Education is more than exam results, qualifications and getting a job, it is about the moral and spiritual development of young people, teaching them about issues they will face when they grow up beyond academic or vocational subjects, equipping them for society and ensuring a smooth transition from adolescence to adulthood; Schools have a responsibility in this area enough that it should be reflected within the inspection system; PSHEE/SRE is a vital part of the teenage pregnancy strategy; Most parents, schools, teachers and young people state schools should teach PSHEE/SRE; Parents say they don't feel able or comfortable talking to their child(ren) about SRE and if schools don't teach PSHEE/SRE young people are going to get it from their peer group or the media - including magazines, television or the Internet; SRE should be a partnership between schools and parents, with parents instilling values and schools providing accurate information and opportunities for young people to develop their ability to make safe and healthy choices; No society has ever flourished where the moral education of young people was left exclusively to the parents or family, without other adults getting involved.	Educational; Health; Intellectual; Rights-based; Social
	Not responsible for teaching SRE	Schools should teach what parents aren't capable of doing, not what they are capable and have a responsibility to do; The 'right' place for children to be taught SRE is at home, or in some cases, a church; If you don't give parents responsibility they are never going to take responsibility; Moral upbringing of young people is the responsibility of parents; Schools are responsible to impart basic educational knowledge to children focusing on reading, writing and	Educational; Family; Intellectual; Political

Table 7: The SRE Approaches Framework (contd.)

Main approach	Argument(s)	Debate (within argument)	Value set type
Role of schools (contd.)	Not responsible for teaching SRE (contd.)	arithmetic, not the 'fluffy' stuff; Teachers feel they have insufficient training to teach the subject; Lack of evidence on the effectiveness of SRE.	Educational; Family; Intellectual; Political
	Faith schools and SRE	PSHEE and SRE are valuable within the curriculum, but should be taught in a sensitive way, compatible with faith traditions and in-line with a school's ethos; Teaching about relationships that are likely to be sexual takes insufficient account of traditional Christian teaching about the relationship between marriage and sexual intimacy; Faith schools should not have to teach about homosexual relationships as normal or harmless.	Educational; Family; Religious
SRE in the National Curriculum	Statutory PSHEE/SRE	More than 21,000 UK young people have called for PSHEE/SRE to be statutory and that state provision is not meeting their needs; Increases the priority schools give to teenage pregnancy and sexual health more generally; Ensures schools will take PSHEE/SRE more seriously and that it is given appropriate resources and is made a priority in school time tables; Only the Government can ensure that all children receive better quality and consistent, factual and appropriate education in this area, that a norm is established and promote best practice across every school; Ensures the five outcomes of Every Child Matters are addressed; Statutory status does not necessarily make good PSHEE happen, but it does mean accountability - making sure it is of good standard and Ofsted inspects the subject; Encourages more teachers to train as specialists; Ensures every child regardless of background or circumstances of their parenting is given some level of information and guidance around their sexual health and wellbeing; Sends a powerful message that the government is fully committed to promoting children's wellbeing; Will help build a partnership between parents and children; Cannot achieve National Curriculum aims of supporting the spiritual, moral and social development of all pupils or indeed prepare them for adult life if schools are not required to teach PSHEE/SRE.	Educational; Health; Intellectual; Political; Rights-based; Social; The Self
	Non-statutory PSHEE/SRE	Government should not take parental responsibilities away from parents; Being too 'universal' with PSHEE/SRE has its dangers; Curriculum has to be sensitive that young people mature at different levels and at different rates; Curriculum must take into account different cultural and ethnic community needs, as well as be sensitive where there is no consensus on what should be taught, therefore, more local discretion/flexibility should be given to communities, schools, teachers, school governing bodies and parents to decide what should be taught; Not enought	Cultural; Economic; Educational; Family; Political; Religious

Table 7: The SRE Approaches Framework (contd.)

Main approach	Argument(s)	Debate (within argument)	Value set type
SRE in the National Curriculum (contd.)	Non-statutory PSHEE/SRE	specialist trained teachers to teach; Faith-schools want to be able to teach SRE in relation to their faith; The Government has to be sensitive and respectful of what is going on in the home; There is little evidence to support the effectiveness of teaching PSHEE/SRE in schools; PSHEE/SRE should not be an examined subject in schools; Need to slim down the National Curriculum because schools and teachers have too many pressures and only a limited time to teach the National Curriculum; In order to tackle TP, STD, and HIV/AIDS rates, instead of focusing on SRE, the Government needs to focus on the benefits and housing allocation system, as well as the over sexual socialisation of society and changing culture in which we live; Simply stating the subject will be compulsory will not make it more effective; Better to encourage and reinforce regular and open communication between parents and schools through clear guidance, rather than through additional legislation.	
Age appropriate SRE	Primary-level PSHEE/SRE	International evidence supports that teaching SRE before the onset of sexual maturation (puberty) and first sexual activity has a positive effect on TP rates; Sexual socialisation through the media; Appropriate PSHEE/SRE for primary students is not about sexual intercourse but about relationships (i.e. what is means to be a brother/sister or a friend), talking about different types of families, what is appropriate touching (i.e. why we give each other hugs and cuddles) and when that is not appropriate, describing the difference between boys and girls and naming body parts - including genitalia; Relationship education should start in primary school to then move on to more developed sexual roles in secondary; Having conversations with younger children about relationships and what they can expect gives children confidence about their bodies and to say 'stop that' if someone touches them inappropriately; No one has ever argued that primary schools should teach four (4) year olds about sexual intercourse, anal sex or masturbation.	Cultural; Educational; Health; Intellectual; Social; The Self
Content	Change name of curriculum	'Relationships and Sexuality Education' because the 'relationships' comes first; 'Living and Growing Up' because some faiths (i.e. Ultra Orthodox Jews) will not even say the word 'sex'; Personal and Social Development because sex and relationships is one component of wellbeing; Life Skills.	Cultural; Educational; Religious

Table 7: The SRE Approaches Framework (contd.)

Main approach	Argument(s)	Debate (within argument)	Value set type
Content (contd.)	Comprehensive SRE	Can not separate SRE from the broader umbrella of PSHEE and wellbeing; Encourage young people to delay early sexual activity; A comprehensive program entails factual discussion around: how and the context of which sex happens, how to manage relationships and one's emotions, safeguarding against violence in relationships, different types of families and relationships, teenage pregnancy, contraception, issues pertaining to STDs and HIV/AIDS, the risks and consequences to sexual behaviours, homophobia and homophobic bullying and abortion; Young people talking to each other about their own values, ethics and feelings; Focus is on how a family functions, not its structure; Can not discriminate against children of lone parent families or non-nuclear families.	Cultural; Health; Intellectual; Social; The Self
	Abstinence Plus	Does not promote sex outside of marriage and teaches one should abstain, however does acknowledge that young people will be involved in relationships and should be informed about contraception, HIV/AIDS and STDs; Have to raise the bar and not be afraid to hold up ideals, but at the same time it is about equipping young people, not morally judging; As long as the 'gold standard' (heteronormative, sexual relations within marriage) is taught, people should be informed of the range of other relationships which exist – but not commend them.	Family; Intellectual; Religious
	Abstinence Only	'Gold standard' – heteronormative, sexual relations within marriage; SRE should be taught but only within the context of marriage; Marriage as a social institution; Maintain a bond between sexuality and marriage; Contraception should not be taught nor given out within schools; teaching young people to abstain without the information about sex.	Family; Religious
	No school-based SRE	Schools should not provide any form of PSHEE/SRE to students as it is the sole responsibility of parents.	Family

The first approach, '**Protection**', is the only main approach found within every national policy actors' argument (both in the *Hansard* and through interviews) – regardless of political position, party or organisation. All policy actors appear to agree that children and young people require and deserve to be protected. However, there is significant debate around what children and young people need protection from. Two main arguments are represented within the 'Protection' approach:

(1) Children and young people need protection from being sexualised and having first sex too young; therefore, 'through SRE' they will be better able to protect themselves; and

(2) Children and young people need protection *from* school-based SRE as it leads to 'loss of childhood innocence'.

The majority of policy actors who have spoken within the PSHEE/SRE debate fall within the protection 'Through SRE' argument. The attitude pushing this argument is that "the more people know and the more they understand, the more they will make the right life decisions" (Allen, 2008a). School-based SRE leads to knowledge that then 'empowers' young people to delay sexual activity and first sex (Baroness Hughes, 2009; Johnson, 2009; Baroness Morgan, 2010; Baroness Walmsley, 2010c, 2011; Gilbert, 2011a-b) and to make healthier decisions – thus reducing unplanned teenage pregnancies and the spread of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) (Knight, 2008d, 2008g; Baroness Hughes, 2009; Earl of Listowel, 2009; Baroness Walmsley, 2010c, 2011; Campbell, 2012; Bryant, 2012). It is additionally argued that as modern society is immersed in mass media marketing and with ease of access to the internet and social media, tools should be taught within PSHEE/SRE to help children and young people become more aware and resistant to external pressures, as well as more critical towards their sexual socialisation through media images and messages (Brook, 2008; Knight, 2008f; Baroness Blackstone, 2010; Lord Howarth, 2010; Brennan, 2011; Baroness Walmsley, 2011; Laxton, 2011; Baroness Massey, 2011c).

In contrast, policy actors pushing the 'From loss of innocence' (McCormack, 2008; Shannon, 2011) argument frequently maintain that children and young people need to be

protected from school-based SRE as too much is being taught too soon (Lord Alton, 2010; Dorries, 2011a; Leadsom, 2011b), SRE puts ideas into young people's heads thus leading to experimentation, and SRE is adversely contributing to increased rates of unplanned teenage pregnancies and STIs (Davies, D., 2008a; Davies, P., 2008a, 2008d, 2011; Dorries, 2011b). As one MP puts it, teaching any SRE inside schools – outside of an abstinence-only approach – "is like saying 'now go and try this for yourself'" (Dories, 2011b).

There are those who straddle the line between these two arguments. For example, there are policy actors who agree that SRE is both a valuable tool to help protect against unplanned teenage pregnancies and socialisation through the media, but also, at times, too graphic and therefore measures should be put in place to ensure that PSHEE/SRE does not introduce young people to sexual topics prematurely. What appears to 'tip' a 'straddler' into either the 'Through SRE' or 'Loss of childhood innocence' category is whether one believes balance has been struck between 'balancing' the entitlement to learning opportunities while ensuring teaching is relevant and appropriate and the degree to which one believes school-based SRE has contributed to increased rates of unplanned teenage pregnancies.

The second main approach within this framework is the '**Right of the child**'. Those who approach SRE from the 'Right of the child' perspective maintain that every person under the age of eighteen has certain civil, political, economic, cultural and social rights. Three main arguments emerge within this approach:

(1) Children and young people have an entitlement to easily accessible knowledge and information pertaining to their own sexual health and wellbeing, regardless of age, race, religion, family circumstance or socio-economic position (Lord Knight, 2011; Baroness Walmsley, 2011; Baroness Massey, 2011c; Johnson, 2011b);

(2) Children and young people have the right to have their thoughts, feelings and preferences listened to regarding their own sexual health and wellbeing (Baroness Tyler, 2011; Lord Knight, 2011; Frances, 2011); and

(3) All UK sexual health policies and educational programmes must take into account the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

The UNCRC is an international human rights treaty that sets out the rights of all young people and how these should be met. It was adopted in 1989 by the UN General Assembly (ratified by the UK in 1991) and is considered the "most widely ratified human rights treaty in history" (UNICEF UK, 2009). All policy actors who approached SRE from the 'Right of the child' adopted both the 'Entitlement to education' and 'Right to be listened to' main arguments, and a majority of policy actors explicitly stated the importance of following the UNCRC. It is important to note that policy actors who argue for the rights of children are not necessarily stating that parents do not have an important role in teaching their child(ren) SRE or that they should not be involved in the development and implementation of school-based SRE. The argument is that parents cannot over-ride their own children's rights.

The third main approach, '**Right of the parent**', is frequently seen as being in opposition to those who approach SRE from the 'Right of the child' perspective. There are three main arguments within this approach:

(1) Parents have a responsibility to teach SRE and instill values in their child(ren) – not the government, schools, etc.;

(2) Parents are the primary educators of their child(ren) and know their child(ren) best, therefore, they have the right to be listened to and to decide what values are (and are not) taught to their child(ren) within school-based SRE programmes; and

(3) Parents have the right to withdraw their child(ren) from all or part of PSHEE/SRE.

The third argument, 'Right to withdraw child from PSHEE/SRE', is arguably the most frequently cited argument of those who take the 'Right of the parent' approach. Parents are argued to have the right to decide whether or not their child(ren) is/are taught SRE and to withdraw their child(ren) from all or part of SRE – regardless of if the child wishes

to participate in the course. It has even been suggested that parents should have to 'opt-in' for their child(ren) to participate in SRE lessons (Leadsom, 2011b).

The '**Role of schools**' to teach SRE is the fourth main approach within the Framework. Policy actors heavily debate the purpose of education and what schools are and are not responsible to teach when it comes to the sexual health and wellbeing of young people. The three main arguments within the approach include:

(1) Schools *have* a responsibility to teach SRE;

(2) Schools *do not* have a responsibility to teach SRE; and

(3) Faith schools should be able to decide what (if any) SRE is taught.

Most policy actors argue that schools *are* responsible for teaching at least some form of SRE. Arguably the strongest argument to this approach has been that it is naïve to assume young people are getting this information while at home (Knight, 2008d; Baroness Gould, 2011; Baroness Massey, 2011c; Board of Deputies of British Jews, 2011) – as many parents say they feel uncomfortable broaching SRE with their child(ren) – and that schools have a responsibility to equip young people for life (including facilitating their social, physical, emotional, behavioural, moral and spiritual wellbeing), not just preparing them for employment (Lord Knight, 2008f, 2011; Allen, 2008b; Lord Layard, 2010; Baroness Enfield, 2011; Kesterton, 2011; Baroness Gould, 2011; Baroness Massey, 2011c; Baroness Walmsley, 2011; Lord Sutherland, 2011d; Frances, 2011; Blake, 2011; Lord Bishop Chester, 2012; Campbell, 2012).

In contrast, a very small number of policy actors have been arguing that schools *are not* responsible to teach SRE because the role of the school is to concentrate on subjects such as reading, writing and arithmetic, while SRE and the moral upbringing of children should be taught within the home by parents (Davies, 2011) and in some cases a church (McCormack, 2008).

The third main argument within this approach, 'Faith schools and SRE' pertains to the debate around whether faith schools should be able to 'opt-out' of teaching important sexual health issues such as contraception, abortion, STIs and homosexuality if these topics do not fit the ethos of their faith, and whether or not faith schools are entitled to 'opt-out' of teaching SRE all together if it is not compatible with their faith traditions. Those who push for sensitivity are found within both the responsible and not responsible to teach arguments.

The fifth approach to the Framework, '**SRE in the National Curriculum**', illustrates not only how policy actors approach the role (if any) the government has in enforcing schools to teach SRE within their curricula, but also the importance of placing PSHEE (and subsequently the non-biological aspects of SRE) within the National Curriculum. There are two main arguments to this approach:

(1) PSHEE/SRE *should* be made statutory within the National Curriculum for England; and

(2) PSHEE/SRE *should not* be made statutory within the National Curriculum for England.

Those who argue for statutory PSHEE/SRE insist that it is the responsibility of the government to ensure that *all* children receive factual, high quality and consistent education pertaining to sexual health and wellbeing (Baroness Howe, 2008; Lord Howarth, 2010; Baroness Benjamin, 2011; Lord Knight, 2011; Baroness Gould, 2011; Baroness Massey, 2011c; Baroness Walmsley, 2011; Johnson, 2011b) and that by requiring every school to teach PSHEE/SRE this ensures that schools will recognise PSHEE/SRE as having an equally important role within the curriculum (Baroness Gould, 2011; Baroness Walmsley, 2011; Frances, 2011) as traditional subjects (e.g. English, Maths and Science) have. This in turn would mean that more teachers would need to be trained in the subject (Baroness Gould, 2011; Baroness, 2011c), so as to ensure that children are taught by properly trained specialists who are comfortable with the subject matter.

The most consistent debate within the 'Non-statutory PSHEE/SRE' argument is that providing a 'universal' programme of PSHEE/SRE assumes children mature at similar levels and rates (Lord Sutherland, 2011d; McCormack, 2011), and that a universal curriculum might not be sensitive to all the different cultural and religious needs of communities (Lord Sutherland, 2011c). Additional debates include that the National Curriculum needs to be slimmed down (Gibb, 2011; Lord Sutherland, 2011a; Baroness O'Cathain, 2011; Lord Hill, 2011a) and that it should be left up to the discretion of local schools to decide what is taught and how (Gibb, 2011; Lord Sutherland, 2011c, 2011d; Lord Lucas, 2011; Lord Hill, 2011a; McCormack, 2011).

However, there are policy actors who support statutory PSHEE/SRE, as well as those who straddle the line between both sides of the statutory/non-statutory argument who believe that PSHEE/SRE is an important subject and should be taught within schools, but that local discretion/flexibility should be given to communities, schools, teachers and school governing bodies to develop and personalise their own individual programmes of PSHEE/SRE (Lord Bishop Langrish, 2010; Lord Sutherland, 2011d; Baroness Howe, 2011).

What appears to separate those who take a non-statutory versus a statutory PSHEE/SRE approach, yet agree that the programme of study should be flexible/left to the local discretion of schools, is that those who argue for statutory legislation assert that there are certain topics that all schools should be required to teach, just that schools should have the flexibility to decide the *depth* of the topic and *how* it will be taught.

'**Age appropriate SRE**' is the sixth main approach within the section's Framework. 'Age appropriate SRE' refers to the stage of schooling (primary or secondary) at which students should begin to learn about gender, sex, sexuality and relationships topics. PSHEE/SRE within primary school education is only mentioned within this approach because there seems to be a general consensus among policy actors that secondary school students should learn some aspects of SRE. The majority of the debate around this issue has focused on de-bunking the myth (especially with regard to the prior New Labour Government's decision to make PSHEE/SRE statutory for all school children) that children as young as five and six years old will be taught about sexual intercourse,

masturbation, and oral and anal sex within their PSHEE/SRE lessons (Dorries, 2011a; Leadsom, 2011a).

The central arguments for teaching PSHEE/SRE within the primary school curriculum include that it is appropriate for primary-aged students to learn about relationships (i.e. relationships with parents, other family members and friends) (Gilbert, 2011a; Nash, 2011b; Baroness Gould, 2011; Baroness Massey, 2011(c); Baroness Walmsley, 2011; Johnson, 2011a, 2011b) and how to relate to one another (e.g. why we give each other hugs and cuddles and when and with whom that is appropriate) (Brooke, 2011; Gilbert, 2011a; Johnson, 2011a, 2011b; Lord Knight, 2011), as well as knowing the difference between boys and girls (i.e. naming the body parts) and that different family types exist before moving onto more sexual (or sexually explicit) topics in secondary school (Gilbert, 2011a; Johnson, 2011a, 2011b; Lord Knight, 2011). Policy actors also argue that international evidence supports that teaching SRE before the onset of puberty and first sexual activity has a positive influence on reducing teenage pregnancy and STI rates (Nash, 2011a; Gilbert, 2011b).

The seventh and last approach, '**Content**', describes the various SRE programme formats and the different content policy actors argue should be implemented through SRE programmes. There are four main overarching approaches to SRE: comprehensive SRE, abstinence-plus, abstinence-only and no school-based SRE.

Comprehensive SRE focuses on the broader umbrella of PSHEE and wellbeing, whereby students are encouraged to abstain from early sexual activity while given factual information pertaining to a range of sexual health topics. These include: the how and context in which sex happens; emotions and managing one's relationships; different types of families and relationships; contraception; teenage pregnancy and issues pertaining to STIs, HIV and AIDS; homophobia and homophobic bullying; and abortion. Abstinence-plus programmes promote a 'gold standard' – heteronormative, sexual relations within marriage – and teach that one should abstain until marriage; however, they acknowledge that young people will have relationships (possibly leading to sexual relations) and therefore should be informed about contraception, HIV and AIDS. While one should be aware of 'other' (non-heterosexual) relationships – these are not recommended. In

contrast, abstinence-only programmes teach only the 'gold standard' without further information – contraception should not be taught nor given out in schools, topics such as abortion, non-heterosexual relationships, and sexually transmitted infections should be avoided. In extremely rare cases, some argue that no form of SRE (including biological and non-biological aspects) should be taught within schools.

Aside from determining what type of programme is best, policy actors from both sides of the statutory PSHEE/SRE debate also argue that the name Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) should be changed. Some argue that it should be called 'Relationships and Sexuality Education' because relationships come first. For instance, the Board of Deputies of British Jews (2011) suggest re-naming SRE to something such as 'Living and Growing Up' because some faiths (such as Ultra Orthodox Jews) will not even say the word 'sex', while others feel that 'Personal and Social Development' would be better because sexual relationships are just one aspect of a broader concept of wellbeing.

6.2.1.2 The Framework in practice: three policy actor cases

To better illustrate this study's SRE Approaches Framework 'at work' and to further highlight the main approaches and possible linkages between arguments found within the SRE policy process, a small sample of arguments made by Lord Knight, Lord Sutherland and Philip Davies MP are traced – starting from the 'Protection' approach. These three specific cases were chosen as each policy actor represents a different political party affiliation (Labour, Crossbench/Ind, Conservative) and is known to uphold a particular position toward PSHEE/SRE (pro-statutory, middle ground position, no PSHEE/SRE at all). Lord Knight was the former New Labour Government's Minister for Schools and Learners and co-Chaired the 2008 SRE Review that influenced the former Government's 2009 decision to make PSHEE statutory. Lord Sutherland is an academic and former Vice-Chancelor of the University of London. He sits as Crossbench (Ind) within the House of Lords and helped not only develop Ofsted but was appointed the first Chief Inspector of Schools. Mr Davies is the Conservative MP for Shipley in West Yorkshire and has described himself as having the role of an 'outrider' in the SRE debate because he is "fundamentally against sex education being taught in schools" (Davies, 2011).

By exploring the specific content and topics debated/defended/rejected by each policy actor, as well as the type and sources of evidence (if any) drawn upon, policy actors' approaches and positions toward SRE become clearer. This analysis also draws attention to the specific oppositional nodal points where linkages between policy actors' arguments and approaches get disconnected – whereby policy actors who appear to not only approach but make similar arguments toward SRE end up on opposite sides of the statutory PSHEE/SRE debate. Throughout the rest of this sub-section, Lord Knight's, Lord Sutherland's and Philip Davies' names are **bolded** within the text so that the reader can more easily follow shifts in focus between the three policy actors.

Having stated that SRE is a 'vital' tool for "tackling the growth of sexually transmitted infections and teenage pregnancy rates" (Lord Knight, 2011), **Lord Knight**, an avid advocate for statutory PSHEE/SRE within the National Curriculum, argued that SRE is an important mode of providing children and young people 'protection'. He continues to contest the argument that having open discussions about sex within SRE puts sexual ideas into young people's heads and leads to experimentation (Lord Knight, 2008h, 2011), because "the fact is [young people] are having those ideas anyways" (Knight, 2008g). Additionally**, Lord Knight** argued that school-based SRE is particularly important because it protects children and young people from "growing up in the highly sexualised climate of this country, in this century" (2008f) from sexual socialisation through the media.

> [With] mass marketing aimed at children, a celebrity and image-conscious culture, T-shirts for girls as young as six reading 'so many boys, so little time', magazines, soaps and music videos create an increasingly sexualised climate in which young people are regularly confronted with sex in some form. It is vital that we get the other side of the story across – information about sex and relationships, advice on how young people can keep themselves safe and straight answers to their questions – so that they are well equipped to cultivate meaningful relationships and make safe choices. (Knight, 2008f)

Lord Sutherland, straddles the line between 'through SRE' and 'from loss of innocence', having used both sides of the 'Protection' argument. During an interview, **Lord Sutherland** provided an example of how one of his neighbour's eleven-year-old, male grandchildren was shown a film depicting full frontal nudity and actual copulation during one of his sex education classes. He described how "The little boy was scared

rigid. No real preparation and that's a poor example of how you can go too far" (Lord Sutherland, 2011d). While he argues that SRE can at times lead to 'loss of innocence', **Lord Sutherland** also stated that he recognises that "at the other end it does not do to have such a rigid system that young people are wholly unprepared" (Lord Sutherland, 2011d) because "look at the culture they live in, look at the billboards and what they look at on telly, they are not well prepared if that is their total diet" (Lord Sutherland, 2011d). At the same time, while **Lord Sutherland** did not go so far as to associate schools teaching SRE with increased rates of unplanned teenage pregnancies and STIs, he did state that:

> Surely with the amount of time and energy that has been spent on [SRE] we should have got it right by now, but we have not as we're the worst in Europe (referring to TP and STD rates) and that is a great indictment that whatever we've been doing has not actually been good enough. (Lord Sutherland, 2011d)

Lord Sutherland draws on the same argument as **Lord Knight** – young people need protection from sexual socialisation through the media –while also drawing attention to young people also needing to be protected from schools teaching SRE material too prematurely.

In contrast, **Philip Davies** has clearly presented himself as approaching SRE from the 'loss of innocence' perspective and that school-based SRE is undesirable. He contended that teenage pregnancy rates are directly linked to schools teaching SRE (Davies,P., 2008a, 2011) and that "sex education itself is the problem" (Davies, 2011). Speaking in an interview, **Davies** stated that:

> As far as I, and most of my constituents can see, the more sex education we are having, the more unwanted teenage pregnancies we are having so quite clearly more sex education is not the answer. It is not making the situation any better at all. As anyone can see it is making it worse so what about having less sex education or even better, no sex education at all? (Davies, 2011)

In addition to the 'Protection' approach, the 'Right of the child' and 'Right of the parent' have been described as two approaches 'dividing' the overall statutory/non-statutory PSHEE/SRE debate. **Lord Knight** has asserted that even though there is "a lot of grey" (2011) among the two rights-based approaches, there is a:

Difference in values between those whose starting point is children and individual children and making sure that every child is given regardless of background, regardless of circumstances of their parenting and whether they've got parents, that every one of those children is given a reasonable level of information and to some extent guidance in conjunction with parents (where they are there). This contrasts with those whose starting point is family and parents and the rights of parents to be in control of everything that their children are told about the sensitive moral subject. (Lord Knight, 2011)

Lord Knight has taken the 'Right of the child' approach to SRE by consistently asserting within parliamentary debates that children and young people have the right to be listened to and the right to information regarding their own health. During the 2008 Labour-led SRE Review, **Lord Knight** (Co-chair) frequently commented that the then Department for Children, School and Families (DCSF) was fully involving young people within its Review (2008a, 2008b, 2008c) to ensure that "future SRE better meets their needs" (2008a). Lord Knight continued, that having listened to many young people, emphasised that they "feel they do not currently have the knowledge they need to make safe and responsible choices about relationships and sexual health" (Knight, 2008b) and that "provision is not meeting their needs, particularly in relation to the relationships aspect of SRE and drug and alcohol issues (Knight, 2008b).

Although **Lord Knight** has taken the 'Right of the child' approach, he has not disagreed with arguments regarding the importance of parents being engaged and fully involved with schools in making decisions (2008c, 2008d, 2011) about what school-based SRE programmes should entail and when topics should be taught, as well as agreeing that "much of this education [should take] place at home" (2008d). However, **Lord Knight** has also argued that the UK government and schools "have to take account of the fact that on some occasions some children are not taught [SRE] at home, so we need to be able to fill in for that absence, in school" (Knight, 2008d).

Lord Sutherland made clear in an interview for this study that he has not been approaching SRE from a rights-based perspective, as the "the rhetoric of rights is not one that [he's] all that enthusiastic about" (2011d). While he went on to state that the rights debate is very important and has sparked great changes in places like South Africa, regarding statutory SRE in the National Curriculum for England:

The notion of an absolute right of children to 'x', 'y' and 'z' is probably as ridiculous as any other absolute right. What's going on at the moment – the right to privacy, the right to freedom and information – these are not always compatible. Likewise, I do not think parents have complete rights once they've given their children up to state education. That's what we're talking about. They have implicitly accepted that it will not always be their view that will prevail. In classrooms teachers ultimately make the decisions, not parents. (Lord Sutherland, 2011d)

Philip Davies has been insisting that the 'right of parents', moreover, that the 'responsibilities' of parents, must be recognised (Davies, P., 2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2011). While being interviewed, **Davies** stated "My starting point is that I am philosophically against sex education in schools because in far too many cases we are taking responsibilities away from parents" (Davies, 2011). He stressed that parents are responsible for the moral upbringing of children (Davies, P., 2008a, 2008c, 2011) and that school-based SRE is one way the government is allowing parents to "farm out to the state" (Davies, P., 2008c, 2011) things that "[parents] are not only capable of doing but have a responsibility to do" (Davies, 2011). **Davies** has been suggesting that "there is no evidence at all from anywhere in the world that [SRE] helps" (2008e, also Davies, 2011) and that it would be "much better to look at the benefits and housing allocation system" (Davies, P., 2008a) because "until the government accept that it is things such as family breakdown and the benefits system, not a lack of sex education in schools" (Davies, 2008e) that drives teenage pregnancy, rates will continue to rise.

Lord Knight's and **Lord Sutherland's** arguments pertaining to the 'Role of schools' and 'SRE in the National Curriculum' highlight how policymakers might share similar arguments within one approach but then take completely different positions within a similar, closely linked approach. Both policy actors have cited schools as having some level of responsibility to teach PSHEE and subsequently the non-biological aspects of SRE; however, they have disagreed on whether the government should go so far as to legislate on the subject. **Lord Knight** has emphasised within debates that "sex education is a serious subject that [the government] should not shy away from" (2008e) and that it is:

No less than part of our moral duty to teach young people how to relate to one another, keep themselves safe and treat each other with respect in order to stand

them in good stead for happiness and success in later life. Sex and Relationships Education is a vital part of that. (Knight, 2008f)

In addition, **Lord Knight** has asserted that the UK education system "must not shy away from the task of preparing young people for life as fully rounded human beings" (2008f) because "sex and relationships are a crucial part of growing up and our approach to those relationships, the choices that we make and our ability to keep ourselves safe is what marks us as independent, free-thinking adults" (Knight, 2008f). Furthermore, **Lord Knight** has reasoned that statutory PSHEE/SRE will make inroads in: "providing better quality and consistent (SRE) advice" (2008f) to young people (2011), "rais[ing] standards across the board and increase[ing] the priority [the subject] receives in schools" (2008g), tackling wider social issues such as "rising rates of [STIs], obesity, aggression, violence, and teenage pregnancy" (2008g), as well as "build[ing] a partnership between parents and their children as they approach [SRE related] issues" (2008g).

While **Lord Sutherland** has agreed that "PSHEE is a very important part of education for many young people" (2011b) and has a "general acceptance that preparing young people for more than Maths, English and History is an important part of schools' work" (Lord Sutherland, 2011d), he has expressed reservations about PSHEE/SRE becoming statutory within the National Curriculum (Lord Sutherland, 2011a, 2011c, 2011d). During an interview he stated that, "I think schools have a responsibility in this area to the extent that that should be reflected within the inspection system" (Lord Sutherland, 2011d). Instead of debating whether PSHEE/SRE should become statutory or not, **Lord Sutherland** has heavily focused on ensuring that the subject is inspected by Ofsted (2011c, 2011d) because "when [schools] know what you are going to inspect, that's what they focus on" (Lord Sutherland, 2011d); therefore, "good inspection is the critical element" (Lord Sutherland, 2011d). The specific concern he has raised around PSHEE/SRE having statutory status is that by legislating the subject a sort of 'universalism' or 'one size fits all' programme gets laid down. He has described two 'dangers' a universal PSHEE/SRE programme presents: (1) "young people mature at different levels, whether it's in in their understanding of society at large, a personal relationship or even how much interest they have in their own health" (2011d), and (2) "if you got a class with representatives of four or five radically different cultures they are

going to be different, their parents are going to be different and their expectations are each going to be different. A school's job is to reflect on that and produce some sort of education in this area" (2011d). **Lord Sutherland** has been pushing for local school flexibility and discretion to teachers. He has not been pushing for a list of criteria schools should legally be required to teach, but for statutory inspection so that Ofsted ensures that for each school questions such as "Is the balance of sex education in this school, in this community and in this culture right?" (Lord Sutherland, 2011d).

Philip Davies approaches the 'Role of schools' from a very different position to that of **Lord Knight** and **Lord Sutherland**. During an interview, **Davies** asserted that "there is absolutely no remit for schools" (2011) to teach PSHEE/SRE and that teachers should teach children and young people "what parents are not capable of doing, not things that parents are not only capable of doing but have a responsibility to" (Davies 2011; also 2008e). **Davies** has been arguing that all schools should have the freedom to opt-out of teaching SRE (2008c, 2011), and that the government should stop "placing all sorts of burdens on schools that take them away from their core job of teaching children the subjects parents want then to learn" (2008e). The government should instead be sending the message that:

> It is against the law to have sex under the age of sixteen – that should be it. We should not be saying that it is okay to have sex under the age of sixteen, so we will give young people all the tools that they might need to sort themselves out while they are indulging in it. (Davies, 2008f)

Lord Knight has been fighting against critics who believe that if PSHEE/SRE became statutory within the primary curriculum, children would be taught about the mechanics of sex, anal sex and masturbation. **Lord Knight** has always been perfectly clear that statutory PSHEE/SRE for all school-age children does not mean that five-year olds should or will be taught the 'mechanics' of sex (Knight, 2008d, 2011). Instead, he has continually pushed that primary SRE programmes should focus on "relationships and their importance so that there is a proper setting for going on to talk about the sensitive matters around sex" (Knight, 2008d) during secondary school.

> All the time you [should be] trying to build a resilience around relationships and that does include childhood relationships – innocent childhood relationships – about how to get along with friends, classmates, teachers, their parents and how they are dealing with bullying. These are hugely important issues in building the emotional resilience of children. Then as that develops you enter a robust foundation within which to start talking about sexual relationships and you do that as appropriate. (Lord Knight, 2011)

Alternatively, **Philip Davies** has clearly approached SRE from the standpoint that SRE should not be taught within any school curriculum – primary or secondary. **Davies** stated in an interview for this study that:

> My children are eight and six and the thought that idiots want to teach them sex education just fills me with absolute horror to be perfectly honest. I cannot think of anything else so spectacularly inappropriate in my entire life as teaching kids – my two children – about sex education. I mean it is the most ridiculous thing I have heard in my entire life. (Davies, 2011)

How one approaches the 'Content', or programme design (i.e. comprehensive, abstinence-plus, abstinence-only, no SRE in schools), school-based SRE should entail is not always overtly stated within the arguments reviewed. Instead, the likely position taken in relation to the 'Content' approach can be postulated after reviewing the specific issues debated for and against as well as the values that appear to drive the arguments made by each policy actor within the overall PSHEE/SRE debate. For example, while **Lord Knight** has been unmistakably supporting the call for statutory, comprehensive SRE for all school-aged pupils (Knight, 2008g, 2011) and **Philip Davies** has been arguing for no school-based SRE (Davies, 2011), **Lord Sutherland** does not appear to have been approaching the overall debate from a 'content'-focused perspective. While **Lord Sutherland** has been arguing for statutory inspection by Ofsted to ensure schools are providing quality and balanced SRE, that the National Curriculum should provide a "balanced education with a minimum core" (Lord Sutherland, 2011a), and that schools should maintain flexibility to design their own programmes, his arguments have not been specifically focused on supporting either a comprehensive or abstinence style programme design.

Policy and the policy process are regarded as being a "struggle between contenders of compromising objectives" (Fulcher, 1989: 7). The SRE Approaches Framework within

this section helps illuminate some of these 'struggles' and 'objectives' by presenting in a clear way the main approaches taken and arguments made by policy actors within the debate. For example, the Framework reveals that policy actors have primarily drawn upon at least one (although usually more) of seven core approaches, and that through these approaches multiple arguments (sometimes opposing) are heavily debated and drawn upon with the ultimate goal of constructing an argument that not only influences other policy actors but guides the debate toward a particular desired policy outcome. As seen within this section's examination of three distinct policy actor cases, tracing a policy actor's arguments and how he/she approaches the general SRE debate (and cross referencing this against the section's Framework) provides a deeper understanding of the ways in which policy actors' arguments are linked and interact with each other, as well as illuminates the competing interests, values and political struggles that have and continue to shape the national SRE policy debate.

While this section did not touch upon the 'Value set type' column identified within the SRE Approaches Framework, the next sub-section, *Values and SRE policy-making*, takes a deeper look at these main values (see: Table 7) embedded within the overall SRE debate by investigating and comparing the specific sets of values national policy actors have expressed and defended within their arguments during the time period studied.

6.2.2 Values and SRE policy-making

It is clear that values play an important part in SRE policy, as "the selection of aims for sex education involves explicit or implicit value judgments, as so does the selection of content and method" (Halstead & Reiss, 2003: 3). Therefore, this sub-section focuses on answering this study's third research question and extends the 'values as policy' discussion further by drawing upon the 'Value set type' column found within Table 7 (pp.120-124) and presenting the sets of values that national policy actors express and defend within their approaches to SRE (see: Table 8). It investigates whether or not looking at the SRE policy process from a values perspective provides deeper insight into what appears to be holding PSHEE (and subsequently SRE) back from becoming statutory within the National Curriculum for England, or at the very least, whether viewing the current SRE policy process from a values perspective helps us to better

understand policy actors' positions and the policy-making process. A focus on policy actor values is important because such an analysis helps illustrate why policy actors might start from a particular approach over others, as well as offers a possible explanation as to why some policy actors start from the same approach toward SRE but ultimately find themselves on very different sides of the 'statutory status' discussion of the PSHEE/SRE debate.

What specific values were defended and contested within the 2008-2013 national SRE debate? First, in this sub-section, the main type of value sets found within the varying arguments made within each of the main approaches policy actors took toward SRE (See: Table 7 'Value set type' column) are identified. Subsequently, the characteristics used to define each value set type are developed (Table 8), drawing on the narratives of the individual policy actors' interviewed for this study and statements made in parliamentary discussions (seen in the *Hansard*). Such an analysis could also be used as a tool to consider how these values have or have not been re-formulated and re-defined within subsequent PSHEE/SRE policy texts.

As a reminder, inductive thematic analysis was applied to official *Hansard* texts and the interview transcripts of the nineteen individual policy actors interviewed for the England case. This analysis identified patterns such as approaches, arguments, values and links among individuals and groups within the overall SRE debate and policy process. The examples of values outlined within Table 8 are those that were identified through this process.

Subsequently, some examples of the ways values have been 'categorised' or 'grouped' by other academics – ideologies such as liberal (Archard, 2000; Halstead, 1996b), Catholic (Clark, 1998) or democratic (Dunlop, 1996; Weeks, 1995; Giddens, 1992); the various disciplines of life – 'The self' (Tate, 2000; SCAA, 1996), 'economic' (Magnell, 1998; Halstead, 1998), 'educational' (Aspin & Chapman, 2007; Halstead, 1998; Taylor, 1998), 'family' (Halstead & Reiss, 2006; DfEE, 2000; Mellman et al., 1990) or 'health' (Halstead & Reiss, 2006; Walsh, 1999) were used for a more deductively-informed second stage of the data analysis process. Informed by the literature, this analysis

suggests that national policy actors express or defend eleven main value set types within their approaches to SRE:

(1) Educational;

(2) Rights-based;

(3) Family;

(4) Health;

(5) The Self;

(6) Intellectual;

(7) Political;

(8) Religious;

(9) Social;

(10) Economic; and

(11) Cultural.

These eleven value set types are not necessarily independent from one another, nor are they listed in any particular order within Table 8.

Table 8: Values embedded within the SRE policy-making debate

Value set type	Examples from policy actor debates/interviews
Educational	• Equality of access to education/PHSEE/SRE • Schools facilitating the spiritual, moral, cultural and personal development of children and young people • Schools working in partnership with children, young people and parents • School promotion of the wellbeing, as well as general and sexual health of children and young people • PSHEE/SRE as a priority subject within the curriculum • Specialist teachers trained to teach PSHEE/SRE • Teaching PSHEE/SRE before sexual maturation (puberty) and first sexual experience • School flexibility and teacher discretion to teach the curriculum • Schools should teach the 'basics' not the 'fluffy' stuff • Schools should teach only vocational subjects • Focus on relationships and relationships education • Broad, well-rounded curriculum that equips young people for life, not just a job • Age appropriate PSHEE/SRE • School inspection
Intellectual	• Truth – provision of accurate, relevant information about sex, sexuality, teenage pregnancy, STIs, HIV & AIDS, relationships, different types of families, and religious beliefs or lack thereof • Knowledge • Comprehensive SRE • Evidence based-research • Providing young people factual information so that they can develop their own sense of integrity and morality
Rights-based	• Human Rights • Equality – race, sex, sexual orientation, religion, non-faith • Children and young people have an entitlement to factual, unbiased sex and sexual health information • UN Convention on the Right of the Child • Every child regardless of background, circumstances of parenting or whether he/she has parents is given a reasonable level of information and guidance • Right of the child to have their voice heard • Children and young people have a right to respect in school • Right of the parent(s) to be the primary educator and control what is taught to his/her child(ren) • Parental right of withdrawal from PSHEE/SRE lessons • PSHEE/SRE as an entitlement • Women's rights – specifically, abortion rights • Children and young people have a right to know and understand their legal and civil rights • Rights-based approach to sexual health – reluctance to place restrictions on sexuality/not telling people what to do

Table 8: Values embedded within the SRE policy-making debate (contd.)

Value set type	Examples from policy actor debates/interviews
Rights-based (contd.)	• Freedom of choice – when and with whom to have sexual relations with, thought, expression, beliefs • Anti-abortion rights – the developing embryo has a 'right to life'
Health	• Reduction of harm – unplanned teenage pregnancy; sexually transmitted infections (STIs); HIV and AIDS; sexual violence • Equality of access to sexual health services • Easy public access to sexual health services • Safe sex practices – abstinence, using condoms and other forms of contraception • Positive sexual health • Committed, sexual relationships • Good, public health • Wellbeing – physical, emotional and psychological
Family	• Traditional nuclear family • Marriage as an institution • Family life • Committed relationships • Parenthood & parental responsibility • Stable, family relationships • Parents as primary educators of their child(ren) • Parents instilling values in their child(ren), not schools
The Self	• Self-respect • Awareness of one's self • Confidence in one's self • Personal responsibility • Self-discipline • Managing one's emotions • Personal wellbeing
Political	• Government should/should not prescribe PSHEE/SRE in the National Curriculum • Government is/is not responsible for the general and sexual health of its citizens • Government should not take on the role of parent or take away parental responsibility • Government accountability – school inspections
Cultural	• Acknowledging and appreciating other cultural/faith/non-faith traditions • Childhood innocence • Protection against sexual socialisation through the media • Awareness and sensitivity to cultural diversity within one's school, community, city and country
Religious	• The 'gold standard'

Table 8: Values embedded within the SRE policy-making debate (contd.)

Value set type	Examples from policy actor debates/interviews
Religious (contd.)	• Marriage as an institution in society • Abstinence-only and abstinence-plus SRE programmes • Relationship between marriage and sexual intimacy • Sex within married life • Homosexuality is 'unnatural' • Catholic/Protestant/Christian/Jewish/Muslim teachings • Pro-life – Right of the 'unborn child' to life
Social	• Knowledge and skills needed to be active and contributing members of society • Healthy personal relationships – with parents, family members, friends, sexual partners • Citizenship skills • Enhancing others wellbeing • Empathy and respect for persons • Understanding the young person's point of view
Economic	• Breaking intergenerational disadvantage – poverty, lack of education and opportunities • Reducing the number of pregnant young people drawing upon the benefits system

Throughout the rest of this section each specific value set type or types being described or referenced will be **bolded** in the text to make the reading easier.

Table 8 illustrates the broad range of value frameworks that policy actors bring to the wider PSHEE and SRE debate. It is clear when viewing the Table that some value examples could be placed within one or more value set types, and that some of the identified value set types could arguably be merged. For instance, many policy actors mentioned valuing 'personal wellbeing'. Depending on the context in which a policy actor is speaking, as well as how he or she defines the terms 'personal' and 'wellbeing', personal wellbeing could be categorised as a '**Health**' value (i.e. maintaining a healthy lifestyle), a value of '**The Self**' (i.e. managing one's emotions) or possibly even an '**Educational**' value (i.e. schools are responsible for promoting pupil wellbeing).

Likewise, multiple policy actors described valuing 'parenthood and parental responsibility'. Again, depending on the larger context within which a policy actor is

speaking, valuing 'parenthood and parental responsibility' could be considered a '**Family**' value (i.e. emphasis on the importance of having children as opposed to not having children and how to be a 'good' parent) or even an '**Economic**' value if, say, one's main concern is that parents take responsibility for their child(ren) so that the child(ren) are less likely to become wards of the state. However, the eleven specific value set types presented in Table 8 are useful at this stage because of the level of detail this tool offers for a closer, more in-depth analysis of the policy-making process.

The SRE Approaches Framework (Table 7) sets out the different value sets embedded within each main argument of the seven core approaches. It is important to know the specific values guiding policy actors' decisions and arguments because a policy objective – regardless of how well thought out and supported – is bound to fail if it does not "confront the basic value frames that shape [policy actors'] understandings of [what] the [policy] problem is" (Fischer, 2003: 12; Friedmann, 1973; Rein, 1976). Table 8 illuminates these 'value frames' further.

Furthermore, by drawing on the specific value examples presented in the Table it is possible to undertake a deeper level of analysis of policy actor positions and arguments toward SRE (as can be gleaned through using the SRE Approaches Framework). Significantly, it is possible to explore why two separate approaches, or even separate arguments within the same approach, might share similar or dissimilar value sets. For example, it is interesting that the values of '**Health**', '**Intellectual**' and '**The Self**' are present within each of the arguments found within the 'Right of the child' approach, yet are missing from the arguments of those who approach SRE from the 'Right of the parent'. Instead, the 'Right of the parent' approach draws upon '**Family**' and '**Political**' values. Another example is that '**Health**' values appear to be present within all the 'pro' PSHEE/SRE arguments (such as 'protection through SRE', 'Responsible for teaching SRE', 'Statutory PSHEE/SRE in the National Curriculum', 'Primary level PSHEE/SRE' and 'Comprehensive SRE'), yet are noticeably absent from what could be considered the 'anti-PSHEE/SRE arguments (i.e. 'Not responsible for teaching SRE', 'Non-statutory PSHEE/SRE in the National Curriculum', Abstinence-plus', 'Abstinence-only' and 'No-school-based SRE') within the overall debate.

Additionally, the SRE Approaches Framework illuminates the specific SRE value sets most frequently embedded within the main arguments of policy actors' debates. Table 9 depicts the eleven identified main values sets in numerical order from most to least (i.e. number of specific value examples as seen in Table 8), threaded throughout the main arguments (19 found in total) within the seven core approaches policy actors take toward SRE.

Table 9: Value set type occurrence within policy actors' main arguments within the SRE Approaches Framework

Value set type	Total number of main arguments embedded within
Educational	12
Intellectual	10
Rights-based	9
Health	8
Family	7
The Self	6
Political	6
Cultural	6
Religious	5
Social	5
Economic	2

Furthermore, on occasion, value examples found within the same value set type are in direct competition with one another. One such example is that '**Rights-based**' values are found within both the 'Right of the child' and the 'Right of the parent' approaches identified within the SRE Approaches Framework (Table 7). While both approaches argue a 'Rights-based' framework, those who believe children and young people have an entitlement to PSHEE/SRE will most likely disagree with those who value the right of the parent to withdraw their child from PSHEE/SRE lessons or, at any rate, disagree that parents' rights trump young peoples'. Examples such as this highlight that adding a values focus to analysing the SRE debate significantly augments what we can understand about positions taken within the debate, rather than relying solely on an approaches perspective as developed within the SRE Approaches Framework. Combining an approaches and values perspective to the analysis of policy-making in relation to SRE

offers the possibility of reaching some conclusions as to why policy actors might stand on opposite sides of the statutory PSHEE/SRE spectrum.

This section suggests that utilising a values perspective in isolation to view and analyse the current SRE policy-making process is not generative enough. Instead, integrating a values lens with the SRE Approaches Framework (developed by this study) offers a set of concepts to view the overall SRE policy-making debate and can be used to better understand why specific arguments might be defended/rejected/upheld.

Thus far, the England case chapter has described the arguments made and approaches taken by policy actors toward the statutory PSHEE and SRE debate, what policy actors think SRE should be about, as well as has illustrated the specific values embedded within the overall debate and policy process. The next sub-section focuses on the influences and alliances found within the statutory PSHEE and SRE debate. The sub-section explores *who* (parliamentarians, third sector interest groups, academics, coalitions of actors, etc.) have been active within the SRE policy process, highlights those considered to be 'influential' in swaying the debate, and identifies two main advocacy coalitions found within the SRE policy-making network.

6.2.3 Policy actors and alliances within the SRE policy process

This sub-section describes the third and final part of the analysis of the main *National SRE Policy Debate* section. Understanding the SRE policy-making process requires some knowledge of the actors (e.g. parliamentarians, interest groups, academics) that have been actively involved within its debate (Sabatier, 2007). As 'policy' has been described as the 'authoritative allocation' of values (Easton, 1953: 132), this "draws our attention to the centrality of power and control in the concept of policy" (Prunty, 1985: 36). This highlights the importance of identifying the '*who* of policy production' (Gale, 2007: 225) or the *authority* in choosing what is of most worthwhile (Pring, 1996) when developing policy.

Therefore, exploring the fourth research question of this study, the sub-section presents an analysis of the *Hansard* data showing which parliamentarians have been the most

active within the SRE debate (see: *Appendix H*) and draws on policy actor interviews to identify additional non-elected policy actors within the SRE policy network. Particular people, interest groups and coalitions of actors that current policy actors believe to be most influential within the SRE debate (based on interview data) are additionally highlighted within the section. This analysis is essential because by tracing not only who has been involved within the SRE debate, but also their frequency and type of involvement (i.e. only written questions, oral debates or both):

(1) A more accurate picture evolves showing who is actively leading/directing/shifting the SRE debate;

(2) It illuminates whether any policy actors tend to speak with one another at the same debates (potentially showing a coalition of actors); and

(3) It highlights if one political party appears to be more engaged within the debate than others.

Furthermore, this sub-section maps the linkages and relationships between SRE policy actors so that within the final part of this section on the debate around SRE at a national level (Section 6.2.4) the 'distribution of power' within the SRE policy process can be better understood.

Throughout this sub-section, policy network analysis (Rhodes, 1990; Thatcher, 1998; Wassermann & Faust, 1999; Adam & Kriesi, 2007) and advocacy coalition literature (Sabatier, 1988; Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993; Sabatier & Weible, 2007) are drawn upon more broadly and used as tools to try to better understand the *who* or *authorities* within SRE policy development. A mixture of policy network analysis techniques and procedural steps within the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) was utilised to identify important policy actors within the SRE policy debate and to explain the structure of the larger SRE policy network. The sub-section is divided into four components:

- 6.2.3.1 *Parliamentarian involvement within the SRE debate*;
- 6.2.3.2 *Additional SRE policy actors and perception of influence*;

- 6.2.3.3 *Relationships and coalitions among policy actors*; and
- 6.2.3.4 *Power within the SRE policy-making process*.

6.2.3.1 Parliamentarian involvement within the SRE debate

The first part to this sub-section draws on policy network analysis procedures (Wasserman & Faust, 1999; Adam & Kriesi, 2007) to determine the set of relevant policy actors belonging to the network (Adam & Kriesi, 2007: 135). It does this by identifying which parliamentarians have made some sort of contribution (posing questions, making statements, supporting motions) to the 2008-2013 statutory PSHEE/SRE debate – as seen within the roughly 380 pages of PSHEE/SRE *Hansard* text analysed for this study. This analysis illustrates not only which individual parliamentarians have been the most active, but also serves as a means to see whether there has been a balance in representation from the differing political parties and two Houses of Parliament. Additionally, by tracing not only frequency but type of involvement (e.g. only written questions, oral debates, or both) a more fine-grained picture evolves, showing who specifically is trying to lead/influence/shift policy and through what policy context (e.g. *Hansard Question Book*, committee meetings, Westminster Hall debates) within Parliament.

As an aid, *Appendix G* (p.339) chronologically orders contributions within each different policy-making context (e.g. questions within the *Hansard Question Book*, debates within Parliament chambers, motions drafted, committee meetings) pertaining to PSHEE and SRE that have taken place during the time period studied year-by-year. See *Appendix H* (p.347) for a list (in alphabetical order) of each parliamentarian that participated within the SRE debate and his/her type of policy-making involvement (e.g. asking questions, writing statements, participation within a debate) by date.

Appendix H shows that 127 parliamentarians participated within one or more SRE policy contexts between January 2008 and January 2013. Appreciating that there have, of course, been private discussions and meetings pertaining to PSHEE/SRE which happen outside Parliament chambers, *Appendix H* is not a finite or absolute list of all parliamentarians involved within the debate. Instead it serves as a tool to help begin to understand the number of and various parliamentarians engaged within the SRE policy

process.

Table 10 shows that overall both Houses of Parliament had similar numbers of representatives involved in the debate (House of Commons 66, House of Lords 61). If focusing solely at political party affiliation, the majority of parliamentarians were affiliated with the Labour party, followed by those representing the Conservative party and then the Liberal Democrat party. There were significantly fewer unaffiliated or Independent parliamentarians active within the SRE debate (though there are few of these parliamentarians represented within the House of Commons). The House of Lords had a sizeable number of Crossbench representatives engaged within the debate.

Table 10: Number of parliamentarians involved in the 2008-2013 PSHEE/SRE debate according to House and political party affiliation

	House of Commons	House of Lords	Total
Labour	29	20	49
Conservative	20	12	32
Liberal Democrat	8	9	17
Crossbench	0	12	12
Lords Bishop	0	6	6
Labour/Co-op	4	1	5
Independent	2	0	2
Democrat Unionist	2	0	2
Speaker	1	0	1
Independent/Liberal Democrat	0	1	1
	66	*61*	*127*

Interested in trying to identify the key parliamentarian(s) driving or wielding power within SRE policy development, the 20 most actively involved parliamentarians by number of policy contexts (as seen within *Appendix H*) were explored. Table 11 shows that between the 20 most active parliamentarians there was an equal balance of representatives from both Houses (10 MPs and 10 Lords/Baronesses) of Parliament.

Table 11: Twenty most actively involved parliamentarians in the 2008-2013 SRE debate (as recorded in **Hansard)**

Name of parliamentarian	Political party affiliation	Number of instances of involvement
Nick Gibb MP	Conservative	29
David Amess MP	Conservative	23
Lord Jim Knight	Labour	19
Baroness Joan Walmsley	Liberal Democrat	13
Lord Jonathan Hill	Conservative	10
Baroness Delyth Morgan	Cross	9
Diana R. Johnson MP	Labour	9
Baroness Doreen Massey	Labour	9
Tim Loughton MP	Conservative	9
Anne Milton MP	Conservative	7
Baroness Beverley Hughes	Labour	7
Baroness Joyce Gould	Labour	7
Lord Ralph Lucas	Conservative	7
Stewart Jackson MP	Conservative	7
Diane Abbott MP	Labour	6
Sarah McCarthy-Fry*	Labour/Co-op	6
Sarah Teather MP	Liberal Democrat	6
Sharon Hodgson MP	Labour	6
Lord Christopher Northbourne	Cross	5
Baroness Sandip Verma	Conservative	5

* Sarah McCarty-Fry served as the MP for Portsmouth North from 5 May 2005 to 6 May 2010.

To better understand the potential values, relationships between policy actors and policy objectives driving each parliamentarian's (listed above) involvement in the debate, an analysis was conducted taking into account each parliamentarian's current and past parliamentary posts, committee memberships and connections to external agencies/interest groups. This information was found by investigating each of the above named MP, Lord and Baroness's parliamentary profile on the Westminster Parliament website and through basic online web searches using each policy actor's name as a search term. This analysis found that 14 out of the 20 listed parliamentarians (in Table 11) had higher-level positions within government during their peak SRE debate involvement. These posts included being Minister of State for Schools, Parliamentary Under-Secretaries for Schools or for the Department for Health, and Shadow Ministers and

Spokesperson positions for one's political party affiliation. For these 14 parliamentarians, it was part of their responsibility to respond to written and oral questions asked to their departments (e.g. education or health) and to represent their political party's or department's stance toward SRE within the debates or discussions.

However, of those not holding upper-level posts, three Baronesses (Walmsley, Massey and Gould) are of particular interest. These Baronesses have been steadily active within multiple policy contexts throughout the period studied, and each have particularly strong 'connections' to committees and external interest groups. These connections could possibly have motivated their frequent SRE policy involvement. The relevant parliamentary and interest group connections of each Baroness are briefly described.

Baroness Joan Walmsley was the fourth most active parliamentarian within the SRE debate. She is a former SRE practitioner and secondary school biology teacher (Baroness Walmsley, 2011). Her interests appear to heavily centre on children, rights and wellbeing. She sits as the Vice-chair of the All-party Parliamentary Group for Children, is a UNICEF board member, is the Parliamentary Ambassador for the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and is a patron of the Children's Rights Alliance for England.

Baroness Doreen Massey is the eighth most active parliamentarian listed within Table 11. Like Baroness Walmsley she is also a former health education teacher, likewise sits as a Chair for the All-party Parliamentary Group for Children and is a UNICEF trustee. Baroness Massey is the Honorary President of Brook and was the Director of the Family Planning Association (fpa) between 1989 and 1994.

Lastly, Baroness Joyce Gould was the 12th most actively involved parliamentarian in the SRE debate. She has been the President of fpa since 2000 and Chaired the Independent Advisory Group on Sexual Health from 2003 until 2010. She is currently the Chair of the Sexual Health Forum (which supersedes the Independent Advisory Group on Sexual Health). She was a pharmacist before her parliamentary career.

The analysis of these three Baronesses supports Sabatier and Weible's (2007) theory that "policy-making is structured, in part, by networks among important policy participants" (p.196). The three Baronesses each share similar professional backgrounds (health and education) and have 'positioned' themselves (sometimes together) within committees, interest groups and actor coalitions to advocate similar policy beliefs (children's rights, health, personal wellbeing). To strengthen their positions within the SRE policy network and to better their chances of influencing policy, they have "sought out allies, shared resources and developed complementary [policy] strategies" (Sabatier & Weible, 2007: 196).

The next part of this sub-section identifies additional policy actors (interest groups, coalitions of actors, researchers) embedded within the SRE policy network. It also explores responses from active policy actors – providing the policy actor perspective – as to the individuals and groups that were influencing the 2008-2013 SRE debate.

6.2.3.2 Additional SRE policy actors and perception of influence

Analysing the *Hansard* was helpful in tracing parliamentarian activity pertaining to PSHEE and SRE. However, it did not – outside of parliamentarians citing specific groups or people within their arguments – provide deeper insight into the non-parliamentary policy actors active within or influencing the SRE policy process. Since "policy choices are shaped and refined in bargaining" (Thatcher, 1998: 406) between a variety of policy actors outside of Parliament (e.g. agency officials, interest group leaders, researchers) (Sabatier, 1988), this sub-section explores policy actor responses – from data collected through face-to-face and telephone interviews – to the following question:

> Do you see that there are particular people and/or groups who appear to be active or 'influential' in driving the PSHEE/SRE policy-making process?

Utilising perceived reputational power measures (Krackhardt & Hanson, 1993; Kriesi et al., 2006; Fischer, 2011) – asking interviewees to identify those considered 'influential' within the debate and calculating the mean score of those cited by each interviewee – this analysis serves to identify non-elected policy actors within the SRE policy network, and

also to bring to light those within the policy process who are viewed as having power or possible *authority* to influence policy. This is important because policy actor responses to the above-mentioned question "show the power that is attributed to respective actors" (Kriesi et al., 2006: 347) within the PSHEE/SRE debate, as one cannot simply identify those with power merely by naming policy actors known to have participated within policy debates, having membership within a coalition of actors or holding a government office position (e.g. Minister of Schools).

Also, measuring the frequency of one's involvement does not necessarily explain the type or depth of policy influence. Therefore, interview data collected from eight parliamentarians, ten third sector representatives and a local education authority in a London borough known to be active within the SRE debate inform this sub-section's findings. Policy actor responses helped identify additional SRE policy actors within the SRE policy network (extending our knowledge of the network boundaries). These responses also provided a policy actor perspective as to who might have the most *influence* or *authority* within the SRE policy process.

A policy actor is considered 'influential' if he or she transmits information to other policy actors, who then not only "change [their own] perceptions of the connection between an action and its consequences" (Knoke, 1990: 3), but subsequently also "alter [their own] actions from what would have occurred without the information" (Knoke, 1990: 3). Table 12 on the following page illustrates the perceived reputational power of the particular people and groups policy actors believe have been/are active within and influencing the PSHEE/SRE policy process. The reputational power of a person or group is calculated by taking the total number of policy actors that cite the specific individual/group as having influence divided by the total number of people interviewed. For example, Brook was cited by nine out of the nineteen total policy actors interviewed for the England case chapter; therefore, to find Brook's reputational power one must take nine and divide it by nineteen.

Table 12: Influential individuals/groups within the PSHEE/SRE debate as identified by interviewed policy actors

Stated as being influential	Number of policy-makers cited by	Reputational power measure
Brook	9	.47
Family Planning Association	8	.42
Catholic Church	7	.37
UK Youth Parliament	6	.32
Faith Schools' Providers Group	6	.32
PSHE Association	3	.16
Sexual Health Forum	3	.16
Anglican Church	3	.16
The Christian Institute	3	.16
National Children's Bureau	2	.11
Jewish faith groups	2	.11
Life	2	.11
Muslim faith groups	2	.11
Family Education Trust	2	.11
Gill Frances	1	.05
Nick Gibb	1	.05
Michael Gove	1	.05
Sex Education Forum	1	.05
Sex and Relationships Education Council	1	.05
Terrence Higgins Trust	1	.05
CARE	1	.05
The National Education Trust	1	.05
National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children	1	.05
Society for the Protection of Unborn Children	1	.05
Uncertain	1	.05

Three main findings emerged from this analysis. First, every interviewed policy actor found it difficult to name just one individual or group as being the 'most influential'. Instead, each interviewee identified a range of people or groups believed to be influential or in competition for power within the debate. Interestingly, each interviewee mentioned at least one interest group or coalition of actors known to support comprehensive or statutory PSHEE/SRE and one interest group or coalition of actors known to support abstinence-only based or non-statutory PSHEE/SRE. This perhaps illustrates the polarity

of the debate, as well as draws attention to the importance of interest groups and non-elected officials within the SRE policy process.

The second significant finding among those interviewed was that third sector interest groups and coalitions of actors are viewed as having the most influence in swaying policy, over any single individual or individuals. Only three individuals were stated as being the most influential (i.e. Gill Frances, Nick Gibb MP and Michael Gove MP). Sabatier (1998) suggests that at any given point in the policy process there will be individuals not linked to any interest group or coalition of actors; however, these individuals will most likely not be important over the long term because they will either disassociate themselves from the SRE debate or join an advocacy coalition (p. 103) to "pool resources and increase the probability of [policy goal] success" (p. 115). For reference, Gill Frances was the Chair of the Teenage Pregnancy Independent Advisory Group (TPIAG), former Director of the Sex Education Forum and former Head of the Wellbeing Department at the National Children's Bureau. Michael Gove is, at the time of writing, the Secretary of State for Education and at the time of the interviews Nick Gibb was the Minister of State for Schools.

The third significant finding arose from the interview data which highlighted the 'types' of interest groups and coalitions of actors perceived by policy actors as exerting the most influence. The following five interest groups and coalition of actors (seen in Table 12) were identified as being most influential within the SRE policy debate: (1) Brook – a sexual health service provider and advice centre for young people under age 25; (2) The Family Planning Association (fpa) – a sexual health charity that provides education and advice on sexual health; (3) the Catholic Church; (4) the UK Youth Parliament and (5) the Faith Providers' Group – an umbrella group representing the five faiths in English maintained schools: Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Hindu.

As seem within Figure 2, the third sector organisations and coalitions of actors believed to be most influential within the PSHEE/SRE policy process appear to fall within six categories: Health; Children, young people & rights; Education; Faith-based; Anti-abortion; and Family.

Figure 2: Interest groups and coalitions of actors categorised by advocacy agenda

Health	Children, young people & rights	Education
• Brook • Family Planning Association • Sexual Health Forum • Terrence Higgins Trust	• UK Youth Parliament • National Children's Bureau • Sex Education Forum • National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children	• PSHE Association • The National Education Trust

Faith-based	Anti-abortion	Family
• Catholic Church • Faith Schools' Providers Group • Anglican Church • The Chrisitan Institute • Jewish faith groups • Fundamentalist Christians • Muslim faith groups • CARE (Christian Action Research & Education)	• Life • Society for the Protection of Unborn Children	• Family Education Trust

Figure 2 has categorised those mentioned within Table 12 into larger groupings according to each interest group or coalition of actor's main advocacy agenda (e.g. promote health initiatives, advocate anti-abortion policies, promote faith-based issues). This analysis shows that the advocacy categories noted above closely resemble some of the values identified as being embedded within and driving SRE policy: 'Health', 'Rights-based', 'Educational', 'Family' and 'Religious' values. Figure 2 shows that when refocusing on the top five groups perceived as being most influential, two interest groups are connected to health advocacy, two groups position themselves as promoting specific faith beliefs, and one group advocates for children, young people and rights. Although policy actors described six main advocacy agendas vying to influence SRE policy, on the surface it appears that 'Health', 'Faith-based' and 'Children, young people & rights' type groups are perceived by policy actors as having the most SRE policy influence.

The next part of this sub-section will illustrate the 'linkages' and sets of 'relationships' found among the interest groups. Specifically, the four coalitions of actors (Faith

Schools' Providers Group, Sex Education Forum, SRE Council and the Sexual Health Forum) listed in Table 12 are briefly explored to argue that two main advocacy coalitions can be seen to be driving the SRE policy network.

6.2.3.3 Relationships and coalitions among policy actors

Policy actors have been described as being "members of shifting coalitions that align and realign as competing pressures arise and [policy] configurations fluctuate" (Malen & Knapp, 1997: 429). The discussion within this sub-section focuses on the sets of relationships and 'coalitions' found among parliamentarians and interest groups active within SRE policy-making. Such an analysis is important because it extends our understanding of SRE policy-making by mapping the linkages and patterns of relations between SRE policy actors (Thatcher, 1998: 400), thus broadening our understanding of the "formal institutional arrangements and highly complex informal relationships in the [SRE] policy process" (Kenis & Schneider, 1991: 27). Continuing to focus on the responses of the interviewed policy actors, four coalitions of actors are examined: Faith Schools' Providers Group, Sex Education Forum, Sex and Relationships Education Council and the Sexual Health Forum.

The examination of these four coalitions of actors leads me to posit that there are two main advocacy coalitions dividing the larger SRE policy network: those advocating for comprehensive SRE and those for abstinence-only/abstinence-plus based SRE programmes. SRE advocacy coalitions are sub-groups found within the larger SRE policy network that are composed of a mix of parliamentarians, interest groups, academic, etc. who "share a particular belief system – i.e. a set of basic values, causal assumptions, and problem perception" (Sabatier, 1988: 139) – around SRE and who act in concert by adopting strategies to influence the policy process so their policy objectives are met (Sabatier, 1988: 133). Additionally, this sub-section identifies some of the specific policy actors (individuals, interest groups, coalition of actors) given access to and active within the broader SRE policy network from 2008-2013.

After analysing the makeup (e.g. mission statements, values, core ethos, members) of the different groups mentioned within Table 12, not only did patterns between the groups

become clearer but the larger picture of the SRE policy network and its two main advocacy coalitions became more apparent. In general terms, an advocacy coalition refers to an alliance between various groups within the SRE policy network that share the "same interests and ideas [and] come together to argue against other policy coalitions" (Fischer, 2003: 95) within the same network. Actors within each coalition "share a set of basic beliefs … who seek to manipulate the rules, budgets and personnel of governmental institutions in order to achieve these goals over time" (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993: 5). This study did not conduct a formal policy network or Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) analysis – identifying power struggles within each coalition of actors and how they've changed over a decade or more – as the study's aim is to better understand the broader SRE policy process. Instead procedural steps within ACF were adopted to help identify and describe the two main SRE advocacy coalitions – 'Comprehensive SRE' and 'Abstinence-only/+ SRE' – embedded in the SRE policy network and a sample of the policy subgroups (i.e. coalitions of actors) found within each.

Only six out of the 25 individuals/groups mentioned by interviewed policy actors (excluding the 'uncertain' response) are not a part of a larger coalition of individuals/groups (i.e. coalition of actors). These included: the UK Youth Parliament, the Christian Institute, Nick Gibb MP, Michael Gove MP, the National Education Trust and the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children. However, some interest groups – Brook, fpa and Terrence Higgins Trust – have aligned themselves within more than one coalition. Figure 3 (p.161) illustrates that the Faith Schools' Provider Group, the Sexual Health Forum, the Sex Education Forum and the Sex and Relationships Education Council (first identified in Table 12) are the formal names for four separate coalitions of actors. Interestingly, each of the 17 interest groups and one individual (Gill Frances) known to be linked to a coalition are aligned to one or more of these four aforementioned coalitions. These four coalitions and their characteristics are briefly explained as a means to better illustrate the 'beliefs' or 'values' tying its members together.

The first identified coalition is the Faith Schools' Providers Group. This coalition was developed in September 2007 during the Labour-led Government, in collaboration with the then DCSF. The five major faith school providers in England – Christian, Jewish,

Muslim, Sikh and Hindu – signed the 'Faith in the System' document (downloadable here: http://www.churchofengland.org/our-views/education/church-schools-faqs.aspx; accessed 5 May 2013) agreeing that faith and non-faith schools, as well as the government should work together to improve the lives of young people and promote community cohesion. The Christian, Jewish and Muslim faith groups within this coalition are mentioned by interviewed policy actors within Table 12. The majority of members in this coalition take a 'Right of the parent' and 'Abstinence-only/+based' approach to SRE, as well as advocate 'Family' and 'Religious' values as identified via their websites and promotional materials as well as through interview data with representatives from these organisations.

Figure 3: Coalitions of actors named by policy actors as being 'influential' in SRE policy development
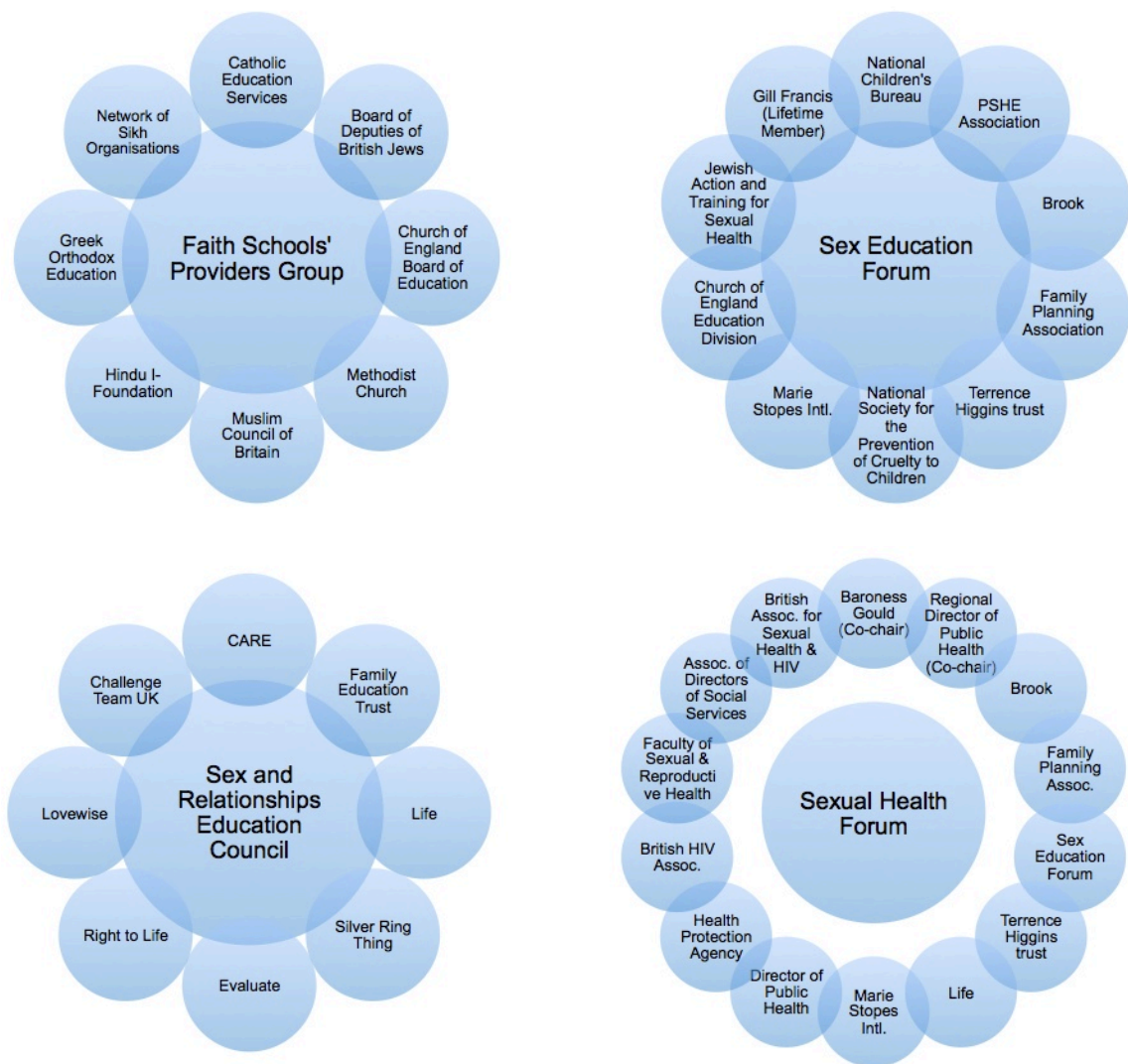
The second coalition, the Sex Education Forum (SEF), is a forum hosted by the National Children's Bureau (NCB). The NCB is a national charity that acts as an 'umbrella' organisation bringing together voluntary and private sector agencies to work in partnership to focus on children's wellbeing. This work covers issues such as SRE, disability, children in care, etc. While the SEF's main focus is on SRE, its website states that it represents over 90 organisations that include representatives from health, education, faith, disability and children's organisations (SEF, 2013). As this coalition has many affiliates, only a couple of its core member organisations are illustrated within Figure 3. However, every organisation and individual listed within Figure 3 – except Marie Stopes International – represents one of the 'influential' individuals or groups identified by those interviewed. This coalition approaches SRE from a 'Protection through SRE', 'Right of the child' and 'Statutory comprehensive PSHE/SRE' perspective and its members share similar 'Rights-based', Educational', 'Health', 'Intellectual' and 'The Self' values.

The Sex and Relationships Education Council is the third coalition of actors. While no information about this Council could be found on either the Parliament or DfE websites, according to Christian Action Research and Education (one of the participating members) it was launched in Parliament by Conservative MP David Burrowes on 20 May 2011 under the current Coalition Government (CARE, 2011). This coalition is made up of sex education providers, specifically those that promote abstinence-only and abstinence-plus programmes. These providers include: CARE (advocates Christian perspective toward sex); Life (an anti-abortion group); Right to Life (anti-abortion); Family Education Trust (family-centered fundamental Christian values); Silver Ring Thing (abstinence-only supporter); Evaluate (abstinence advocate); Challenge Team UK (promotes the message that sex is for marriage); and Lovewise (promotes sex within marriage and the Christian perspective). Members of this coalition approach SRE from a 'Right of the parent', 'Non-statutory' and 'Abstinence-only/+' perspective and share similar 'Family', 'Religious' and 'Rights-based' value objectives.

The last coalition discussed is the Sexual Health Forum. The Sexual Health Forum is a government health forum that provides sexual health and HIV advice to the Department of Health. It supersedes the Sexual Health Independent Advisory Group and is co-chaired

by Baroness Gould. This is a larger coalition where the policy actor groups come from the sexual and public health sectors. Five interest groups within the Sexual Health Forum appear within Table 12's list of most influential policy actors: Brook; fpa; Life; the SEF; and Terrence Higgins Trust. Regarding SRE, the central values driving this coalition are 'Rights-based', 'Health', 'Intellectual', 'The Self' and 'Statutory comprehensive PSHEE/SRE'.

After analysing the four coalitions of actors above and the 'approaches', 'values' and policy objectives of each it is evident that those advocating for comprehensive SRE and those for abstinence-only or plus type SRE programmes divide the statutory PSHEE/SRE debate within the SRE policy network. Figure 4 was developed from the overall findings of this analysis. It offers an insight into the SRE policy-making network between 2008-2013 and how each of the four coalitions of actors, mentioned by policy actors as being 'influential', fit within two of the network's main advocacy coalitions: 'Comprehensive SRE' and 'Abstinence-only/+ SRE' advocacy coalitions.

Figure 4: Framework of the SRE policy network from 2008-2013 [non-comprehensive]
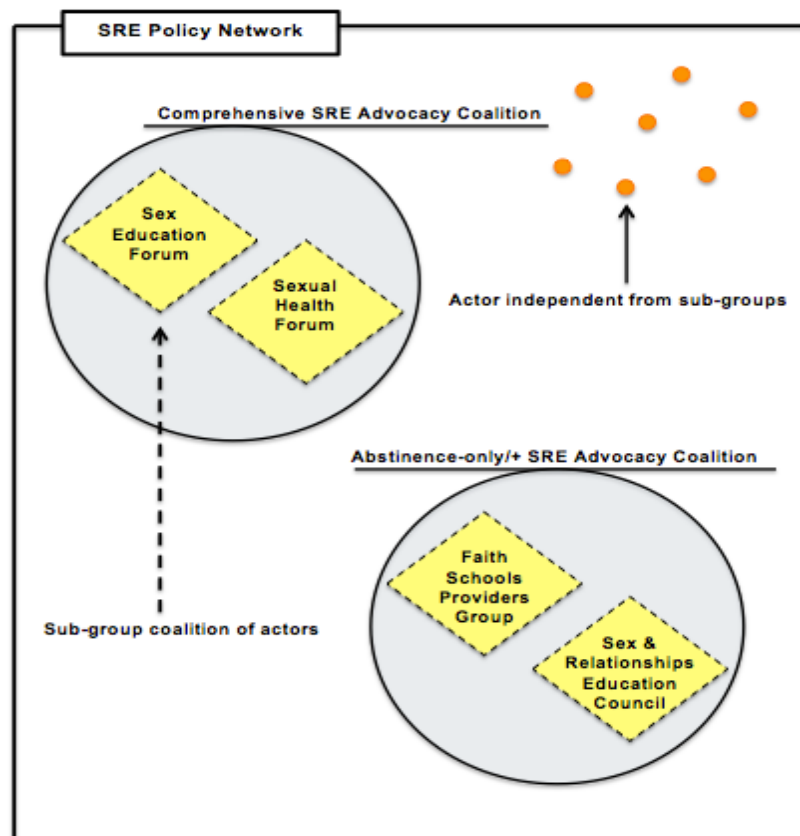
The next and final part to this sub-section draws on the findings of each of the analyses within this section thus far to try to offer some initial insights into the possible distribution of power among the policy actors within the SRE policy debate.

6.2.3.4 Power within the SRE policy-making process

Within the statutory PSHEE/SRE debate does 'power' appear to be in the hands of one policy actor or group or shared between individuals and/or coalitions of actors? This sub-section focuses in more depth on 'power and control' (Prunty, 1985) within the policy process to get a general idea of the 'distribution of power' (Atkinson & Coleman, 1989; Rhodes & Marsh, 1992; van Waarden, 1992; Kriesi et al., 2006) within the SRE policy network. Analysing the interactions and relationships between SRE policy actors "reveals an essential part of the [SRE policy network] power structure" (Kriesi et al., 2006: 342). 'Power' is not seen as "a property or attribute that is inherent in an individual or group" (Knoke, 1990: 1), but as an "aspect of actual or potential interactions between two or more [policy] actors" (Knoke, 1990: 1). For as Foucault – described within this thesis' review of literature – posits, power is "exercised through networks and individuals do not simply circulate in those networks; they are in a position to both submit and exercise this power" (Foucault, 2004: 29). Power can be identified by looking at who has and has not had 'permission to speak policy' (Gale, 2007: 225), the type and amount of capital or resources they have to draw on, as well as whether a policy actor has structural relations with others connected to SRE policy. These analyses extend what this thesis has already found by putting into context and framing *whose* specific approaches/arguments/debates and values are represented within the SRE policy debate.

Kriesi et al. (2006) state that "the power of an actor is operationalised by reputational measures" (p.347). That is, "the reputational power attribute of each actor is derived from the data regarding the attribution of influence" (Knoke et al., 1996: 189). Drawing on policy network analysis, identifying power within the SRE network involves analysing which specific individual, third sector organisation, interest group or coalition of actors are cited most frequently – by policy actors who are members of the SRE policy network – as having perceived or reputational power (Knoke, 1993).

Based on the SRE policy actors interviewed for this study, interest groups and coalitions of actors have more 'influence' on SRE policy development than any single individual actor (parliamentarian, academic or third sector representative), more specifically, interest groups and coalitions of actors with the following advocacy agendas: Health; Children, young people & rights; Education; Faith-based; Anti-abortion; and Family. Brook and fpa were cited as the two most influential policy actors within the SRE debate. Significantly, Brook and fpa have similar policy aims. Focusing on the interactions of these two groups, what differentiates Brook and the fpa from other interest groups mentioned (see: Table 12) by those interviewed is that they have strong structural relations and provide specific SRE based-services that are valued by key parliamentarians in Parliament. As seen in Figure 3, Brook and fpa are represented in both the SEF and the Sexual Health Forum, thus giving them greater access to contexts where policy-making happens. Their access is further extended because as noted earlier, Brook's President is Baroness Massey (also the former Director of fpa and 8th most active parliamentarian in the SRE debate), while Baroness Gould (12th most active parliamentarian in the SRE debate) has been the Director of fpa since 2000. What potentially gives these two groups more policy 'influence' or 'power' could be that their access to resources gives them 'permission to speak policy' (Gale, 2007: 225).

Brook and fpa both strongly support and advocate for statutory comprehensive PSHEE/SRE. While the former DCSF under the New Labour Government pushed to make PSHEE/SRE statutory for all age groups, legislation was not finalised, and the current Coalition Government has stated this will not happen while they are in control of Parliament. So, despite Brook's and fpa's perceived 'power' to influence policy, their policy aims to date have not been enacted. To understand why this is the case and to find a deeper understanding of the power structure during the time period studied, the next main section to this chapter explores the policy changes from the previous New Labour Government to the current Conservative/Liberal Democrat Coalition.

6.3 Policy change: from New Labour to a Coalition Government

When speaking about policies and the policy-making process "references to change have become ubiquitous" (Taylor et al., 1997: 5). For instance, policy development is seen as

occurring within a continuous 'policy cycle' (Bowe, Ball and Gold, 1992; Ball, 1993), where within this process changes are continually taking place (Hogwood & Peters, 1983; Peters, 1986; Parsons, 2001). The definition and boundaries policy actors use to characterise and describe policy problems shift (Fischer, 2003); policy actors align, re-align or even leave a policy network due to competing pressures and fluctuating power configurations (Malen & Knapp, 1997: 429), along with policy actors' "beliefs change over time given the external environment" (Dowding, 1995: 147) around them. Put simply, policy change can be described as the "product of a power struggle among groups with different resources and values/interests operating within a given regime structure and changing socio-economic environment" (Sabatier, 1988: 157; see also Truman, 1951; Easton, 1965; Wilson, 1973).

This second main section of the England case chapter examines some of the significant changes (e.g. in terms of parliamentarian participation, SRE approaches taken, values and priorities promoted) that occurred within the SRE policy process during and after the shift from the New Labour to current Coalition Government. Changes within SRE policy texts and the SRE policy process can be seen as a "function of both competition within the [SRE policy network] and events outside [the SRE policy network]" (Sabatier, 2007: 9). During the time period of this thesis, the SRE policy network experienced an 'external shock' when Parliament shifted from the New Labour Government to that of the current Conservative and Liberal Democrat Coalition. Regarding SRE, the former New Labour Government announced on 5 November 2009 that PSHEE was to become statutory for both primary and secondary school pupils and that new legislation (i.e. the *Children, Schools and Families Bill*) and school guidance texts were to be drafted and implemented within schools starting during the autumn 2010.

During the process of these changes taking place, a new government was elected, so despite New Labour's efforts (and also those of the Liberal Democrat party), this policy commitment was not accomplished. Therefore, examining the significant changes mentioned above is important because such analyses help illuminate the effect which the change of government has had on not only the SRE policy network, but also the SRE policy-making process and policy development as well.

An analysis of key SRE-related parliamentary texts is crucially important because "without text analysis we simply miss important aspects of political and governmental work" (Fairclough, 2000: 158). Focusing on "the language of policy" (Ball, 2013: 6) within policy debates and texts is helpful as the policy discourses embedded within them can be used as an "instrument with which to exclude certain issues from the realm of the public debate; or indeed resist certain claims made by interest groups" (Taylor et al., 1997: 5; also Ball 2013). This is central to better understanding current SRE policy, as policy texts involve:

> Value priorities, perceptions of important causal relationships, and perceptions of world states (including the magnitude of the problem, and perceptions/assumptions concerning the efficacy of various policy instruments. (Sabatier, 1988: 99)

Furthermore, by investigating the PSHEE and SRE values and approaches that each government not only resisted and rejected but also privileged, it becomes more apparent which individual, group or coalition of actors' voices are threaded throughout the different published policies and texts. This makes it possible to better understand the power structure within the internal SRE policy network during the time period studied, as mapping out the approaches and values taken by each government provides the "vehicle for assessing the influence of various [policy] actors over time" (Sabatier, 1998: 99). This, in turn,will help to inform how power is distributed across the policy network and overall policy process making it clearer who is in the position of authority to influence or control SRE policy development.

The section is organised into three sub-sections:

- 6.3.1 *Shifts in parliamentarian involvement within the SRE debate*;
- 6.3.2 *New Labour's values and policy approach to PSHEE/SRE*; and
- 6.3.3 *The Coalition's values and policy approach to PSHEE/SRE.*

6.3.1 Shifts in parliamentarian involvement within the SRE debate

A change of government is a significant external shock – "a stimulus of change largely outside the control of [policy network] actors" (Sabatier & Weible, 2007: 204) – to a policy environment and network. Understanding that "policy change may be the consequence of organisational change" (Parsons, 2001: 579), this sub-section provides an examination of some of the significant organisational changes (e.g. shifts in the number, political party and House representation of active parliamentarians engaged in SRE policy discussions) and patterns in parliamentarian involvement that occurred within the SRE policy network and within SRE policy discussions after the Coalition Government took control of Parliament.

A focus on these 'internal dynamics of change' (Taylor et al., 1997: 163) among the parliamentarians active in SRE policy discussions is important because such changes can help not only identify shifts in leadership within the policy-making process, but also whether the strategies employed to facilitate change by those within the SRE policy network have also reformed (Taylor et al., 1997: 163) following the installment of a new government in 2010. That is, such an analysis is important because "changes in government are telling moments for policy actors" (Gale, 2007: 225), as a change of government can result in "the repositioning of policy actors within policy contexts" (Gale, 2007: 225) and "draw in or redistribute critical resources" (Sabatier & Weible, 2007: 204) such as internal or public support.

Overall, three main findings emerged after analysing parliamentarian participation within the PSHEE/SRE debate during the former New Labour and current Coalition Governments. The first main finding shows that despite the change of government in May 2010, there was not a major shift in either the total number or political party affiliation of those parliamentarians active within the PSHEE/SRE debate (as seen in *Hansard*). Analysing whether more or less representatives from each main political party (more specifically the Conservatives, Labour and Liberal Democrat parties) enter or exit the SRE policy-making network is important because "political parties may well introduce different policies reflecting their difference in values and beliefs" (Parsons, 1999: 604; also Budge & Keman, 1990; Burns et al., 1994).

Table 13 shows the number of active parliamentarians engaged in the debate according to House and political party affiliation during the New Labour (1 January 2008 – 10 May 2010) and Coalition (11 May 2010 – 1 January 2013) time periods studied. The figures found within this table were derived from *Appendix G* after re-reviewing the data (i.e. political party affiliation, House membership, date and type of policy-making context) for the 127 parliamentarians identified as having participated in at least one SRE policy-making context. Table 13 shows that there was only a slight increase of 12 additional parliamentarians active within the debate after the Coalition Government came into power – with the Labour and Conservative parties equally increasing their representation by five policy actors. While there were, likewise, no major fluctuations in political party affiliation, there was a significant rise in the number of parliamentarians actively engaged in SRE policy-making within the House of Lords.

Table 13: Number of parliamentarians active in the PSHEE/SRE debate (by House and political party affiliation) during both government time periods studied

	Labour government House of Commons	Labour government House of Lords	Total	Coalition government House of Commons	Coalition government House of Lords	Total
Labour	17	9	26	16	15	31
Conservative	11	7	18	14	9	23
Liberal Democrat	6	3	9	4	8	12
Crossbench	0	8	8	0	8	8
Lords Bishop	0	2	2	0	4	4
Labour/Co-op	4	1	5	0	0	0
Independent	1	0	1	1	0	1
Democrat Unionist	0	0	0	1	0	1
Speaker	1	0	1	2	0	2
Independent/Liberal Democrat	0	0	0	0	1	1
	40	*30*	*70*	*37*	*45*	*82*

Source: Derived from data represented within *Appendix G*

After the change of government, the PSHEE/SRE debate within the House of Lords had an increase of 15 additional policy actors – with the Labour (+6 actors) and Liberal Democrat (+5 actors) parties having the greatest rise in representation. It is not clear why the number of SRE policy actors within the House of Lords rose, while the House of

Commons saw a slight decrease of three. However, the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993) suggests that focusing on each of the parliamentarians' "belief systems is more important than [his or her] institutional affiliation" (Sabatier, 2007: 5).

Interestingly, after further exploration into the specific arguments and values (found within relevant *Hansard* texts) put forward by each of the additional 15 House of Lords members, it was found that each policy actor was voicing his or her support for statutory PSHEE/SRE within the National Curriculum. The motivation that drove each of these House of Lords members to enter the SRE policy debate is unclear, as is whether there is a connection between each of these policy actors taking a similar statutory approach to PSHEE/SRE in the National Curriculum. The ACF (Sabatier, 1988, 2007; Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993, 1999) would propose that it is possible that the external shock of changing to a Conservative and Liberal Democrat Coalition Government has brought more engagement among those who feel their SRE values are likely to face greater challenges in the new political landscape. Sabatier (1998) suggests that policy actors will join coalitions and will "resist information suggesting that their basic beliefs may be invalid and/or unattainable, [while using] formal policy analyses primarily to buttress and elaborate those beliefs (or attack their opponents)" (p.133).

The second significant finding was that although the number of parliamentarians active within the debate roughly stayed the same throughout the entire time period studied – possibly giving the impression that membership within the policy network has likewise remained predominantly unchanged – these numbers are deceptive. Table 14 identifies the parliamentarians who participated in the PSHEE/SRE debate during both the former New Labour and current Coalition Government time periods studied.

Table 14: Parliamentarians active in the PSHEE/SRE debate throughout the entire time period studied

Name of parliamentarian	Political party affiliation	Number of instances of involvement
Nick Gibb MP	Conservative	29
David Amess MP	Conservative	23
Lord Jim Knight	Labour	18
Baroness Joan Walmsley	Liberal Democrat	12
Diana R. Johnson MP	Labour	9
Tim Loughton MP	Conservative	9
Baroness Delyth Morgan	Crossbench	8
Baroness Doreen Massey	Labour	8
Baroness Beverley Hughes	Labour	7
Baroness Joyce Gould	Labour	6
Lord Ralph Lucas	Conservative	6
Lord Christopher Northbourne	Crossbench	5
Baroness Sandip Verma	Conservative	5
Jo Swinson MP	Liberal Democrat	4
Kevin Brennan MP	Labour	4
Lord Peter Layard	Labour	4
Lord Rodney Elton	Conservative	4
Baroness Valerie Howarth	Crossbench	4
Baroness Elspeth Howe	Crossbench	3
Mark Lancaster MP	Conservative	3
Baroness Sue Garden	Liberal Democrat	3
Lord Alan Howarth	Labour	2
Annette Brook MP	Liberal Democrat	2
Christopher Chope MP	Conservative	2
Baroness Pauline Perry	Conservative	2

Source: Derived from data represented within *Appendix G*

Looking for shifts among the individual policy actors within the debate post the 2010 election is important, as these shifts could mean that previously active policy actors now face "a reduction in their status and/or legitimacy as policy producers [or even their] exclusion from policy-making contexts altogether" (Gale, 2007: 225). One's 'exclusion' could be the result of not being re-elected, the 'opening or closing of venues' within the SRE policy network (Sabatier & Weible, 2007: 199) or because one chooses to no longer participate in the debate.

Table 14 illustrates that only 25 (or roughly 20%) out of the recorded 127 parliamentarians active within the overall PSHEE/SRE debate (listed in *Appendix G*) participated in at least one policy-making context during both the former New Labour and current Coalition Governments. While this finding might simply indicate that many parliamentarians make only very occasional contributions to the SRE debate, it could alternatively signify that a shift or repositioning of individual parliamentarians within the SRE policy process occurred after the Coalition took control of Parliament. The change and repositioning of policy actors within Parliament could mean a large "degree of belief change" (Sabatier & Weible, 2007: 198) has happened among policy actors both in government and the SRE policy network. It is therefore important to take a deeper look at whether the approaches taken toward SRE and values underpinning the Coalition's SRE policy focus are similar to or completely different from the former New Labour Government's SRE value objectives. In addition, the "components of the policy core beliefs of a dominant advocacy coalition" (Sabatier & Weible, 2007: 199) may have shifted or even the complete "replacement of a dominant coalition by a [previous] minority coalition" (Sabatier & Weible, 2007: 198) within the network might have occurred. Therefore, New Labour's and the current Coalition's (i.e. government position) approaches and values toward SRE will be further explored and compared within the following two sub-sections.

Lastly, the third key finding is that the first 13 parliamentarians listed within Table 14 represent policy actors previously identified as being the most 'active', or having the most instances of involvement within the overall PSHEE/SRE debate (Table 11, p.152). Although there was a lot of 'coming and going' among parliamentarians within the SRE policy network between 2008-2013, the parliamentarians that have been the most 'active' within the PSHEE/SRE debate have remained quite stable. A majority (13 parliamentarians or 65%) of the top 20 most actively involved parliamentarians have consistently participated within the PSHEE/SRE debate over a long period of time (perhaps gaining more 'influence' than others) and regardless of which Government has controlled Parliament. However, of these 13 representatives, nine are members of the House of Lords and may have been able to participate longer within the debate over others as a result of not having to worry about being re-elected. Also, not having to worry about being re-elected might mean that these policy actors feel more able to speak freely

and assert their own personal beliefs and values about the subject as their voice does not have to represent constituents.

What these three main findings show is that although the number of parliamentarians engaged in the SRE policy debate from 2008-2013 stayed roughly the same as well as the number of policy actors representing the three main political parties, the change of government in 2010 greatly altered the specific parliamentarians active within SRE policy-making debate – more specifically the membership of individual MPs within the SRE policy network. Perhaps this more frequent shuffle of MPs within the policy-making process over third sector organisations, interest groups and academics provides some insight into why few parliamentarians were identified by interviewed policy actors as having the greatest 'influence' to change policy (previously seen in Table 11). In addition, as the number of parliamentarians and political party representation within the debate pre and post the change of government didn't alter greatly, it could be argued that the momentum (most especially by the Labour party) driving statutory PSHEE/SRE policy did not dissipate after the Coalition Government came into power. As stated, one of the most visible changes in the network is that 15 additional pro-statutory and comprehensive PSHEE/SRE members of the House of Lords entered the debate.

The next part of this section analyses PSHEE/SRE policy texts (e.g. the 2008 SRE Review, written ministerial statements, government responses to reports) developed during the former New Labour Government as a means to help illustrate how New Labour approached SRE and its position within the National Curriculum and the specific values threaded within New Labour's policy position.

6.3.2 New Labour's values and policy approach to PSHEE/SRE

This sub-section focuses on the production of SRE policy by the former New Labour Government from 11 December 2007 until the change of government on 10 May 2010. It traces the key policy developments that occurred within the SRE policy process (e.g. research commissioned, curriculum reviews conducted, published papers and reports, ministerial statements, SRE clauses included within Bills but deleted before Royal Assent) and details the main approaches taken, values promoted and specific evidence

drawn upon by New Labour to inform its SRE platform. This focus on the 'how of policy production' (Gale, 2007) is important, as it illuminates the government's "strategic orientation toward the [policy] game" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 99) and aids in highlighting dominant discourses that "establish certain boundaries on the possibilities and limits of the debate, how individuals should act, and in some instances, how the state should intervene" (Garratt & Forrester, 2012: 11).

Figure 5 illustrates key developments that occurred within the SRE policy process during the New Labour Government time period studied. Thematic and content analysis of SRE-related *Hansard* data and legislative, statutory policy and departmental text published during the time frame studied inform the key text listed and policy developments illusreated within the Figure, as well as the policy approaches, prioritised values and evidence mentioned within this sub-section.

Specific value set types are **bolded** within this sub-section to make the reading easier and to more clearly highlight the specific value examples and main value types (e.g. '**Rights-based**', '**Economic**', '**Intellectual**' values) New Labour most frequently drew upon to drive its SRE policy agenda.

Figure 5: Key SRE policy developments during the New Labour Government
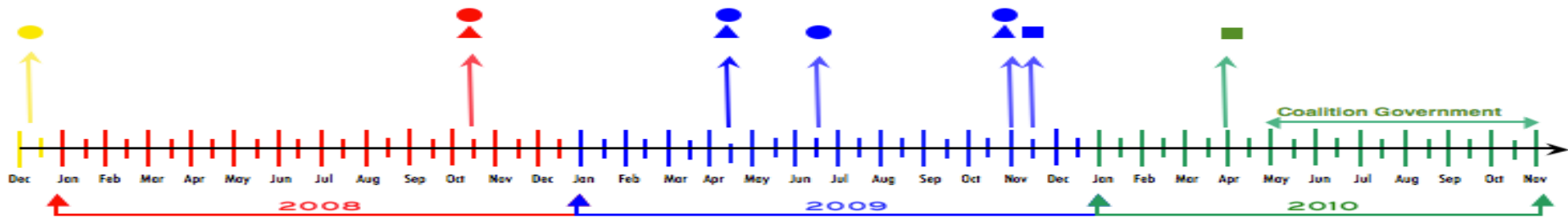
Notes:

🟡 **11 December 2007 – *Published Report***: DCSF publishes *The Children's Plan* announcing the government's intention to review SRE and its delivery in schools.

🔴 **23 October 2008 – *Published Reports***: SRE External Steering Group's *Review of SRE in Schools Report* and the DCSF's *Government Response to the Report by the Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) Review Steering Group* are published.

🔺 **23 October 2008 – *Ministerial Statement (Jim Knight)***: Announces the DCSF's intention to accept the principle recommendation that PSHEE be made statutory within the National Curriculum for England; Government commissions Sir Alasdair Macdonald to conduct independent PSHEE review.

🔵 **27 April 2009 – *Published Reports***: DCSF publishes Sir Alasdair Macdonald's *Independent review of the proposal to make PSHE Education statutory* report.

🔺 **27 April 2009 – *Ministerial Statement (Ed Balls)***: States Government is attracted to Sir Alasdair Macdonald's advice that PSHEE be made statutory for primary and secondary school stages; Government accepts all PSHEE recommendations; QCDA commissioned to consult on how best to legislate statutory PSHEE.

🔵 **22 June 2009 – *Published Paper***: DCSF publishes the White Paper *Your child, your schools, our future: building a 21st century school system* citing statutory PSHEE in the 'Pupil Guarantee' section.

🔵 **05 November 2009 – *Published Report***: QCDA publishes its *Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education: curriculum reform consultation report to the DCSF*.

🔺 **05 November 2009 – *Ministerial Statement (Ed Balls)***: Formally announces statutory PSHEE within the National Curriculum for England for all age groups; States Government plans to legislate PSHEE within forthcoming *Children, Schools and Families Bill*.

🟩 **19 November 2009 – *Reading of Bill***: First reading of the *Children, Schools and Families Bill* in the House of Commons; Clauses 11-14 pertain to statutory PSHEE and SRE.

🟩 **07 April 2010 – *Reading of Bill***: Third reading of *Children, Schools and Families Bill* in the House of Lords; Clauses 11-14 deleted from the *Bill*.

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Figure 5 shows that the DCSF first announced the Government's plan to review SRE and its delivery within schools (DCSF, 2007: 13, No.31) within *The Children's Plan*. This Plan was greatly influenced by the June 2007 published UK Youth Parliament and Sex Education Forum-sponsored SRE survey of over 21,000 UK young people, describing their views and experiences of school-based SRE. As Lord Knight (2011) stated within an interview for this study:

> In opinion poll terms that is a substantial sample that overwhelmingly said that young people thought that the quality of the SRE they were receiving was not good enough. If we were serious about tackling the growth of sexually transmitted infection and teenage pregnancy then it was vital that we addressed that inadequacy. The [survey] engaged me in thinking about how we might address that because a very powerful set of arguments were coming from young people themselves about their own experience and that what they were getting was inconsistent and not adequately preparing them for life and growing up as sexually active people.

The Children's Plan was a 169-paged document that summarised the DCSF's 10-year education reform plan and the Government's six strategic objectives "to improve children and young people's lives" (DCSF, 2007: 15, No.6). The first education objective was to "secure the health and wellbeing of children and young people" (DCSF, 2007: 17). The phrase 'every child' ('**Rights-based**' values) was heavily threaded throughout the text, as well as it placed great emphasis on the importance of valuing children within society ('**Social**' values), tackling disadvantage ('**Economic**' values), reducing 'risk' ('**Health**' values) and building cross-sector and cross-government partnerships ('**Political**' values) to "back all parents as they bring up their children" (DCSF, 2007: 4).

The Children's Plan highlighted the Government's strong support of the 'Right of the Child' approach to education, with the DCSF stating, "Because we value children as young citizens, we have developed the *Plan* with regard to the principles and articles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (DCSF, 2007: 15, No. 5). Within a section titled 'Improving young people's sexual health', the DCSF stated its review of SRE would "involve young people fully to ensure it better meets their needs" (DCSF, 2007: 136, No.6.58). One could argue that the title of the section recognises young people as sexual beings and not 'innocent' or devoid of sexuality. In addition, the phrase "better meets their needs" stresses the importance of not only partnering with young people in

policy development but also valuing what young people – not parents, schools or the government – state their own needs are ('**Rights-based**' values). Young people should be the most significant partners in SRE policy-making because "one of the most important quality criteria of SRE is whether it actually addresses young people's needs" (Walker, 2004: 241; see also Aggleton et al., 1998; SEU, 1999; DfEE, 2000). Other SRE values threaded within the *Plan* included '**Health**' values (e.g. healthy behavioural and emotional development), '**Social**' values (e.g. developing good relationships, improving access to social welfare programmes) and '**Intellectual**' values (e.g. knowledge to make 'responsible' choices and on effective contraception).

Three important texts were published on 23 October 2008: (1) the SRE External Steering Group's *Review of SRE in Schools Report* (SRE External Steering Group, 2008) – that outlined the main findings and recommendations from the review; (2) the DCSF's *Government Response to the Report by the Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) Review Steering Group* (DCSF, 2008); and (3) a ministerial statement by the then Minister of State for Schools and Learners detailing the Government's position toward PSHEE and specifying principles that would guide the DCSF's ongoing PSHEE/SRE policy work.

The DCSF's *SRE in Schools Review* was conducted by an external steering group of 26 members and co-chaired by Jim Knight (then Minister of State for Schools and Learners; he became a life peer in March 2010), Jackie Fischer (then Principal of Newcastle College) and Joshua McTaggart (a member of the UK Youth Parliament). Steering group members fell within at least one of four categories: (1) someone with practical experience planning and delivering school-based SRE; (2) someone with expert knowledge of young people's sexual health; (3) a young person; and (4) a representative from a faith group or expert on wider diversity issues (SRE External Steering Group, 2008: 10-11).

It has been stated that New Labour's general approach to education "consulted with a far 'broader church' [which] include[ed] teachers representatives, parents and children" (Bates et al., 2011: 43) than its Conservative predecessors "in an attempt to provide a 'ground up', more 'inclusive' policy-making process" (Bates et al., 2011: 43). Table 15 presents the organisational breakdown of the Steering Group members.

Table 15: Organisational breakdown of SRE Steering Group Members

	Number of representatives
Sexual health charity	4
Head teacher/Principal of a school or college	3
Religious interest group	3
Young person	3
Health sector	2
Local Authority advisor	2
Subject association	2
Academic	1
Children's services	1
Ofsted HMI PSHEE subject advisor	1
Government Minister	1
School governor	1
School PSHEE Co-ordinator	1
Student union	1

Source: SRE Review Steering Group, 2008

While the review did not focus specifically on what should be taught within school-based SRE, it did have six broad focal areas:

(1) Improving the skills and confidence of those who deliver SRE;

(2) The role of external contributors in supporting schools;

(3) Further guidance and support for schools;

(4) Involving young people in designing SRE programmes;

(5) The role of wider programmes and initiatives;

(6) Improving school leadership on SRE. (SRE External Steering Group, 2008: 11)

The following evidence was drawn upon by the SRE External Steering Group to inform the review:

- Ofsted subject reports on PSHE;

- A joint UK Youth Parliament and Sexual Health Forum survey which gathered more than 20,000 UK young people's responses;

- A residential event with a group of 15 young people;

- A survey collecting teachers' views on 'the main factors that inhibited better delivery of SRE';

- A literature review on existing survey research of parent views about SRE and supplemented by evidence of issues concerning parents raised during an fpa 'Speakeasy' course;

- A literature review on international evidence on SRE; and

- The 'knowledge, experience and expertise' of the Review's steering committee members (SRE External Steering Group, 2008: 11).

The Steering Group presented figures and percentages for each piece of evidence in a clear and transparent manner. The principal recommendation within the Report was that:

> **PSHE should be a statutory subject in Key Stages 1-4 and that it should be underpinned by a statutory programme of study that sets out a common core of knowledge and skills that all young people should be taught.** (SRE External Steering Group, 2008: 3; original emphasis in report)

The Steering Group believed that the Government had a direct responsibility to legislate on school-based PSHEE/SRE:

> We do not believe that the Government can leave it to individual schools to decide what priority to give to PSHE … We believe that making PSHE statutory is the only way to achieve step-change in SRE that is needed. (SRE External Steering Group, 2008: 4)

The review report additionally stated that the Steering Group came to a 'consensus' as to the 'underlying principles' that need to guide SRE policy to improve SRE delivery. These principles included SRE focusing more heavily on 'relationships' and skills building; SRE being taugh within a clear values framework; comprehensive SRE being all

inclusive and meeting all young people's needs; schools better informing parents on school provision; schools partnering with professional external sources (e.g. health and chidlren's services) to provide SRE; and not teaching SRE in isolation but alongside comprehensive PSHEE (SRE External Steering Group, 2008: 2-3).

New Labour responded positively to the Steering Group's report with Jim Knight – in the DCSF's government report responding to the review (DCSF, 2008) – stating that the Government "welcomed the fact that the review had been evidence based" (p.1). This is perhaps not surprising given New Labour's policy-making preference to use a "'what works' agenda based on research evidence" (Garrett & Forrester, 2012: 10; see also Ozga, 2004; Bates et al., 2011). Knight asserted that the Government was confident that the SRE Steering Group had "correctly identified the key delivery challenges" (DCSF, 2008: 1) to SRE and that the DCSF broadly agreed with the Steering Group's above-mentioned principles to tackle them. Therefore, the Department was "attracted to giving PSHE statutory status" (DCSF, 2008: 4, No.4) and thus "introducing statutory programmes of study for PSHEE" (DCSF, 2008: 4, No.4).

The Government report rejected the claim that SRE leads to the early sexualisation of young people – an argument made by those who approach SRE from a 'loss of innocence' position. Instead, Knight asserted that good quality SRE provides a mode of 'protection' for young people, as it gives them the opportunity to "understand the influence of the media, clarify values and attitudes, understand risks and consequences and acquire the knowledge and skills that will keep them safe and healthy" (Knight qtd in DCSF, 2008: 3).

The values embedded within this DCSF report similarly reflect the values put forward by the SRE External Steering Group. These values included: **Intellectual** (e.g. evidence-based research, knowledge and skills factual information), **The Self** (e.g. understanding, personal development, responsibility, self-confidence), **Educational** (e.g. PSHEE/SRE as a priority subject in schools, schools retaining flexibility to develop curriculum, young people and parents working in partnership with schools to develop curriculum), **Social** (e.g. developing and maintaining healthy relationships with others), **Health** (e.g. making healthy choices), **Rights-based** (e.g. gender equality, listening to young people, ensuring

parents and young people are fully involved in SRE policy development) and **Cultural** (e.g. diversity) values. Sir Alasdair Macdonald, Head teacher at Morpeth Secondary school in Tower Hamlets, was commissioned to conduct an independent review on how best to translate statutory PSHEE into practice.

The third key policy text published on 23 October 2009 was a ministerial statement released by Jim Knight that provided further insight into the values and approaches New Labour would adopt in relation to SRE. Knight (2008c) stressed that the "importance of good-quality personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) has never been greater" (col WS77) – showcasing the government's perception of the magnitude of the problem – and that the government had decided that "PSHE *should* have statutory status" (col WS79). New Labour viewed schools as having a responsibility to teach PSHEE/SRE because it "has a major contribution to make to young people's personal development and wellbeing" (col WS77) – even calling PSHEE "a key indicator of the success of a 21st-century school" (col WS77). The government, again, emphasised its support toward the 'Right of the Child' approach to SRE and valuing partnership working with young people by re-highlighting evidence from the UKYP's SRE survey and stressing that young people "are telling us that provision is not meeting their needs" (Knight, 2008c: WS77).

Furthermore, the Minister outlined the key principles that would govern the DCSF's ongoing policy work on PSHEE and SRE. These principles included such things as the government developing a national framework setting out a common core of information representing an entitlement for all children and young people; fully involving parents in curriculum development; improving the quality of PSHEE/SRE teaching by ensuring teachers are specially trained to teach the subject so it meets young people's needs; and PSHEE being taught to reflect a school's thics and moral values (Knight, 2008c).

Sir Alasdair Macdonald's independent PSHEE report was published six months later along with a ministerial statement by Ed Balls (2009a), former Secretary of State for Children Schools and Families, who stated that the New Labour Government viewed PSHEE as an 'entitlement' of young people ('**Rights-based**' values) and that it was 'attracted' to the idea of legislating statutory PSHEE for all school Key Stages – as recommended by Sir Alasdair Macdonald – within the National Curriculum. The DCSF's

not so 'hinted' intention to legislate for statutory PSHEE was further echoed within the White Paper *Your child, your schools, our future: building a 21st century schools system* (DCSF, 2009) – whereby the Department argued that it approached schools as having a responsibility to promote students' health and wellbeing ('**Educational**', '**Health**' and '**The Self**' values) and that it aimed for every pupil to receive PSHEE starting in September 2011 (Sherbert Research, 2009: 38, No.2.3.4) ('**Rights-based**' values) – before an official ministerial statement was released on 5 November 2009 (Balls, 2009b) confirming that statutory PSHEE (and subsequently SRE) for all Key Stages was to be legislated within the then forthcoming *Children, Schools and Families Bill.*

Balls' ministerial statement focused on young people ('**Rights-based**' values) and their 'wellbeing' ('**Health**' and '**The Self**' values) and 'healthy development' ('**Health**' values) (Balls, 2009b: col 49WS). SRE was stressed as being "crucial to the drive to reduce teenage pregnancy [and being] vital for the healthy development of every child and young person" (Balls, 2009b: col 49WS); thus, SRE being approached as a mode of 'protection' and not a cause of young people's 'loss of innocence' (an argument made by non-stautory PSHEE/SRE advocates). Evidence-based research was not only heavily valued but frequently drawn upon by New Labour as Balls added that in addition to the government commissioning the external *SRE in Schools Review* and Sir Alasdair Macdonald's independent report on PSHEE, the DCSF had also commissioned the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA) to consult publicly on key PSHEE concerns such as curriculum burden, the role of governing bodies and parental right to withdraw their children from lessons. These are three core issues that tend to divide those who take a statutory versus non-statutory approach to PSHEE/SRE as seen in Section 6.2.1.1.

With regard to parents' right to withdraw from PSHEE and SRE lessons, Balls announced that after 'carefully considering' the evidence that while parental rights to withdraw their child from lessons was 'very important', this right only applied to young people under the age of 15 (to ensure every young person received one year of SRE before turning 16) (Balls, 2009b: col 49WS).

The Children Schools and Families Bill was introduced within the House of Commons on 19 November 2009. The *Bill* (House of Commons, 2009) initiated curriculum reforms and set out what parents and students could expect from schools. Four clauses specific to PSHEE and SRE were included within the *Bill*: Clause 11 'PSHE in maintained schools', Clause 12 'PSHE in Academies etc.', Clause 13 'Sex and relationships education: manner of provision' and Clause 14 'Exemption from sex and relationship education'. Clauses 11 and 12 laid out New Labour's plans that PSHEE would be statutory in the National Curriculum for England and outlined the type of schools to which this legislation applied. Clauses 11 and 12 additionally outlined that PSHEE should be taught in a way that: (1) is accurate and balanced ('**Intellectual**' values), (2) is age appropriate ('**Educational**' values), (3) is sensitive to one's religious and cultural background ('**Religious**' and '**Cultural**' values), (4) reflects a range of religious, cultural and other perspectives ('**Cultural**' values), (5) promotes equality ('**Rights-based**' values), (6) encourages acceptance of diversity ('**Rights-based**' and '**Cultural**' values) and (7) emphasises the importance of both rights and responsibilities ('**Rights-based**' and values of '**The Self**').

Clauses 13 and 14 aimed to amend the *Education Act of 1996* by replacing the term 'sex education' with 'sex and relationships education', outlined the types of schools required to teach SRE, inserted "learn the nature of civil partnerships and the importance of strong and stable relationships" within provision, as well as lowered the upper age of a pupil to which a parent could withdraw his or her child from SRE lessons (from 19 to 15).

The *Bill* made its way to the House of Lords for its first reading on 24 February 2010 and by its third and last reading on 7 April 2010 – during the government 'Wash-up process' – Clauses 11 through 14 were removed from the *Bill* in their entirety. There was heated debate amongst the 12 Lords/Baronesses (representing both sides of the statutory argument) who contributed their opinions during this last reading, particularly Baronesses Walmsley, Massey and Gould – all staunch supporters of statutory PSHEE. The responses of these Baronesses provide insight as to why Clauses 11 through 14 were removed from the *Bill* and possibly show that there had been a shift in power and influence within the SRE debate as policy actors began foreshadowing the external shock of a governmental change.

Baroness Walmsley called the *Bill* "a complete car crash [where] hardly anything remains of the old banger in one piece" (2010a) and that she felt like "the boy who stood on the burning deck when all around has fled" (2010b). She asserted "the Government and the official Opposition had conspired behind closed doors" (Baroness Walmsley, 2010b) and that changes to the clauses were being made "at the behest of some of the churches which do not want their schools to comply with the *Bill*" (Baroness Walmsley, 2010b). Baroness Massey added that she was "saddened and dismayed that teachers, the voluntary sector and other campaigners have been let down by our parliamentary procedures and lack of will" (2010a), while Baroness Gould claimed that the PSHEE clauses were being removed from the *Bill* "at the last moment because it [was] the wish of the Conservative opposition" and that such is "the nature of the wash-up" (Baroness Gould, 2010) process.

After tracing the movement of PSHEE/SRE reforms within the policy process and mapping out the main approaches taken and value priorities pushed within the aforementioned key SRE policy developments, it can be shown that New Labour favoured four approaches to SRE: 'Right of the child', 'Protection through SRE', 'Schools are responsible for teaching PSHEE/SRE' and the 'Pro-statutory PSHEE/SRE' approach. Focusing on the specific 'types' of values the government mostly drew upon, New Labour heavily pushed 'Rights-based', 'Health', 'Intellectual' and values of 'The Self' (as described in Table 8, pp. 143-145).

However, the government particularly adopted and prioritised seven specific value examples: (1) listening to young people; (2) partnership sharing in SRE delivery (e.g. government and cross sectoral, as well as with parents, schools, young people); (3) evidence-based research; (4) health and wellbeing; (5) accurate and balanced information; (6) relationships education; and (7) PSHEE as an 'entitlement' of young people. These seven specific values are frequently threaded within the wording of New Labour's SRE policy texts, along with specific references to the SEF, fpa and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This frequent inclusion illustrates whose voices were the most powerful policy players on this issue during the New Labour Government.

The next sub-section analyses key SRE policy developments that occurred during the Coalition Government time period studied and explores whether the specific approaches,

values and people/evidence drawn upon by the former New Labour Government have been likewise adopted by the Coalition Government.

6.3.3 The Coalition's values and policy approach to PSHEE/SRE

The Coalition Government – formed of the Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties – took control of Parliament on 11 May 2010. This sub-section identifies some of the key policy developments that occurred within the PSHEE/SRE policy process during the Coalition Government time period studied. Tracing the developments within Figure 6, this sub-section identifies and compares the specific SRE value priorities and policy approaches of both political parties within the Coalition. These values and approaches are additionally contrasted with those adopted by the former New Labour Government to better illuminate how the change of government altered the landscape of the PSHEE/SRE debate.

 Additionally, Figure 6 aids in providing a possible explanation as to why despite the previous Government's attempts to push through reforms, PSHEE and SRE remain non-statutory (apart from some of the biological aspects found in the National Curriculum for Science) under the Coalition Government. These analyses are important as "values, beliefs [and] ideologies have a dominant role" (Parsons, 1999: 576) regarding decisions to initiate or terminate policies (in this case statutory PSHEE/SRE). These analyses are additionally valuable as cross-mapping the policy beliefs (or values) of policy actors (individuals, groups, political parties) and those cited within SRE policy documents "offers a way of evaluating the influence of various policy actors over time, including the role of technical-analytic information on policy change" (Fischer, 2003: 95).

The texts shown within Figure 6 inform the subsequent discussion within this sub-section and value set types are, again, **bolded** within the text to more clearly highlight the main values adopted by the DfE and Coalition Government.

Figure 6: Key SRE policy developments during the Coalition Government
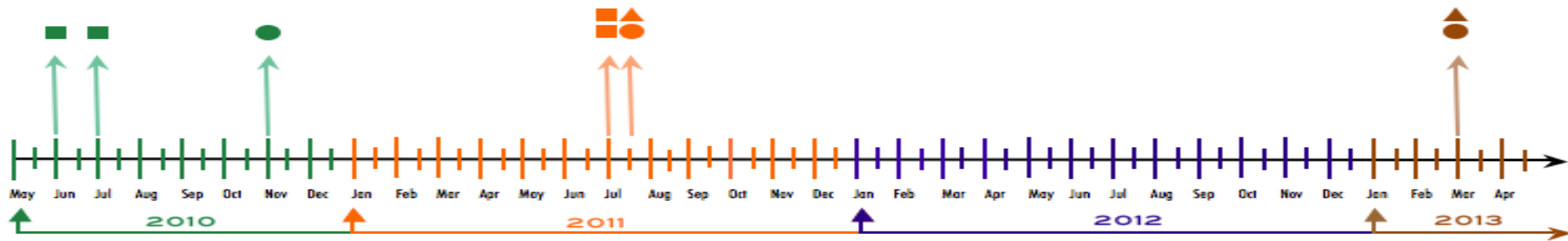
Notes:

■ **28 June 2010 – *Reading of Bill***: Committee Stage of the *Academies Bill* in the House of Lords; Baronesses Massey and Gould introduce Amendment 32 – that academies have a curriculum which includes 'PSHEE as a statutory entitlement for all pupils'; Amendment 32 is withdrawn.

■ **07 July 2010 – *Reading of Bill***: Report Stage of the *Academies Bill* in the House of Lords; Baronesses Massey, Gould and Flather introduce Amendment 9, again, adding a statutory PSHEE provision for academies within the *Bill*; Amendment 9 disagreed (156 for / 245 against).

● **24 November 2010 – *Published Paper***: DfE publishes the White Paper *The importance of teaching* stating it will conduct an *internal* review of PSHEE to determine how to support schools in improving quality of teaching, including teachers having the flexibility to decide how best to deliver PSHEE.

■ **11 July 2011 – *Reading of Bill***: Committee Stage of *Education Bill* in the House of Lords; Baronesses Massey and Gould and Lord Knight introduce Amendment 83 – that pupils at all schools are entitled to a 'balanced curriculum' that includes diversity of cultures, faiths and no faith and PSHEE; Amendment 83 is withdrawn.

■ **13 July 2011 – *Reading of Bill***: Committee Stage of *Education Bill* in the House of Lords; Baronesses Walmsley and Tyler introduce Amendments 88, 89 and 90 requiring all maintained schools and academies to teach PSHEE and outlining school-based SRE provision; Amendment 80 withdrawn.

▲ **21 July 2011 – *Ministerial Letter (Nick Gibb)***: Writes letter to the Education Select Committee stating DfE launched its PSHEE review with the aim to 'consider the essential knowledge and awareness that pupils need to be taught' and 'how schools can improve the quality of PSHEE'.

● **21 July 2011 – *Published Remit***: The remit to the PSHEE review is enclosed with Nick Gibb's Ministerial letter addressed to the Education Select Committee.

▲ **21 March 2013 – *Ministerial Statement (Elizabeth Truss)***: Announces PSHEE will remain non-statutory and states new standardised frameworks or programmes of study are unnecessary; PSHE Association to receive grant funding to support schools; Ofsted commissioned to publish school guide on PSHEE.

● **21 March 2013 – *Published Report***: DfE publishes its *Consultation on PSHE education: summary report*.

When looking at Figure 6 in isolation, three findings stand out. First, the momentum to reform PSHEE and SRE did not dissipate after the Conservatives rejected Clauses 11 through 14 within the *Children, Schools and Families Bill*, nor after the Conservative party took majority control of the Coalition Government. As Figure 6 shows, policy actors representing varying political parties (none of whom were Conservative party members) inserted multiple amendments within the *Academies Bill* and *Education Bill* pushing to make PSHEE statutory and to revise the provision of SRE. Policy actors advocating a 'Pro-statutory PSHEE/SRE' approach have continued to ensure that it remains on the education policy agenda, possibly in an attempt to maintain the momentum for statutory PSHEE that was built up under the previous government or perhaps to put PSHEE and SRE on the agenda in the face of the Conservative party's inaction within the debate.

Second, compared to the key developments during New Labour (Figure 5, p.175), the Coalition Government does not appear to have commissioned as much evidence-based research to inform its PSHEE/SRE policy strategy. New Labour commissioned at least five research projects (SRE External Steering Group, 2008; Macdonald, 2009; QCDA, 2009; Sherbert Research, 2009; Formby et al., 2011) pertaining to SRE and PSHE education before pushing for statutory status within the *Children, Schools and Families Bill*. As seen in Figure 6, unlike the previous government, the Coalition held an *internal* review of PSHE education and a year and eight months later without further research consultations announced that the subject would remain non-statutory. The 'what works' evidence-based agenda of New Labour's education policy-making appears to have shifted under the Coalition toward 'gut instinct' (Garratt & Forrester, 2012: 19) and "non-academic or even anecdotal evidence [that is] selectively interpreted and understood" (Exley & Ball, 2011: 105).

Lastly, Figure 6 illustrates that the Liberal Democrat side of the Coalition Government might not share the same non-statutory policy approach to school-based PSHEE/SRE as its Conservative counterparts. For instance, Baroness Walmsley and Baroness Tyler, both Liberal Democrats, co-wrote Amendments 88, 89 and 90 within the *Education Bill* (now *Education Act 2011*). Although the Amendments did not end up in the final wording of the *Act*, these proposed amendments were intended to ensure statutory PSHE education

and SRE within the curriculum for all maintained schools and academies, as well as outlining the manner of provision for these subjects.

In complete contrast to the main approaches taken and value priorities held by New Labour, the Conservative-majority of the Coalition Government approached SRE through a 'Right of the Parent', 'Protection from loss of innocence', 'Schools are not responsible for teaching' and 'Non-statutory PSHEE/SRE' lens. '**Political**', '**Rights-based**' and '**Educational**' values (as described in Table 8, pp.143-145) ground Conservative arguments as to why PSHEE and SRE (except for that which is taught in the National Science Curriculum for secondary schools) should remain non-statutory for all key stages. Seven value examples were heavily threaded within relevant DfE texts, ministerial statements and Conservative policy actors' arguments during readings of both the *Academies* and *Education Bill*. These specific examples include: (1) less central prescription from government; (2) parents have the principal responsibility to teach PSHE education and SRE; (3) a slimmed down National Curriculum; (4) school and teacher flexibility to develop the curriculum; (5) parental right of withdrawal; (6) no SRE for primary school-aged students; and (7) teaching sexual consent (i.e. the legal age at which a young person can consent to sex).

To explore whether the aforementioned approaches and values of the Conservatives aligned with the Liberal Democrat policy position toward PSHEE/SRE and to assess the main differences and similarities among the values and 'voices' excluded and privileged under the former New Labour and current Coalition governments, the key developments within Figure 6 are examined in greater depth now.

Two weeks after the change of government, the Coalition introduced the *Academies Bill* into the House of Lords on 26 May 2010 – which sought to enable more maintained schools to apply for academy status and funding. As seen within the Figure, Baronesses Massey and Gould inserted Amendment 32 – ensuring PSHE education as a statutory entitlement for all pupils – into the *Bill* and a debate on this Amendment occurred during a reading on the 28th of June. The Amendment had the support of eight (4 Labour, 2 Crossbench, 2 Lib Dems) out of the eleven Baronesses and Lords that participated within the debate. Despite this support, the Amendment was withdrawn at the end of the debate

session. This incident illuminates three main findings.

First, Amendment 32 shows that post the change of government Baronesses Massey and Gould continued to partner up, as seen during the previous government, to attempt to reform PSHEE/SRE provision. This is important because debates on Amendments within readings of Bills provide an opportunity to see the development of strategic partnerships and the formation of (or changing of) a coalition of policy actors around a policy issue. Second, Baronesses Walmsley and Williams, the only Liberal Democrats to engage in the debate, urged their Conservative Coalition counterparts to "redress the damage that was done before the election when [statutory PSHEE] very nearly got into legislation" (Baroness Walmsley, 2010d) and suggested that the "coalition might think of something rather unique and announce that it is its intention to introduce compulsory PSHE" (Baroness Williams, 2010). This suggests that the Liberal Democrat side of the Coalition wished to adopt a 'Pro-statutory' approach to PSHEE and SRE, possibly indicating that the Coalition was not united on this policy issue.

Lastly, the specific arguments of Baronesses Walmsley and Williams in support of Amendment 32 potentially highlight some of the main values and approaches toward PSHEE and SRE generally adopted by the Liberal Democrat party. The main values promoted by these Baronesses included: (1) young people have an entitlement to information ('**Rights-based**' and '**Intellectual**' values); (2) importance of teaching parenting ('**Family**' values); (3) personal wellbeing ('**The Self**' values); and (4) teaching PSHEE at primary school stage ('**Educational**' values). The main approaches drawn upon included: 'Protection through PSHEE/SRE', 'Right of the Child', 'Schools are responsible for teaching PSHEE/SRE' and 'Pro-statutory PSHEE/SRE'. These values and approaches closely mirror those of the previous New Labour Government.

Perhaps not surprisingly, Baronesses Massey and Gould found themselves re-introducing an amendment for statutory PSHEE for academies 10 days later on 7 July 2010. However, Baroness Flather's name was added to this Amendment. Baroness Massey is the current President of Brook, Baroness Gould is the President of fpa and Baroness Flather is a member of the Board of Trustees for Marie Stopes Int. As seen in Figure 3 (p.158) the three separate interest groups that these three baronesses are affiliated with

have membership within the larger Sex Education Forum and Sexual Health Forum coalition of actors. This coalition of PSHEE and SRE advocates appears to have remained intact despite the change of government.

Within the Amendment debate, Baroness Walmsley stated that her ambition was to use her 'new influence' within the Coalition to bring about change and asserted the importance of '**Intellectual**' (e.g. knowledge and skills, accurate and balanced information), '**Rights-based**' (e.g. promotion of equality and acceptance of diversity; understanding one's rights) and values of '**The Self**' (e.g. personal responsibility).

Conservative arguments as to why PSHEE should remain non-statutory included that individual teachers should decide what should be taught ('**Educational**' values), SRE should not be taught in primary schools ('**Educational**' values), SRE should be taught within a moral context ('**The Self**' values) and it should be sensitive to one's religious beliefs ('**Religious**' values). Amendment 9 was defeated with a vote of 156 for and 245 against.

The next key PSHEE development during the Coalition time period studied occurred on 24 November 2010 when the DfE announced in the White Paper titled *The Importance of Teaching* that it was going to conduct an internal review of PSHEE. The Coalition Government briefly (in four sentences) stated that it would conduct a review to determine how it could support schools in improving the quality of PSHEE, "including giving teachers the flexibility to use their judgment about how best to deliver PSHE education" (DfE, 2010: 46). This emphasis on school and teacher flexibility to teach the subject suggests that before the review had even begun the government had already decided on a minimal role for the state (i.e. 'Non-statutory PSHEE/SRE' approach) and a policy of localism toward the subject.

Soon after *The Importance of Teaching* was published, the DfE drafted the *Education Bill* to legislate the proposals introduced in the White Paper (as well as proposed reforms to higher education funding). This wide-ranging *Bill* was introduced to the House of Commons on 26 January 2011 and did not receive Royal Assent until 11 months later on 15 November. During a Grand Committee debate of the *Bill* in the House of Lords on 13

July 2010, Liberal Democrats Baroness Walmsley and Baroness Tyler introduced Amendments 88, 89 and 90. These amendments required maintained schools and academies to teach statutory PSHE education and outlined the manner of provision for SRE. Regarding SRE, Amendment 90 would have amended the *Education Act of 1996* so that young people would not not only be taught about marriage, but also civil partnerships and other 'strong and stable relationships'.

Although Baronesses Massey, Gould and Flather, as well as Lord Knight, also introduced a statutory PSHEE amendment (Amendment 98) within the *Education Bill*, Baronesses Walmsley and Tyler's drafting of Amendments 88, 89 and 90 is perhaps more noteworthy because it further demonstrates the party division within the Coalition around legislating PSHEE and SRE. This division is further illuminated when analysing the Liberal Democrat and Coalition arguments within this Grand Committee debate. Liberal Democrats argued for the importance of listening to young people ('**Rights-based**' values) and legislating statutory PSHEE and SRE. Policy actors drew upon the UNCRC, PSHE Association and SEF to support their 'pro-statutory' approach, while the following specific value examples were threaded throughout arguments: partnerships between homes and schools to teach PSHEE/SRE ('**Educational**' values), focus on relationships ('**Social**' values), schools supporting young people's emotional health and wellbeing ('**Health**' and '**The Self**' values), knowledge and life skills to resist peer, partner and media pressures ('**Intellectual**' values), strengthening social and interpersonal skills ('**Social**' and '**The Self**' values), and allowing young people to think for themselves ('**Rights-based**' and '**The Self**' values).

In contrast, Conservative peer arguments against Amendments 88-90 included that it would be "daffy to prescribe that individual items should be learnt" (Lord Lucas, 2011: col GC356), that the curriculum aim should be about "teaching on core subjects" (Baroness O'Cathain, 2011: col GC354) and that the Amendments would "take us in a completely different direction" (Baroness O'Cathain, 2011: col GC354) because "how can we have a slimmed-down curriculum and yet put in it more and more issues that are extremely difficult to teach" (Baroness O'Cathain, 2011: col GC354). Furthermore, Minister Lord Hill quoted Ofsted as having stated that PSHEE is good or outstanding in three-quarters of schools and maintained that the Coalition Government (or at least the

Conservative party side) is not interested in legislating on the subject because "the Government's aim is to shrink the curriculum and to leave schools and teachers more time to decide for themselves what to teach" (Lord Hill, 2011: col GC361). Lords Lucas and Hill and Baroness O'Cathain value a less prescriptive curriculum that focuses on core subjects while giving schools flexibility to teach (or not to teach) PSHEE and SRE. The specific value examples above are found within the 'Non-stautory PSHEE/SRE' and 'Schools are not responsible for teaching PSHEE/SRE' approaches to PSHEE and SRE.

Perhaps the most important document that supports the analysis of the main approaches and values which have shaped the Coalition's approach to PSHEE and SRE can be found in the *PSHE Review Remit* (DfE, 2011b) that was attached to a letter that Nick Gibb, then Minister of State for Schools, wrote to the Education Select Committee on 21 July 2011. Although the letter and *Remit* both admitted that young people could benefit 'enormously' from PSHE education, the DfE asserted that "the Government has already ruled out making PSHE education as a whole a statutory subject within the National Curriculum" (DfE, 2011b: No.9) and that it "has no plans to change the law on sex education or parents' right to withdraw their child from sex education" (DfE, 2011b: No.9). The DfE described that one of its reasons for conducting the review was because it was "already reviewing the National Curriculum so that it reflects the body of essential knowledge in core subjects" (DfE, 2011b: No.6) so that schools could have more 'space' to provide subjects such as PSHE education in their curricula. This could be understood to imply that the knowledge, values and skills taught within PSHEE were not considered by the DfE to be 'essential knowledge' and reinforced "Conservative beliefs in traditional curricula 'subjects' and methods of instruction" (Garratt & Forrester, 2012: 19).

The *Remit* additionally stressed the need for less central prescription and that "it should be for teachers, not government, to design the lessons and the experiences which will engage pupils" (DfE, 2011b: No.7). While New Labour embraced the government as having an "active role to play in assisting rational parent-citizens" (Nichols et al., 2009: 65) by taking a "pragmatic approach to partnerships" (Walker, 2004: 248; Hodgson & Spours, 1999) – cross sectoral, private and public sector, schools, young people, parents – and "intervening directly into the curriculum and school organisation" (Garratt & Forrester, 2012: 56), the Conservative side of the Coalition Government has been more

committed to 'cutting red tape' (Ball, 2013) by "reducing unnecessary prescription, bureaucracy and central control throughout the system" (DfE, 2011b: No.5).

Content and quality of PSHE education were to be the main aims of the review. For instance, regarding the content of PSHEE the review would:

- Consider the core outcomes which we expect PSHE education to achieve and the core of knowledge and awareness that the government should expect pupils to acquire at school;

- Look at whether the national, non-statutory frameworks and programmes of study are an effective way of defining content;

- Explore how schools can better decide for themselves what pupils need to know, in consultation with parents and others locally;

- Consider whether elements of PSHE education should be make statutory within the basic curriculum (in addition to sex education); and

- Consider how to simplify the statutory guidance on sex and relationships education, including strengthening the priority given to: teaching about relationships, the importance of positive parenting; and teaching young people about sexual consent. (DfE, 2011b: No.9)

The third bullet point illustrates a 'Non-statutory PSHEE/SRE', 'Right of the parent' and 'Schools are not responsible for teaching PSHEE/SRE' approach to the curriculum. First, the statement places minimal responsibility on the state to legislate PSHEE and instead adopts a policy of localism. While emphasis is placed on schools consulting with parents in developing their curricula, followed by 'others locally', noticeably absent is any mention of including and listening to young people. Involving young people in curriculum design was the fourth main aim of the former government's SRE Review and was a theme heavily threaded throughout ministerial statements and DCSF texts during this time.

Additionally, the fifth bullet point above states that the Coalition wants to not only 'simplify' current statutory SRE guidance (i.e. DfEE, 2000), but in doing so also wants 'priority' to be given to teaching about relationships ('**Social**' values), 'positive' parenting ('**Family**' values) and sexual consent – legal age a young person can give their consent ('**Political**' values). By using the term 'priority', this suggests that these three specific value examples are highly privileged by the DfE at the expense of others.

The announcement that the DfE's *internal* PSHEE review was complete came within a ministerial statement (Truss, 2013) written on 21 March 2013, along with the published *Consultation on PSHE education: summary report* (DfE, 2013b). This announcement came one year and eight months after the government stated the review had been started and approximately two years and four months after it first announced in *The importance of teaching* that the DfE was going to conduct the review. This is quite a lengthy time difference compared to the 10 months it took New Labour from first announcing its plan to review SRE within the *Children's Plan* to the publication of the external *SRE in Schools Report* and its government response to this review. However, this might not be surprising as during an interview for this study (coincidentally during the time period the Coalition's PSHEE review was being conducted) Philip Davies MP (Con) shared his thoughts on the future of PSHEE and SRE under his party and the Coalition and stated, "I suspect that the Government just wants to forget that the subject ever exists and just kick it into the long grass and do nothing at all with it" (2011).

The ministerial statement (Truss, 2013) stated that PSHEE would remain non-statutory and that the Government considered it "unnecessary to provide any new standardised framework or programme of study" (para 3), citing that "teachers are best placed to understand the needs of their pupils" (para 3) and the need for less central prescription. Yet, PSHE education was described as being an 'important' and 'necessary' part of students' education and if or when schools decide to teach it, PSHEE should "equip pupils with a sound understanding of risk and with the knowledge and skills necessary to make safe and informed choices" (Truss, 2013: para 4). The central message appears to be that PSHEE should emphasise harm reduction.

In contrast to the DCSF's ministerial statement (Knight, 2008c) post its 2008 SRE review, the Coalition continued to ignore the importance of "listening to young people" (col WS77) or contributing to "young people's personal development and wellbeing" (col WS77). Instead, the DfE approached PSHEE from a 'Non-statutory PSHEE/SRE' position and some could argue a 'Schools are not responsible for teaching PSHEE/SRE' approach. Curriculum flexibility for schools means that individual schools can decide whether, as well as what, PSHEE it will or will not provide its students. However, the DfE mentioned it would be giving grant money to the PSHE Association to help support schools in building their curricula, but the Association would have to "promote the teaching of consent as part of SRE" (Truss, 2013: para 6).

The *DfE Consultation on PSHE education: summary report* (DfE, 2013b) was also published on 21 March 2013. Significantly missing from within the DfE's report is (1) any mention or re-statement of the 'focus' or 'aims' of the review as laid out in the review's *Remit* (DfE, 2011b, No.9-10); (2) key information about review respondents; (3) a transparent outline of the modes of data collection employed to generate the statistics that form the basis of the report; (4) any mention of the specific sources of data collected to inform the review; and (5) any reference to government recommendations or an engagement with how the review findings addressed its intended focus (DfE, 2011b: No. 9-10).

The presentation of data within the *Consultation* is arguably misleading and is presented in a way that is easy to misinterpret. The first sentence to the *Consultation* states that "This report has been based on 699 responses to the consultation document" (DfE, 2013b: 3). Without any background information as to the main focal areas or process guiding the review, the *Consultation* presents a table (Table 16, p.196) highlighting the organisational breakdown of the review's respondents. The organisational categories within the Table are vague (e.g. educational provider, other and school leader) – and therefore arguably unhelpful – and the table itself could be considered misleading as readers of this report are not shown whether or not there was a 'balance' among different kinds of respondents for the review. For instance, readers might interpret the presented statistics within the report differently if it was known that out of the 113 VCS sector/charity respondents, the

majority represented 'abstinence-only' and 'anti-choice' charities, or if 'sexual health' or 'humanist' groups had been favoured.

Table 16: Organisational breakdown of PSHEE review respondents

Parent	168
VCS sector/charity	113
Teacher	90
Local authority	71
Other*	67
PCT health/NHS organisations	45
Educational provider	37
Individual	31
Governor	20
Religion/belief/faith groups	20
School leader	16
Teaching association/union	11
Subject association	5
Pupil	5

Source: DfE, 2013b: 3

Another misleading aspect of the *Consultation* is that the findings themselves are not portrayed in a clear manner. Generic terms such as 'most respondents', 'many respondents' and 'some respondents' are used in the 'Overview' section to describe data without any guide to help gauge the 'weight' of each category. Additionally, the report states that "the consultation asked several questions" (DfE, 2013b: 5), but there is no mention as to how these data were collected (e.g. interviews, surveys, focus groups) and whether the questions were open-ended or whether respondents were given pre-determined choices. The only mention of the research methods for the review can be seen in a four-sentence section titled 'Evidence' where the DfE says it asked consultees to provide examples of good practice, sought examples of case studies that demonstrate best practice, and received "numerous contributions and representations" (DfE, 2013b: 19). Due to inconsistencies within the report, the *Consultation* is perhaps less a reflection of the PSHEE (and SRE) policy debate and more a re-statement of the current Government's (most especially the Conservative-majority's) position toward the subject.

After tracing the key policy developments around PSHEE/SRE during the Coalition time period studied this analysis has identified that the values and approaches taken towards PSHE education and SRE by the Coalition Government largely challenge those adopted by New Labour. While partnership working (Walker, 2004; Bache, 2003; Bates, Lewis & Pickard, 2011), a greater role for the state in education (Bates, Lewis & Pickard, 2011; Garratt & Forrester, 2012) and "skills, knowledge and intellectual capital" (Hodgson & Spours, 1999: 10) were central to New Labour's policy platform, the Coalition has emphasised the need for a minimal role of the state (Garratt & Forrester, 2012: 19) and less central intervention and control (Ball, 2013: 5), enabling a slimmed down curriculum and a policy of localism.

Additionally, although the 'Right of the child', 'Schools are responsible for teaching PSHEE/SRE' and 'Protection through SRE' approaches were embraced by New Labour, the Coalition has rejected these positions and instead argued for the 'Right of the parent', that schools can decide if and what to teach, as well as a 'Protection from loss of innocence' approach to PSHEE/SRE. These significant value and policy approach differences provide a strong explanation for why the Coalition Government has not reformed current PSHEE and SRE policies. These stark differences also suggest that PSHEE is unlikely to become statutory, at least not until there is a change of government where values such as 'PSHEE and SRE as an entitlement' and a 'Schools are responsible for teaching PSHEE/SRE' approach once again become a strong part of the Government's policy platform.

However, these values and approaches are not completely missing from within the Coalition Government. There is a clear division between the values, approaches and 'voices' considered privileged by the Liberal Democrats compared to their Conservative counterparts within the Coalition. It appears that the Conservatives – who hold the majority of seats in Parliament – are predominantly driving the Government's PSHEE and SRE political agenda (or lack thereof), as the Liberal Democrat policy platform closely mirrors that of New Labour's. The Liberal Democrat side of the Coalition has stressed the importance of listening to young people, approaching PSHEE and SRE as an 'entitlement' for all and the need for the government to legislate statutory PSHEE/SRE within the primary and secondary school national curricula. Also paralleling New

Labour's policy strategy is that the Liberal Democrats draw upon the UNCRC and SEF to inform their policy arguments. The aforementioned values and 'voices' drawn upon by the Liberal Democrats are clearly absent from within the DfE's PSHEE Remit (DfE, 2011b), as well as its ministerial statement (Truss, 2013) and consultation report (DfE, 2013b) post the review. This supports the notion that "at the end of the day, the material power and legitimacy [of the majority party in Parliament] can ride roughshod over any policy community" (Dowding, 1995: 144).

6.4 Concluding comments

This England case chapter fills three gaps located within social policy literature regarding SRE policy and the policy-making process in England. First, the chapter presents a new framework (i.e. the SRE Approaches Framework) that provides an in-depth, critical explanation of the core SRE approaches and values informing policy actors' arguments regarding the statutory status of SRE within the National Curriculum for England between 2008-2013. The SRE Approaches Framework (Table 7) reveals that policy actors approach school-based SRE from at least one (though usually more) of seven core approaches and express or defend 11 main types of values when debating SRE. The seven core approaches comprise: Protection; Right of the child; Right of the parent; Role of schools; SRE in the National Curriculum; Age appropriate SRE; and Content. The eleven specific types of value sets policy actors draw upon comprise: Educational; Rights-based; Family; Health; The Self; Intellectual; Political; Religious; Social; Economic; and Cultural.

These core approaches and the main arguments, debates and values reinforced within each provide a deeper understanding of not only how policy actors' arguments are linked, but also – as seen through the exploration of three separate policy actor cases (Lord Knight, Lord Sutherland and Philip Davies MP) – draw attention to oppositional nodal points whereby these connections between policy actors' approaches and arguments get detached. The SRE Approaches Framework can be used as a valuable tool to better understand why SRE policy actors who share similar approaches and arguments toward the subject might end up on opposing sides of the statutory PSHEE/SRE debate.

Second, the chapter illuminates the individuals and groups who are active within the SRE policy debate. This supports an understanding of how power is exercised and distributed within the SRE policy-making process. SRE is a contentious, heavily argued and largely political issue within Westminster Parliament. Westminster Parliament *Hansard* searches identified at least 127 parliamentarians (66 House of Commons, 61 House of Lords) who participated within the PSHEE/SRE debate during the five-year time period studied. The chapter broadly draws on policy network analysis to identify the scope of parliamentarian involvement (*Appendix H*) within the PSHEE/SRE debate, the relationships and coalitions among policy actors (Figure 3) and maps the boundaries of the 2008-2013 SRE policy network (Figure 4). In addition it reveals that two main advocacy coalitions divide the statutory PSHEE and SRE debate and SRE policy network: those advocating for comprehensive school-based SRE opposed to those advocating abstinence-only or abstinence-plus style SRE programmes.

Using perceived reputational power measures to analyse this study's interview data, this chapter unveils that third sector interest groups and coalitions of actors – especially those with a 'Health', 'Faith-based' and 'Children, young people & rights' advocacy agenda – are viewed by those within the SRE policy network as having the 'most influence' to sway policy over any single individual or individuals. More specifically, Brook and fpa – two sexual health charities that similarly advocate for statutory, comprehensive PSHEE and SRE – were cited the most times by those interviewed as having the greatest policy influence within the network. However, despite Brook's and fpa's perceived 'power' their SRE policy aims and objectives (that mirror those of New Labour's) are not reflected within current PSHEE and SRE policy. Therefore, this chapter deduces that although those within the debate may consider certain groups to have more 'influence' than others, perceived power and influence within the larger SRE policy network is ultimately overshadowed by the authoritative power of the current ruling Government. This suggests that there is an elitist power structure to SRE policy-making in England in this area as education policy is made through a more closed, 'top down' policy-making strategy, whereby the "government still holds the ring both against the producer and professional interest in the [SRE policy] network" (Marsh & Rhodes, 1992: 264).

Lastly, the chapter fills a gap within social policy literature by identifying important factors that provide possible explanations as to why PSHEE and subsequently the non-biological aspects of SRE were to become statutory during the former New Labour Government but continue to remain non-statutory under the current Coalition. The change of government in 2010 was a major external 'shock' to not only the SRE policy network but also the national-level SRE policy-making process. The chapter first describes that following the change of government there was a repositioning of the individual parliamentarians active within the SRE policy network. Investigation shows that only 25 out of the recorded 127 parliamentarians active within 2008-2013 PSHEE/SRE debate participated in at least one policy-making context during both the New Labour and Coalition Government time periods studied. The repositioning of policy actors within a network can mean a shift in support towards/against specific policies, alterations in policy core beliefs and the creation of a new advocacy coalition and/or dissolution of a previously influential coalition of actors because of the redistribution of resources (e.g. funding, number of supporters, access to policy-making discussions).

While it was beyond the scope of this study to analyse the degree of belief change that occurred (if any) amongst each member of the SRE policy network – given it is "all but impossible to identify clearly who [all the] actors are" (Heclo, 1978a: 102) within a network – the chapter does link conflicting SRE approaches and values among the three main political parties in Westminster Parliament as explaining two key reasons why PSHEE and SRE policy remain unchanged under the current Coalition Government.

First, the SRE approaches taken and main values driving the Coalition Government's PSHEE and SRE policy aims largely challenge those of the former New Labour Government's. After tracing the key SRE policy developments that occurred during the time period studied and mapping out the approaches taken and values pushed by both the former and current government, this chapter illustrated how the former New Labour Government favoured four approaches to SRE – 'Right of the child', 'Protection through SRE', 'Schools are responsible for teaching PSHEE/SRE' and the 'Pro-statutory PSHEE/SRE' approach – and heavily drew upon 'Rights-based', 'Health', 'Intellectual' and values of 'The Self' to inform its policy position. More specifically, seven specific values were predominantly threaded within the government's wording of ministerial

statements and DCSF-published texts: (1) listening to young people; (2) partnership sharing in SRE delivery (e.g. government and cross sectoral, parents, schools, young people); (3) evidence-based research; (4) health and wellbeing; (5) accurate and balanced information; (6) relationships education; and (7) PSHEE as an 'entitlement' of young people.

In contrast, the Coalition has approached SRE through a 'Right of the Parent', 'Protection from loss of innocence', 'Schools are not responsible for teaching PSHEE/SRE' and 'Non-statutory PSHEE/SRE' lens. Arguments as to why PSHEE/SRE should remain non-statutory are grounded within 'Political', 'Rights-based' and 'Educational' values and seven specific value examples are heavily pushed within ministerial statements, DfE texts and arguments of government officials within PSHEE/SRE-related parliamentary debates: (1) less central prescription from government; (2) parents have the principal responsibility to teach PSHE education and SRE; (3) a slimmed down National Curriculum; (4) school and teacher flexibility to develop the curriculum; (5) parental right of withdrawal, (6) no SRE for primary school-aged students; and (7) teaching sexual consent (i.e. the legal age a young person can consent to sex).

Second, the chapter distinguishes that the aforementioned approaches and values appear to be predominantly those of the Conservative-majority partners in the Coaltion. The SRE approaches (e.g. 'Right of the child', 'Pro-statutory PSHEE/SRE', 'Schools are responsible for teaching PSHEE/SRE') and values (e.g. young people have an entitlement to PSHEE and SRE, accurate and balanced information, schools supporting young people's emotional health and wellbeing) drawn upon by the Liberal Democrat partners of the Coalition closely mirror those adopted by New Labour – which suggests that the Conservative party (which holds the most seats and therefore votes within Parliament) is primarily driving the current Government's PSHEE and SRE policy agenda.
The SRE approaches utilised and policy values prioritised by New Labour and the Liberal Democrats are so dissimilar to those driving the arguments of the Conservative-majority within the Coalition Government that these differences provide a strong explanation as to why PSHEE and SRE policy has not been reformed (and made statutory) under the current government (despite wide-spread public support and international evidence). The Advocacy Coalition Framework suggests that because statutory PSHEE and SRE reforms

are a threat to the fundamental beliefs of the Conservative-majority – and as the Conservative party is in a greater authoritative position to translate its SRE beliefs into policy given its position within the Coalition Government – the status of PSHEE and SRE within the National Curriculum is unlikely to change (unless policy orientied learining occurs) (Sabatier, 1988) until a new government that values 'PSHEE and SRE as an entitlement of young people' and approaches SRE from a 'pro-statutory' and 'schools are responsible for teaching PSHEE/SRE' lens is elected.

The next chapter focuses on telling the RSE policy-making story within Northern Ireland by describing the policy-making process that led to 'Personal Development' and subsequently Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) being legislated within the Northern Ireland Curriculum – an area on which little social policy literature exists – and highlighting the main RSE values not only driving RSE discussions but embedded within legislation and statutory policy texts.

Chapter 7: The 'RSE policy-making process in Northern Ireland' case

7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the 'Northern Ireland case' of this thesis and addresses the thesis' aim of better understanding the policy process in relation to Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) being made statutory within the Northern Ireland Curriculum. Social policy literature regarding education within Northern Ireland has predominantly centered around the country's distinctive structure of education, such as integrated (i.e. Protestant and Catholic-pupil mixed) schooling (McGlynn et al., 2004; Graham & Nash, 2006; Hayes et al., 2007), selective education through the 11+ test (McVicar, 1999; Gallagher & Smith, 2000; Carlin, 2003) and church and state relations within education in a 'divided' society (Gallagher, 1989; Dunn, 1993; Gallagher, 1995; Byrne & McKeown, 1998).

While there is a small volume of literature pertaining to RSE in Northern Ireland, this research tends to be indirectly linked to the school-based subject of RSE and the development of RSE policy. For example, RSE-related literature has primarily focused on young people's general health and wellbeing (HPANI, 1994; 2000), RSE teacher training (Newitt & Karp, 2003), parent and teacher views toward school-based sex education (HPANI, 1992; 1996) and health education (Adamson et al., 2006), homophobic and LGBT bullying in schools (Carolan & Redmond, 2003; Radford et al., 2006; McNamee et al., 2008; Schubotz & McNamee, 2009) and the sexual attitudes and behaviours of young people (Schubotz et al., 2002; Accord 2002; Love for Life, 2004; Schubotz, 2011). Much of the aforementioned research has had small sample sizes and few studies have been conducted in the last decade. As Dr Schubotz, one of the principal researchers of the *Towards Better Sexual Health* survey (Schubotz et al., 2002), the first major Northern Ireland study to focus on the sexual attitudes and lifestyles of young people, as well as delivery of RSE in schools, states in an interview:

> It's quite significant that there has not been a large-scale study in RSE or sexual health since 2002, so we have the situation where the *Towards Better Sexual Health Study* is still the most significant piece of research, and that was published over 10 years ago. (Schubotz, 2012)

Noticeably absent within Northern Ireland-specific policy-making literature is an in-depth exploration of the policy-making process that informed Northern Ireland's current legislation (i.e. *Education (Curriculum Minimum Content) (NI) Order 2007*) and statutory policy (i.e. Department of Education, Northern Ireland (DENI) *Circular 2001/15 Relationships and Sexuality Education*) relating to RSE. Additionally absent from within social policy literature is an emphasis on the values and background knowledge that underpin the conceptual framework advising school-based RSE. Such explorations are important given that Northern Ireland's culture has been described as being 'different' from its UK counterparts with regard to people's sexual attitudes and behaviours (Schubotz et al., 2004) – due to the country's deeply routed religious conflict – and yet 'Personal Development' (the equivalent to PSHEE in England) and subsequently RSE are statutory within both the primary and post-primary Northern Ireland Curriculums. This lack of literature on education policy-making in Northern Ireland is not necessarily surprising given that detailed research on Northern Ireland's policy-making processes and its policy style have been frequently omitted within UK policy literature due to the popularity of "single country studies, the stop start nature of devolution in Northern Ireland until 2007 and the political complexities of the arrangements for devolved governance" (Birrell & Heenan, 2013: 3; also Blakemore, 2003; Phillips, 2003; Donnelly & Osborne, 2005).

In this chapter, policy-making processes are examined through a specific focus on Northern Ireland's current, statutory RSE policy – an area about which little is known and seems to be largely absent within social policy literature. This chapter fills that gap within the literature by telling the Northern Ireland story of how school-based RSE – a theoretically contentious issue – has not only been made statutory, but also significantly developed within a full programme of study (i.e. Personal Development) to be delivered (albeit variably) across all Northern Ireland schools. Four types of data are heavily drawn upon: (1) reports, letters, and statutory/non-statutory school guidance texts published by the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA); (2) letters, Circulars and legislative texts published by the Department of Education, Northern Ireland (DENI); (3) debates, written questions and answers, and committee reports accessed through the Northern Ireland Assembly's (NIA) – the devolved legislature for Northern Ireland – and Westminster Parliament's *Hansards*; and (4) data collected

through 14 semi-structured interviews (conducted face-to-face or by telephone) with key RSE policy actors. Table 17 illustrates the organisational breakdown of the RSE policy actors interviewed.

Table 17: Organisational breakdown of interviewed RSE policy actors

	Number of representatives
Northern Ireland Assembly Member (MLA)	1
DENI Curriculum Advisor	1
Health Trust Employee	2
Sexual Health Charity	1
External RSE Provider	3*
Academic/Researcher	1
Education and Library Board	2
Local School Principal	1
Local School RSE Coordinator	2

* Three representatives from the same external RSE provider were interviewed

The structure and analysis found within this case study varies slightly from those presented within the England case chapter. These differences of approach are due to:

- The lack of social policy literature regarding RSE policy-making and significantly, background knowledge detailing the specific policy process (e.g. actively engaged policy actors, type and frequency of RSE-related policy debates, particular arguments driving policy discussions) that informed current statutory provision;

- The political context in Northern Ireland (e.g. devolution and four suspended governments during the time period studied) effecting not only how policy is made but also who at the national parliamentary level (e.g. MLAs in the NIA or MPs in Westminster Parliament) is in charge of education; and

- Differences in the type, amount and access to available data and resources.

The chapter is organised into six main sections:

- 7.1 *Introduction*;
- 7.2 *The RSE policy-making story*;
- 7.3 *Policy actors and alliances within the RSE policy process*;
- 7.4 *Power within the RSE policy-making process*;
- 7.5 *Values and RSE policy-making*; and
- 7.6 *Concluding comments*.

7.2 The RSE-policy-making story

The first analyses offered within this chapter engages with the first question being examined by this thesis – what debates are taking place within the sex and relationship(s) education policy-making process? – by focusing on key occurrences that have taken place and continue to influence Northern Ireland's RSE policy process, national legislation and statutory policy texts. *The RSE policy-making story* considers key policy developments and the policy process adopted during the most recent (1999-2003) curriculum review that ultimately led to 'Personal Development and Mutual Understanding' and 'Learning for Life and Work' becoming statutory within the Northern Ireland Curriculum for primary and post-primary schools. These two 'Areas of Learning' are the equivalent to England's non-statutory PSHEE. RSE is a statutory component taught within the 'Personal Development' (PD) strand of 'Personal Development and Mutual Understanding' and 'Learning for Life and Work'.

The section describes how and what steps were followed during the process of the revised curriculum review (during 'direct rule' and a fully devolved government), discusses policy actor support and resistances to school-based PD (and subsequently RSE), and details how RSE has been further developed (or not) since PD became statutory in 2004. Exploring the policy-making process that led to current RSE policy and understanding how the content and guidance supporting this curriculum area were developed is important because this analysis highlights the actors and values at play and the factors shaping the current policy situation. The section is separated into two sub-sections: *RSE and the revised Northern Ireland Curriculum* and *RSE policy post the revised Northern Ireland Curriculum*.

Three types of data heavily inform this section's analyses: (1) interview data from key RSE policy actors; (2) Northern Ireland Assembly and Westminster Parliament *Hansard* texts; and (3) curriculum review reports, official letters and statutory/non-statutory school guidance materials published by CCEA and DENI.

7.2.1 RSE and the revised Northern Ireland Curriculum

This sub-section examines the policy-making process that led RSE to become a statutory component of the 2006 revised NIC. To better understand significant changes made within the revised curriculum that affected RSE, the sub-section first offers a brief description of the provision of RSE prior to the NIC's revised framework, as well as discusses the policy-making situation (i.e. direct rule and devolved government) within Northern Ireland and the key influences that drove CCEA to conduct the curriculum review that ultimately led to the approval of the current revised NIC framework. As the policy formulation and implementation processes of the revised NIC and statutory RSE policies took place during periods of both devolved and suspended government, considering the RSE policy-making story within this section is important. It provides insight into whether the revised NIC and RSE policies are a product of 'direct rule' politics (i.e. generated in Westminster then thrust upon Northern Ireland schools), a result of policy copying and transfer from England, or are instead an outcome of collaborative, local policy-making initiated independently from London.

Introduction of a Northern Ireland Curriculum. The NIC was first introduced into schools in 1992 and is equivalent to the National Curriculum in England; however, it shuns the term 'national' to avoid potential political problems (Gallagher, 2006), as the term is one of many politically charged words in Northern Irish politics. At that time, sex education (the term used within DENI's texts) was covered within two statutory components of the NIC – the programme of study for Science and the 'Health Education' cross-curricular theme (DENI, 1992: 9). The statutory provision at that time required young people to learn about reproduction in a flowering plant within Key Stage 2 of the primary curriculum before the main teaching of sex education was taught within post-primary education. In Key Stage 3 schools were required to teach about plant and animal reproduction as well as "changes connected to puberty, the need to stay healthy during

pregnancy, and the need for a responsible attitude to sexual behavior (which must cover contraception, sexually transmitted diseases and interpersonal relationships)" (DENI, 1992: 9). Pupils' knowledge of reproduction, interpersonal relationships, sexually transmitted infections and responsible behaviours were further covered and reinforced during Key Stage 4. Perhaps most significant to recognise within Northern Ireland's initial NIC is that elements of sex education were statutory for both primary and post-primary aged students and that post-primary schools were required to teach non-biological aspects of sex education (e.g. interpersonal relationships), two features absent within the current National Curriculum for England.

Call for a revised NIC. By 1996 there was growing concern that the NIC was too prescriptive, needed to be slimmed down, and was not effectively preparing young people for life and work (Gallagher, 2006). To address these concerns, CCEA sponsored a research project (i.e. the *Northern Ireland Curriculum Cohort Study*) that same year which presented for the first time in Northern Ireland – in terms of educational and longitudinal scope – an in-depth insight into young people's views and perceptions of the adequacy of the NIC (Gallagher, 2006: 121-122). Along with valuing young people's opinions of the curriculum, the views of teachers and school senior managers were also included within the *Study*. The principal message from young people was that the NIC "over-emphasised the 'academic' at the expense of practical, creative and personal, social and health education (PSHE)" (Harland et al., 2005: iii), thus, inadequately preparing them for life post-secondary education. These views of Northern Irish young people, along with research evidence discussed within a series of CCEA-sponsored conferences entitled 'Curriculum 21' – which drew together "key thinkers around the world to advise on areas of educational concern" (Gallagher, 2006: 122) – drove CCEA in January 1999 to provide its unsolicited advice to DENI that the NIC and its curriculum assessment needed to undergo a major curriculum review (CCEA, 1999).

Those responsible for the NIC. Although the Northern Ireland Assembly (NIA) was established the year prior, the full set of its devolved and legislative powers had yet to be handed over and Northern Ireland was in a 'shadow period', still under the direct rule of Westminster Parliament. While under direct rule, legislation was usually written up in the form of Statutory Instruments instead of as full Bills (Carmichael & Osborne, 2003). This

procedure "allowed for debates but they were often held late at night [within Westminster] with a tiny attendance and no amendments could be made" (Carmichael & Osborne, 2003: 207).

DENI is "the central authority for administering education in Northern Ireland" (Byrne & Donnelly, 2006: 14) and ever since Northern Ireland has become part of the UK has "always been wholly independent" (Gallagher, 2006: 120) from England's Department of Education. DENI's "primary statutory duty is to promote the education of the people of the north of Ireland and to ensure the effective implementation of education policy" (DENI, 2013c). Under devolution DENI is "headed by a locally elected minister responsible to the [Northern Ireland Assembly]" (Greer, 1999: 144). However, when under direct rule the locally elected minister is removed, the administrative body of DENI is left intact and the Department "reports directly to the Secretary of State but [has its] own departmental minister who is constitutionally part of the Northern Ireland Office" (Greer, 1999: 144). Thus, as political matters were in the process of being handed to local politicians when CCEA advised DENI that a major curriculum review was needed, Ministers in Westminster were hesitant to make major policy changes (Gallagher, 2006). Interestingly though, in October 1999, two months shy of Northern Ireland receiving its full devolved powers, John McFall – then Northern Ireland's Minister for Education and a Scottish Labour MP – invited CCEA to "publish and disseminate its advice in order to 'test the mood' in the system" (Gallagher, 2006: 122).

Steps in the development of the revised NIC. Within Northern Ireland there is a "well-grounded principle that education should be based on sound research" (Gallagher, 2006: 124) and that "major innovations should, where possible be pilot tested, monitored and adjusted in light of experience gained" (Gallagher, 2006: 124). Therefore, it is perhaps not surprising that CCEA embarked on a four-year intensive curriculum and assessment review (November 1999 – December 2003) that was divided into three phases for both the primary and post-primary curricula. The aim of the review was to provide a revised NIC framework that would meet the changing needs of young people, society and the economy (CCEA, 2000: 4).

Phase I of the review centred on developing and disseminating initial advice regarding the NIC before additional consultations were conducted and pilot work was tested to draft more detailed curriculum and assessment proposals (Phase II). After presenting advice to and receiving feedback from the Minster of Education, CCEA continued to consult with stakeholders and evaluate assessments before presenting its final version of a recommended new statutory curriculum and assessment framework for each Key Stage in December 2003 (Phase III). In June 2004 Barry Gardiner, then the newly appointed Minister of Education for Northern Ireland and a Scottish-born English MP, approved CCEA's proposed primary and post-primary revisions to the NIC (Gardiner, 2004). CCEA's proposed revisions were drafted into a piece of primary legislation and make up the current legislative framework of the Northern Ireland Curriculum (i.e. *The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 2006*). Figure 7 shows the five Key Stages of the revised NIC and the statutory Areas of Learning found within each.

Figure 7: The revised Northern Ireland Curriculum Framework

The Revised Northern Ireland Curriculum (2006)				
Primary Curriculum			Post-primary Curriculum	
Foundation Stage (4 to 5 year olds)	Key Stage 1 (5 to 7 year olds)	Key Stage 2 (8 to 11 year olds)	Key Stage 3 (11 to 14 year olds)	Key Stage 4 (14 to 16 year olds)
Language & Literacy	Language & Literacy	Language & Literacy	Language & Literacy	Language & Literacy
Mathematics & Numeracy	Mathematics & Numeracy	Mathematics & Numeracy	Mathematics & Numeracy	Mathematics & Numeracy
The Arts	The Arts	The Arts	Modern Languages	Modern Languages
The World Around Us	The World Around Us	The World Around Us	The Arts	The Arts
Personal Development & Mutual Understanding	Personal Development & Mutual Understanding	Personal Development & Mutual Understanding	Environment & Society	Environment & Society
Physical Development & Movement	Physical Education	Physical Education	Science & Technology	Science & Technology
			Learning for Life & Work	Learning for Life & Work
			Physical Education	Physical Education

Six months after the revised NIC received Royal Assent, subordinate legislation was passed outlining the specific minimum content each Northern Ireland school must teach regarding each Area of Learning of the NIC (i.e. *The Education (Curriculum Minimum Content)(NI) Order 2007*). Analysing the curriculum review process and the revised NIC framework, as well as examining other key policy developments that occurred during the same time frame (1999-2004), has resulted in the identification of four significant findings.

Finding #1: The revised NIC was developed through a 'ground up' policy style

The revised NIC appears to have been developed locally from 'the ground up' instead of being super-imposed on schools from above (e.g. Westminster Parliament or the NIA) without consultation. Although each of Northern Ireland's four suspended devolution periods occurred during the time frame of the curriculum review, CCEA consulted widely with various stakeholders and interested local groups to inform every step of the curriculum review instead of simply copying or transferring England's National Curriculum policy. For instance, during Phase I of the review, CCEA drew upon *Northern Ireland Curriculum Cohort Study* findings and extensive consultation with stakeholders in the local education sector to develop an initial proposal on how best to restructure the NIC. 'Working Groups' comprised of practicing teachers, local teacher unions, representatives from the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) and the five Education and Library Boards (ELBs) were formed to work together to offer advice on what the shape of the curriculum should look like. An 'Overview Group' that included principals from both local primary and secondary schools, DENI inspectors, advisors from the research and health sectors and senior educationalists (CCEA, 2000: 9) then synthesised each Working Group's views into a NIC curriculum framework proposal (CCEA, 2001c).

This initial framework proposal was then more extensively consulted on. During the first consultation on the proposed initial framework alone, CCEA distributed written questionnaires to every primary and post-primary school within Northern Ireland for feedback (8,353 individuals responded), conducted 20 consultation seminars attended by approximately 700 local teachers (c.500 primary and c.200 post-primary) and held 50

meetings attended by approximately 1,300 stakeholders (e.g. DENI representatives, community, health and educational organisations) that wanted to express their views (CCEA, 2001c). The four-year curriculum review and its intensive, local consultation process during a period of direct rule is perhaps "tangible evidence of increasingly independent thinking within Northern Ireland" (Gallagher, 2006: 124) that Northern Irish "teachers and pupils [are] not necessarily served well by English solutions to educational problems" (Gallagher, 2006: 124).

Finding #2: Northern Ireland's equivalent of PSHEE is made statutory within the NIC

The second main finding is that the revised NIC strays away from focusing exclusively on traditional 'subjects' (e.g. History, Maths and English) and the specific content taught within each subject, and instead places great emphasis on skills development and creativity. The revised NIC is structured by a set of minimum entitlement statements under Areas of Learning that link specific skills and related subjects together (e.g. Environment and Society; Mathematics and Numeracy; Learning for Life and Work). Schools are required to go beyond teaching the minimum entitlement statements but have flexibility to do so "in different ways for different groups of children" (CCEA, 2003c: 3) while providing "proper balance between legal obligation and professional discretion" (CCEA, 2003c: 3). Barry Gardiner, the Minister who accepted CCEA's revised statutory NIC framework, even acknowledged that the structure of this NIC "represents a significant departure from the status quo" (Gardiner, 2004: para 3). This finding is important because both the 'Personal Development and Mutual Understanding' (PDMU) Area of Learning at primary level and 'Learning for Life and Work' (LLW) at the post-primary level are statutory within the revised NIC, meaning that these two programmes of study are time-tabled and not just taught as cross-curricular themes.

Table 18 (p.213) illustrates PDMU and LLW within the revised NIC and details the specific statutory minimum content or statements of entitlement for subject strands related to RSE.

Table 18: Statutory 'Personal Development' provision across each Key Stage of the Northern Ireland Curriculum

	Foundation Stage	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2	Key Stage 3	Key Stage 4
Area of Learning:	Personal Development & Mutual Understanding	Personal Development & Mutual Understanding	Personal Development & Mutual Understanding	Learning for Life & Work	Learning for Life and Work
Contributing Subject Strands:	Personal Understanding & Health Mutual Understanding in the Local & Wider Community	Personal Understanding & Health Mutual Understanding in the Local & Wider Community	Personal Understanding & Health Mutual Understanding in the Local & Wider Community	Employability Local and Global Citizenship Personal Development Home Economics	Employability Local and Global Citizenship Personal Development
Statutory Minimum Content (for subject strands related to RSE):	***Personal Understanding & Health*** • Themselves and their personal attributes; • Their own and others' feelings and emotions; • Their dispositions and attitudes to learning; • The importance of keeping healthy and how to keep safe in familiar and unfamiliar environments ***Mutual Understanding in the Local & Wider Community*** • Their relationships with family and friends; • Their responsibilities for self and others; • How to respond appropriately in conflict situations: • Similarities and differences between groups of people; • Learning to live as a member of a community	***Personal Understanding & Health*** • Their self esteem and self confidence; • Their own and others' feelings and emotions and how their actions effect others; • Positive attitudes to leaning and achievement; • Strategies and skills for keeping themselves healthy and safe ***Mutual Understanding in the Local & Wider Community*** • Initiating and developing mutually satisfying relationships; • Responsibility and respect, honesty and fairness; • Constructive approaches to conflict; • Similarities and differences between people; • Developing themselves as members of a community	***Personal Understanding & Health*** • Their self esteem, self confidence and how they develop as individual; • Their management of a range of feelings and emotions and the feelings and emotions of others; • Effective learning strategies; • How to sustain their health, growth and well-being coping safely and efficiently with their environment ***Mutual Understanding in the Local & Wider Community*** • Initiating and developing mutually satisfying relationships; • Human rights and social responsibility; • Causes of conflict and appropriate responses; • Valuing and celebrating cultural difference and diversity; • Playing an active and meaningful part in the life of the community and being concerned about the wider environment	***Personal Development*** (Delivered within 3 key concepts) 1. *'Self Awareness'* • Explore and express a sense of self; • Explore personal morals, values and beliefs; • Investigate the influences on a young person; • Explore the different ways to develop self-esteem; • Develop skills and strategies to improve own learning 2. *'Personal Health'* • Explore the concept of Health as the development of a whole person; • Investigate the influences on physical and emotional and mental personal health; • Develop understanding about, and strategies to manage, the effects of change on body, mind and behaviour; • Investigate the effects on the body of legal and illegal substances and the risks and consequences of their misuse; • Develop preventative strategies in relation to accidents in the home, school and on the road; • Develop strategies to promote personal safety 3. *'Relationships'* • Explore the qualities of relationships including friendship; • Explore the qualities of a loving, respectful relationship; • Develop coping strategies to deal with challenging relationship scenarios; • Develop strategies to avoid and resolve conflict; • Explore the implications of sexual maturation; • Explore the emotional, social and moral implications of early sexual activity	***Personal Development*** • Develop an understanding of how to maximise and sustain their own health and well-being; • Reflect on, and respond to, their developing concept of self, including managing emotions and reactions to on-going life experiences; • Recognise, assess and manage risk in a range of real-life contexts; • Develop their understanding of relationships and sexuality and the responsibilities of healthy relationships; • Develop an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of parenting; • Develop further their competence as discerning consumers in preparation for independent living

Source: Developed from the *Education (Northern Ireland) Order 2006* and the *Education (Curriculum Minimum Content) Order 2007*

Elements of RSE are taught within the PD subject strands of PDMU and LLW, while some biological areas of RSE are a minimum requirement within the 'Science' strand of the 'Science and Technology' Area of Learning. This means that the equivalents of PSHEE and SRE in England are statutory within both the primary and post-primary curriculums in Northern Ireland.

Finding #3: PDMU and LLW are non-contentious policy issues

The third key finding to emerge from analysing the curriculum review process and the approved revised NIC framework is that PDMU and LLW, unlike PSHEE in England, are not contentious policy areas and instead are seen as entitlements within the NIC. At its core, the revised NIC views the role of schools as not only preparing children and young people for work, but for wider issues concerning adult life (e.g. emotional development, relationships, interpersonal skills, etc.). For instance at Key Stage 3, LLW and its subject strands are described as "at the centre of it all for pupils at whatever type of school" (CCEA, 2003a: 5) they attend and that the "contribution of general education to the statutory curriculum [should] consist mostly of the area of overlap with [LLW]" (CCEA, 2003a: 8).

 Likewise, regarding Key Stage 4, the proposed statutory framework stresses that "the development of skills for life and work [within LLW] are at the centre of the statutory curriculum" (CCEA, 2003b: 2). The lack of contention around PDMU and LLW is perhaps best seen when focusing on the strong support and lack of resistance these two Areas of Learning encountered both at the local and parliamentary level.

Concentrating first on the local community and schools level, those consulted during Phase 1 of the curriculum review stressed to CCEA that the aim of the NIC needed to change. Consultees argued that although the NIC placed great emphasis on intellectual development, data suggested that "insufficient attention was being paid to other aspects such as spiritual, moral, cultural and physical dimensions, and [preparing] young people for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life (CCEA, 2000: 10). Consultees also stated that these aspects were of 'such importance' that they "should be strengthened and placed at the centre of curriculum planning" (CCEA, 2000: 10). In

addition, one of the initial key recommendations proposed by those consulted within Phase 1 was that the NIC needed to "provide a specific programme for Personal Development as a statutory entitlement for all young people from Key Stages 1 to 4" (CCEA, 2001c: 20). PD as a statutory entitlement for all students was highly welcomed with 85.2% of primary school consultees agreeing (5.6% disagreed, 9.2% undecided) and 74.3% of post-primary consultees agreeing (17.9% disagreed, 7.8% undecided) that PD should be made a specific, statutory programme of study (CCEA, 2001c: 20-21).

Consultees argued strongly that a discrete provision of PD within the primary curriculum is "relevant and essential for children in a rapidly growing society" (CCEA, 2001c: 20) and that such a programme would provide 'balance' within the NIC. The small minority (5.6%) of consultees who did not support statutory PD within the primary curriculum contended that PD was the responsibility of parents, that discrete provision would put pressure on teacher/parent relationships and he or she "doubted the extent to which schools could impact on these areas when changes needed to be supported by society at large" (CCEA, 2001c: 20). Regarding the post-primary curriculum, the majority of consultees (74.3%) stressed that PD should be a statutory entitlement and "recognised the advantages of such a programme" (CCEA, 2001c: 21). Those consulted stated that they had "grappled continuously with the need to provide a valid and relevant [PD] programme for all pupils" (CCEA, 2001c: 21) and that having a statutory, discrete programme could still be "flexible enough to allow schools to adopt [PD] to local needs" (CCEA, 2001c: 21). Opponents to the statutory PD proposal for post-secondary education (17.9%) argued that PD should be taught in a cross-curricular manner and incorporated into other subjects instead of being a stand-alone Area of Learning (CCEA, 2001c: 22).

At the higher political level in Westminster (as Northern Ireland was in its fourth suspension at the time), statutory PD within the NIC also remained a non-contentious policy issue. CCEA's proposed revised NIC framework was drafted into a piece of primary legislation, the *Education (Northern Ireland) Order 2006* and passed by both Houses of Parliament in July of that year. Sharon Lawlor, Head of Curriculum Support at DENI, states that while there was debate within Westminster over the *Order*, "the main focus was on the provisions relating to selection at age 11. The curriculum provisions [laying out the Areas of Learning] were not seen as controversial" (Lawlor, 2012b).

Additionally, the specific minimum content for each Area of Learning and at each Key Stage of the revised NIC was set out in a subordinate piece of legislation, the *Education (Curriculum Minimum Content) Order (Northern Ireland) 2007*, and passed by Westminster in January 2007. As this *Order* was subordinate legislation it was not debated within Westminster but passed with a 'negative resolution' – "which means it came into force after the specified number of weeks unless somebody raised an objection to it" and from memory, Lawlor states "there were no such objections" (Lawlor, 2012b). Even if the NIA was not suspended at the time of the *Order's* passing, the *Order* still would not have been debated within the NIA, but "would have been drawn to the attention of the Assembly Education Committee which, at its discretion, may have required officials to come and explain it" (Lawlor, 2012b).

Finding #4: Schools must teach statutory, comprehensive RSE

Lastly, the fourth key finding is that schools must teach statutory, comprehensive RSE. That is, each school must teach more than just the biological elements of RSE and explore topics such as relationships, parenting and pornography. In August 2001 – during Phase II of the curriculum review – DENI updated its school-based RSE policy and distributed to every school in Northern Ireland an RSE resource pack. Each pack contained a Circular (DENI, 2001) outlining expected statutory RSE provision in schools, as well as non-statutory comprehensive guidance material – produced by CCEA and to be read in conjunction with DENI's Circular – to aid schools in the development and delivery of RSE. As DENI's Circular was developed and distributed ahead of the revised NIC, it emphasised that "RSE is included on a statutory basis within the Northern Ireland Curriculum through the Science programme of study and the Health Education cross-curricular theme" (DENI, 2001: 1, No.3). The Department stressed that RSE is required within the curriculum because: (1) the age of first sex among young people has decreased, (2) international research supports the finding that school-based RSE does not cause early sexual activity, (3) greater need for public and school-based RSE programmes were emphasised in an HIV and AIDS strategy developed by the Department of Health and Social Services, and (4) a survey on the health behavior of young people in Northern Ireland found that a large proportion of pupils were not receiving school-based RSE (DENI, 2001: 1-2).

Additionally, the Circular highlighted that RSE should not be taught in a value-free context, the importance of schools taking into account pupils' needs when developing their RSE programme and that parents should be involved in and fully informed about the RSE his or her child would be receiving. Furthermore, DENI emphasised that school-based RSE did not lead to 'loss of childhood' and that schools should have a comprehensive RSE programme. The Circular asserted that "teachers should not avoid discussion of sensitive issues such as contraception, abortion, HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, homosexuality and pornography" (DENI, 2001: 4, No.17) since "discussion of such issues in the media and elsewhere is so common that many pupils will already be aware of them" (DENI, 2001: 4, No.17).

Each RSE resource pack also included non-statutory guidance materials produced by CCEA in the form of a 46-page RSE guidance document for primary (CCEA, 2001a) and a 58-page RSE guidance document for post-primary schools (CCEA, 2001b). While the developmental process behind DENI's Circular could not be unveiled, despite the extensive investigation undertaken for the purposes of this thesis, it is the case that CCEA – mirroring the curriculum review – consulted widely and locally to generate its recommended guidance. The framework and approaches used within CCEA's RSE guidance materials were utilised by CCEA with the permission of the Family Planning Association (fpaNI), the Sex Education Forum (SEF) and the Department of Education and Science in Ireland (CCEA, 2001a, 2001b).

In addition, working groups and a steering group aided in the development of both guidance documents, with each group consisting of primary and post-primary teachers, as well as representatives from:

- DENI;

- The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPSNI);

- The DHSS Trusts (Health Promotion Department);

- The Diocesan Advisers Office (Religious Education);

- The Education and Library Boards;

- The Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland (HPANI);

- Initial Teacher Training (CCEA, 2001b: v).

Additionally, 'many organisations', school Boards of Governors, parents and the general public were invited to submit responses during the consultation phase (CCEA, 2001b: v). However, there appears to have been some friction during the formation of working groups. Dr Audrey Simpson OBE, Director of fpaNI, recalls that after being asked to join the RSE working group, a pastoral care advisor and a priest stated they would leave the group if she became a member (Simpson, 2012). "There were other people in the group who felt very uncomfortable with that" (Simpson, 2012), so a compromise was sought to which she "would have sight of all the documents and comment on the documents, but would not attend meetings" (Simpson, 2012).

Dr Simpson also explained that while the finalised guidance documents were "about as good as you are going to get in Northern Ireland, because it says all the things it should do" (Simpson, 2012), originally the documents were written from a solely 'abstinence-only' approach. She describes discussing a set of document drafts with another member of the working group (a representative from the DHSSPSNI) after which she wrote a letter to the group explaining why it would be detrimental to young people if school guidance materials took an abstinence-only approach to RSE (Simpson, 2012). She states that she asserted to the group that "abstinence should be promoted as a positive option", but promoting it as the only option "would be detrimental to young people whose parents have chosen not to get married" and as "sex outside marriage, whether it's affairs or not, is commonplace in society you cannot promote abstinence as the only option" (Simpson, 2012). Dr Simpson's argument appears to have been incorporated into the finalised published documents as they place abstinence as a positive option but not the only option.

The next sub-section of the *RSE policy-making story* examines whether, and if so how, school-based RSE provision and its policy have gone 'forward' since DENI's 2001 RSE Circular, the establishment and implementation of the revised NIC Framework and the

Education (Curriculum Minimum Content) Order (Northern Ireland) 2007.

7.2.2 RSE policy post the revised Northern Ireland Curriculum

Given the strong momentum which emerged during the development of the revised NIC to ensure statutory PD for all young people and that such PD be relevant and meet their changing needs, it is striking that there have not been any significant changes to RSE policy post its statutory inclusion within the NIC. Nor has DENI produced a new RSE framework to update and replace its *Circular 2001/15 Relationships and Sexuality Education* policy. According to one of the ELB representatives interviewed for this thesis and whose work closely focuses on PD and pastoral care issues, "there have not been any real changes to RSE policy direction since 2001" (ELB Representative #1, 2013). *Circular 2001/15* was written nearly fifteen years ago. However, ELB Representative #1 does suggest that the lack of focus on and changes made to school-based RSE policy could be due, in part, to local schools and DENI focusing on the smooth transition of 'phasing in' the newly revised curriculum. While the revised NIC was passed in 2006 and its statutory minimum content produced in 2007, the new curriculum was 'rolled out' in stages over a four-year period with all schools required to implement the new curriculum by 2010.

However, while there have not been any specific changes made to RSE policy by DENI, the Department of Education has made schools aware of other governmental bodies that have passed legislation that has forced addenda to be made to *Circular 2001/15* (DENI, 2010b). For instance, schools must ensure the following are taken into account when developing/implementing its RSE policy: (1) guidance produced by the Equality Commission to eliminate sexual orientation discrimination in accordance with the *Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006* and (2) the *Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008* which came into effect on 2 February 2009 and lowered the age of consent from 17 to 16.

DENI does not appear to have taken a completely stagnant position towards RSE policy-making following the implementation of the revised NIC. It commissioned the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) in 2009 to evaluate the delivery of RSE in post-primary

schools. Through survey research in 2009 and a series of school visits in the summer term of 2010, the ETI published a report (ETI, 2011) stating that RSE "provision ranged from outstanding to satisfactory, but was good or better in most schools" (ETI, 2011: 3). The report also highlighted that "good progress had been made in the development of the curricular provision for RSE" (ETI, 2011: 3) and that some of the main strengths seen within the schools it inspected included: (1) the quality of school leadership and management of RSE provision; (2) increased priority given by senior school leaders toward RSE; (3) the amount of motivation and enthusiasm shown by school RSE coordinators; and (4) the quality of planning almost all schools took toward the RSE Key Stage 3 curriculum (ETI, 2011: 3).

There were also areas requiring improvement within school provision according to the report, which include: (1) the need for more consistency and whole-school planning to address gaps in provision (especially at Key Stage 4); (2) more opportunities for pupils to contribute to RSE policy planning; (3) further whole-school staff training so that RSE can be embedded across the whole curriculum; and (4) more newly-developed resources (ETI, 2011: 4).

While no changes to RSE policy were made directly following the ETI's report, DENI did circulate an RSE-related Circular (DENI, 2013c) in 2013 stating it was liaising with CCEA to "commission a review of existing [RSE] guidance and [to] develop resources to address any identified gaps in provision" (DENI, 2013c: #6). Further details emerged in a letter sent to all schools on 14 January 2014, announcing that DENI has commissioned CCEA to "take forward a review of current [RSE] guidance and [to] develop further resources for Key Stage 4" (DENI, 2014: 2). The review is expected to be completed in 2014/15. Also in the letter, DENI stated that "now would be a good time to remind schools about the best practice characteristics identified by ETI in relation to the provision of RSE" (DENI, 2014) and that while the Department had intended for the ETI to conduct a similar piece of research looking into the delivery of RSE in primary schools, "other work priorities delayed this work" (DENI, 2014: 2). Therefore, as DENI believes that the best practice characteristics and actions identified within the post-primary report apply across both the post-primary and primary sectors, primary schools should "consider taking action as detailed [in the post-primary report]" (DENI, 2014: 2).

In order to gain a deeper understanding of the specific individuals or groups involved within, and potentially driving, RSE policy development, the next section examines influential policy actors within the policy-making process and identifies the RSE policy network.

7.3 Policy actors and alliances within the RSE policy process

This section describes the second part of the analysis of the Northern Ireland case chapter and draws attention to the '*who* of policy production' (Gale, 2007: 225) by addressing the thesis' fourth main research question – Who or what group(s) or stakeholder(s) are trying to influence policy?. It draws attention to the lack of RSE discussion within the NIA and Westminster Parliament and, like the England case chapter, also draws broadly upon policy network analysis (Rhodes, 1990; Thatcher, 1998; Wasserman & Foust, 1999; Adam & Kriesi, 2007) and policy network analysis procedures (Wasserman & Faust, 1999; Adam & Kriesi, 2007) to identify relevant policy actors within the RSE policy-making domain. In addition, the section also highlights the relationships, partnerships and coalitions (or lack thereof) developed among RSE policy actors and presents a network analysis diagram framing the RSE policy network during the time frame studied (1999-2013). Furthermore, given that policy is "about the exercise of political power" (Olssen et al., 2004: 72), the section utilises semi-structured interview data collected from a variety of policy actors (e.g. former NIA member, third sector representatives, RSE practitioners) to better understand those people/groups/organisations believed to be the 'most influential' or 'power wielding' within the RSE policy-making process. Three sub-sections structure this discussion:

- 7.3.1 *MLA and parliamentarian involvement in RSE policy development*;
- 7.3.2 *Additional RSE policy actors and perceptions of policy influence*; and
- 7.3.3 *Policy actor relationships and the RSE policy network.*

7.3.1 MLA and parliamentarian involvement in RSE policy development

With the revised NIC and school-based RSE policy being developed and updated during bouts of both devolved and suspended government, the Northern Ireland Assembly and

Westminster Parliament *Hansards* were analysed to identify the extent to which parliamentarians and Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) within the NIA have made contributions (e.g. posing questions, participating in debates, giving evidence within Committee meetings) that contributed towards the changes made to statutory school-based RSE policy and its content. This analysis illuminates the frequency (or lack thereof) of RSE being discussed at the national level by MLAs and, during direct rule, parliamentarians. It serves as a means to better understand whether RSE is an 'active' or heavily debated topic at the national policy-making level, as well as identifies the specific MLAs and parliamentarians that have been trying to influence/change RSE policy, and through which type of policy context (e.g. Committee meetings, *Hansard Question Book*, NIA or Westminster debates) they have been trying to do so.

Focusing on the period of Northern Ireland's first devolved government (December 1999 until June 2013), *Appendix I* chronologically orders contributions within each different policy-making context (e.g. questions within the *Hansard Question Book*, answers to parliamentary questions, memorandums) pertaining to PD/RSE. *Appendix J* illustrates (in alphabetical order) each MLA, MP, or policy actor that has participated within the RSE debate and categorises his or her type of policy-making involvement (e.g. asking or answering parliamentary questions) by date. As the data within this sub-section are limited to those discussions recorded within *Hansard*, *Appendices E* and *F* are not absolute lists of all the PD/RSE discussions that have occurred at the parliamentary-level, nor should they be viewed as a complete list of all parliamentary-level policy actors that have engaged within the debate. Instead, they serve as tools to better understand the extent to which PD and RSE have (or have not) been policy issues debated at the national policy-making level.

Appendices E and *F* show that during the roughly 13-year time period studied, PD and RSE have not been widely discussed/contested/focused on at the more 'national' parliamentary level within the NIA or Westminster. Table 19 displays the type and amount of relevant PD/RSE *Hansard* data reviewed for the Northern Ireland case. *Hansard* findings indicate that during the time period studied there has not been any NIA or parliamentary debates specific to RSE policy and provision. Instead, the vast majority of the PD/RSE discussion has occurred through the form of written questions, more

specifically written questions asked by MLAs within the Northern Ireland Assembly *Hansard Question Book.*

Table 19: Type and amount of **Hansard** *data reviewed*

	Northern Ireland Assembly	House of Commons	House of Lords
Written Questions	17	2	0
Answers to Written Questions	17	2	0
Memoranda	0	0	1

Seen within Appendix I (p.357), between 1999-2007 – the time frame in which each of the four government suspensions occurred – the only *Hansard*-recorded RSE policy-making contexts that took place were two written questions asked within the House of Commons *Hansard Question Book.* One question asked what advice DENI had published on the teaching of school-based RSE (Lady Hermon, 2003), while the other inquired about what RSE Northern Irish young people were receiving while at school (Robinson, 2004). Instead, the majority (i.e. 17 written questions to and answers from the NIA) of Northern Ireland's PD/RSE discussion took place among MLAs within the NIA between 2008-2013. This finding possibly demonstrates that PD and RSE policy have been developed more locally within Northern Ireland and perhaps have not been heavily influenced by and super-imposed on Northern Ireland by Westminster.

The lack of interest by both Northern Irish MPs and others in Westminster in discussing school-based RSE at that level leaves the impression that this policy issue was of little importance to Westminster. This is interesting given that the newly revised NIC, as well as the statutory minimum content for the curriculum (including RSE), were passed during periods of suspended government and under direct rule. More specifically, as statutory PSHEE and SRE have been such contentious policy issues at the national policy-making level in Westminster, it is interesting that that same debate did not occur during Westminster discussions pertaining to Northern Ireland's proposed revised NIC – which included statutory PD and RSE at both the primary and post-primary school level.

However, Joanna Gregg, the Sexual Health Coordinator for the Belfast Health & Social Care Trust (BHSCT) as well as the head of RSE teacher training in the Eastern area of Northern Ireland states that "it would not be fair to say that RSE is not heavily debated" (Gregg, 2012). While "MLAs do not discuss sexual health and RSE routinely" (Gregg, 2012), in fact "RSE has been debated in the Education Committee, in the Health Committee as well as within the All-party Sexual Health Group" (Gregg, 2012). These statements further illustrate the need to view *Hansard* transcripts as helpful tools but not definitive records of the only PD/RSE discussions and debates that have occurred within the NIA or Parliament.

Interestingly, when trying to identify 'national-level' policy actors potentially wielding the most 'power' to push/sway/influence RSE policy development, *Hansard* searches revealed that only 15 parliamentary-level policy actors were engaged within the PD/RSE debate during the 13 year time frame investigated (seen in Table 20).

Table 20: Actively involved MLAs/parliamentarians in the 1999-2013 RSE debate (as recorded in the NIA and Westminster **Hansards***)*

Name of policy actor	Type of representative	Political party affiliation	Number of instances of involvement
Caitríona Ruane	MLA	Sinn Féin	7
John O'Dowd	MLA	Sinn Féin	6
Michael McGimpsey	MLA	Ulster Unionist	4
Anna Lo MBE	MLA	Alliance Party	3
Dawn Purvis*	MLA	Independent	3
Allan Bresland*	MLA	Democratic Unionist	2
Iris Robinson*	MLA/MP	Democratic Unionist	2
Mervyn Storey	MLA	Democratic Unionist	2
Steven Agnew	MLA	Green Party	2
Thomas Burns*	MLA	Social Democratic & Labour Party	2
Barry Gardiner	MP	Labour	1
Chris Hazzard	MLA	Sinn Féin	1
Jane Kennedy PC*	MLA	Labour	1
Mark Durkan*	MLA	Social Democratic & Labour Party	1
Sylvia Hermon, Lady	MP	Independent	1

* Denotes that the policy actor no longer serves as an MLA or MP

Table 20 shows that the majority of policy actors (i.e. 12) were MLAs, followed by two MPs and one policy actor who served as both an MLA and MP for her constituency. It is important to note that the first three MLAs represented within the table –that have the most number of instances of involvement within the PD/RSE debate – served in higher-level minister positions within the NIA during their peak PD/RSE debate involvement. For instance, Caitríona Ruane and John O'Dowd have served as Ministers of Education, while Michael McGimpsey has served as the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. The RSE involvement activity of these three MLAs (seen in *Appendix J*) has centred around responding to questions asked to his or her department; therefore, the frequency of his or her activity does not necessarily reflect that policy actor actively initiating a debate seeking to question/influence/change current RSE policy.

While Table 20 identifies each policy actor's political party affiliation, this information is not necessarily of great importance given Northern Ireland's "unique power-sharing arrangement" (Carmichael & Osborne, 2003: 212; also Carmichael, 1999). That is, the government structure in Northern Ireland is based on proportional representation. Elected MLAs must identify themselves as being a 'Unionist' (supporter of Northern Ireland being part of the UK), a 'Nationalist' (supporter of Northern Ireland joining the Republic to form one nation), or 'an Other'. Internal voting procedures for issues considered 'contentious', such as the budget, must meet 'parallel consent' – "the support of the majority of voting MLAs and a majority of both Unionist and Nationalist members" (Carmichael & Osborne, 2003: 213). Other voting measures require 'weighted majorities' whereby "60 percent plus of voting MLAs must support the proposal, with at least 40 percent support within each of the two main groupings (Nationalist and Unionist)" (Carmichael & Osborne, 2003: 213; also O'Leary, 1998). What this means is that when a devolved Northern Ireland government is formed it is always built as a coalition of almost all the same political parties in Northern Ireland. Thus, party representation and strong involvement can't be read into too much given the structure of the NIA.

The next sub-section identifies additional policy actors (academics, third sector representatives, members of quangos) involved in the RSE policy network. Drawing upon interview data with those known to be active in school-based RSE and young people's sexual health more broadly in Northern Ireland, it also explores which individuals and

groups can be identified as having the most 'influence' on RSE policy development.

7.3.2 Additional RSE policy actors and perceptions of policy influence

Recognising that policy-making "does not happen in a vacuum or bubble [and] is subject to a range of competing influences" (Garratt & Forrester, 2012: 1), including the "interactions of public and private actors" (Kriesi, Adam & Jochum, 2006: 341), this sub-section identifies additional policy actors outside of the NIA and Parliament that are or have been active, as well as influential, in school-based RSE policy development. The analysis in this sub-section is heavily informed by interview data collected from 14 policy actors (identified in Table 17, p.205) relevant to RSE policy and practice. As done for the England case chapter, policy actors' interview responses to the following question are examined:

> Do you see that there are particular people and/or groups who appear to be active or 'influential' in driving the PD/RSE policy-making process?

Interview data from active, RSE policy actors not only extends our knowledge of the RSE policy network and those individuals and groups within it, but also identifies whose voices are 'privileged' and have 'authority' to speak policy as well as those who perhaps lack access to relevant policy-making contexts. Table 21 illustrates the particular people, third sector groups and governmental/non-governmental bodies policy actors believe to be the most 'influential' within the PD/RSE policy process, 'influential' being defined as "the ability to affect the content of [RSE policy] decisions through some form of [internal] or external pressure" (Heywood, 2004: 122).

Table 21: Those considered 'influential' within the PD/RSE debate as identified by interviewed policy actors

Stated as being influential	Number of policy-makers cited by	Reputational power measure
Department of Education (DENI)	4	.29
Board of Governors and local management of schools	3	.21
Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPSNI)	3	.21
Family Planning Association	3	.21
All-party Group on Sexual Health	2	.14
Dr Aubrey Simpson OBE	2	.14
Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA)	2	.14
Education and Library Boards (ELBs)	2	.14
Health Trusts	2	.14
Joanna Gregg	2	.14
Love for Life	2	.14
Public Health Agency (PHA) – formerly the Health Promotion Agency (HPA)	2	.14
Sexual Health Improvement Network	2	.14
Brook	1	.07
Health and Social Care Boards in Northern Ireland	1	.07
Janice Armstrong	1	.07
Joe Harris	1	.07
Northern Ireland Churches	1	.07

Four main findings emerged from this analysis. First, third sector interest groups and governmental/non-governmental bodies are viewed as having more RSE policy influence than any single individual. Interviewees only named four specific individuals as having 'power' to influence the RSE debate: Dr Audrey Simpson OBE, Janice Armstrong, Joanna Gregg and Joe Harris. Interestingly, none of these individuals are parliamentary-level policy actors or cabinet members – such as the Minister of Education or Minister of Health. Each of these four individuals work within the health, specifically sexual health, sector.

For instance, Dr Simpson is the Chief Executive and Director of the Family Planning Association in Northern Ireland (listed in Table 21 as the fourth most influential group) and was a lead researcher of the Towards Better Sexual Health Survey (alongside Dr Dirk Schubotz and Dr Bill Rolston). In addition, Janice Armstrong, Joanna Gregg and Joe Harris all work for the Northern Health and Social Care Trust. Ms Armstrong is the Senior Health Promotion Officer for Sexual Health within the Health Promotion Service, while both Ms Gregg and Mr Harris serve as the Sexual Health Coordinators within the Sexual Health Team of the Trust. This finding not only suggests a lack of participation in the debate by parliamentarians, but is also an indication of the influence of the sexual health sector within RSE policy development – particularly when the four individuals are grouped with the DHSSPSNI.

The second key finding is that interviewed policy actors do not view any one single individual or group to be the 'most influential' in shaping the PD/RSE debate and getting issues onto the policy-making agenda. Table 21 shows that DENI – identified by the most policy actors (i.e. 4) as being 'influential' – does not appear to dominate or have significantly more perceived influence than the rest of those listed within the Table. As seen within the Table, interviewed policy actors cited 13 out the total of 18 people/departments/groups listed within the Table two or more times. Each interviewee did name at least two health-sector related groups, departments, and/or individuals as having RSE policy influence. This is perhaps not surprising, given the third significant finding.

The third significant finding is that the RSE policy process appears to be strongly dominated by those within the health sector, or at the very least the health sector is viewed as having significant 'power' to influence policy. Figure 8 categorises the third sector interest groups and governmental/non-governmental bodies highlighted within Table 21 (p.227) according to their advocacy agenda. As seen in the Figure, those named as being 'influential' within Table 21 fall within three advocacy categories: Health, Education and Faith-based.

Figure 8: 'Influential' RSE policy actors categorised by advocacy agenda

Health
- Family Planning Association
- All-party Sexual Health Group
- Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety
- Health Trusts
- Public Health Agency
- Sexual Health Improvement Network
- Brook
- Health and Social Service Boards

Education
- Department of Education
- Board of Governors and local management of schools
- Council for the Curriculum, Examinations & Assessment
- Education and Library Boards

Faith-based
- Northern Ireland churches
- Love for Life

As seen in the Figure, those named as being 'influential' within Table 21 fall within three advocacy categories: Health, Education and Faith-based. Excluding the individual policy actors named within the table (i.e. Dr Audrey Simpson OBE, Janice Armstrong, Joanna Gregg and Joe Harris), Figure 8 illustrates that out of the 14 third sector interest groups and various bodies viewed by policy actors as being 'influential', the majority (eight) are members of the Northern Ireland 'Health' sector or have a main advocacy agenda of promoting sexual health initiatives. That is a significant difference from the four listed as having an 'Education' advocacy focus, followed by only two with a 'Faith-based' agenda.

However, these three advocacy categories are not all-inclusive. For example, Love for Life is an independent charity that acts as an RSE provider within Northern Ireland. It could easily be included within the 'Health' and 'Education' advocacy agenda categories – as it does specifically focus on regional sexual health issues and education policy; however, for the purposes of this research Love for Life has been categorised under the 'Faith-based' category because the charity teaches through a Christian values lens. Adding the eight 'Health' sector groups with the additional four 'Health' policy actors named in Table 21 shows that, in total, approximately 12 out of the 18 policy actors identified within the table represent the health sector. Again, this strengthens the argument that the sexual health sector is the most influential group – even more so than educationalists – when it comes to PD/RSE policy development.

Lastly, the fourth main finding pertains not to the advocacy agenda of each identified person, interest group or public body, but its physical location and 'policy reach'. The majority (16) of those listed as being 'influential' within Table 21 are solely based in Northern Ireland. The Family Planning Association and Brook were the only UK-wide interest groups named by interviewees as having significant RSE policy influence. The local nature of those stated as being influential within RSE policy discussions is perhaps indicative of Northern Ireland's devolved government and policy-making style or implies that policy communities and networks within Northern Ireland are closed to outside influence.

The next part of this section focuses on describing the RSE policy 'partnerships' and networks among those policy actors perceived to be most influential. Specifically, the relationships among those listed in Table 21 are analysed before a framework of the Northern Ireland RSE policy network is presented to illustrate whether coalitions of actors or larger advocacy coalitions have formed to strengthen the power and influence of certain values or agendas within the RSE policy debate.

7.3.3 Policy actor relationships and the RSE policy network

Regarding policy development more broadly within Northern Ireland, and compared to its UK counterparts, there are fewer think tanks and policy fora (Birrell & Heenan, 2013: 778; also Keating, 2007). Although lobbying groups are present, the stop and start nature of devolution within Northern Ireland means that the relationship between these groups and the government is still evolving (Birrell & Heenan, 2013). Recognising the lack of think tanks and policy fora is important given that "the role of lobbying and pressure groups are acknowledged as a significant element of policy communities" (Birrell & Heenan, 2013: 778). It should be noted, however, that policy network relationships between voluntary organisations, lobbying groups and the NIA are strengthening due to the fact that "access to Assembly members and [NIA] committees is relatively open and submissions to public consultations are quite numerous" (Birrell & Heenan, 2013: 778). As these network relationships are still in their infancy and forming, unlike the SRE policy network in England the RSE policy network appears to be much more fluid which in turn makes it difficult to identify the main advocacy coalitions (if any) present within

the RSE policy network.

Therefore, this sub-section provides a systematic picture of the RSE policy network by examining the relationship linkages among policy actors and groups known to be active within Northern Ireland's RSE policy development. The section describes the structure of policy actors' interactions during RSE policy-making (Knoke, 2011: 210) and through these linkages provides a "visualisation of the pattern of network relations" (Thatcher, 1998: 400) within the larger RSE policy network becomes clearer. The analysis offered within this sub-section is important since this analysis illustrates some of the connections and coalitions that have formed between policy actors as they seek to gain power and influence in the policy-making process.

Continuing to adopt network analysis procedures and drawing upon advocacy coalition literature more broadly, the analyses provided in this sub-section emerged after analysing interviewed policy actors' responses to the question 'Do you see that there are particular people and/or groups who appear to be active or 'influential' in driving the PD/RSE policy-making process', and the organisational structure as well as makeup (e.g. mission statements, values, services provided, core ethos) of the different third sector groups and governmental/non-governmental bodies (illustrated within Table 21) perceived to have the most RSE policy 'influence'. Illuminating ties between actors and "seeing actors as parts of a broader structure of connectedness" (Considine et al., 2009: 69) is important as it not only provides a clearer picture of the RSE policy network, but also provides an additional tool to better understand the RSE policy process. This focus on policy actor connections is also crucial given that the large majority (11 out of 14) of policy actors interviewed stressed that RSE policy is developed through a 'partnerships' approach.

Figure 9 illustrates the organisational structure of those identified as 'influential' within Table 21. For reference, non-departmental public bodies are a type of quango and are described as "bodies that are set up by the government to carry out public functions at arm's-length from government but accountable to government" (Birrell, 2012: 164). As an example, CCEA is a non-departmental public body and is responsible to the Minister of Education and DENI. It has a board and chair appointed by the Minister of Education, employs its own staff and is allocated its own budget. However, non-departmental public

bodies "operate outside the devolved Civil Service departments and outside local government" (Birrell, 2012: 164).

Figure 9: Organisational structure of RSE policy actors considered most 'influential'

Statutory Governmental Department	Non-Departmental Public Bodies	Third Sector Organisations
• Department of Education (DENI) • Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety (DHSSPS)	• Council for the Curriculum, Examinations & Assessment (CCEA) • Education and Library Boards (ELBs) • Health & Social Care Boards (HSCB) • Health & Social Care Trusts • Public Health Agency (PHA)	• Brook • Family Planning Association (fpaNI) • Love for Life • Churches in Northern Ireland
Local Schools	**Coalition of Actors**	**Individual Policy Actors**
• Board of Governors and local management of schools	• All-party Group on Sexual Health • Regional Sexual Health Improvement Network (SHIN)	• Dr Audrey Simpson OBE • Janice Armstrong • Joanna Gregg • Joe Harris

The use of non-departmental public bodies "has been justified in the special circumstances of Northern Ireland as a mechanism for avoiding the intrusion of sectarian politics into the composition of administration" (Birrell, 2012: 173). To better showcase the connection between non-departmental public bodies and statutory governmental departments, as well as the relationship links among those policy actors deemed 'influential', Figure 10 on the following page displays a network analysis illustrating the ties between the bodies mentioned within Figure 9. It offers a non-comprehensive look at the overall RSE policy network between 1999 and 2013.

Figure 10: Network analysis diagram of the RSE policy network from 1999-2013
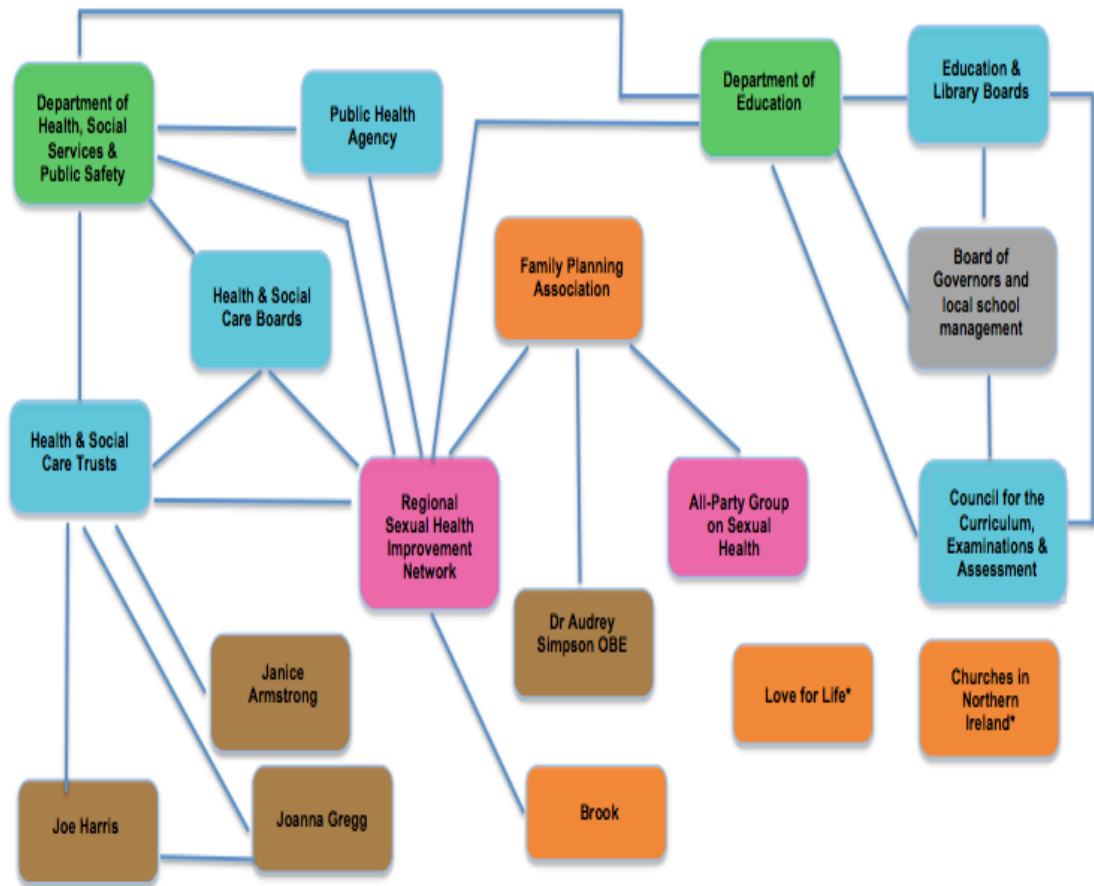
* Denotes this study was unsure of the direct links that this group had with others listed in the Figure

Source: Constructed from data collected from 14 interviews with key RSE policy actors in Northern Ireland

Analysing influential policy actor relationships unearths three main findings. First, as seen in Figures 9 and 10, interviewees named five non-departmental public bodies as being influential RSE policy actors: the PHA, HSCBs, Health and Social Care Trusts, CCEA and ELBs. Each of these five non-departmental public bodies (highlighted in blue) are connected to at least one of two statutory governmental departments also shown within both Figures – DENI and the Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety (DHSSPSNI). Both Departments are highlighted in green. This finding is interesting given it emphasises that policy actors view internal governmental departments and their closely associated non-departmental public bodies as having particular RSE policy influence, more so than any lobbying interest group or individual. Thus, potentially highlighting how the relationships between members of the NIA and lobbying and

pressure groups within Northern Ireland are still evolving (Birrell & Heenan, 2013).

The second main finding is that only two larger coalitions of actors are perceived to have significant RSE policy influence: the All-party Group on Sexual Health and the Regional Sexual Health Improvement Network (represented in pink). Interestingly, neither of these two coalitions nor any of their members – or any body listed in Figure 10 – overtly appear to be set-up in opposition to one another. The All-party Group on Sexual Health consists of nine MLAs representing each political party in Northern Ireland (All-party Group on Sexual Health, 2013). The group states it has three purposes: (1) to identify and promote more innovative and cost effective methods of sexual health clinical service delivery; (2) to encourage education and information initiatives which enable people to develop and maintain the knowledge, skills and values necessary for improving sexual health and well-being; and (3) to raise awareness in the Assembly of the importance of improving, protecting and promoting the sexual health and wellbeing of women and men in Northern Ireland (All-party Group on Sexual Health, 2013).

Of particular significance is that fpaNI provides secretarial assistance to this Group on an on-going basis. This means that fpaNI has direct access to policy-making contexts through its membership of this All-party Group and has direct links to the NIA. Furthermore, fpaNI's relationship with those within this Group means that its values are accepted by those within the Group, and fpaNI's strategic partnership with the Group has potentially given it the greatest resources (than those without connections to Ministers and MLAs) to "draw on to produce policy" (Gale, 2007: 226).

The second coalition of actors depicted in Figures 9 and 10 is the Regional Sexual Health Improvement Network (SHIN). This coalition of actors has a wide membership consisting of various governmental and non-governmental bodies and third sector voluntary organisations. While there is no website specifically for this coalition, PHA documents state that it is sponsored by the PHA and made up of the DHSSPSNI, DENI, HSCBs, Health and Social Care Trusts, the Local Commissioning Group, the Patient and Client Council, and voluntary organisations (Public Health Agency, 2011). This group was, however, established to oversee the implementation of the *Sexual Health Promotion Strategy and Action Plan 2008-2013*. It is not clear which voluntary organisations are

included in SHIN's membership – although policy actors interviewed for this study stated that fpaNI and Brook are members. What is perhaps most significant about SHIN is that – as seen in Figure 10 – seven of its members have been cited by interviewed policy actors as being the most 'influential' bodies within RSE policy development, and that it brings together representatives from all sectors of the debate. Additionally, SHIN appears to act as one of the focal points, or main connections, linking DENI and the DHSSPSNI.

Lastly, eight out of 14 interviewees mentioned that the DHSSPSNI and DENI work in close partnership instead of parallel to one another. For instance, according to Joanna Gregg – who heads RSE teacher training programmes for the Eastern area of Northern Ireland – "the DHSSPSNI and DENI have come together with such a tight partnership through a very joint-up approach" (Gregg, 2012). She states that between the Belfast Library Board and South Eastern Library Board, 98% of schools have come through her RSE teacher training programmes (Gregg, 2012) and this is in part due to those in education not seeing the teacher training programme as "another health service coming in but a service that is in partnership with education" (Gregg, 2012).

Having explored how the various RSE policy actors are engaged within the RSE debate and their perceived 'influence', as well as the relationships linking those within the larger RSE policy network, the next section in this chapter offers insight into the distribution of power and control found within the RSE policy process and network.

7.4 Power within the RSE policy-making process

This section brings together what has been gleaned about the development of school-based RSE to illuminate "the model of decision making and power distribution" (Marsh & Rhodes, 1992: 264) within the RSE policy network. That is, to see whether a particular policy actor or group have 'power and control' (Prunty, 1985) over RSE policy or a plurality of policy actors from varying backgrounds and institutional affiliations share the 'distribution of power' (Atkinson & Coleman, 1989) to influence/change/reject policy initiatives. The analysis within this section is significant because it brings to light where 'power' and control are based within the RSE policy process and whether RSE policy has been developed through a 'top down' elitist or 'ground up' pluralistic style of policy-

making.

Within the RSE policy-making process, power does not appear to be controlled by one specific policy actor or third sector interest group within Northern Ireland. 'Power' within this sub-section refers to "the capacity to make formal decisions which are in some way binding upon others" (Heywood, 2004: 122). Interestingly, the NIA and Westminster Parliament (during direct rule) have not been all that influential in RSE policy development. Very few 'national' level RSE discussions were recorded from 1999 (devolution) until June 2013. As one former member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) states – "while this is slowly changing, RSE has traditionally been rarely discussed in Assembly politics and is not on the radar of most politicians" (Purvis, 2012). In addition, one representative from an Education and Library Board, who asked for anonymity, asserted, while laughing, that when it comes to education matters "the [NIA] has no power. It's only there to do [DENI's] bidding" (Education and Library Board Representative #1, 2012).

Interviewed policy actors engaged within the RSE and broader sexual health debate, instead, describe RSE policy as being made through a 'partnership' approach. During the time of the Northern Ireland Curriculum review (1999-2004) through to the passing of the Revised Northern Ireland Curriculum in 2006 and the *Education (Curriculum Minimum Content) Order in 2007* – which legislate statutory 'Personal Development' for each Key Stage and subsequently statutory RSE – policy decisions were developed locally from the 'ground up' instead of being super-imposed onto schools from above (e.g. Westminster Parliament, the NIA or DENI).

However, while voluntary third sector organisations have been described as "playing an important role in formulating policy areas such as health and education and lobbying minister and civil servants" (Keating et al., 2012: 292), this role still appears to be developing within Northern Ireland. Although interviewed policy actors viewed fpaNI, Brook, Love for Life and to some extent churches within Northern Ireland as influencing RSE policy, non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) and statutory government departments within the 'Health' and 'Education' sector are perceived to have more power to sway RSE policy. In particular, the specific partnership between the Department of

Health, Social Services & Public Safety (DHSSPSNI) and the Department of Education (DENI) is seen as powerful (and productive for policy-making) (Table 21, p.227). Furthermore, Joanna Gregg states that "the bulk of RSE policy power lies in the Department of Health [DHSSPSNI] and Education [DENI] and it's because they work well in partnership" (Gregg, 2012).

To further capture the RSE policy-making story, the next section of this Northern Ireland case chapter takes a deeper look at the particular values embedded within statutory RSE policy and the specific values 'at play' within the RSE policy-making process.

7.5 Values and RSE policy-making

By analysing the content within RSE-related debates and policies, the values and assumptions that underpin the overall RSE policy process become clearer (Olssen et al., 2004). Marshall, Mitchell and Wirt (1989) describe policies as "sets of values expressed in words, issued with authority, and reinforced with power in order to induce a shift toward those values" (p. 6). This section explores both the second and third main research questions of this study by investigating the approaches taken towards PD/RSE in the Northern Ireland Curriculum and the RSE values explicitly expressed within key policy actor interviews, national legislation (i.e. *Education (Curriculum Minimum Content) Order (Northern Ireland) 2007*) and statutory school-based RSE policy published by DENI (i.e. *Circular 2001/15 Relationships and Sexuality Education*). The analysis within this section is central, as the specific approaches taken and values held by influential Northern Ireland policy actors, as well as the values imbedded within national legislation and statutory RSE policy texts, provide insight into what has influenced the nature and content of RSE policy. They therefore offer a possible explanation as to why PD (specifically RSE) has been made a statutory component within the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

The section first presents the main types of values embedded within and driving school-based RSE policy and policy-making discussions within Northern Ireland, before dividing into two sub-sections focusing, in more detail, on (1) the values specifically found within statutory legislation and DENI's RSE framework and (2) the values interviewed policy

actors state are 'at play' within the larger RSE policy debate. These analyses are important as the specific values embedded within Northern Ireland's 'national'-level policies illuminate which RSE values are given the most 'power' within the debate and are deemed most important for young people to learn, while policy actor responses (unlike the policies themselves) detail whether, and if so what, values are rejected, negotiated or challenged within the policy process. Given that values are "often the subject of negotiation, compromise and conflict" (Bell & Stevenson, 2006: 18), policy actor responses identifying the values most influential in RSE policy-making shed light on the degree to which those values written within legislation and statutory policy texts were 'shared' amongst those during the policy process and which values were in direct competition to those embedded in current policy.

Overall, this section's analysis suggests that statutory RSE policy and its developmental process are driven by ten main value sets. These value sets include: Educational, The Self, Health, Rights-based, Intellectual, Family, Social, Cultural, Religious and Economic. Regarding the analysis of current legislation, the three pages relevant to the delivery of RSE were examined within the *Education (Curriculum Minimum Content) (NI) Order 2007* – Part 1 of the Specifications of Minimum Content Section in Schedule 2 (p.3) and the minimum content laid out for the statutory contributory element of Personal Development within the Learning for Life and Work Area of Learning for Key Stage 3 (p.61) and Key Stage 4 (p.67) in the post-primary curriculum. *Circular 2001/15* published by DENI was analysed in its entirety. Data was analysed using a similar approach to that set out within the methodology chapter of this thesis and illustrated in the England case study.

The next part to this section explores which of the main value sets have the most influence or weight within the policy process by identifying the specific RSE values detailed within education legislation and statutory RSE policy texts issued to post-primary schools in Northern Ireland. To make the reading of this section easier, throughout the rest of this section each specific value set type being described or referenced will be **bolded** in the text.

7.5.1 Education legislation and statutory RSE policy texts

The values articulated in schools "can be interpreted as the expected values for all members of society" (Vergari, 2000: 290; Benninga, 1991; Wynne & Ryan, 1993; DeRoche & Williams, 1998). Therefore, it is important to have an awareness and understanding of the specific values embedded within statutory RSE policy texts (seen in Table 22), as these values underpin what is considered 'important' and 'acceptable' for children and young people to learn about sex more broadly, one's own sexuality and relationships. There are two statutory policy texts central to school-based RSE in Northern Ireland: DENI's *Circular 2001/15 Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)* and the *Education (Curriculum Minimum Content) (NI) Order 2007*.

DENI published on 24 August 2001 *Circular 2001/15*, providing guidance to schools regarding the statutory provision of RSE each school (primary and post-primary) should provide its pupils. The *Circular* – which still remains DENI's RSE framework as of February 2014 – addresses why RSE is required in the NIC, the framework in which the subject should be taught, and the importance of schools addressing pupil needs and parental involvement.

The *Education (Curriculum Minimum Content) Order 2007* (hereafter *Minimum Content Order*) is a secondary piece of legislation linked to the 2006 revised Northern Ireland Curriculum (NIC) and specifies the statutory minimum content – i.e. the "knowledge, understanding and skills required to be taught to pupils of different abilities and maturities" (p. 5) – that schools must teach within each Area of Learning within the statutory NIC. Specific to RSE, the *Minimum Content Order* explicitly outlines the minimum content that must be taught within the statutory Personal Development (PD) strand within the Areas of Learning of Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) for each primary Key Stage, and within Learning for Life and Work (LLW) at Key Stages 3 and 4. While the *Minimum Content Order* does not explicitly state that RSE must specifically be taught, the minimum content and learning opportunities it asserts schools must provide do directly relate to elements of RSE (e.g. "understanding of relationships and sexuality and the responsibilities of healthy relationships" (p.67) and "implications of sexual maturation" (p.61)).

Table 22: Values embedded within **Circular 2001/15** *and the* **Minimum Content Order**

Value set type	Examples from policy actor debates/interviews
Educational	• Education is concerned with the personal, social, emotional and vocational preparation and moral development of young people, as well as with their academic attainment • School promotion of spiritual, emotional, moral, cultural, intellectual and physical development of pupils at the school and thereby of society • Importance of RSE in preparing children and young people for adult life is greater than the distinct demands RSE will place on schools and teachers • Schools not ignoring sexual practices that are at variance with or run counter to the prevailing moral standards of society • Schools cannot afford to ignore the possibility that some pupils may already have experienced homosexual feelings and teachers should be sensitive to this in their teaching • Schools emphasising what is positive and good in relationships between the sexes • Schools working in partnership with children, young people and parents • Schools have the responsibility to teach PD and RSE • Schools prepping young people for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life • RSE taught in a sensitive manner which is in harmony with the ethos of the school • RSE must <u>not</u> be taught value free
The Self	• Self-respect • Self-awareness – concept of self, personal morals, values, beliefs • Self-restraint • Personal responsibility • Awareness of one's own sexuality • Personal development • Self-confidence • Self-esteem • Personal safety • Managing one's own emotions and reactions to on-going life experiences • Spiritual development
Health	• Reduction of harm – delaying early sexual activity, sexual promiscuity, unplanned teenage pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), HIV and AIDS • Physical and emotional development • Maintaining positive physical and emotional/mental health throughout life • Maximising and sustaining one's own health and well-being • Healthy and responsible relationships • Risk management • Sexuality • Health as the development of the whole person • Strategies to manage the effects of change on the body, mind and behaviours
Intellectual	• Truth – provision of factual, objective and balanced information that is relevant to young people's lives: sexual maturation, relationships,

Table 22: Values embedded within **Circular 2001/15** *and the* **Minimum Content Order** *(contd)*

Value set type	Examples from policy actor debates/interviews
Intellectual (contd.)	contraception, methods of family planning, abortion, HIV and AIDS, pregnancy, pornography and homosexuality • Knowledge • Understanding • Intellectual development • Comprehensive RSE – including ethical, social and biological implications of the subject • Evidence-based research • Life skills
Rights-based	• Listening and responding to what children and young people say they want to learn regarding RSE – meeting young people's needs • Young people and parents expect RSE to be presented in a broad, balanced way, free from sensationalism and personal bias • Ensuring every child regardless of background, circumstances of parenting and whether parents already teach RSE at home is given factual, relevant and balanced information • Taking account of parents' views on the content of his or her child's RSE and to have any expressed concerns accounted for • Making alternative arrangements for any pupil whose parents wishes him or her to be excused from particular, or all sex education classes • Supporting the proper exercise of parental rights and responsibilities
Family	• The value of prevailing 'moral' standards of society • Role and responsibilities of parenthood • Marriage • Stable, family life • Stable, loving, personal relationships • Reinforcing and strengthening positive family relationships
Social	• Social development of young people • Respect for others – including those of different sexual orientation • Forming and maintaining relationships – parents, family, friends, sexual • Social benefits that relationships bring • Responsibilities of healthy relationships • Loving, respectful relationships
Cultural	• Protection against sexual socialisation and distorted information through the media, peers and other sources • Cultural development of young people
Religious	• RSE taught in conformity with religious principles held by parents and school management authorities

Table 22 illustrates the main RSE values and provides specific examples of each threaded within DENI's *Circular 2001/15* and the *Minimum Content Order*. The value set types presented within the Table are ordered according to the number of value examples (from

most to least) found across the two texts for each value type. As seen within the Table, the two studied policy texts draw upon nine out of the ten identified main RSE values embedded within RSE policy-making in Northern Ireland. While there were examples of '**Economic**' values mentioned by those interviewed for the Northern Ireland case chapter (viewed in Table 23 of the next section), there was no reference to or examples of '**Economic**' values found within the legislation or DENI's RSE policy framework. Therefore, this value set type is not illustrated within the Table.

To help conceptualise Table 22, Figure 11 depicts the identified main value set types found within both DENI's RSE *Circular 2001/15* and the *Minimum Content Order* and lists (in numerical order from most to least) and the frequency of RSE value examples within each value set type.

Figure 11: Main RSE value set types found within two statutory policy texts categorised by frequency

DENI RSE Circular 2001/15		Minimum Content Order		Two policies combined	
Value set type	Frequency	Value set type	Frequency	Value set type	Frequency
The Self	13	Health	12	The Self	23
Intellectual	12	Intellectual	10	Intellectual	22
Educational	10	The Self	10	Health	18
Family	9	Social	4	Educational	12
Health	6	Educational	2	Family	10
Rights-based	6	Cultural	1	Social	7
Social	3	Family	1	Rights-based	6
Cultural	2	Religious	0	Cultural	3
Religious	1	Rights-based	0	Religious	1

Three main findings emerge from this examination. The first is that '**The Self**' and '**Intellectual**' values are two main value set types both statutory policy texts place great emphasis on and most frequently utilise. When looking at Figure 11, '**The Self**' and '**Intellectual**' values are ranked within both texts' top two most frequently cited values set types and have a combined total of 23 ('**The Self**') and 22 ('**Intellectual**') value examples across the two statutory texts. *Circular 2001/15* and the *Minimum Content Order* mention that each school's RSE programme should allow young people to develop

their own 'concept of self', 'self-awareness' and 'spiritual development' ('**The Self**' values). The two policy texts also recurrently cite the importance of children and young people developing 'knowledge', 'understanding' and 'intellectual development' ('**Intellectual**' values). This main finding shows that DENI's RSE framework and the *Minimum Content Order* are more centrally focused on 'the individual' and providing the information/knowledge/skills to aid that individual in developing his or her own concept of 'self', than pushing more collective-based values such as '**Cultural**' and '**Religious**' values.

The second key finding is that the *Minimum Content Order* places the greatest significance on '**Health**', while DENI's RSE framework more heavily reinforces '**Family**' values. This section's analysis shows that '**Health**' values were not only the most frequently references value type within legislation (i.e. 12 cited examples), but that there were twice as many references to '**Health**' (i.e. 12) in the *Minimum Content Order* as in *Circular 2001/15* (i.e. six value examples, fifth main value type overall). Within the statutory minimum content for post-primary pupils to learn within PD, the *Minimum Content Order* stresses the importance of 'maintaining positive, physical and emotional/mental health throughout life', exploring the 'concept of Health as the development of the whole person', as well as understanding 'the effects of change on body, mind and behaviour' during sexual maturation.

However, perhaps the greatest disparity between the two policy texts is seen in the weight DENI's policy places on '**Family**'. There are nine specific '**Family**' value examples within *Circular 2001/15* compared to the one value example (i.e. 'roles and responsibilities of parenting') found within the *Minimum Content Order*. More specifically, *Circular 2001/15* reinforces the importance of 'stable, family life' and the 'roles of parents and parental responsibility' three times. It also cites the importance of 'marriage', having 'committed, stable relationships' and having regard to the 'prevailing moral standards of society'. DENI's RSE policy framework does not explicitly define what it considers the 'prevailing moral standards of society' to be, but this could be understood to mean heteronormative, nuclear families. However, despite this finding, the analysis shows that legislation emphasises that it is of greater importance that young people gain the skills needed to protect and sustain positive health and well-being while

at school than schools promoting values pertaining to what appropriate 'families' should look like and the types of relationships (e.g. stable, loving, marriage) one should have.

Lastly, the third significant and perhaps most striking finding is the lack of '**Religious**' and '**Cultural**' values represented within both policies. DENI's RSE *Circular* only mentions two '**Cultural**' value examples (i.e. the importance of cultural development and RSE as a mode of protecting young people against sexual socialisation through the media and peers), and provides only one '**Religious**' value example . *Circular 2001/15* states that schools should teach RSE "in conformity with the moral and religious principles held by parents and school management authorities" (DENI, 2011: 2, #11). '**Religious**' values are completely absent from the relevant material examined within the *Minimum Content Order* and only one '**Cultural**' value example (i.e. cultural development) was embedded in the text.

The low frequency of these two value set types within the two studied texts could indicate that '**Religious**' and '**Cultural**' values are considered to be less essential than the other values (e.g. '**The Self**', '**Intellectual**', '**Health**', '**Educational**', etc.) listed within the third table of Figure 11. If so, such a finding would be a significant change to previous research that explored sex and relationship(s) education in Northern Ireland and found that sex education (the term used in the article) was "used to reaffirm the dominant sexual and moral values of society, values with strong and often explicit religious overtones" (Rolston et al., 2005: 219). Perhaps the lack of inclusion of '**Religious**' and '**Cultural**' values within both examined texts supports the claim that education in Northern Ireland is "increasingly geared towards the promotion of human rights, equality, choice and inclusion" (Donnelly & Osborne, 2005: 147). Given that Northern Ireland has been described as having "the most radical equality legislation in Western Europe" (Donnelly & Osborne, 2005: 149) this shift might not be all that surprising.

Alternatively, a lack of focus on '**Cultural**' values within both policies could also be due to the political division in Northern Irish society, as there is no cohesive Northern Irish cultural identity. For, as Ms Gregg, Sexual Health Coordinator for the Belfast Health & Social Care Trust, describes:

> We do not have political identity in Northern Ireland, so we have a citizenship curriculum that is based around human rights. Whereas if you compare that to England, you've got a citizenship curriculum that is based very much around what it is like to be British. (Gregg, 2012)

Because of the history of cultural tension within Northern Ireland and "problems caused by discrimination on the grounds of religion and politics" (Donnelly & Osborne, 2005: 149), the lack of '**Religious**' and '**Cultural**' values embedded within both texts could be the result of a strategic political move to avoid such topics in the hope of not raising complications in getting the policies enacted.

To better understand whether the values embedded within the final text versions of *Circular 2001/15* and the *Minimum Content Order* were shared among the majority of policy actors or were part of a process of struggle, negotiation and compromise, the next part to this section analyses data collected from interviews with RSE policy actors.

7.5.2 Policy actor perspectives on RSE values 'at play'

One of the objectives of interviewing those with knowledge of or engagement in the RSE policy-making process was to elicit each interviewee's perspective about the main values in RSE discussions in Northern Ireland. Such an analysis is important given that this policy actor insight not only allows for the examination of whether the values made explicit within current statutory policy appear to be commonly shared among policy actors, but also aids in the identification of further values that may challenge or are entirely absent from DENI's 2001 RSE policy and the *Minimum Content Order*.

Each of the fourteen interviewed policy actors for this Northern Ireland case chapter was asked to describe the specific values he or she thinks are at the centre of RSE policy-making or, at the very least, driving the debate around what school-based RSE policy should be. Table 23 (p.246-247) illustrates the particular values interviewed policy actors acknowledge as being 'at play' within RSE policy-making development. As seen within the Table, policy actors identify eight main values: Intellectual; The Self; Health; Educational; Social; Rights-based; Religious; and Economic. Specific value types are, again, **bolded** in the text to aid the reader.

Table 23: RSE values identified by interviewed policy actors

Value set type	Examples from policy actor debates/interviews
Intellectual	• Truth – provision of factual, objective and balanced information that is relevant to young people's lives: sexual maturation, relationships, contraception, methods of family planning, abortion, HIV and AIDS, STIs, pregnancy, pornography and homosexuality • Knowledge • Comprehensive RSE • Decision-making processes • Evidence-based research • Emotional intelligence • Life skills • Informed choice • Open and honest discussion
The Self	• Empowerment • Own sense of self • Self-respect • Self-awareness – including one's own morals, values and beliefs • Self-esteem • Awareness of what makes us a sexual being • Personal development • Personal safety • Personal wellbeing • Manage one's own behaviours
Health	• Reduction of harm – delaying early sexual activity, multiple partner acquisition, unplanned teenage pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), HIV and AIDS, sexual abuse • Maintaining positive physical and emotional/mental health • Equal and easy access to sexual health services • Safe sex practices – abstinence, using condoms and other forms of contraception • Sexual health • Health and wellbeing • Emotional development • Risk management
Educational	• Schools working in partnership with children, young people and parents • School-based RSE through an inclusive, non-judgmental approach • RSE as a holistic rather than harm reduction-only approach • Teaching 'sex before marriage' and 'sex after marriage' • Schools preparing young people for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life
Social	• Forming and maintaining relationships – family, friends, boyfriend/girlfriend • Respect for others • Loving relationships

Table 23: RSE values identified by interviewed policy actors (contd.)

Value set type	Examples from policy actor debates/interviews
Social (contd.)	• Normalisation of sexual health as part of the whole self and as a normal part of society
Rights-based	• Young people have an entitlement to RSE • RSE is a fundamental human right – UN Convention on the Right of the Child • Children and young people have a right to say what they want to learn within their RSE so it meets their needs • Ensuring the 'most vulnerable' receive RSE by ensuring every child regardless of background, circumstances of parenting and whether parents already teach RSE at home is given factual, relevant and balanced information
Religious	• Catholic/Protestant church teachings • Abstinence-only based RSE programmes • Anti-abortion (pro-life) versus pro-choice
Economic	• RSE as a preventative intervention to reduce costs in public services and public spending

Some interviewees named only one value example (e.g. schools preparing young people for more than just getting a job, for adult life). Others named values they believed to be in conflict with one another (e.g. children have a right to factual, unbiased information versus a school should not have to teach topics at ends with its ethos – i.e. Catholic schools teaching acceptance of homosexuality or abortion) and, therefore, restricting the development of more progressive policy. Progressive policy was described as including, for example, DENI producing a prescriptive RSE programme that all schools would be required to implement in order to ensure more consistent provision across schools and statutory policies utilising language that is more authoritative and less conducive to multiple interpretations (e.g. changing policies to state that 'schools must have an RSE policy' instead of 'schools *should* have an RSE policy').

Unlike the analysis of values evident within *Circular 2001/15* and the *Minimum Content Order*, interviewed policy actors did not explicitly make reference to '**Family**' or '**Cultural**' values. Table 24 shows the main type of values policy actors state are influencing RSE policy development and lists (in numerical order from most to least) the frequency (number of occurrences) with which interviewees reference examples within

each value set type.

Table 24: Main types of RSE values policy actors state are 'influencing' policy-making and policy content

Value set type	Frequency
Intellectual	25
The Self	19
Health	16
Social	7
Educational	6
Rights-based	5
Religious	3
Economic	1
Family	0
Cultural	0

Investigation of the specific RSE value perspectives of the 14 interviewed policy actors reveals four main findings. The first is that the value examples put forward by those interviewed reinforce that '**Intellectual**' values and values of '**The Self**' – the two most frequently emphasised value types within statutory policy texts (as seen in Figure 11, p.242) – are shared among many people and third sector groups engaged in RSE policy development in Northern Ireland. Multiple interviewed policy actors repeatedly mentioned seven specific values as being frequently advocated within RSE policy-making deliberations and, as such, having a higher degree of 'power' to influence the wording within policy texts. Six policy actors cited 'evidence-based research' ('**Intellectual**' value) as heavily influencing policy development, while five interviewees mentioned 'life skills' **('Intellectual**' value) and 'informed choice' ('**Intellectual**' value) as being values recurrently embedded within arguments pertaining to what RSE should teach.

Furthermore, four policy actors named 'personal development' ('**The Self**' value), 'self awareness' ('**The Self**' value), 'self-esteem' ('**The Self**' value) and teaching factual, balanced and un-biased RSE relevant to young people's lives ('**Intellectual**' value) as being central values permeating policy-making discussions. This finding is important

because it indicates that '**The Self**' and '**Intellectual**' values are perhaps the two most frequently threaded values within both the *Minimum Content Order* and DENI's RSE policy framework because, as opposed to other values, valuing people as individuals ('**The Self**' value) and approaching education as a vehicle for providing 'truth' ('**Intellectual**' value) and 'knowledge' ('**Intellectual**' value) are non-contentious policy issues commonly shared among policy actors. That is, this finding shows a close link between the policy debate and statutory legislation and policy texts and suggests that current legislation and policy has been developed in parallel with the debate.

The second main finding is that not one policy actor mentioned an example of '**Cultural**' or '**Family**' values being 'at play' within RSE policy development. Given that only three references to '**Cultural**' values were found in *Circular 2001/15* and the *Minimum Content Order* it is perhaps not so unexpected that interviewees do not claim '**Cultural**' values to be heavily influential within policy-making. However, as DENI's RSE framework does place a substantial amount of emphasis on '**Family**' values such as 'reinforcing and strengthening positive family relationships', 'marriage' and the 'prevailing moral standards of society', it is surprising that there was not at least some mention of either support of or contention with '**Family**' values. It is not possible from the data to suggest why this might be.

Thirdly, when discussing examples of values that policy actors draw upon to inform their arguments, as well as the values interviewees believe to be 'at odds' with one another, and therefore negotiated during policy, only three references were made regarding '**Religious**' values. Given the history of religious conflict within Northern Ireland, as well as how "the schools system has been accused of not only reflecting sectarian division but of creating and reinforcing sectarianism" (Donnelly & Osborne, 2005: 148), it is perhaps surprising that religious influence was not mentioned by more policy actors or at least described as an area of contention. Dr Schubotz emphasises that "the churches (especially Catholic and Protestant) in Northern Ireland still very much so influence policy and education" (Schubotz, 2012), while Dr Simpson (fpaNI), as mentioned above, spoke of an instance when two members (a pastoral care advisor and a pastor) of an RSE working group threatened to leave the group if she was allowed to join (Simpson, 2012). She attributed this to her affiliation with fpaNI and how it is the only organisation that

publically campaigns for the liberalisation of abortion laws in Northern Ireland. In addition, Ms Gregg described that when providing RSE teacher training to schools within the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT), the main areas of contention were 'contraception' and 'abortion' – especially among Catholic schools (Gregg, 2012).

Lastly, the fourth key finding is that while four policy actors did make reference to examples of '**Rights-based**' values, each of the four interviewees stated that he or she does not believe that RSE debates in Northern Ireland are centred around a 'Right of the child' versus 'Right of the parent' approach. According to Dr Simpson:

> When you send your child to school here, you sign up to the ethos of the school. If you send your child to a Catholic school you know exactly what you're signing up for. End of discussion. A Catholic school is black and white. State schools are a bit more grey. But there's going to be no debate about the rights of the child to information or the rights of parents. I was never asked what my ethos was or what my values were when my children were in school. It does not happen, there's no debate in that. (Simpson, 2012)

On the other hand, other policy actors acknowledge that 'right of the child' and 'right of the parent' discussions do take place but are not the focal point of negotiations. For instance, a Student Support Officer in charge of child protection and pastoral care at an all-boys Catholic High School (and who wishes to remain anonymous), who was interviewed for this study, stated that:

> RSE policies are very much governed by both these rights. Young people have the right to information. Parents have the right to be consulted with. Sometimes these rights pull against each other, but [DENI's] policy is very supportive of both childrens' rights, as well as parents'. I've been at this post seven years and not one parent has withdrawn their son from RSE lessons. I give out an end of year assessment to each year asking the boys what they want to learn in RSE and what issues are relevant to them. I prepare lessons for the next year and inform parents about the issues the boys state are relevant to their needs and how we will address them. It's a holistic, inclusive approach; therefore, no one is claiming their 'rights' are not being recognised. (Student Support Officer, 2012)

This last key finding shows that perhaps policy actors do not feel that they have to approach RSE policy debates with a 'right of the child' or 'right of the parent' argument because legislation allows for schools to deliver RSE in accordance with its own ethos. Therefore, there is no great need to argue over this or for policy texts and legislation to be

more prescriptive.

The analyses described within this sub-section suggest that governmental policy texts and statutory legislation have been developed in parallel with the issues and specific values put forward by those active in the RSE policy debate. That is, the values embedded within statutory policy texts appear to be shared among many people and groups involved in RSE policy development. However, those interviewed for this study state that just because the values rooted within statutory policy texts are more commonly shared does not mean that there are not certain values at 'odds' with one another (e.g. 'Right of the child' and 'Right of the parent'). These values are just not central focal points to the debate and therefore perhaps more easily negotiated. The next part to this chapter offers some concluding comments and poses questions for further review.

7.6 Concluding comments

This Northern Ireland case chapter fills two gaps found within social policy literature by providing: (1) an in-depth exploration of the policy-making process that informed Northern Ireland's current legislation (i.e. *Education (Curriculum Minimum Content) (NI) Order 2007*) and statutory policy (i.e. Department of Education, Northern Ireland (DENI) *Circular 2001/15 Relationships and Sexuality Education*) relating to RSE and (2) an investigation of the values and background knowledge that underpin the conceptual framework advising school-based RSE.

The chapter has sought to tell the policy-making story behind the revised 2006 Northern Ireland Curriculum (NIC) and how this led to RSE not only being made statutory, but also a carefully developed 'Personal Development' curriculum, within which RSE is taught, for both primary and post-primary schools. One of the main conclusions is that education policy in Northern Ireland is a product of a 'ground up' policy style. Instead of the current Northern Ireland Curriculum being superimposed on schools by the government or the Department of Education (DENI) – or even simply copied or transferred from one of Northern Ireland's neighbouring UK counterparts – it was the outcome of evidence-based research, consultation with young people, questionnaire feedback from 8,353 local school representatives, consultation seminars attended by

approximately 700 local teachers (c.500 primary and c.200 post-primary) and meetings attended by over 1,300 stakeholders (e.g. DENI representatives, community, health and educational organisations) (CCEA, 2001c).

Making 'Personal Development' (PD) statutory for both primary and post-primary education was not a highly contentious policy issue, as can be seen within public consultations performed during Phase 1 of the NIC review (CCEA, 2000; 2001c). PD was viewed as an important part of education, which is viewed in Northern Ireland as being about more than just academic attainment, but critically about preparing young people for adult life. Within PD, all schools are required to teach statutory, comprehensive RSE – though schools do do so variably. In August 2001 – before the revised curriculum was passed and during Phase II of its review – DENI distributed updated RSE policy information and a resource pack to each school in Northern Ireland. Like the NIC, this RSE policy arose from a 'ground up' policy-making approach as local teachers, health representatives, DENI and other non-parliamentary professionals were consulted during the development of this policy. Although there has not been any significant change to RSE policy since 2001, DENI did publish *Circular 2013/16* on 25 June 2013 announcing that DENI is in the process of liaising with CCEA to conduct a review of existing guidance to identify any gaps in provision and to update its RSE resources (DENI, 2013c).

This chapter also draws attention not only to the policy actors engaged within RSE policy development but the specific individuals and groups considered to be most 'influential'. RSE is not a largely political issue within Northern Ireland. Searches within the NIA and Westminster Parliament *Hansards* show that during the 13-year time period studied – which included periods when the government was suspended – only 19 written questions were asked, one memorandum was published, and not one parliamentary-level RSE-specific debate occurred. Data collected from fourteen policy actors known to be active in RSE policy development strengthen this argument that RSE is not a parliamentary-level issue. Interviewees did not name one parliamentary-level policy actor as having particular 'influence' within RSE policy-making. Instead, third sector interest groups and governmental/non-governmental bodies – especially those with a 'health', 'education' or 'faith-based' agenda – appear to have the most reputational power. Given Northern

Ireland's history of religious conflict and divisive school structure it is perhaps surprising that only one explicit reference was made regarding the role of Churches within Northern Ireland within these discussions. Interviewees stressed that RSE policy was/is made through 'partnerships'.

Focusing on legislation and statutory RSE policy, 'The Self', 'Intellectual' and 'Health' are the three main types of values underpinning DENI's *Circular 2001/15* and the minimum content laid out for statutory PD within the *Education (Curriculum Minimum Content) (NI) Order 2007*. Both statutory policies strongly emphasise the importance of developing one's own concept of 'self' and that RSE is about providing the information/knowledge/skills to aid young people in managing and sustaining positive emotional, physical and mental health. These three values – 'The Self', 'Intellectual' and 'Health' – are the same three value sets most frequently cited by those interviewed for this chapter as being the values 'at play' within RSE policy discussions. Therefore it appears as if those developing and informing policy successfully ensured such values are enshrined within policy texts.

The next and final chapter in this thesis presents a 'home international' comparison of the sex and relationship(s) education policy-making processes in England and Northern Ireland. The chapter considers why is it that policy actors within Northern Ireland – a country whose schools are structured along religious lines (Birrell & Heenan, 2013) – have been able to collaborate and significantly develop a statutory, comprehensive RSE programme within a full programme of study (i.e. Personal Development) to be delivered across all schools, yet within England statutory PSHEE (and subsequently SRE) remains so contentious that policy actors cannot come to an agreement. What has been conducive to policy-making in RSE? Does it have something to do with Northern Ireland having a lack of policy fora? Is it therefore easier to maintain collaborative partnerships because policy network relationships are still being developed and there are not yet as stringent hardline positions? Is it that these two countries draw upon differing policy-making models or strategies? Or perhaps an explanation can be found by looking at how SRE and RSE are approached by policy actors and the specific values that drive policy?

PART IV: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Chapter 8: Discussion of comparative findings, implications and recommendations

8.1 Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to develop a framework for examining the various policy-making processes in relation to making sex and relationship(s) education a statutory component in the English and Northern Irish national curricula. This chapter provides a 'home international' comparison of the SRE and RSE policy-making processes in England and Northern Ireland. The previous two chapters (Chapters 6 and 7) explored, analysed and discussed the key patterns and main findings found within this study's data pertaining to the process in which SRE in England and RSE in Northern Ireland has been made. In this chapter analyses focus on three main points of comparison – approaches taken and values upheld, access to 'policy speak', and 'power' to influence policy – regarding SRE and RSE policy development. Utilising existing literature in the field (presented in Chapters Two, Three and Four) the chapter discusses connections among the identified main points of comparison and suggests that these central differences within England's SRE and Northern Ireland's RSE policy-making processes might explain what has been conducive to the development of statutory, comprehensive PD and RSE within Northern Ireland, while PSHEE and the non-biological aspects of SRE in England continue to remain non-statutory. The chapter concludes by outlining what the implications of this study are.

8.2 Approaches taken and values upheld toward SRE and RSE policy

This section illuminates some of the key similarities and differences between the approaches taken and values that have and continue to drive Northern Ireland's statutory PD/RSE policy and the continuing statutory/non-statutory school-based PSHEE/SRE debate in England. Table 25 (p.255) shows a comparison of the main approaches taken, type of values most frequently drawn upon and specific value examples prioritised with Northern Ireland's statutory RSE policy and the former New Labour and current Coalition Governments' SRE policies (as seen during the time frame studied). The purpose of this examination is to highlight whether policy approaches and values found

within English SRE debates are similar to or in direct conflict with the approaches and values embedded in RSE policy, as this analysis may provide a possible explanation as to why Northern Irish policy actors have been able to come to a consensus that PD and RSE should be made statutory for all young people, while English PSHEE/SRE policy actors have not.

Table 25: Comparison of the approaches taken and values upheld toward SRE and RSE

	SRE under New Labour Government (2008-2010)	SRE under Coalition Government (2010-2013)	RSE in Northern Ireland (1999-2013)
Main approach adopted:	• Right of the child • Protection through SRE • Schools are responsible for teaching PSHEE/SRE • Pro-statutory PSHEE/SRE	• Right of the parent • Protection from loss of 'innocence' • Schools are not responsible for teaching PSHEE/SRE • Non-statutory PSHEE/SRE	• Not a conflict of rights between young people and parents • RSE does not lead to loss of 'innocence' • Schools are responsible for teaching PD/RSE • Pro-statutory PD/RSE
Main values most frequently drawn upon:	• Rights-based • Health • Intellectual • The Self	• Political • Rights-based • Educational	• The Self • Intellectual • Health
Specific value examples prioritised:	• Listening to young people • Partnership-sharing in SRE delivery (e.g. government and sectoral, young people, schools, parents) • Evidence-based research • Health and wellbeing • Accurate and balanced information • Relationships education • PSHEE education as an 'entitlement' of young people	• Less central prescription from government • Parents have the principle responsibility to teach PSHEE/SRE • A slimmed down National Curriculum • School and teacher flexibility to develop the curriculum • Parental right of withdrawl • No SRE for primary school-aged students • Teaching sexual consent (i.e. legal age a young person can consent to sex)	• Evidence-based research • Developing one's own concept of 'self' (e.g. self awareness, self esteem and spiritual development) • Knowledge, understanding and intellectual development • Preparing young people for adult life • Informed choice • Personal development • Factual, balanced and un-biased RSE relevant to young people's lives

Within both countries, policy actors (regardless of political party affiliation or stance toward the statutory debate) are in agreement that young people need to be protected from sexualisation and that something should be done to help reduce the rate of unplanned pregnancies and STIs among young people. Both countries also place a great deal of emphasis within their SRE and RSE policies on the importance of not teaching SRE or RSE in a value-free context. However, differences can be seen in the way in which policy actors in England and Northern Ireland have approached school-based SRE and RSE in relation to the issues mentioned above (i.e. sexualisation, unplanned pregnancy, rate of STIs), as well as in the specific values driving policy actors' arguments as to the role of government (e.g. legislating such a subject), schools (e.g. responsibility to teach SRE or

RSE) and education (e.g. traditional 'academic' subjects with a focus on getting a job or life skills to be prepared for adult life). In addition, conflict can be seen between both political partners of the Coalition Government.

Three significant findings particularly stand out from the analysis of the main approaches and values embedded within Northern Ireland's PD/RSE policies, and those that drove the former New Labour Government to prescribe statutory PSHEE/SRE in England (which continues to be this party's PSHEE/SRE position) and the current Coalition Government's position (i.e. non-statutory PSHEE and the non-biological aspects of SRE).

Finding # 1: 'Right of the child' and 'Right of the parent' arguments are highly contentious in England

Ball (2013) states that "in education policy research and in the field of policy advocacy, parental choice is one of the most contested and most difficult concepts" (p.147). While the rhetoric of rights – most especially the 'Right of the child' and 'Right of the parent' perspective – has been a central point of conflict among policy actors engaged within statutory PSHEE/SRE debates in England, this same argument is not seen as one of the main focal concerns within RSE policy deliberations in Northern Ireland. As seen within Table 25 New Labour adopts a 'Right of the child' approach to PSHEE/SRE, where comprehensive, factual and balanced PSHEE/SRE information is valued as being an 'entitlement' of all young people. Findings from the Sex Education Forum (SEF), the Family Planning Association (fpa) and Ofsted are frequently drawn upon to drive New Labour's statutory PSHEE/SRE arguments, as is the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the UK Youth Parliament's 2007 SRE survey of over 21,000 UK young people, the majority of whom cited SRE provision as not meeting their needs.

New Labour argued that statutory PSHEE/SRE protects the most vulnerable – as it is naïve to assume that all young people are getting this information from parents or carers while at home (Knight, 2008d; Baroness Gould, 2011; Baroness Massey, 2011c) – and evidence-based research confirms that SRE programmes are more likely to be effective if young people are involved during policy deliberations. New Labour has also stressed the importance of schools listening to and working in partnership with parents to develop its

SRE curriculum. However, parental 'opt out' should cease once a young person reaches the legal age for sexual consent within England – 16 years of age. The party has wanted to change current SRE provision (DfEE 2000) because the policy presents an anomaly within legislation allowing a parent to withdraw his or her child from all or part of SRE until said young person reaches the age of 18.

Alternatively, SRE policy under the Coalition Government fails to acknowledge the UNCRC and no reference has been made within Coalition-published PSHEE/SRE policy documents regarding the importance of listening to what young people state their own needs are (DfE, 2011b, 2013b; Truss, 2013). Instead, the Government approaches PSHEE and SRE from a 'Right of the parent' perspective with parents ultimately deciding what their children's needs are and every parent having the right to withdraw their child from all or part of PSHEE and SRE – regardless of the young person's age and if the young person wishes to take part in PSHEE/SRE lessons. This primary focus on parents is perhaps best seen within the DfE's PSHEE review (DfE, 2013b) as parents (i.e. 168 individuals) were the largest consulted group within the review – over every other type of respondent (e.g. teacher, local authority, VCS sector/charity, faith groups) – while young people were the least involved (i.e. 5 students).

One of the Coalition' primary arguments is that school-based PSHEE/SRE should not pre-empt the wishes of parents and carers (DfE, 2013b). The Government argues that parents have the right and principal responsibility to teach their children PSHEE/SRE and decide what they should or should not learn. However, the Coalition Government does not seem to be united on this approach. The Liberal Democrat-minority partners of the Coalition – as seen within parliamentary debates and the values, approaches and 'voices' considered privileged (outlined in Section 6.3.3) – share similar arguments and values as those made by New Labour and found within Northern Ireland's RSE policy. Like New Labour, the Liberal Democrat party also approaches PSHEE/SRE from the 'Right of the child' perspective arguing that under the UNCRC young people have an entitlement to factual, balanced information and the right not only be listened to but to think for themselves and be involved in curriculum planning.

Whether or not a parent has the right to withdraw his or her child(ren) from part or all of school-based PSHEE/SRE lessons and, if so, until what age is a highly contested issue (across each political party) among English SRE policy actors, whereby little or no compromise has been made by either side to the debate. In contrast, while similar arguments have been made in Northern Ireland – e.g. young people should be listened to and have the right to factual, balanced and un-biased information and schools should work in partnership with parents – Northern Irish policy actors interviewed for this study state (as described within the Northern Ireland case) that the 'Right of the child' versus the 'Right of the parent' argument is not a central topic driving PD/RSE debates. Interviewed policy actors maintain that it is not an issue of 'either/or' but working in partnership (e.g. schools, young people, parents) to find balance.

That is, by a school involving both young people and parents in developing its RSE curriculum (1) the curriculum will be relevant to young people's lives and (2) parents will not only feel involved within the policy-making process and that their concerns are being heard, but they will also gain a better understanding of the issues young people say are relevant to their lives and, therefore, will be less likely to feel the need to have to withdraw their children from RSE. Current RSE policy (DENI, 2001) states that schools should, "as far as possible make alternative arrangements for any pupil whose parent wishes him/her to be excused from particular, or all, sex education classes" (p.2, No.3). Interviewed policy actors state that in practice very few parents do withdraw their children.

This first significant finding reveals that the contrasting 'Right of the child' and 'Right of the parent' approaches to PSHEE/SRE have (1) been a major stumbling block for the policy-making process in England and (2) been a major factor in derailing PSHEE and the non-biological aspects of SRE from having statutory status within the National Curriculum for England because policy actors within both approaches refuse to make concessions with regard to the parental right of withdrawal. While arguments found within the 'Right of the child' and 'Right of the parent' approaches are present within RSE policy debates in Northern Ireland, this debate is not a highly contentious focal issue within RSE policy development. While RSE policy (DENI, 2001) states that RSE is a statutory 'entitlement' of young people and that young people should be consulted with

so that their needs are met, schools are, likewise, expected to take parental concerns into account and make alternative arrangements for any child whose parent wishes to withdraw him or her from all or part of RSE.

Finding #2: Views on the effectiveness of sex and relationship(s) education are closely linked to one's position regarding young people's perceived 'innocence'

Although every PSHEE/SRE policy actor agrees that young people need to be protected, whether one considers PSHEE/SRE from a 'Protection through SRE' or 'Protection from loss of innocence' approach is connected to whether school-based SRE is viewed as a mode of protection for young people or a contributor to the policy problem (e.g. sexual socialisation, unplanned pregnancies, STIs), as well as if young people are believed to be sexually aware versus sexually 'innocent'.

This study's SRE Approaches Framework (pp.110-114) shows that two main arguments are grounded within the 'Protection' approach to SRE: (1) through school-based PSHEE/SRE children and young people become better prepared to protect themselves from sexual socialisation, unplanned pregnancies, STIs, sexual violence, etc. and (2) children and young people need to be protected *from* school-based PSHEE/SRE as it leads to 'loss of childhood innocence' by putting ideas into young people's heads. The main differences between these two arguments are: (1) the degree to which one views the effectiveness of SRE; (2) one's perception of young peoples' 'innocence'; and (3) one's own interpretation of evidence-based research.

Northern Ireland's statutory RSE policy (DENI, 2001) draws on evidence-based research to reject the argument that school-based RSE leads young people to engage in sexual intercourse earlier that those who receive their main source of information from parents, peers or their boyfriend or girlfriend (p.1, No.5). RSE is seen as a useful tool to aid young people in protecting themselves. In addition, young people are not viewed as being sexually naïve or 'innocent' because sensitive issues such as homosexuality, pornography, contraception, abortion, HIV and AIDS are so prevalently discussed within the media and wider society that "pupils will already be aware of them" (DENI, 2001: 4, No.17).

New Labour and the Liberal Democrat minority partner of the Coalition Government (similar to Northern Irish policy actors) have also drawn upon (and continue to) a 'Protection through SRE' approach. In agreement with Northern Ireland's RSE policy, given that from birth UK young people are immersed in a society and culture saturated with sexual imagery and messages – which reinforces the argument that young people are not sexually naïve or 'innocent' – both New Labour and Liberal Democrat peers consider SRE to be an important instrument to aid young people in becoming not only more resistant to sexual socialisation but also critical thinkers able to make better informed choices. Information gives 'power' as the development of knowledge and skills empowers young people to be able to delay first sexual activity and make healthier, informed decisions.

Within the 'Protection through SRE' approach, school-based SRE and RSE are seen as providing young people with a mode of 'protection' from sexualisation, poor sexual health and unplanned pregnancies when taught consistently and through a factual, unbiased, comprehensive programme of study. Within SRE-related debates both New Labour and Liberal Democrat policy actors argue that teaching school-based SRE in itself is not ineffective, but rather PSHEE and components of SRE having non-statutory status within the National Curriculum have resulted in 'patchy' quality and provision being taught across schools that has not met young people's changing needs.

In England, the Conservative-majority – although it has stated that PSHEE "remains an important and necessary part of all pupils' education" (Truss, 2013: para 2) – takes a 'From loss of innocence' approach to support its non-statutory PSHEE (and the non-biological aspects of SRE) stance. Within its 2011 PSHEE Review Remit (DfE, 2011) the Coalition stated that it had already ruled out making PSHEE statutory within the National Curriculum unless the review found "clear evidence of the benefit to pupils by doing so" (p.4, No.9). Within its final write up of the review (Truss, 2013) the Government stated it "considered it unnecessary" (para 3) to change non-statutory provision or create a new or standardised framework for the programme (para 3). Conservative party arguments have described SRE as being taught too soon, being too graphic and age-inappropriate, and putting ideas into young peoples' heads that lead them to experiment (Lord Alton, 2010; Dorries, 2011a; Leadsom, 2011b). Young people are perceived to be innocent and devoid

of any sexual self; therefore, they need to be protected (to some degree) from school-based SRE.

This second main finding reinforces policy literature regarding the significance of identifying the specific values driving policy actors' approaches and policy arguments. Policy deliberations are bound to fail if the basic value frames underpinning policy actors' perceived definitions of the problem within these discussions are not compatible (Friedmann, 1973; Rein, 1976; Fischer, 2003). When comparing SRE policy actors' views on the effectiveness of school-based SRE and young people's perceived 'innocence' against the approaches taken and values embedded within Northern Ireland's statutory RSE Policy, this analysis shows that there is a real disconnect between those who take a 'Protection through SRE'/young people are not sexually 'innocent' approach to that of a 'Protection *from* SRE'/young people are sexually 'innocent' stance.

Finding #3: In contrast to Northern Ireland's policy actors and New Labour and Liberal Democrat affiliates, the Conservative-majority of the Coalition places overwhelming value on teaching traditional 'academic' subjects at the expense of personal development

The third main finding to emerge from analysing the approaches and values underpinning SRE and RSE debates and policies is that a comprehensive sex and relationship(s) education programme of study is more likely to be agreed upon and implemented if policy actors see the role of schools and education as developing the whole person instead of just preparing young people for employment. As was discussed within the Northern Ireland case chapter, growing concern that the previous NIC framework was too over-prescribed, needed to be slimmed down, and was not effectively preparing young people for life beyond employment led to a four-year curriculum review (1999-2003). This review resulted in a revised, statutory and comprehensive RSE framework for primary and secondary schools and with 'Personal Development' being made compulsory within the newly statutory Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) for primary and Learning for Life and Work (LLW) post-primary Areas of Learning (legislated within the 2006 revised NIC). (As a brief reminder, PDMU and LLW are the equivalent of PSHEE in England.)

The role of the school – argued by young people, additional RSE policy actors (e.g. educationalists, health sector representatives, parents, third sector interest groups) and supported within legislation – is viewed as being to prepare young people for more than just work, for wider issues in adult life (e.g. emotional and physical wellbeing, interpersonal and social skills, relationships, etc.). The revised NIC strays from focusing exclusively on traditional 'academic' subjects (e.g. History, Maths, English) and instead places greater emphasis on personal skills development and creativity. This perhaps explains why PDMU and LLW are not contentious policy areas, unlike PSHEE in England, and instead are viewed as entitlements within the NIC. Likewise, as the role of schools and education is to aid young people in building life skills, developing their own concept of 'self' and wellbeing, it is perhaps unsurprising that comprehensive, statutory RSE is not only taught within Northern Ireland schools – as opposed to strictly teaching only the biological aspects of the subject – but also has statutory minimum content legislated within the Personal Development strands of PDMU and LLW for each Key Stage of the curriculum.

Mirroring the approaches taken and values embedded within Northern Ireland's NIC and RSE policies, New Labour (during its time in government and as evidence in recent statutory PSHEE/SRE-related arguments made by its parliamentarians) has pushed for statutory PSHEE within the National Curriculum for England. New Labour takes the approach that schools have a responsibility to teach PSHEE/SRE, given that schools have "a major contribution to make to young peoples' personal development and wellbeing" (Knight, 2008c: col WS77). The skills taught within PSHEE and SRE are argued to be beneficial to every young person (regardless if they are taught at home as well or not). Thus, PSHEE (and subsequently SRE) needs to be made a priority subject within the curriculum so that young people's education is broad-based and well-rounded and gives them the skills to adjust to adult life.

Policy documents published by the current Coalition have stressed the Government's belief that the National Curriculum needs to be less prescriptive and slimmed down so that local schools have more discretion and flexibility to teach. As was discussed within the England case chapter PSHEE was omitted from the Coalition's recent review of the National Curriculum. The Government has continually stated that it wants a 'slim'

National Curriculum that "reflects the essential body of knowledge" (DfE, 2011b: No.6) found within 'core' subjects. The Government has also argued that a less prescriptive National Curriculum will free up space and time for schools to teach non-core subjects such as PSHEE if they so desire. Thus the Coalition Government – specifically the Conservative-majority partner– does not consider the values and skills taught within PSHEE and the non-biological aspects of SRE to be 'essential knowledge' for young people to learn, as all of PSHEE and parts of SRE continue to remain non-statutory. As the Conservative-majority in the Coalition approach PSHEE/SRE through a 'Non-statutory' and 'Schools are not responsible to teach' approach, this third main finding suggests – like the Advocacy Coalition Framework – that PSHEE and parts of SRE will continue to remain non-statutory unless an external shock occurs within the policy system (e.g. a change of government) or policy-oriented learning occurs within the Conservative party (Sabatier, 1988; Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993, 1999).

The three significant findings discussed within this section support social policy literature discussed within Chapter Three that regard policy-making as being a messy, non-linear, contested process (Bowe, Ball & Gold, 1992; Turner, 1997; Moran, 2005; Bell & Stevenson, 2006) in which policy derives from policy actors with varying degrees of power "negotiat[ing], bargaining, compet[ing] and cooperat[ing]" (McNay & Ozga, 1985: 1) to have their values embedded within policy. The next section focuses on identifying similarities and differences within the membership of England's SRE and Northern Ireland's RSE policy-making networks.

8.3 *Access to 'policy speak' within SRE and RSE policy-making*

As has been discussed within this thesis, policies can be viewed as a composition of values allocated by an 'authority' (Easton, 1953). It has been beyond the scope of this thesis to identify and describe all possible policy actors engaged within both the SRE and RSE policy-making processes. However, the England (Chapter Six) and Northern Ireland (Chapter Seven) case chapters of this thesis have highlighted specific policy actors that have been (and in some cases continue to be) actively engaged in trying to lead/influence/shift SRE and RSE policy-making within Parliament, the NIA and other policy fora. Both chapters also offer a glimpse of the complexity of the SRE and RSE

policy networks by highlighting the relationships and interconnectedness between those engaged in SRE and RSE policy-making.

This section discusses three key findings that emerge from comparing and contrasting the data and main findings regarding policy actors actively engaged in PSHEE/SRE and PD/RSE policy-making during the time period studied. Conducting such a 'home international' comparison is important to address the aim of this study as it illuminates whether the same types of policy actors (e.g. politicians, third sector interest groups, academics) are given access to PSHEE/SRE and PD/RSE policy-making contexts, as well as whether both countries adopt similar styles (e.g. 'ground up' or 'top down') to sex and relationship(s) education policy-making.

Finding #4: PSHEE/SRE is highly politicised within Parliament, while PD/RSE is significantly less so within the Northern Ireland Assembly

This study's analysis of the Westminster Parliament *Hansard* found that 127 parliamentarians participated in at least one or more of 214 PSHEE/SRE-related policy-making contexts (e.g. written questions, policy debates, committee meetings) between the five-year period from January 2008 to January 2013 (See: Table 10 and *Appendix H*). Yet, despite assertions that Northern Ireland has a very 'different' culture around sexual attitudes and behaviours because of the deep-seated religious nature of its culture, RSE is not a politically charged issue in the Northern Ireland Assembly. Over a 13-year time period (December 1999 – June 2013) only 15 parliamentary-level policy actors (seen in Table 20) have engaged within the PD/RSE policy-making debate through just 19 written questions asked and answered and one memorandum (seen in Table 19). However, one policy actor did explain that RSE had been debated to some extent within the Health and Education Committees as well as by the All-party Sexual Health Group (Gregg, 2012) – all government-led fora.

Looking at these SRE and RSE parliamentarian participation figures, the thesis' fourth finding reinforces the argument that education policy in England is tightly controlled at the national parliamentary level (Bache, 2003: 303), with the government mediating the policy agenda and policy-making process (Taylor et al., 1997). Whereas in Northern

Ireland, RSE is rarely discussed within the Assembly, it is not high on politicians' radars and Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) are not seen to be driving the policy agenda (Purvis, 2012; Health Representative, 2012; Education and Library Board Representative #1; Education and Library Board Representative #2, 2012). Thus, the highly politicised nature of PSHEE/SRE in Westminster Parliament stands in stark contrast to the lack of PD/RSE policy-making occurring within the NIA, and may be part of the explanation for why PSHEE and parts of SRE remain non-statutory in the English National Curriculum.

Finding #5: New Labour consulted with a broad spectrum of policy actors to develop its PSHEE/SRE policy, while the Coalition Government has adopted a more 'closed' system to policy-making

Consulting with a broad range of relevant and interested individuals and groups can aid in reducing problems of compliance by producing an atmosphere of appreciation and inclusion and generating greater dedication to ensuring a policy's success (Cairney, 2009: 363). During the process of reviewing PSHEE and SRE, the former New Labour Government consulted with and drew upon research evidence from a wide range of individuals, interest groups and organisations. The Government's decision to make PSHEE and comprehensive SRE statutory was influenced by young people's views (most especially through the 2007 UK Youth Parliament SRE Survey) and findings from two external reviews (SRE External Steering Group, 2008; Macdonald, 2009), two consultations (one public on statutory PSHEE reforms (QCDA, 2009) and one consulting with parents on their views about SRE (Sherbert Research, 2009)) and a mapping study on effective PSHEE models (Formby et al., 2011). These five key policy developments were used within the production of PSHEE/SRE policy under the former New Labour Government.

When calculating those given access to 'policy speak' under New Labour (as seen within the numerical data provided within the key policy developments mentioned above), over 20,507 young people were consulted with during the policy-making process, along with over 600 teachers, more than 422 parents and well over 100 different organisations and institutions (e.g. subject associations, teacher unions, faith-based and humanist groups,

children advocacy groups, parent groups, health providers) representing diverse views on the topic of PSHEE and SRE. Members of the general public, professional organisations, teachers unions and educationalists, parents, young people and more shared their views through surveys, consultations, focus groups, within school field visits and through written and online correspondence.

In contrast, the Coalition Government has conducted a single internal review of PSHEE. The review's concluding results and comments supported the Conservative-majority's position toward non-statutory PSHEE and non-comprehensive SRE. When looking at the specific voices included within and drawn upon to inform the Coalition's PSHEE review, significantly fewer individuals and groups were included in this process. Table 16 (p.196) within the England case chapter illustrates that those given access to take part in the Coalition's PSHEE review mostly consisted of parents (i.e. 168), followed by 'VCS sector/charity' representatives, then various types of educationalists, health representatives and religious groups, and lastly young people (i.e. 5 pupils). Furthermore, the DfE has not commissioned nor actively sought out PSHEE/SRE-related evidence-based research as the former New Labour did. Thus, the PSHEE/SRE policy-making process under the Coalition appears to be a 'closed' system with limited people being given 'privileged' access to policy development.

This fifth main finding – much like Philip Davies' (2011) previously mentioned quote – suggests that the Coalition Government (in particular the Conservative-majority) "just want to forget that [PSHEE and SRE] ever exist[ed] and [want to] just kick [them] into the long grass and do nothing at all with [them]". This finding also shows that the PSHEE/SRE policy-making process in England can be easily manipulated or ignored on a parliamentary level when the Government (or majority partner) in power has little desire to participate in policy-making.

Finding #6: In contrast to current non-statutory PSHEE/SRE in England, Northern Ireland's statutory PD/RSE policy was developed through a 'ground up' policy approach

The national sex and relationship(s) education policy-making processes in England and Northern Ireland represent two differing policy styles. Under the Coalition Government, PSHEE and SRE policy in England is being 'developed' and implemented through a 'top down' style of policy-making, while Northern Ireland's statutory Personal Development (PD) and comprehensive RSE policies are the product of a 'ground up' policy approach. A 'top down' policy strategy involves more internalised policy-making, whereby central government develops a policy (through minimal consultation with interest groups and the public) and then mandates community-level and local school practitioners implement these policy (Moon & Richardson, 1984; Cairney, 2008; Birrell & Heenan, 2013). A 'ground up' policy style features three main components: "[moving] away from a majoritarian government, [utilising] a more consensual approach and [embracing] a more participative ethos" (Birrell & Heenan, 2013: 766) to policy-making.

As discussed in Chapter Seven, Northern Ireland's current legislation (i.e. *Education (Northern Ireland) Order 2006* and *Education (Curriculum Minimum Content) (NI) Order 2007*) and statutory policy (i.e. DENI's RSE *Circular 2001/15*) relating to PD and comprehensive RSE were not imposed onto local schools by the NIA or DENI. These policies are also not a product of policy copying or transfer. Instead, both the statutory PD curriculum and the minimum content it must teach (including comprehensive RSE) were developed through evidence-based research and open, wide-spread, public consultation. Unsolicited by DENI, the review of the NIC and its effectiveness was instigated by the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) – a non-departmental public body – largely due to young people stating within the *Northern Ireland Curriculum Cohort Study* that the NIC was inadequately meeting their needs and they wanted more personal, social and health education. In its first consultation, not only did CCEA invite *every* primary and post-primary school to participate within the review, but Northern Irish young people and parents, approximately 8,353 local school representatives, 700 local school teachers, and about 1,300 stakeholders (including community, health, educational and church organisations) directly contributed to the review's first consultation (CCEA, 2001c). As a reminder, the review of the NIC spanned over four years and three phases for both the primary and post-primary stages of schooling.

Drawing on this section's first significant finding that parliamentary-level policy actors are driving PD/RSE policy, this third key finding indicates that PD and RSE policy-making is not dominated, nor is it superimposed onto schools, by the Government. Instead, governmental bodies (e.g. DENI and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety), non-departmental public bodies (e.g. CCEA, ELBs, Public Health Agency), third sector interest groups and organisations, as well as local schools, academics, young people and parents, appear to be given similar access to 'policy speak' and work in close partnership with one another to plan, develop and implement not only PD and RSE policy, but education policy more generally.

Regarding PSHEE and SRE policy in England, statutory reforms put forward by the former New Labour Government appear to have been the product of an attempted 'ground up' style of policy-making. The 2007 UK Youth Parliament SRE survey of over 21,000 UK young people helped inform New Labour's *Children's Plan* that resulted in the DCSF commissioning the five key reviews and consultations mentioned above. As was discussed, not did New Labour give a considerable number of third sector interest groups and organisations (representing a wide spectrum of views) access to PSHEE and SRE policy-making contexts, but young people were also significantly involved in, and had their voices heard, during policy deliberations, as did parents, local authorities and school-level governors and PSHEE/SRE practitioners. New Labour's 'ground up' policy style to PSHEE and SRE policy development and implementation promoted "professional relationships both across a range of sectors and within the public" (Walker, 2004: 248), showing a commitment to public participation within the policy-making process through a participative ethos and joined-up policy-making.

In contrast to both Northern Ireland's PD/RSE and the former New Labour Government's PSHEE/SRE style of policy-making, the Coalition Government has employed a 'top down' style for its PSHEE/SRE policy-making (or lack thereof). The Coalition Government (most especially its Conservative-majority partner) has consistently voiced its desire to 'cut red tape' and "reduc[e] unnecessary prescription, bureaucracy and central control throughout the system" (DfE, 2011b: No.5). Specifically regarding school-based PSHEE and SRE, the Coalition has argued for non-statutory PSHEE (and non-comprehensive SRE) so that "teachers [have] the flexibility to use their judgment about

how best to deliver PSHE education" (DfE, 2010: 46).

It could be argued that by not legislating statutory PSHEE (and parts of SRE), the Coalition Government are, indeed, decentralising policy-making and leaving it to local community policy actors to create a 'ground up' policy. However, findings from this study suggest that the Coalition Government has instead intentionally dismissed the numerous and loud 'ground level' voices (e.g. young people, parents, local authorities, school governors, PSHEE/SRE practitioners) found in the PSHEE/SRE reviews/consultations conducted before 2010. Instead of facilitating a 'ground up', partnership sharing PSHEE/SRE policy-making process, the Coalition has exercised its power within government to limit those given acess to 'policy speak'. This finding supports Dowding's (1995) assertion that "the material power and legitimacy [of the majority party in Parliament] can ride roughshod over any policy community" (Dowding, 1995: 144) or network, regardless of whether the values of the majority policy actors within the network run counter to those of the current government's.

The three significant findings discussed within this section show that even when the majority of those at the 'ground level' receiving and implementing sex and relationships-related education petition the government to make it statutory and comprehensive, it can be prevented if sex and relationship(s) education is a highly contentious and politicised issue and the majority power holder within the government holds strongly held values that go against such calls.

The next section focuses on comparing and contrasting those perceived to be 'influential' (i.e. reputational power) within England's SRE and Northern Ireland's RSE policy-making processes, as such an analysis not only illuminates *whose* approaches and values have been prioritised within SRE and RSE policy, but also enables an investigation into whether there is a correlation between those who are seen as 'influential' and the statutory/non-statutory status of SRE/RSE policy.

8.4 The 'power' to influence SRE and RSE policy development

It has been said that analysing the exercise and distribution of 'power' is key to examining policy-making processes (Laswell, 1950; Lukes, 1974; Foucault, 1981). It is also argued that those with access to policy-making contexts and those with the 'power' to 'influence' policy development are concentrated within a policy network (Marsh & Rhodes, 1992: 264). Therefore, this section discusses three key findings that emerge from comparing and contrasting the data and main results described within the England and Northern Ireland case chapters of this thesis regarding: (1) whom those interviewed for this study consider to be 'influential' in driving SRE and RSE policy-making; (2) the specific advocacy agendas acknowledged as having more privileged access to 'policy speak' within the SRE and RSE policy networks; and (3) the role, exercise and distribution of decision-making power within the SRE and RSE policy networks.

These ideas are important because they not only provide further analysis of whether current SRE and RSE policy have been and/or are made through a similar process, but whether similar policy actors are considered to be 'influential' in driving/shifting/rejecting policy debates pertaining to PSHEE/SRE and PD/RSE. The findings presented here should also enable a better understanding of the power relationships within both the SRE and RSE policy networks and the exercise and distribution of power within decision-making at the 'macro' level of the state.

Finding #7: Those with 'Health', 'Faith-based' and 'Children, young people & rights' advocacy agendas are viewed as having significantly more 'influence' within the SRE policy network, while the health sector in Northern Ireland has considerable PD/RSE policy influence

Nineteen PSHEE/SRE and fourteen PD/RSE policy actors known to be active within England's and Northern Ireland's sex and relationship(s) education policy-making processes were interviewed for this study. Each interviewed policy actor was asked to identify whether he or she perceives any particular people and/or groups to be 'influential' in driving PSHEE/SRE or PD/RSE policy-making. Table 12 in the England case chapter identified that SRE policy actors view 25 individuals, interest groups, third

sector organisations and coalitions of actors as having particular PSHEE/SRE policy 'influence', with Brook, the Family Planning Association (fpa), the Catholic Church, the UK Youth Parliament and the Faith Schools' Providers Group exerting more 'influence' (according to reputational measures) within the PSHEE/SRE debate over others engaged in policy-making.

Excluding the three individual SRE policy actors named as being 'influential' (i.e. Gill Frances, Nick Gibb MP and Michael Gove MP) and one interviewee's 'uncertain' response, the remaining 21 referenced policy actors within Table 12 represent six main advocacy agendas: Faith-based; Health; Children, young people & rights; Education; Anti-abortion; and Family. However, when focusing on the specific advocacy agendas of the top five groups perceived as being the 'most influential' (i.e. Brook, fpa, the Catholic Church, UK Youth Parliament and the Faith Schools' Providers Group), the voices of 'Health', 'Faith-based' and 'Children, young people & rights' type groups appear to have greater SRE policy influence or privileged 'policy speak' within the PSHEE/SRE network.

In contrast, interviewed PD/RSE policy actors for this study named 18 different individuals, groups and coalitions of actors as having greater 'power' to 'influence' policy (seen in Table 21); however, the perceived reputational power of those cited are similar. For example, although DENI was cited by the most PD/RSE policy actors as being particularly 'influential' in PD/RSE policy development (four out of the 14 interviewed), this number is not much higher than for other individuals and third sector organisations cited. This finding suggests that interviewed policy actors do not view any one specific individual, organisation or group to have substantially more 'influence' within the PD/RSE policy-making process.

As discussed within the Northern Ireland case chapter, each of the 18 'influential' policy actors can be categorised into three main advocacy agenda groups: Health (12 policy actors); Education (4 policy actors); and Faith-based (2 policy actors). Although these three advocacy agendas are found within both the SRE and RSE policy networks, this finding suggests that the RSE policy-making process, unlike SRE in England, appears to be highly driven by the health sector or at the very least health arguments appear to have

significant 'power' to influence policy developments.

Analysis also shows that the specific types of policy actors perceived to be the 'most influential' within the PD/RSE policy-making process differ from those cited by PSHEE/SRE policy actors. PD and RSE are not highly politicised or topics much discussed within the NIA, and PD/RSE policy actors identified a wide range of organisations as highly influential in policy-making (as seen in Figure 9, p.232). These ranged from Board of Governors and local management of schools, statutory governmental departments (i.e. DENI and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPSNI)) and non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) accountable to DENI and the DHSSPSNI. Meanwhile, the statutory PSHEE/SRE debate in England is, as shown, a highly contentious and politicised topic within Westminster Parliament. However, SRE policy actors interviewed for this study did not mention any statutory governmental body (e.g. DCSF, DfE, DoH) or examinations and assessment agency (e.g. Ofsted) as having particular power to 'influence' SRE policy. Additionally, no interviewed policy actor cited local authorities or school-level governors, headteachers or PSHEE/SRE coordinators or practitioners as being members of the SRE policy network with the power to 'influence' policy.

This seventh main finding mirrors policy network literature that describes the potential for policy change to be at its greatest when power is concentrated (Taylor et al., 1997; Adam & Kriesi, 2007), whereas, when power is similarly fragmented amongst network members with opposing policy agendas, beliefs and perceptions of the policy problem, a process of bargaining and negotiation is likely to occur which will result in small incremental policy changes (Adam & Kriesi, 2007). Perhaps PD and comprehensive RSE are statutory within the Northern Ireland Curriculum because power to influence policy within the network appears to largely driven by one specific advocacy agenda (i.e. Health). Comparably, the argument can be made that PSHEE and the non-biological aspects of SRE continue to remain non-statutory within the National Curriculum for England because power within the PSHEE/SRE policy network is similarly fragmented among three differing policy agendas (i.e. 'Health', 'Faith-based' and 'Children, young people & rights'). These three policy agendas have dissimilar deep core (e.g. fundamental values, views regarding the role and responsibilities of government and schools) and

policy core (e.g. the cause of a policy problem and possible policy solutions) beliefs that are so varied and strongly held (Sabatier & Weible, 2007: 194).

Finding #8: While two clear advocacy coalitions divide the policy debate within the SRE policy network, advocacy coalitions are less overtly evident within Northern Ireland's RSE policy network

The existence of a policy network not only affects policy-making outcomes by limiting what does and does not get put onto the policy agenda, but networks can also act to constrict policy change (Marsh & Rhodes, 1992: 262) by limiting policy-making participation and favouring particular interests (Rhodes, 2006: 436). As described within Chapter Four of this thesis, the Advocacy Coalition Framework suggests that within a policy network, policy actors are "aggregated into a number (usually one to four) of 'advocacy coalitions'" (Sabatier, 1998: 103), with each coalition composed of both governmental and non-governmental individuals and groups who both "(a) share a set of normative and causal beliefs and (b) engage in a non-trivial degree of coordinated activity over time" (Sabatier, 1998: 103). Within both the England and Northern Ireland case chapters, network analysis (Rhodes, 1988, 2006; Parsons, 1995; Wasserman & Faust, 1999; Adam & Kriesi, 2007) and Advocacy Coalition Framework (Sabatier, 1988; Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993, 1999) literature and procedures were drawn upon more generally as tools not only to identify the key policy actors present within both the SRE and RSE policy networks, but to map the links between, interactions of and relationships amongst those having network membership.

As described within the England case chapter (also seen within Table 12), 21 of the 25 policy actors mentioned as being 'influential' within the SRE policy-making process represent an interest group, third sector organisation or larger coalition of actors. In addition, a majority (i.e. 19) of those 25 'influential' policy actors are known to be members of a larger coalition of actors, with some third sector organisations – such as Brook, fpa and Terrence Higgins Trust – extending their resources and access to contexts of policy-making by aligning themselves with more than one coalition of actors. Interestingly, 18 of those considered to be 'influential' are members of one or more of the four specific coalitions of actors cited by those interviewed for this study as having

particular influence within the SRE policy network: the Faith Schools' Providers Group, the Sexual Health Forum, the Sex Education Forum and the Sex and Relationships Education Council.

Furthermore, comparing and contrasting the main approaches, values, advocacy agendas and policy objectives of the policy actors perceived as having the greatest 'influence' within the policy debate has led to the finding that the SRE policy network from 2008-2013 was divided by two main advocacy coalitions: those advocating for comprehensive school-based SRE and alternatively those advocating for 'abstinence-only' or 'abstinence-plus' SRE programmes. This analysis helped inform the structure of Figure 4 within the England case chapter that displays a non-comprehensive view of the SRE policy network.

In comparison, analysis of the organisational structure and makeup (e.g. mission statements, values, services provided, core ethos) of the 18 different policy actors perceived to be driving Northern Ireland's PD/RSE policy development (illustrated within Table 21) found that the majority (i.e. 11) of those considered to be 'influential' represent either a statutory governmental department or a non-departmental public body that is accountable to the government (e.g. ELBs or the Public Health Agency). The close knit nature of Northern Ireland's policy network and scarcity of non-governmental bodies within it – interviewees for instance mentioned only four third sector organisations as having policy influence – make it difficult to identify the main advocacy coalitions (if any) dividing the RSE policy network. For example, 12 out of the 18 policy actors identified within Table 21 represent the health sector and appear to share similar policy beliefs, values and perceptions of the policy problem – highlighting the difficulty of identifying the oppositional nodal point whereby linkages between policy actors' arguments and approaches get disconnected.

Furthermore, eight out of the 14 interviewed PD/RSE policy actors state that RSE policy is developed through a joined-up, close partnership approach – most especially between the DHSSPSNI and DENI. When looking at this study's non-comprehensive network analysis diagram of the RSE policy network for the time period studied (Figure 10), only two policy actors who are cited as being 'influential' do not have clear, direct links to

either the DHSSPSNI or DENI: Churches in Northern Ireland and Love for Life (an external RSE provider that delivers programmes through a Christian ethos to over 30,000 young people across the Republic and North of Ireland each year).

This eighth key finding demonstrates that unlike the SRE policy-making process in England – in which two main advocacy coalitions (i.e. 'Comprehensive SRE' and 'Abstinence-only/+') clearly divide the SRE policy network, with interest groups and third sector organisations having the most perceived power to 'influence' policy – advocacy coalition divisions within the RSE policy network in Northern Ireland are less defined and third sector groups are not perceived as having particular policy influence. This finding reinforces social policy literature which argues that the role, connections and interactions of lobbying and pressure groups within Northern Ireland are still evolving – given Northern Ireland's government has only more recently been devolved (Birrell & Heenan, 2013: 778). One possible explanation as to what has been conducive to policy-making in RSE is that policy actors have been able to come to a consensus regarding statutory, comprehensive, school-based PD/RSE because there are not – unlike the two opposing, main advocacy coalitions dividing the SRE policy network in England – stringent hardline positions dividing the network. This could be in part because policy network relationships are in their infancy and still being developing. An additional or alternative reading may be that the compulsory power-sharing model of decision-making within the policy-making process mirrors the Northern Ireland Assembly's proportional representation principle whereby "power is dispersed across parties, encouraging the formation of coalitions based on common aims" (Cairney, 2011: 211).

Finding #9: Under the current Coalition Government SRE policy-making has been developed through an elitist 'macro' level system of the state, while RSE in Northern Ireland has been developed through a pluralist, power-sharing model of decision-making power

As was discussed in Section 8.3 of this chapter, under the current Coalition Government, PSHEE and SRE policy in England have been and is currently developed and implemented through a 'top down' style to policy-making. Meanwhile Northern Ireland's statutory PD and comprehensive RSE policies are the product of a 'ground up'

policy approach. It is perhaps not surprising that current PSHEE and SRE policy are products of a 'top down' policy style, given Westminster Parliament's majoritarian-style of government and the Coalition Government's (more specifically the Conservative-majority) refusal to engage with the broader PSHEE/SRE policy network's views – especially local community (e.g. young people, parents, local authorities) and school-level (e.g. teacher unions, PSHEE and SRE practitioners, headteachers) policy actors. Policy power is concentrated within the government (Birrell & Heenan, 2013).

This 'authoritative power' to overshadow the SRE policy network, as well as the current Coalition's closed-system of policy-making whereby little evidence-based research has been commissioned or drawn upon, a limited number of people and organisations have been given access to 'policy speak' and even fewer opportunities have been opened up to the general public to voice support or concerns toward school-based PSHEE and SRE, supports the contention that there is an elitist power structure to SRE policy-making. This elitist 'macro' level model of decision-making power means that power to influence PSHEE/SRE policy remains in the hands of a privileged few, where there is unequal access to contexts of policy-making, and the power to influence policy is largely concentrated within the Government and state institutions.

That is, unlike rational-choice theory suggests, the Coalition's current non-statutory PSHEE and non-comprehensive SRE policies are "not simply the results of a rational assessment of available options" (Marsh & Smith, 2006: 6) made through a linear process, but rather they are the products of a complex process and "reflect [the] past conflicts and the culture and values of [select] decision-makers" (Marsh & Smith, 2006: 6). While some might argue that the Coalition has 'muddled through' (Lindblom, 1959) SRE-related policy problems instead of necessarily trying to solve them (as is the case when drawing upon an incremental model to decision-making), this study has argued that the Coalition has skewed the possibility for 'policy speak' "in favour of certain groups" (Bochel & Bochel, 2004: 36) – those who wish to promote non-statutory and non-comprehensive school-based PSHEE and SRE.

With regard to the PD/RSE policy-making process in Northern Ireland, the findings from this study have highlighted that both the statutory PD and comprehensive RSE

programmes of study have not been superimposed down onto local schools and community-level policy actors by the NIA or DENI, nor are both policies copied or transferred from one of Northern Ireland's neighbouring UK counterparts. Instead, both policies are the outcome of evidence-based research, multiple public consultations spanning over several development phases which have used a wide range of methods (interviews, school field visits, focus groups, questionnaires, seminars, community meetings and conferences), and have involved a wide range of policy actors (e.g. individuals, statutory government bodies, non-departmental public bodies, third sector organisations, parents, young people and coalitions of actors) – all of whom have had access to contexts of policy-making and 'policy speak'. As was discussed within the Northern Ireland case chapter, even at the national NIA level, "access to Assembly members and committees is relatively open and submissions to public consultations is quite numerous" (Birrell & Heenan, 2013: 778).

This study therefore argues that at the 'macro' level, the exercise of decision-making power by and within Northern Ireland's state to develop PD and RSE policy is pluralistic in nature. The RSE policy network is much more fluid and 'open' than England's current SRE policy network, which appears to be based on a 'closed' system of negotiation among a few elite people/groups. In Northern Ireland, although policy actors often cited members within the health sector as having particular PD/RSE policy influence, there is still no centralised source of power dominating the PD and RSE policy-making process. Power is instead dispersed among a multitude of different policy actors with those considered to be 'influential' or wielding the most power continuously shifting due to changing relationships among network members.

This chapter's ninth finding is significant because for a culture often argued to be 'different' with regard to sexual attitudes and behaviours (Schubotz et al., 2004), which is seen as linked to Northern Ireland being a deeply religious society – PD and comprehensive RSE, despite its arguably contentious nature, have statutory status within each Key Stage of the Northern Ireland Curriculum. School-based PD and RSE are statutory because they have been heavily influenced by Northern Ireland's 'open' and 'ground up' policy style to policy-making whereby decision-making power at the 'macro' level of the state is diffused and more evenly distributed among a pluralistic group of

policy actors: the general public; local community and school-level PD, health and RSE practitioners; governmental bodies; academics; third sector organisations; etc.

Alternatively, school-based PSHEE and comprehensive SRE continue to remain non-statutory within the National Curriculum for England regardless of the fact that the DfE has been viewed (discussed in Chapter One) as the 'lead department' (Raffe et al., 1999: 12), setting the tone for more progressive education across the UK (Raffe et al., 1999). PSHEE and SRE are seen to be national policy issues at the state level which require debate. While the former New Labour Government attempted to follow a similar 'ground up' policy style and pluralistic approach like Northern Ireland, this was cut short by the external shock of the 2010 general election.

The next section to this chapter provides a summary of the main findings from this study and how it makes an original contribution to education social policy research.

8.5 *Main findings and contribution to research*

This study has developed a framework for examining the various policy-making processes in relation to sex and relationship(s) education becoming a statutory component in the English and Northern Irish national curricula. Focusing on four separate components, this framework includes:

(1) Drawing upon *Hansard* texts, interviews with known policy actors and policy network analysis and Advocacy Coalition Framework literature more broadly so that the particular individuals and/or groups with access to 'policy speak' become apparent and thereby resulting in the identification of the boundary lines of the policy networks;

(2) Applying thematic and content analysis to both *Hansard* and sex and relationship(s) education-related policy texts as well as the verbatim word-for-word transcripts of interviewed policy actors so that the various approaches policy actors have taken toward sex and relationship(s) education and its status within the curriculum become clearer;

(3) Utilising thematic and content analysis of sex and relationship(s) education-related policy texts, *Hansard* transcripts and data collected from interviewed policy actors to identify the explicit and implicit values represented/embedded within both policy actor arguments and the wording of policy texts; and

(4) Asking interviewed policy actors to identify those considered to have the greatest policy 'influence' (or perceived reputational power) within the policy-making process and using these findings, as well as those resulting from the first three components to this framework, to identify the policy style (i.e. 'top down' or 'ground up') drawn upon so that the distribution of power at the 'macro' level of the state and 'meso' level policy network becomes visible.

By utilising the framework mentioned above, this research was able to fill two significant gaps within education social policy literature: a focus on sex and relationship(s) education policy-making and what factors shape this; and a 'home international' comparison of sex and relationship(s) policy-making in England and Northern Ireland and how policy actors within both countries conceptualise the policy debate. Additionally, as Northern Ireland has been regularly excluded from UK-wide 'home international' comparisons and there is only a small volume of literature pertaining to RSE (typically focused on its delivery within schools), this study presents the policy-making story behind the process that informed Northern Ireland's current legislation (i.e. *Education (Curriculum Minimum Content) (NI) Order 2007*) and statutory policy (i.e. Department of Education, Northern Ireland (DENI) *Circular 2001/15 Relationships and Sexuality Education*).

Some findings within this thesis provide further support to arguments some other social policy and educational researchers have posited. Specific to SRE policy-making in England, this study's findings confirm Halstead's (1998) assertion that behind policy actors' disagreements about what the aims of sex and relationship(s) education should be "lie incompatible and conflicting values" (p.234). This is perhaps best highlighted when looking at the SRE Approaches Framework (pp.110-114) specifically created for the purpose of this study. This framework provides detailed, critical insight into the core approaches, varying arguments and specific values SRE policy actors in England have drawn upon and utilised to influence/shift/reject recent policy. This study suggests that

SRE policy actors (during the 2008-2013 time frame studied) approach school-based SRE from one or more of seven specific approaches while defending 11 main types of values. This novel framework allows for a deeper understanding of the 'linkages' among policy actors' arguments and can also be used as a helpful tool since it draws attention to oppositional nodal points whereby connections between policy actors can become detached leading those with similar policy approaches and values to end up on opposing sides of the statutory/non-statutory PSHEE/SRE debate.

This study's findings also support network analysis and Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) literature that assert that the "most useful unit of analysis for understanding the overall policy process ... is not any specific governmental organisation or programme but rather a policy subsystem or domain" (Sabatier, 1998: 99). This study found it to be useful to draw upon network analysis procedures (Wasserman & Faust, 1999; Adam & Kriesi, 2007) and the ACF (Sabatier, 1988; Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993, 1999) more broadly to ascertain major factors that have and are still affecting the overall sex and relationship(s) education policy-making processes in both England and Northern Ireland. Network analysis and ACF literature was also helpful in aiding in the mapping out the boundary lines of both the SRE and RSE policy networks and in deducing what has been conducive to RSE policy-making in Northern Ireland and what 'changes' need to occur within the SRE policy-making process in order for PSHEE and the non-biological aspects of SRE to become statutory within the National Curriculum for England.

The ACF identifies that in order for policy changes or belief change within an advocacy coalition or even the larger policy network to occur, policy-oriented learning and/or an external perturbation or 'shock' to the policy system needs to occur (Sabatier & Weible, 2007: 198). Findings from this study show that, as policy network literature argues, the potential for policy change is greatest when power is concentrated (Taylor et al., 1997; Adam & Kriesi, 2007), producing a 'policy monopoly'; however, when decision-making power is equally fragmented amongst network members it is more likely that small incremental changes to policy will occur (Adam & Kriesi, 2007).

Under the former New Labour, PSHEE and comprehensive SRE were due to become statutory components within the National Curriculum for England – for both the primary and secondary curricula. Statutory reforms to policy appear to have been the product of an attempted 'ground up' policy style driven by young people's voices and evidence-based research and adopting a model of pluralism that focused on 'partnerships' and public participation (Walker, 2004: 248). Despite a policy consensus being reached, PSHEE and comprehensive SRE continue to remain non-statutory. This study proposes that the external 'shock' of the change of Government in 2010 from a New Labour Government to that of a Conservative-led Coalition resulted in not only the re-organisation of policy actors given access to 'policy speak', but also decision-making power being more centrally located within the 'macro' level of the state. This 'closed', 'top down' SRE policy-making style adopted by the Coalition Government and based on an elitism model is a (or perhaps the) major contributing factor as to why SRE remains non-statutory today.

Through this study's 'home international' comparison of England's PSHEE/SRE and Northern Ireland's PD/RSE policy processes, we can conclude that despite Northern Ireland's assumed contentious status with regard to sex and relationship(s) education due to its deep religious divisions, both Personal Development and comprehensive RSE are statutory components within the Northern Ireland Curriculum for each Key Stage in (large) part due to the 'open' and 'ground up' policy style to policy-making.

Northern Ireland's political structure of compulsory power-sharing through its Proportional Representation government, as well as its inclusive, 'ground up' approach to the development of education policies – as seen with the 2006 revised NIC – is arguably a more democratic and 'open' policy process than that found within current English politics and education policies led under the incumbent Conservative/Liberal Democrat Coalition Government. Education policy in Northern Ireland has been made within an atmosphere of inclusion whereby a diverse and broad spectrum of individuals and groups (at both the national, local community and schools levels) have been given access to contexts of policy-making. Alternatively, under the current Coalition Government, education policy in England continues to be made through a highly internalised process within central government and mandated down ('top down') to communities, local authorities and

schools to implement. This policy process has produced an atmosphere of 'privilege', where only a select few are *given* access to 'policy speak' and the voices of educationalists, parents and those young people receiving education have become marginalised.

However, SRE policy-making under the former New Labour Government, much like how RSE policy in Northern Ireland has been developed, involved policy discussions with policy actors at both the national and local schools levels – most especially involving the voices children and young people. A lot of headway was made pushing PSHEE and subsequently the non-biological asepcts of SRE forward and it could be argued that if it had not been for the 2010 change of Government, PSHEE might have been made statutory in England. Nevertheless, it can be argued that a 'ground up' approach to education policy-making is more stable due to its co-operative nature, is experienced as more inclusive through promoting partnership and power sharing, which then in turn encourages policy actors to develop common aims. Policy actors, as is evident in the data, feel involved in the policy-making process and perhaps are therefore more willing to concede or negotiate around policy approaches and/or values in order to come to an agreement that will encourage sign up to a policy that is being developed or debated.

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Appendix A: Sample research study invitation letter emailed to an SRE policy actor

IOE
LONDON

Leading education
and social research
Institute of Education
University of London

18 May 2011

Lord Jim Knight
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW

Dear Lord Knight:

I am studying for a PhD at the Institute of Education, University of London. Broadly, my research aims to better understand the policy processes which have occurred and the continuing discussions within the English political system with regard to making SRE a statutory component of the English National Curricula for secondary schools.

Following an analysis of *Hansard*-recorded discussions in Westminster regarding SRE and the sexual health of young people in England more broadly, I have identified a list of Members of Parliament (MPs) and Lords who have made the most significant and divergent contributions to debates. I intend to invite these individuals to participate in my study, as well as other leading voices in the SRE/PSHEE debate from the third sector and those straddling the policy and academic worlds.

It is obvious from the parliamentary debates I have analysed that you have been actively involved in issues around SRE, the importance of relationship education, the inclusion of UK student voices in developing the SRE/PSHEE curriculum, tackling teenage pregnancy rates and so forth. Your commitment to Every Child Matters by striving to provide every student with vital life skills to make healthy and safe choices while Minister of State for the Department of Education and Skills and then Minister for Schools and Learners, as well as your involvement as a Co-chair for the SRE Review Steering Group in 2008, speak of a committed approach to ensuring every school provides high-quality PSHEE/SRE to its students, make major inroads in tackling wider social issues and build stronger partnerships between parents and their children.

As one of the most influential leaders in the SRE policy-making process, I would be very interested and grateful for the opportunity to explore with you your views of policy-making processes with regard to SRE legislation and guidance.

A detailed analysis of both the support for, and opposition to, making PSHEE (and as a result SRE) statutory in both the previous and current Parliamentary terms, as well as the

compromises various sides of the debate might feel they have to make, would support a stronger understanding of why this area of policy-making continues to be such a contentious and drawn-out process.

I anticipate that such an interview would last approximately 50 minutes and it could take place at a location and time most convenient to you.

I hope that despite your undoubtedly extremely busy schedule, you may feel able to find the time to take part in this important study. Such a focus on policy-making processes around SRE in England has not been done before, and a better understanding of who the 'policy elite' are (both during the first decade of the century as well as now) and what interests/values they represent may support you as well as others heavily involved in this field to critically reflect on the most effective strategies to employ to ensure the policy outcomes you feel are central to meeting the needs of your constituents and others can be achieved.

I attach a more detailed research proposal for your information.

If you have any questions regarding this study or would like further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Dee Cavender
Institute of Education, University of London
Email: DCavender@ioe.ac.uk
Tel: 078 5546 XXXX

Appendix B: Sample question leaflet emailed to an SRE policy actor

IOE LONDON Leading education and social research
Institute of Education
University of London

Sex and relationship(s) education: an examination of Northern Ireland's and England's policy-making processes

A research project

Research background

This research aims to better understand the policy processes in England and Northern Ireland in relation to how sex and relationship(s) education policy is made at the national level. The research seeks to explore who and what groups were and are now the most influential in the policy-making process (at a national and local level) and what values and arguments are drawn on during the debates and within the final documents (national legislation, statutory and non-statutory guidance).

Interview questions

1. Can you tell me a little more about how and why you became involved in parliamentary debates about PSHE/SRE?

   a. Have you played any particular 'roles' in relation to the debates would you say?

2. More generally, how would you characterize the debate and policy-making processes around PSHE, and more specifically SRE in England?

   a. What are the main issues under discussion?
   b. What would you say are the main areas of contention? Have any of these been overcome? How?

3. Do you see that there are particular people and/or groups who appear to be active and/or influential in the PSHE/SRE policy-making process?

   a. Who are they?
   b. What values and interests do they appear to represent?
   c. Do you feel any particular person or groups appear to have a significant influence on the debates? Unduly so? Why do you think that is?

Sex and relationship(s) education: an examination of Northern Ireland's and England's policy-making processes

A research project

Interview questions (contd.)

4. As you are undoubtedly aware, following a 2008 SRE Review it was announced that PSHE was to become a statutory component of the English National Curriculum. Why, in your opinion, was it that during the Wash-up Process the PSHE provision in the Children, Schools and Families Bill was deleted?

    a. How did you feel about this?
    b. Could this have been avoided? How, in your opinion?

5. I am aware that you are currently involved in the Education Bill debates on PSHE. Has the debate changed in any way from when it was being discussed during the previous Labour governments?

    a. If so – why do you think that is? Who is driving this change?
    b. Have you seen a change in the alliances that have formed on this issue?

6. How do you see the SRE/PSHE debate with the current Government?

    a. Where do you see it going from here?

Sex and relationship(s) education: an examination of Northern Ireland's and England's policy-making processes

A research project

The Research

This research aims to better understand the policy processes in Northern Ireland and England with regard to how sex and relationship(s) education policy is made.

Rationale of this study

There has been little analysis of the values informing sex and relationship(s) education policy-making discussions and how official policy texts (e.g. guidance, reports, legislation) are produced. Specifically within the UK, currently no academic literature provides an in-depth 'home international' exploration specifically comparing Northern Ireland's and England's sex and relationship(s) education policy processes. Such research is important in order to understand both the different factors that shape education policy-making systems within the UK, but also offers the opportunity to examine the perceived impact of making Personal Development (the Northern Irish equivalent of Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education in England) and subsequently RSE statutory.

Your role in this study

In an interview likely to last around 45 minutes, I will explore with you the Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) policy-making process in Northern Ireland and your involvement within the policy development process. I will ask some questions regarding your view on schools teaching RSE within the classroom, the RSE policy-making process more broadly in Northern Ireland, and current national policy and whether or not you believe it should be changed. And if so, why and how?

Anonymity and confidentiality

It is important that you feel confident about the level of confidentiality and anonymity you will be granted if you agree to participate in the research. First, in accordance with

Sex and relationship(s) education: an examination of Northern Ireland's and England's policy-making processes

A research project

Anonymity and confidentiality (contd.)

the Data Protection Act (1988) I will ensure all data (audio files, transcripts) are securely stored and password encrypted and that pseudonyms are used when saving the files. Second, if you would like your contribution to remain anonymous, I will as far as possible anonymise your contribution by using a pseudonym, change identifiable places, events and names. Third, at the end of the interview we can talk about whether there were any parts of the discussion that you would like to add on to or further elaborate on. Additionally you can also ask for any parts of the discussion to be removed from the analysis process, or any specific statements you do not wish to have quoted (even with pseudonym). Alternatively, you might prefer for part of your contribution to be paraphrased (rather than using direct quotes) in any subsequent publications that arise from the research. Finally, you can decide to end your participation in the study at any point before or after the interview has taken place. If you have any further questions about this, please let me know and we can discuss them further.

A little about the researcher

I am an international student from the United States entering her third year of a PhD at the Institute of Education, University of London, being supervised by Professor Michael Reiss and Dr. Claire Maxwell.

Appendix D: SRE policy actors initially contacted to participate in this study

Policy actor's name	*Affiliation*	*Stance on SRE*
Education Programme Committee	Board of Deputies of British Jews	Anti-statutory
Simon Blake	Brook	Pro-statutory
Dr Oona Stannard	Catholic Education Services	Anti-statutory
CARE representative	Christian Action Research & Education	Anti-statutory
Ms Alex	The Christian Institute	Anti-statutory
Liz Carter	Church of England National Society	Not known to researcher
David Kesterton	Family Planning Association	Pro-statutory
Graham Allen, MP	House of Commons	Pro-statutory
David Amess, MP	House of Commons	Anti-statutory
Philip Davies, MP	House of Commons	Anti-statutory
Diana Johnson, MP	House of Commons	Pro-statutory
Lord Bishop Peter Forster	House of Lords	Anti-statutory
Baroness Joyce Gould	House of Lords	Pro-statutory
Lord Jonathan Hill	House of Lords	Anti-statutory
Lord James Knight	House of Lords	Pro-statutory
Baroness Doreen Massey	House of Lords	Pro-statutory
Lord Christopher Northbourne	House of Lords	Straddles the debate
Baronesss Detta O'Cathain	House of Lords	Anti-statutory
Lord Stewart Sutherland	House of Lords	Straddles the debate
Baroness Sandip Verma	House of Lords	Anti-statutory
Baroness Joan Walmsley	House of Lords	Pro-statutory
Stuart Cowie	Life	Anti-statutory
Sandy Youngston	London District of Methodist Church	Not known to researcher
PSHEE Subject Advisor	London Local Authorty Advisor	Pro-statutory
Education Committee	Muslim Council of Britain	Anti-statutory
Gill Frances	National Children's Bureau	Pro-statutory
Jan Campbell	PSHE Association	Pro-statutory
Anna Martinez	Sex Education Forum	Pro-statutory
Catherine Murphy	Terrence Higgins Trust	Pro-statutory

***Appendix E*: RSE policy actors initially contacted to participate in this study**

Policy actor's name	Affiliation
Dr Dirk Schubotz	Academic / Researcher
Joanna Gregg	Belfast Health & Social Care Trust
Mary Crawford	Brook NI
Sharon Lawlor	Department of Education, Northern Ireland
Personal Development Advisor	Education & Library Board
Personal Development & Pastoral Care Advisor	Education & Library Board
Dr Audrey Simpson	Family Planning Association NI / Academic
Dr Richard Barr	Love for Life
Anna Lo, MBE, MLA	Northern Ireland Assembly
Dawn Purvis, MLA	Northern Ireland Assembly
Mervyn Storey, MLA	Northern Ireland Assembly
Bernadette Smyth	Precious Life
Health Representative	Southern Health & Social Care Trust
Principal	Co-ed, Catholic high school
Vice Principal	Co-ed, Catholic high school
Pastoral & RSE Coordinator	Co-ed, grammar high school
Vice-principal & Pastoral Care Leader	Co-ed, grammar high school
Learning for Life & Work (LLW) Coordinator	Co-ed, integrated high school
Vice-principal & Pastoral Care Director	Co-ed, state-controlled high school

Appendix F: **Extended discussion of thematic analysis procedures**

Thematic textual analysis was the primary method used to analyse the data collected for the purposes of this study. Thematic analysis is one of the most commonly used tools to analyse qualitative data (Bryman, 2012: 578). It "moves beyond counting explicit words or phrases and focuses on identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas" (Guest et al., 2012: 10), otherwise known as 'themes'. For the purposes of this study, themes are described as "patterns found in the information that at minimum describes and organises the possible observations and at a maximum interprets aspects" (Boyatzis, 1998: 4) of SRE and RSE. Thematic analysis means that through examination of each collected text and narrative, 'codes' (i.e. categories) are created and applied to the data, to which a limited number of patterns within the data should be made visible (e.g. patterns among ideas, arguments, concepts, repeated words or phrases). 'Codes' can be defined as "tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled" (Miles & Huberman, 1994: 56). Gibson and Brown (2009) state that when conducting thematic analysis there are three main aims: examining commonalities, examining differences and examining relationships (pp.128-129).

In keeping with Framework's first stage – data familiarisation – photocopies were made of each individual SRE and RSE *Hansard*, legislative, statutory policy and departmental text, as well as transcribed interview transcript. In doing so this created a series of 'working transcripts' so that notes could be made, text could be highlighted, codes could be recorded and so forth on these. After separating all the data according to its relevant case (i.e. SRE policy-making process in England and RSE policy-making process in Northern Ireland), each country's working texts and transcripts were put in chronological order. Starting with SRE policy-making in England, the England case was analysed separately and in its entirety before moving on to the Northern Ireland case and, lastly, comparing and contrasting each case looking for similarities and differences. Each case was treated as a separate study to try to reduce the chance of possible bias from key concepts, ideas or 'themes' found within the contrasting case influencing the current case being analysed; this provided more accurate, detailed and reliable descriptions and explanations during the analysis of each case.

As familiarisation with one's data is arguably the most crucial step in the data analysis process (Ritchie et al., 2003: 221), starting with the England case, each compiled text was given an uncritical reading (Huckin, 1997). That is each text was read through without looking for patterns or relationships within the data, and content within each text was just accepted as presented. Next, each text was given a second more critical reading so that I could become more familiar with and understand the ideas, concepts, representations and meanings illustrated within each text.

After the fifth or sixth critical reading of the England case texts inductive, empirical (directly 'pulled' from within the text) 'codes' – brief descriptions to small chunks of data – were applied to roughly every two or three lines of text to represent key themes in relation to SRE and its policy-making process. Gibson and Brown (2009) make a distinction between two types of codes: apriori and empirical. Apriori codes are codes selected prior to analysis that mirror categories the researcher is interested in examining, while empirical codes are generated from the raw data itself as recurring commonalities, differences and relationships are identified within the texts (Gibson & Brown, 2009: 132-133).

Drawing upon key patterns viewed within each text (empirical findings) the following general questions emerged (informing this study's research questions) and were applied: 'How are SRE topics touched upon within the document?'; 'What specific content forms arguments either for or against statutory SRE and its placement in the National Curriculum for England?; How does the text/policy actor conceptualise the SRE policy-making process?'; 'What ideas, concepts or key words and phrases are recurrently being used within the text?'; and 'Who or what groups or references are being drawn on when arguments or points are being made?'.

As codes emerged from asking of the text the above questions, these were written in the margin of each 'working transcript' as well as a master list of each code was kept within a separate notebook. First initial codes included words or phrases such as 'evaluation', 'pro-SRE argument', 'anti-SRE argument', 'who should teach', 'delivery', 'parental involvement'. Some of these codes illustrate exact words or phrases extracted from the texts, while other codes were developed using words or phrases that 'summed up' what

the key issues, concepts and themes being debated appeared to be.

The next step included pattern coding. Miles and Huberman (1994) assert that pattern coding qualitative data has four important functions: large amounts of data can be reduced into a smaller number of analytic units; as data collection and analysis are conducted simultaneously later fieldwork can be more focused; pattern coding aids in developing a cognitive map used to better understand local incidents and interactions; and finally, in the case of multi-case studies, "it lays the groundwork for cross-case analysis by surfacing common themes and directional processes" (p.69). In addition, identifying patterns within the data to where codes are and are not present "can assist [a] researcher in exploring relationships" (Harding, 2013: 82).

Further readings of each text took place, whereby codes were altered and modified as I continued to gain even further familiarity with the data and as new ideas emerged as to how codes in each transcript related to one another. Once recurring issues, concepts and themes were identified, this provided the thematic framework for which the data could be sifted and sorted.

After coding each piece of relevant text and identifying the recurring themes, a conceptual framework or 'index' was developed. The coded recurring themes were organised and grouped under broader, higher order categories or 'main themes'. This means that for each group of patterned codes, a word or brief phrase was identified or generated (main theme) stating the meaning shared in all instances of that specific set of codes. This progression of identifying and developing themes is described by Leininger (1985) as the process of "bringing together components or fragments of ideas or experiences, which often are meaningless when viewed alone" (p.60). However, while trying to identify 'main themes' within the coded text of these transcripts, I applied Ryan and Bernard's (2003) recommendation that one should look for repetitious topics that occur within the data, words such as 'since' and 'because' which point to causal connections in the minds of the social actors, the similarities and differences that social actors use when discussing a topic and the transitions used to shift one topic to another.

After all the codes were grouped and listed under 'main themes', each text was re-read with these themes in mind to not only ensure accuracy but also to revise any codes or 'main themes' that might not be as close to the original meaning of the coded text or to add a new 'sub-theme' if needed. When each 'main theme' and 'sub-theme' was finalised, a manageable index was created. Following Ritchie et al.'s (2003) suggestion on how to construct an index, I started by "identifying links between categories, grouping them thematically and then sorting them according to different levels of generality so that the index had a hierarchy of main and subthemes" (p.222).

Figure 12: Excerpt illustration from within the 'SRE in England case' master index

SUB-THEME (BOLD)	CODE	INDEX REFERENCE NUMBER
PRO-PSHEE (SRE)	*PRO*	*1.1*
Helps raise student attainment	PRO-SA	1.1.2
Unplanned teenage pregnancy rate decline	PRO-UTPD	1.1.3
Not every parent teaches SRE to children	PRO-NEPT	1.1.4
Increase in non-nuclear families	PRO-INNF	1.1.5
'Patchy' provision	PRO-PP	1.1.6
Meeting young peoples' needs	PRO-YPN	1.1.7
Encourages teacher training	PRO-ETT	1.1.8
Accountability	PRO-A	1.1.9
ANTI-PSHEE (SRE)	*ANTI*	*1.2*
Slim down national curriculum	ANTI-SDNC	1.2.2
Makes no positive difference	ANTI-MNPD	1.2.3
'Loss of childhood innocence'	ANTI-DCI	1.2.4
Infringes parental rights	ANTI-IPR	1.2.5
'Too universal'	ANTI-UNI	1.2.6
Student maturity levels	ANTI-ML	1.2.7
Promotes sex	ANTI-PS	1.2.8

Figure 12 presents an excerpted example of one of the 'main themes' found within the SRE policy-making in England case, 'Necessity of Statutory PSHEE (SRE)', and two of its identified 'sub-themes': Pro-PSHEE (SRE) and Anti-PSHEE (SRE). Under the two 'sub-themes' the issues, concepts and themes relevant to the 'sub-theme' are identified along with its code and index reference number. After creating the master index for the England case it was then applied to the raw data in second 'working' transcript documents for each originally compiled text. Within each transcript's margins each coded theme was indexed by placing the assigned index number referring back to which 'main theme' or 'sub-theme' it linked most closely to.

Wanting to create a picture of the data as a whole, a chart was created depicting each 'main theme', its identified 'sub-theme(s)', and a string of text (across each analysed transcript) or key points that represented examples of each (providing reference back to the original text). Ritchie and Spencer (1994) argue that "charting involves abstraction and synthesis" (p.184) and that each text needs to be condensed whereby a distilled synopsis is entered on the chart. I drew upon this but also, where appropriate, 'cut and pasted' condensed verbatim chunks of the text. The argument for doing this is that I wanted to emphasise key terms, phrases or expressions that policy actors specifically referenced or stated within the text as to not lose original meaning.

Once all the data were charted according to 'main themes' and 'sub-themes' and relationships and linkages among each were mapped out on large pieces of poster board, the 'interpreting' stage of the Framework approach began and I engaged in a descriptive analysis of the data. Although key ideas, associations and patterns were noted and recorded while the analysed texts were being indexed as well as charted, it was within this stage that I returned to the thesis' main aim – to examine the various policy-making processes in relation to making sex and relationship(s) education statutory within the national curriculum – by not only exploring and comparing policy actors' arguments but also attempting to extract as well as find associations between the views, perceptions and/or accounts of those who have engaged in relevant policy discussions.

Using the indexed transcripts, constructed charts and maps, and written research notes, the patterns and connections among each were compared and contrasted while I sought to

condense "the key dimensions within [these], [to] identify broader, more refined categories which [could] both incorporate and discriminate the different manifestations of the data" (Ritchie et al., 2003: 238). Through this analysis the following patterns were found within the themes of the analysed texts: specific approaches policy actors take toward SRE; repetitive arguments that seem to drive policy actors' positions toward SRE; value examples underpinning policy actor arguments and threaded within legislative and statutory policy texts; recurring names of policy actors (individuals and groups) stated as being engaged within SRE policy discussions and influencing SRE policy development.

To help simplify and make sense of the initial collected data pertaining to 'values', these data were re-organised and then re-coded largely drawing on apriori (Gibson and Brown, 2009) or deductive codes inspired by social policy literature that has explored values more broadly (Selmes & Robb, 1993; Halstead, 1996a, 1996b; Taylor, 1998; Haydon, 2006) and values in sex and relationship(s) education policy-making and practice (Halstead, 1998; Reiss, 1998; Halstead & Reiss, 2003). As SRE has been taught under the larger umbrella subject of PSHE Education, Ofsted's (2004) most recent published inspection booklet on *Promoting and evaluating pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development* was also analysed for potential codes to help categorise policy actor value examples into larger 'main themes' – in this case 'value set type' categories.

The data collected for the 'RSE policy-making process in Northern Ireland' case followed the same thematic analysis procedure as was taken for the England case. However, during this separate analysis of the Northern Ireland case, first initial codes included the words and phrases: 'pro-RSE argument', 'anti-RSE argument', 'school responsibility', 'relationships education', 'partnership sharing', 'self-confidence', etc. Like the England case chapter, inductive, empirical codes were generated from the data within the relevant RSE texts representing the Northern Ireland case chapter. In some cases codes were the same as those identified during the analysis of the England case; however, I ensured that the names of the codes, at least initially, were drawn from the actual Northern Ireland-specific texts to ensure differences in language between the two country's use of English was not lost.

These new codes for the Northern Ireland case were then added to a separate notebook so that a relevant key code list could be developed. As RSE is already statutory within the Northern Ireland Curriculum for each Key Stage, the following questions were used to approach each text and aid in the identification of key themes: 'How are RSE topics touched upon within the document?'; 'What specific content forms policy actors' discussions or debates regarding RSE, its placement and its teaching within the Northern Ireland Curriculum?'; 'How does the text/policy actor conceptualise the RSE policy-making process?'; 'What ideas, concepts or key words and phrases are recurrently being used within the text?'; and 'Who or what groups or references are being drawn upon when arguments or points are being made?'.

Patterns found within the analysed Northern Ireland case texts included: discussion on how RSE policy is developed through 'partnerships'; specific approaches policy actors take toward RSE; value examples underpinning policy actor arguments and threaded within legislative and statutory policy texts; and recurring names of policy actors (individuals and groups) stated as being engaged within RSE policy discussions and influencing RSE policy development. Many of these examples closely resemble the patterns found within the themes present within the England case data.

Appendix G: England *Hansard* debate breakdown by year

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                          INDEX CODE KEY                                        │
│                                                                                │
│  HC-WQ (Commons Written Question)          L-WQ (Lords Written Question)      │
│  HC-A-WQ (Commons Answer to Written Question)  L-A-WQ (Lords Answer to Written Question) │
│  HC-OA-WQ (Commons Oral Answer to Written Question)  L-OQ (Lords Oral Question) │
│  HC-OQ (Commons Oral Questions)            L-OA-OQ (Lords Oral Answer to Oral Question) │
│  HC-OA-OQ (Commons Oral Answer to Oral Question)  L-D-OQ (Lords Debate over Oral Question) │
│  HC-D-OQ (Commons Debate over Oral Question)  L-AB-D (Lords Academies Bill Debate) │
│  HC-BI-D (Commons Body Image within PSHE Debate)  L-CSF-D (Lords CSF Bill Debate) │
│  HC-EB-D (Commons Education Bill Debate)    L-EB-D (Lords Education Bill Debate) │
│  HC-LS-D (Commons Life Skills Debate)       L-EB80-D (Lords Education Bill Am.80 Debate) │
│  HC-SRE-D (Commons SRE Debate)              L-EB83-D (Lords Education Bill Am.83 Debate) │
│  HC-S23-D (Commons Standing Order #23 Debate)  L-EB88-D (Lords Education Bill Am.88 Debate) │
│  HC-TP-D (Commons Teenage Pregnancy Debate)  L-EBC36-D (Lords Education Bill Cl.36 Debate) │
│  HC-M (Commons Memorandum)                  L-ESB-D (Lords Education & Skills Bill Debate) │
│  HC-MOE (Commons Minutes of Evidence)       L-VAW-D (Lords Violence Against Women │
│  HC-NOM (Commons Notice of Motion)                  Debate)                    │
│  HC-NOM-U (Commons Notice of Motion Update)  L-WS (Lords Written Statement)    │
│  HC-WS (Commons Written Statement)          L-CM (Lords Committee Meeting)     │
│  CM-R (Committee Report)                    MS (Ministerial Statement)         │
│                                                                                │
│  The * behind a person's name represents that the exact date said person asked his/her question(s) could not be │
│  found, therefore, the date provided is that which a response was given.       │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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2008

January
07 Jan (HC-WQ x 3: Chris McCafferty)
07 Jan (HC-A-WQ x 3: Jim Knight)
14 Jan (HC-WQ: Andrew Dismore)
30 Jan (HC-A-WQ: Beverley Hughes)

February
04 Feb (HC-WQ: Stephen Hesford)
19 Feb (HC-A-WQ: Jim Knight)
22 Feb (HC-WQ: David Amess)
27 Feb (HC-A-WQ: Kevin Brennan)

March
HC NC26: Memorandum submitted by DCSF (PSHE/SRE)
06 Mar (HC-WQ: David Amess)
17 Mar (HC-A-WQ: Jim Knight)
17 Mar (HC NC10: Memorandum submitted by fpa (SRE)
19 Mar (HC-WQ: Tim Loughton)
25 Mar (HC-A-WQ: Jim Knight)

2008 (contd.)

June
02 Jun (L-WQ: Baroness Gould of Potternewton)
02 Jun (L-A-WQ: Lord Adonis)
23 Jun (HC-WQ: Nick Gibb)
25 Jun (HC-A-WQ: Jim Knight)
25 Jun HC NOM: Motion 1732 PSHE *40 people

July
07 Jul (HC MOE CSF Committee: Dawn Butler & Jim Knight)
21 Jul L Education and Skills Bill Debate (6 Lords contributed)
22 Jul HC NOM: Motion 760 Young People's Sexual and Reproductive Health *55
22 Jul HC NOM: Motion 1732 PSHE *50 people

October
06 Oct (HC-WQ x 2: David Amess)
06 Oct (HC-A-WQ x 2: Beverley Hughes)
13 Oct HC Sex and Relationship Education Debate (6 MPs contributed)
23 Oct L Written Statement (PSHE to become statutory)
23 Oct HC MOE: 422-vii Health Committee – Health Inequalities (8 people contributed)
29 Oct (HC-WQ x 3: David Amess)
29 Oct (HC-WQ x 4: Maria Miller)
29 Oct (HC-A-WQ x 2: Jim Knight)

November
03 Nov (HC-A-WQ x 2: Sarah McCarthy-Fry)
05 Nov HC NOM: Motion No 1732 * 55 people
05 Nov HC NOM: No 2218 Council of Europe Convention on the Protection
        of Children and Compulsory Sex and Relationship Education * 29 people
05 Nov (HC-WQ: Maria Miller)
12 Nov (HC-A-WQ: Sarah McCarthy-Fry)
13 Nov HC MOE: Health Committee – Health Inequalities HC 422-x (11 people
        contributed)
17 Nov (HC-OQ: Dr John Pugh)
17 Nov (HC-OA-OQ: Jim Knight)
17 Nov (HC-D-OQ: 6 MPs contributed)
26 Nov HC Sex and Relationships Education Debate (11 MPs contributed)

December
09 Dec HC Life Skills in the Curriculum Debate (2 MPs contributed)
17 Dec (HC-OQ: Jo Swinson)
17 Dec (HC-OA-OQ: Jim Knight)
17 Dec (HC-D-OQ: 3 MPs contributed)
17 Dec (HC-WQ x 4: David Amess)

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│              2008 Debate Breakdown Total:         │
│                                                   │
│     HC-WQ: 23                  L-WQ: 1            │
│     HC-A-WQ: 16                L-A-WQ: 1          │
│     HC-OQ: 2                   L-ESB-D: 1         │
│     HC-OA-OQ: 2                L-WS: 1            │
│     HC-D-OQ: 2                                    │
│     HC-LS-D: 1                                    │
│     HC-SRE-D: 2                                   │
│     HC-M: 2                                       │
│     HC-MOE: 3                                     │
│     HC-NOM: 3                                     │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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2009

January
12 Jan (HC-A-WQ x 4: Jim Knight)
13 Jan (HC-WQ: John Bercow)
15 Jan (HC-A-WQ: Sarah McCarthy-Fry)

February
26 Feb HC Health Committee Third Report (Health Inequalities)

March
11 Mar (HC-WQ: David Amess)
18 Mar (HC-A-WQ: Sarah McCarthy-Fry)
24 Mar (L-OQ: Lord Northbourne)
24 Mar (L-OA-OQ: Baroness Thornton)
24 Mar (L-D-OQ: 6 Lords contributed)
25 Mar HC Unplanned Teenage Pregnancy Debate (Nottingham)
25 Mar (HC-WQ: David Amess)

April
27 Apr L Written Statement (Schools: PSHE)

May
21 May (HC-WQ: David Amess)

June
02 Jun (HC-A-WQ: Beverley Hughes)

July
01 Jul (HC-WQ: Mark Lancaster)
08 Jul (HC-A-WQ: Diana R. Johnson)

July (contd.)
08 Jul (HC-WQ x 2: David Amess)
21 Jul (HC-A-WQ x 2: Diana R. Johnson)

October
21 Oct (L-OQ: Lord Northbourne)
21 Oct (L-OA-OQ: Baroness Morgan of Drefelin)
21 Oct (L-D-OQ: 6 Lords contributed)
27 Oct (HC-WQ: Philip Davies)
27 Oct (HC-A-WQ: Diana R. Johnson)

November
05 Nov HC PSHE Written Ministerial Statement (Ed Balls)
05 Nov L PSHE Written Ministerial Statement (Baroness Morgan on behalf of Ed Balls)

December
15 Dec (HC-WQ: Sir Gerald Kauufman)
15 Dec (HC-A-WQ: Gillian Merron (DfH))

2009 Debate Breakdown Total:

HC-WQ: 9	**L-OQ:** 2
HC-A-WQ: 12	**L-OA-OQ:** 2
HC-TP-D: 1	**L-D-OQ:**
CM-R: 1	**L-WS:** 1
MS: 2	

2010

January
07 Jan (HC-WQ: Ben Chapman)
07 Jan (HC-A-WQ: Diana R. Johnson)
07 Jan (HC-WQ x 2: Tim Loughton)
13 Jan (HC-A-WQ: Diana R. Johnson)
14 Jan (HC-A-WQ: Diana R. Johnson)
25 Jan (HC-OQ: Peter Bone)
25 Jan (HC-OA-OQ: Diana R. Johnson)

March
08 Mar (L-CSF-D: 10 Lords contributed)

April
07 Apr (L-CSF-D: 12 Lords contributed)

2010 (contd.)

June
28 Jun (L-AB-D: 11 Lords contributed)

July
07 Jul (L-AB-D: 13 Lords contributed)

October
27 Oct (HC-WQ x 2: David Amess)

November
22 Nov (HC-A-WQ x 2: Nick Gibb)

> ### *2010 Debate Breakdown Total:*
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | **HC-WQ:** 5 | **L-AB-D:** |
> | **HC-A-WQ:** 5 | **L-CSF-D:** 2 |
> | **HC-OQ:** 1 | |
> | **HC-OA-OQ:** 1 | |

2011

January
13 Jan (L-VAW-D: 3 Lords contributed)
17 Jan (HC-WQ: David Burrowes)
18 Jan (HC-WQ x 2: Stewart Jackson)

February
01 Feb (HC-A-WQ x 2: Nick Gibb)

March
14 Mar (L-WQ: Lord Patel of Blackburn)
21 Mar (HC-WQ x 3: Chris Ruane)
23 Mar (L-A-WQ: Lord Hill of Oareford)
23 Mar (HC-WQ x 2: David Amess)
23 Mar (HC-A-WQ: Sarah Teather)
24 Mar (HC-A-WQ x 2: Nick Gibb)
31 Mar (HC-EB-D: Kevin Brennan & Nick Gibb)

April
01 Apr (HC-A-WQ: Sarah Teather)
01 Apr (HC-A-WQ: Nick Gibb)
05 Apr (HC-A-WQ: Sarah Teather)
06 Apr (L-WQ: Baroness Benjamin)
26 Apr (L-A-WQ: Lord Hill of Oareford)

April (contd.)
26 Apr (HC-WQ: Andrew Selous)
27 Apr (L-OQ: Baroness Massey of Darwen)
27 Apr (L-OA-Q: Lord Hill of Oareford)
27 Apr (L-D-OQ: 7 Lords contributed)
27 Apr (HC-A-WQ: Tim Loughton)
27 Apr (HC-WQ x 4: Sharon Hodgson)

May
04 May HC Standing Order #23: Sex Education & Required Content Debate (2 MPs
          contributed)
05 May (HC-A-WQ x 2: Nick Gibb)
09 May (HC-WQ: Mike Weatherley)*
09 May (HC-A-WQ: Anne Milton)
11 May (HC-A-WQ x 2: Sarah Teather)
24 May HL Committee on HIV & Aids in the UK – Evidence meeting with Nick Gibb

June
09 Jun (HC-WQ: Sadiq Khan)*
09 Jun (HC-A-WQ: Nick Gibb)
14 Jun (L-EB-D: Lords contributed)
14 Jun (HC-WQ: Stewart Jackson)*
14 Jun (HC-A-WQ: Nick Gibb)
14 Jun (HC-WQ: Diane Abbott)*
14 Jun (HC-A-WQ: Anne Milton)
21 Jun (HC-WQ x 2: David Amess)*
21 Jun (HC-A-WQ x 2: Nick Gibb)
21 Jun (HC-WQ x 2: Iain Wright)*
21 Jun (HC-A-WQ x 2: Nick Gibb)
27 Jun (L-OQ: Lord Marks of Henley-on-Thames)
27 Jun (L-OA-OQ: Lord Hill of Oareford)
27 Jun (L-D-OQ: 6 Lords contributed)
28 Jun (HC-WQ x 2: Diane Abbott)*
28 Jun (HC-A-WQ x 2: Anne Milton)
30 Jun (HC-WQ: Stewart Jackson)*
30 Jun (HC-A-WQ: Nick Gibb)
30 Jun (HC-WQ x 2: Iain Wright)*
30 Jun (HC-A-WQ x 2: Nick Gibb)

July
06 Jul (HC-WQ: Stewart Jackson)*
06 Jul (HC-A-WQ: Nick Gibb)
11 Jul (HC-OQ: Jo Swinson)
11 Jul (HC-OA-OQ: Nick Gibb)
11 Jul (HC-D-OQ: 4 MPs contributed)
11 Jul (L-OQ: Lord Northbourne)
11 Jul (L-OA-Q: Lord Hill of Oareford)

July (contd.)
11 Jul (L-D-OQ: 5 Lords contributed)
11 Jul (L-EB83-D: 5 Lords contributed)
13 Jul (L-EB88-D: 16 Lords contributed)
18 Jul (HC-WQ x 2: Diane Abbott)*
18 Jul (HC-A-WQ x 2: Anne Milton)
19 Jul (L-WQ: Baroness Deech)*
19 Jul (L-A-WQ: Lord Hill of Oareford)
19 Jul Lords Select Committee on HIV/AIDS in the UK – 1st Report
19 Jul (HC-WQ: Diane Abbott)
19 Jul (HC-A-WQ: Nick Gibb)
19 Jul (HC-BI-D: Jo Swinson)
20 Jul (HC-WQ: Andrew Stephenson)*
20 Jul (HC-A-WQ: Nick Gibb)
20 Jul (HC-WQ: John Glen)*
20 Jul (HC-A-WQ: Sarah Teather)
20 Jul (L-EBC36-D: 3 Lords contributed)

October
25 Oct HC Westminster Hall Debate: Sex and Relationship Education (11 MPs contributed)
26 Oct (L-EB80-D: 15 Lords contributed)

2011 Debate Breakdown Total:

HC-WQ: 32	**L-WQ:** 3
HC-A-WQ: 32	**L-A-WQ:** 3
HC-OQ: 1	**L-OQ:** 3
HC-OA-OQ: 1	**L-OA-OQ:** 3
HC-BI-D: 1	**L-D-OQ:** 3
HC-EB-D: 1	**L-EB-D:** 1
HC-S23-D: 1	**L-EB80-D:** 1
HC-SRE-D: 1	**L-EB83-D:** 1
CM-R: 1	**L-EB88-D:** 1
	L-EBC36-D: 1
	L-VAW-D: 1
	L-CM: 1

2012

February
08 Feb (HC-WQ: Mark Lancaster)*
08 Feb (HC-A-WQ: Nick Gibb)

February (contd.)
27 Feb (HC-OQ x 2: John Glen)
27 Feb (HC-OA-OQ: Tim Loughton)
27 Feb (HC-D-OQ: 6 MPs contributed)

March
06 Mar (HC-WQ: Mark Lancaster)*
06 Mar (HC-A-WQ: Nick Gibb)

April
16 Apr (HC-OQ: Christopher Chope)

April
16 Apr (HC-OA-OQ: Nick Gibb)
16 Apr (HC-D-OQ: 3 MPs contributed)
16 Apr (HC-WQ: Alex Cunningham)*
16 Apr (HC-A-WQ: Anne Milton)

2012 Debate Breakdown Total:

HC-WQ: 3
HC-A-WQ: 3
HC-OQ: 3
HC-OA-OQ: 2
HC-D-OQ: 2

Appendix H: **Alphabetical list of parliamentarians and their type of PSHEE/SRE involvement by date (January 2008 – January 2013)**

INDEX CODE KEY

HC-WQ (Commons Written Question)
HC-A-WQ (Commons Answer to Written Question)
HC-OA-WQ (Commons Oral Answer to Written Question)
HC-OQ (Commons Oral Questions)
HC-OA-OQ (Commons Oral Answer to Oral Question
HC-D-OQ (Commons Debate over Oral Question)
HC-BI-D (Commons Body Image within PSHE Debate)
HC-EB-D (Commons Education Bill Debate)
HC-LS-D (Commons Life Skills Debate)
HC-SRE-D (Commons SRE Debate)
HC-S23-D (Commons Standing Order #23 Debate)
HC-TP-D (Commons Teenage Pregnancy Debate)
HC-M (Commons Memorandum)
HC-MOE (Commons Minutes of Evidence)
HC-NOM (Commons Notice of Motion)
HC-NOM-U (Commons Notice of Motion Update)
HC-WS (Commons Written Statement)
CM-R (Committee Report)

L-WQ (Lords Written Question)
L-A-WQ (Lords Answer to Written Question)
L-OQ (Lords Oral Question)
L-OA-OQ (Lords Oral Answer to Oral Question)
L-D-OQ (Lords Debate over Oral Question)
L-AB-D (Lords Academies Bill Debate)
L-CSF-D (Lords CSF Bill Debate)
L-EB-D (Lords Education Bill Debate)
L-EB80-D (Lords Education Bill Am.80 Debate)
L-EB83-D (Lords Education Bill Am.83 Debate)
L-EB88-D (Lords Education Bill Am.88 Debate)
L-EBC36-D (Lords Education Bill Cl.36 Debate)
L-ESB-D (Lords Education & Skills Bill Debate)
L-VAW-D (Lord Violence Against Women
        Debate)
L-WS (Lords Written Statement)
L-CM (Lords Committee Meeting)
MS (Ministerial Statement)

The * behind a person's name denotes that that person is no longer an MP.
The ** behind a person's action represents that the exact date said person asked his/her question(s) could not be found, therefore, the date provided is that which a response was given.

Political party affiliation is coded as follows: (Con) Conservative; (Cross) Crossbench; (Ind) Independent; (Lab) Labour; (Lib Dem) Liberal Democrat; (Co-op) Co-opperative; (DUP) Democratic Unionist Party

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1. Adam Patel, Lord of Blackburn (Lab)
    a. 14 Mar 2011 (L-WQ)

2. Alan Howarth, Lord of Newport (Lab)
    a. 07 Apr 2010 (L-CSF-D); 28 Jun 2010 (L-AB-D)

3. Alex Cunningham (Lab)
    a. 16 Apr 2012 (HC-OQ)

4. Alison Seabeck (Lab)
    a. 25 Oct 2011 (HC-SRE-D)

5. Andrea Leadsom (Con)
    a. 25 Oct 2011 (HC-SRE-D)

6. Andrew Adonis, Lord (Lab)
    a. 02 Jun 2008 (L-A-WQ); 21 Jul 2008 (L-ESB-D)

7. Andrew Dismore (Lab)*
   a. 14 Jan 2008 (HC-WQ)

8. Andrew Selous (Con)
   a. 26 Apr 2011 (HC-WQ)

9. Andrew Stephenson (Con)
   a. 20 Jul 2011** (HC-WQ)

10. Anne Milton (Con)
    a. 09 May 2011 (HC-A-WQ); 14 Jun 2011 (HC-A-WQ); 28 Jun 2011 (HC-A-WQ x 2); 18 Jul 2011 (HC-A-WQ x 2); 16 Apr 2012 (HC-OA-OQ)

11. Annette Brooke (Lib Dem)
    a. 26 Nov 2008 (HC-SRE-D); 25 Oct 2011 (HC-SRE-D)

12. Anthony Clarke, Lord of Hampstead (Lab)
    a. 26 Oct 2011 (L-EB80-D)

13. Anthony Steen (Con)*
    a. 17 Dec 2008 (HC-D-OQ)

14. Ben Chapman (Lab)*
    a. 07 Jan 2010 (HC-WQ)

15. Beverley Hughes, Baroness of Streford (Lab)
    a. 30 Jan 2008 (HC-A-WQ); 06 Oct 2008 (HC-A-WQ x 2); 25 Mar 2009 (HC-TP-D); 31 Mar 2009 (HC-A-WQ); 02 Jun 2009 (HC-A-WQ); 13 Jul 2011 (L-EB-D)

16. Bill Morris, Lord of Handsworth (Lab)
    a. 27 Jun 2011 (L-D-OQ)

17. Charlotte Atkins (Lab)*
    a. 13 Nov 2008 (HC-MOE) – present but no dialogue recorded

18. Chris Bryant (Lab)
    a. 04 May 2011 (HC-S23-D); 27 Feb 2012 (HC-D-OQ); 16 Apr 2012 (HC-OQ)

19. Chris McCafferty (Lab)*
    a. 07 Jan 2008 (HC-WQ x 3)

20. Chris Ruane (Lab)
    a. 21 Mar 2011 (HC-WQ x 3)

21. Christine Crawley, Baroness (Lab)
    a. 26 Oct 2011 (L-EB80-D)

22. Christopher Chope (Con)
    a. 26 Nov 2008 (HC-SRE-D); 16 Apr 2012 (HC-OQ)

23. Christopher Northbourne, Lord (Cross)
    a. 24 Mar 2009 (L-D-OQ), 21 Oct 2009 (L-OQ); 07 Apr 2010 (L-CSF-D); 28
       Jun 2010 (L-AB-D); 11 Jul 2011 (L-OQ / L-D-OQ)

24. Claire Tyler, Baroness of Enfield (Lib Dem)
    a. 13 Jul 2011 (L-EB-D)

25. David Alton, Lord of Liverpool (Cross)
    a. 08 Mar 2010 (L-CSF-D); 07 Apr 2010 (L-CSF-D)

26. David Amess (Con)
    a. 22 Feb 2008 (HC-WQ); 06 Mar 2008 (HC-WQ); 06 Oct 2008 (HC-WQ x 2);
       29 Oct 2008 (HC-WQ x 3); 17 Dec 2009 (HC-WQ x 4); 11 Mar 2009 (HC-
       WQ); 25 Mar 2009 (HC-WQ); 21 May 2009 (HC-WQ); 08 Jul 2009 (HC-WQ
       x 2); 27 Oct 2010 (HC-WQ x 2); 23 Mar 2011 (HC-WQ x 2); 13 May 2011
       (HC-WQ); 21 Jun 2011** (HC-WQ x 2)

27. David S. Borrow (Lab)*
    a. 17 Nov 2008 (HC-D-OQ)

28. David Burrowes (Con)
    a. 17 Jan 2011 (HC-WQ)

29. David T.C. Davies (Con)
    a. 26 Nov 2008 (HC-SRE-D)

30. David James, Lord Bishop of Bradford
    a. 08 Mar 2010 (L-CSF-D)

31. David Simpson (DUP)
    a. 25 Oct 2011 (HC-SRE-D)

32. David Taylor (Lab/Co-Op)*
    a. 17 Nov 2008 (HC-D-OQ)

33. Dawn Butler (Lab)*
    a. 07 Jul 2008 (HC-MOE)

34. Delyth, Baroness of Drefelin (Cross)
    a. 23 Oct 2008 (L-WS); 13 Nov 2008 (HC-MOE); 27 Apr 2009 (L-WS); 21 Oct
       2009 (L-OA-OQ); 05 Nov 2009 (MS); 08 Mar 2010 (L-CFS-D); 07 Apr 2010
       (L-CSF-D); 28 Jun 2010 (L-AB-D); 07 Jul 2010 (L-AB-D)

35. Denis MacShane (Lab)*
    a. 11 Jul 2011 (HC-D-OQ)

36. Detta O'Cathain, Baroness (Con)
    a. 13 Jul 2011 (L-EB-D); 26 Oct 2011 (L-EB80-D)

37. Diana R. Johnson (Lab)
    a. 08 Jul 2009 (HC-A-WQ); 21 Jul 2009 (HC-A-WQ x 2); 27 Oct 2009 (HC-A-WQ); 07 Jan 2010 (HC-A-WQ); 13 Jan 2010 (HC-A-WQ); 14 Jan 2010 (HC-A-WQ); 25 Jan 2010 (HC-OA-OQ); 25 Oct 2011 (HC-SRE-D)

38. Diane Abbott (Lab)
    a. 14 Jun 2011** (HC-WQ); 28 Jun 2011** (HC-WQ x 2); 18 Jul 2011** (HC-WQ x 2); 19 Jul 2011** (HC-WQ)

39. Doreen Massey, Baroness of Darwen (Lab)
    a. 07 Apr 2010 (L-CSF-D); 28 Jun 2010 (L-AB-D); 07 Jul 2010 (L-AB-D); 27 Apr 2011 (L-OQ/L-D-OQ); 27 Jun 2011 (L-D-OQ); 11 Jul 2011 (L-EB83-D); 13 Jul 2011 (L-EB88-D); 20 Jul 2011 (L-EBC36-D); 26 Oct 2011 (L-EB80-D)

40. Doug Naysmith, Dr. (Lab/Co-Op)*
    a. 13 Nov 2008 (HC-MOE)

41. Ed Balls (Lab/Co-op)
    a. 05 Nov 2009 (MS)

42. Elizabeth Butler-Sloss, Baroness (Cross)
    a. 07 Apr 2010 (L-CSF-D)

43. Elspeth Howe, Baroness of Idlicote (Cross)
    a. 21 Jul 2008 (L-ESB-D); 28 Jun 2010 (L-AB-D); 07 Jul 2010 (L-AB-D); 13 Jul 2011 (L-EB-D)

44. Evan Harris, Dr. (Lib Dem)*
    a. 26 Nov 2008 (HC-SRE-D)

45. Fiona Bruce (Con)
    a. 25 Oct 2011 (HC-SRE-D)

46. Fiona Mactaggart (Lab)
    a. 11 Jul 2011 (HC-D-OQ)

47. Floella Benjamin, Baroness (Lib Dem)
    a. 06 Apr 2011 (L-WQ); 13 Jul 2011 (L-EB88-D)

48. Francis Hare, Earl of Listowel (Cross)
    a. 21 Oct 2009 (L-D-OQ); 8 Mar 2010 (L-CSF-D)

49. George Cassidy, Lord Bishop of Southwell and Nottingham
    a. 24 Mar 2009 (L-D-OQ)

50. George Howarth (Lab)
    a. 25 Oct 2011 (HC-SRE-D)

51. Gerald Kauffman, Sir (Lab)
    a. 15 Dec 2009 (HC-WQ)

52. Gillian Merron (Lab)*
    a. 15 Dec 2009 (HC-A-WQ)

53. Glenys Thornton, Baroness (Lab/Co-op)
    a. 24 Mar 2009 (L-OA / L-D-OA)

54. Graham Allen (Lab)
    a. 26 Nov 2008 (HC-SRE-D); 09 Dec 2008 (HC-LS-D)

55. Hilary Armstrong, Baroness of Hilltop (Lab)
    a. 11 Jul 2011 (L-D-OQ)

56. Howard Flight, Lord (Con)
    a. 27 Apr 2011 (L-D-OQ)

57. Howard Stoate, Dr. (Lab)*
    a. 13 Nov 2008 (HC-MOE)

58. Iain Wright (Lab)
    a. 21 Jun 2011** (HC-WQ x 2); 30 Jun 2011** (HC-WQ x 2)

59. Ilora Finlay, Baroness of Llandaff (Cross)
    a. 27 Apr 2011 (L-D-OQ); 13 Jul 2011 (L-EB-D)

60. Janet Whitaker, Baroness (Lab)
    a. 13 Jul 2011 (L-EB-D)

61. Jeff Ennis (Lab)*
    a. 13 Oct 2008 (HC-SRE-D)

62. Jenny Tonge, Baroness (Ind/Lib Dem)
    a. 27 Apr 2011 (L-D-OQ)

63. Jim Knight, Lord of Weymouth (Lab)
    a. 07 Jan 2008 (HC-A-WQ x 3); 19 Feb 2008 (HC-A-WQ); 17 Mar 2008 (HC-A-WQ); 25 Mar 2008 (HC-A-WQ); 25 Jun 2008 (HC-A-WQ x 2); 07 Jul 2008 (HC-MOE); 13 Oct 2008 (HC-SRE-D); 29 Oct 2008 (HC-A-WQ x 2); 17 Nov 2008 (HC-OA-OQ/ HC-D-OQ); 26 Nov 2008 (HC-SRE-D); 17 Dec 2008 (HC-OA-OQ / HC-D-OQ); 12 Jan 2009 (HC-A-WQ); 07 Jul 2010 (L-AB-D); 11 Jul 2011 (L-EB83-D); 20 Jul 2011 (L-EBC36-D)

64. Jim Shannon (DUP)
    a. 25 Oct 2011 (HC-SRE-D)

65. Jo Swinson (Lib Dem)
    a. 17 Dec 2008 (HC-OQ / HC-D-OQ); 11 Jul 2011 (HC-OQ /HC-D-OQ); 19 Jul 2011 (HC-BI-D); 27 Feb 2012 (HC-D-OQ)

66. Joan Walmsley, Baroness (Lib Dem)
    a. 21 Jul 2008 (L-ESB-D); 24 Mar 2009 (L-D-OQ); 21 Oct 2009 (L-D-OQ); 08 Mar 2010 (L-CSF-D); 07 Apr 2010 (L-CSF-D); 28 Jun 2010 (L-AB-D); 07 Jul 2010 (L-AB-D); 27 Apr 2011 (L-D-OQ); 14 Jun 2011 (L-EB-D); 11 Jul 2011 (L-D-OQ); 11 Jul 2011 (L-EB83-D); 13 Jul 2011 (L-EB88-D); 26 Oct 2011 (L-EB80-D)

67. John Bercow (Con until 2009/ current Speaker of House of Commons)
    a. 13 Oct 2008 (HC-SRE-D); 13 Jan 2009 (HC-WQ)

68. John Eden, Lord of Winton (Con)
    a. 26 Oct 2011 (L-EB80-D)

69. John Glen (Con)
    a. 20 Jul 2011** (HC-WQ); 27 Feb 2012 HC-OQ x 2 / HC-D-OQ)

70. John Richard Packer, Lord Bishop of Ripon and Leeds
    a. 26 Oct 2011 (L-EB80-D)

71. John Pugh, Dr. (Lib Dem)
    a. 17 Nov 2008 (HC-OQ / HC-D-OQ)

72. Jonathan Hill, Lord of Oareford (Con)
    a. 28 Jun 2010 (L-AB-D); 07 Jul 2010 (L-AB-D); 23 Mar 2011 (L-A-WQ); 26 Apr 2011 (L-A-WQ); 27 Apr 2011 (L-OA-OQ / L-D-OQ); 27 Jun 2011 (L-D-OQ); 11 Jul 2011 (L-OA-OQ / L-D-OQ); 13 Jul 2011 (L-EB-D); 19 Jul 2011 (L-A-WQ); 26 Oct 2011 (L-EB80-D)

73. Jonathan Marks, Lord of Henley-on-Thames (Lib Dem)
    a. 27 Jun 2011 (L-D-OQ)

74. Joyce Gould, Baroness of Potternewton (Lab)
    a. 02 Jun 2008 (L-WQ); 24 Mar 2009 (L-D-OQ); 7 Apr 2010 (L-CSF-D); 28 Jun 2010 (L-AB-D); 07 Jul 2010 (L-AB-D); 13 Jan 2011 (L-VAW-D); 26 Oct 2011 (L-EB80-D)

75. Kerry McCarthy (Lab)*
    a. 26 Nov 2008 (HC-SRE-D)

76. Kevin Barron (Lab)
    a. 23 Oct 2008 (HC-MOE); 13 Nov 2008 (HC-MOE)

77. Kevin Brennan (Lab)
    a. 27 Feb 2008 (HC-A-WQ); 23 Oct 2008 (HC-MOE); 31 Mar 2011 (HC-EB-D); 25 Oct 2011 (HC-SRE-D)

78. Lee Scott (Con)
    a. 13 Nov 2008 (HC-MOE) – present member but no dialogue recorded

79. Lindsay Northover, Baroness (Lib Dem)
    a. 26 Oct 2011 (L-EB80-D)

80. Margaret Jones, Baroness of Whitchurch (Lab)
    a. 27 Apr 2011 (L-D-OQ)

81. Margaret Sharp, Baroness of Guildford (Lib Dem)
    a. 07 Apr 2010 (L-CSF-D)

82. Maria Miller (Con)
    a. 13 Oct 2008 (HC-SRE-D); 29 Oct 2008 (HC-WQ x 4); 05 Nov 2008 (HC-WQ); 26 Nov 2008 (HC-SRE-D)

83. Mark Lancaster (Con)
    a. 01 Jul 2009 (HC-WQ); 8 Feb 2012** (HC-WQ); 06 Mar 2012 (HC-WQ)

84. Mark Williams (Lib Dem)
    a. 26 Nov 2008 (HC-SRE-D)

85. Martin Thomas, Lord of Gresford (Lib Dem)
    a. 13 Jan 2011 (L-VAW-D)

86. Michael Bates, Lord (Con)
    a. 08 Mar 2010 (L-CSF-D)

87. Michael Langrish, Lord Bishop of Exeter
    a. 28 Jun 2010 (L-AB-D)

88. Mike Weatherly (Con)
    a. 09 May 2011(HC-WQ)

89. Muriel Turner, Baroness of Camden (Lab)
    a. 11 Jul 2011 (L-EB-D)

90. Nadine Dorries (Con until suspended 6 November 2012/ currently an Ind)
    a. 04 May 2011 (HC-S23-D)

91. Neil Gerrard (Lab)*
    a. 13 Oct 2008 (HC-SRE-D)

92. Nick Gibb (Con)
    a. 23 Jun 2008 (HC-WQ x 2); 22 Nov 2010 (HC-A-WQ); 01 Feb 2011 (HC-A-WQ x 2); 24 Mar 2011 (HC-A-WQ x 2); 31 Mar 2011 (HC-EB-D); 01 Apr 2011 (HC-A-WQ); 05 May 2011 (HC-A-WQ x 2); 24 May 2011 (L-CM); 09 Jun 2011 (HC-A-WQ); 14 Jun 2011 (HC-A-WQ); 21 Jun 2011 (HC-A-WQ x 2); 21 Jun 2011 (HC-A-WQ x 2); 30 Jun 2011 (HC-A-WQ); 30 Jun 2011

(HC-A-WQ x 2); 06 Jul 2011 (HC-A-WQ); 11 Jul 2011 (HC-OA-OQ / HC-D-OQ); 19 Jul 2011 (HC-A-WQ); 20 Jul 2011 (HC-A-WQ); 25 Oct 2011 (HC-SRE-D); 08 Feb 2012 (HC-A-WQ); 06 Mar 2012 (HC-A-WQ); 16 Apr 2012 (HC-OA-OQ)

93. Nigel Lawson, Lord of Blaby (Con)
    a. 07 Apr 2010 (L-CSF-D)

94. Nuala O'Loan, Baroness (Cross)
    a. 07 Apr 2010 (L-CSF-D)

95. Pamela Nash (Lab)
    a. 25 Oct 2011 (HC-SRE-D)

96. Patrick Cormack, Lord (Con)
    a. 13 Oct 2008 (HC-SRE-D); 17 Nov 2008 (HC-D-OQ)

97. Pauline Perry, Baroness of Southwark (Con)
    a. 07 Apr 2010 (L-CSF-D); 07 Jul 2010 (L-AB-D); 13 Jul 2011 (L-EB-D)

98. Peter Bone (Con)
    a. 25 Jan 2010 (HC-OQ)

99. Peter Forster, Lord Bishop of Chester
    a. 13 Jul 2011 (L-EB-D)

100. Peter Layard, Lord (Lab)
    a. 08 Mar 2010 (L-CSF-D); 28 June 2010 (L-AB-D); 13 Jul 2011 (L-EB-D); 26 Oct 2011 (L-EB80-D)

101. Philip Davies (Con)
    a. 17 Nov 2008 (HC-D-OQ); 26 Nov 2008 (HC-SRE-D); 27 Oct 2009 (HC-WQ)

102. Ralph Lucas, Lord (Con)
    a. 21 Jul 2008 (L-ESB-D); 08 Mar 2010 (L-CSF-D); 07 Apr 2010 (L-CSF-D); 07 Jul 2010 (L-AB-D); 27 Jun 2011 (L-D-OQ); 13 Jul 2011 (L-EB-D); 20 Jul 2011 (L-EBC36-D)

103. Raymond Hylton, Lord (Cross)
    a. 26 Oct 2011 (L-EB80-D)

104. Richard Faulkner, Lord of Worcester (Lab)
    a. 07 Apr 2010 (L-CSF-D) – present but no record of speaking

105. Richard Taylor, Dr. (Ind)*
    a. 23 Oct 2008 (HC-MOE); 13 Nov 2008 (HC-MOE)

106. Robert Lingfield, Lord (Con)
    a. 26 Oct 2011 (L-EB80-D)

107. Rodney Elton, Lord (Con)
    a. 21 Jul 2008 (L-ESB-D); 21 Oct 2009 (L-D-OQ); 13 Jul 2011 (L-EB-D); 26 Oct 2011 (L-EB80-D)

108. Rosalind Howells, Baroness of St. Davids (Lab)
    a. 11 Jul 2011 (L-EB83-D)

109. Ruth Deech, Baroness (Cross)
    a. 19 Jul 2011** (L-WQ)

110. Sadiq Khan (Lab)
    a. 09 Jun 2011** (HC-WQ)

111. Sandip Verma, Baroness (Con)
    a. 24 Mar 2009 (L-D-OQ); 21 Oct 2009 (L-D-OQ); 08 Mar 2010 (L-CSF-D); 07 Apr 2010 (L-CSF-D); 13 Jan 2011 (L-VAW-D)

112. Sandra Gidley (Lib Dem)*
    a. 13 Nov 2008 (HC-MOE) – present but no dialogue recorded

113. Sarah McCarthy-Fry (Lab/Co-op)*
    a. 03 Nov 2008 (HC-A-WQ x 2); 12 Nov 2008 (HC-A-WQ); 09 Dec 2008 (HC-LS-D); 15 Jan 2009 (HC-A-WQ); 18 Mar 2009 (HC-A-WQ)

114. Sarah Teather (Lib Dem)
    a. 23 Mar 2011 (HC-A-WQ); 01 Apr 2011 (HC-A-WQ); 05 Apr 2011(HC-A-WQ); 11 May 2011 (HC-A-WQ x 2); 20 Jul 2011 (HC-A-WQ)

115. Sharon Hodgson (Lab)
    a. 27 Apr 2011 (HC-WQ x4); 11 May 2011 (HC-WQ x 2)

116. Shirley Williams, Baroness of Crosby (Lib Dem)
    a. 28 Jun 2010 (L-AB-D)

117. Stephen Gilbert (Lib Dem)
    a. 25 Oct 2011 (HC-SRE-D)

118. Stephen Hesford (Lab)*
    a. 19 Feb 2008 (HC-WQ)

119. Stewart Jackson (Con)
    a. 18 Jan 2011 (HC-WQ x 2); 14 Jun 2011** (HC-WQ); 30 Jun 2011** (HC-WQ); 06 Jul 2011** (HC-WQ); 11 Jul 2011 (HC-D-OQ); 27 Feb 2012 (HC-D-OQ)

120. Stewart Sutherland, Lord of Houndwood (Cross)
    a. 27 Jun 2011 (L-D-OQ); 11 Jul 2011 (L-EB83-D); 13 Jul 2011 (L-EB-D)

121. Sue Garden, Baroness of Frognal (Lib Dem)
    a. 21 Jul 2008 (L-ESB-D); 13 Jul 2011 (L-EB-D); 26 Oct 2011 (L-EB-D)

122. Tessa Blackstone, Baroness (Lab)
    a. 08 Mar 2010 (L-CSF-D)

123. Tessa Jowell (Lab)
    a. 23 Mar 2011 (HC-WQ)

124. Thomas McAvoy, Lord (Lab)
    a. 11 Jul 2011 (L-EB88-D); 13 Jul 2011 (L-EB-D)

125. Tim Loughton (Con)
    a. 19 Mar 2008 (HC-WQ); 13 Jan 2010 (HC-WQ); 07 Jan 2010 (HC-WQ x 2);
       27 Apr 2011 (HC-A-WQ); 27 Apr 2011 (HC-A-WQ); 13 May 2011 (HC-A-
       WQ); 27 Feb 2012 (HC-OA-OQ x 2 / HC-D-OQ)

126. Tim Stevens, Lord Bishop of Leicester
    a. 11 Jul 2011 (L-D-OQ)

127. Valerie Howarth, Baroness of Brackland (Cross)
    a. 08 Mar 2010 (L-CSF-D); 07 Jul 2010 (L-AB-D); 11 Jul 2011 (L-D-OQ); 13
       Jul 2011(L-EB-D); 2Oct 2011 (L-EB80-D)

Appendix I: Northern Ireland PD/RSE debate breakdown by year

INDEX CODE KEY

NIA-WQ (Assembly Written Question)   HC-WQ (Commons Written Question)
NIA-A-WQ (Assembly Answer to Written Question)   HC-A-WQ (Commons Answer to Written Question)
Question)   L-M (Lords Memorandum)

The title MLA behind a policy actors name represents that person is or was a Member of the Legislative Assembly in Northern Ireland, while a Member of Parliament is represented by the abbreviation MP. A policy actor who sits as both an MLA and MP is noted as MLA/MP.

The * behind a person's name represents that the exact date said person asked his/her question(s) could not be found, therefore, the date provided is that which a response was given.

The years from 1999-2002 and 2005-2007 are omitted from *Appendix I* given that there were no *Hansard* recorded PD/RSE-related policy-making contexts (e.g. questions, oral debates and memorandums).

Given the long spans of time between parliamentary-level policy activities only the months within each year where policy-making contexts occurred are illustrated within this *Appendix*.

2003

March
19 Mar (HC-WQ: Lady Sylvia Hermon, MP)*
19 Mar (HC-A-WQ: Jane Kennedy, MP)

> *2003 Debate Breakdown Total:*
>
> **HC-WQ:** 1
> **HC-A-WQ:** 1

2004

December
07 Dec (HC-WQ: Iris Robinson, MLA/MP)*
07 Dec (HC-A-WQ: Barry Gardiner, MP)

2004 (contd.)

```
+---------------------------------------------------+
|            2004 Debate Breakdown Total:           |
|                                                   |
|   HC-WQ: 1                                         |
|   HC-A-WQ: 1                                       |
|                                                   |
+---------------------------------------------------+
```

2008

April
02 Apr (NIA-A-WQ: Caitríona Ruane, MLA)
08 Apr (NIA-WQ: Mervyn Storey, MLA)

May
01 May (NIA-A-WQ: Caitríona Ruane, MLA)
07 May (L-M: Submitted by the Christian Institute)

```
+---------------------------------------------------+
|            2008 Debate Breakdown Total:           |
|                                                   |
|   NIA-WQ: 2                        L-M: 1          |
|   NIA-A-WQ: 2                                      |
|                                                   |
+---------------------------------------------------+
```

2009

March
27 Mar (NIA-WQ: Mervyn Storey, MLA)*
27 Mar (NIA-A-WQ: Michael McGimpsey, MLA)

November
11 Nov (NIA-WQ x 2: Allan Bresland, MLA)
25 Nov (NIA-A-WQ: Caitríona Ruane, MLA)
26 Nov (NIA-A-WQ: Michael McGimpsey, MLA)

December
1 Dec (NIA-WQ: Mark Durkan, MLA)*
1 Dec (NIA-A-WQ: Caitríona Ruane, MLA)

> ### *2009 Debate Breakdown Total:*
>
> **NIA-WQ:** 4
> **NIA-A-WQ:** 4

2010

March
22 Mar (NIA-WQ x 2: Thomas Burns, MLA)*
22 Mar (NIA-A-WQ x 2: Michael McGimpsey, MLA)

November
02 Nov (NIA-WQ x 3: Dawn Purvis, MLA)
10 Nov (NIA-A-WQ x 3: Caitríona Ruane, MLA)

> ### *2010 Debate Breakdown Total:*
>
> **NIA-WQ:** 5
> **NIA-A-WQ:** 5

2011

September
07 Sep (NIA-WQ: Anna Lo, MLA)*
07 Sep (NIA-A-WQ: John O'Dowd, MLA)

October
10 Oct (NIA-WQ: Anna Lo, MLA)*
10 Oct (NIA-A-WQ: John O'Dowd, MLA)

> ### *2011 Debate Breakdown Total:*
>
> **NIA-WQ:** 2
> **NIA-A-WQ:** 2

2012

November
23 Nov (NIA-WQ: Steven Agnew, MLA)*
23 Nov (NIA-A-WQ: John O'Dowd, MLA)

December
14 Dec (NIA-WQ: Steven Agnew)*
14 Dec (NIA-A-WQ: John O'Dowd)

2012 Debate Breakdown Total:

NIA-WQ: 2
NIA-A-WQ: 2

2013

May
10 May (NIA-WQ: Chris Hazzard, MLA)*
10 May (NIA-A-WQ: John O'Dowd)

June
28 Jun (NIA-WQ: Anna Lo, MLA)*
28 Jun (NIA-A-WQ: John O'Dowd)

2013 Debate Breakdown Total:

NIA-WQ: 2
NIA-A-WQ: 2

Appendix J: **Alphabetical list of MLAs/parliamentarians and their type of PD/RSE involvement by date (December 1999 – June 2013)**

<div style="border:1px solid black;">

INDEX CODE KEY

NIA-WQ (Assembly Written Question)   HC-WQ (Lords Written Question)
NIA-A-WQ (Assembly Answer to Written Question)   HC-A-WQ (Lords Answer to Written Question)
                                                      HL-M (Lords Memorandum)

The * behind a person's name denotes that that person is no longer an Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) or a Member of Parliament (MP).

The ** behind a person's action represents that the exact date said person asked his/her question(s) could not be found, therefore, the date provided is that which a response was given.

Political party affiliation is coded as follows: (All) Alliance Party; (DUP) Democratic Unionist Party; (GP) Green Party; (Ind) Independent; (Lab) Labour; (SDLP) Social Democratic and Labour Party; (Sinn F) Sinn Féin; (UU) Ulster Unionist; (UUAP) United Unionist Assembly Party

</div>

1. Allan Bresland (MLA; DUP)*
   a. 11 Nov 2009 (NIA-WQ x 2)

2. Anna Lo MBE (MLA; All)
   a. 7 Sept 2011 (NIA-WQ); 10 Oct 2011 (NIA-WQ); 28 Jun 2013 (NIA-A-WQ)

3. Barry Gardiner (MP, Lab)
   a. 7 Dec 2004 (HC-A-WQ)

4. The Christian Institute
   a. 7 May 2008 (L-M)

5. Caitríona Ruane (MLA; Sinn Féin)
   a. 2 Apr 2008 (NIA-A-WQ); 1 May 2008 (NIA-A-WQ); 25 Nov 2009 (NIA-A-WQ); 1 Dec 2009 (NIA-A-WQ); 10 Nov 2010 (NIA-A-WQ x 3)

6. Chris Hazzard (MLA; Sinn F)
   a. 10 May 2013 (NIA-WQ)

7. Dawn Purvis (MLA; Ind)*
   a. 2 Nov 2010 (NIA-WQ x 3)

8. Iris Robinson (MLA; DUP*
   a. 7 Dec 2004** (HC-WQ); 11 Mar 2008 (NIA-WQ)

9. Jane Kennedy PC (MP; Lab)*
   a. 19 Mar 2003 (HC-A-WQ)

10. John O'Dowd (MLA; Sinn F)
    a. 7 Sept 2011 (NIA-A-WQ); 10 Oct 2011 (NIA-A-WQ); 23 Nov 2012 (NIA-A-WQ); 14 Dec 2012 (NIA-A-WQ); 10 May 2013 (NIA-A-WQ); 28 June 2013 (NIA-A-WQ)

11. Mark Durkan (MLA; SDLP)*
    a. 1 Dec 2009** (NIA-WQ)

12. Mervyn Storey (MLA; DUP)
    a. 8 Apr 2008 (NIA-WQ); 27 Mar 2009** (NIA-WQ)

13. Michael McGimpsey (MLA; UU)
    a. 27 Mar 2009 (NIA-A-WQ); 26 Nov 2009 (NIA-A-WQ); 22 Mar 2010 (NIA-A-WQ x 2)

14. Steven Agnew (MLA; GP)
    a. 23 Nov 2012 (NIA-WQ)**; 14 Dec 2012 (NIA-WQ)**

15. Sylvia Herman, Lady (MP; Ind)
    a. 19 Mar 2003** (HC-WQ)

16. Thomas Burns (MLA; SDLP)*
    a. 22 Mar 2010** (NIA-WQ x 2)