

## COMMISSIONER'S BLOG

### POLICE AND CRIME PANEL 2 March 2017

#### Introduction

I now write a regular blog on individual topics in which I have a specific interest. This new format replaces the previous diary blog which was a simple record of events I had attended. My blogs are published on my website ([www.wiltshire-pcc.gov.uk](http://www.wiltshire-pcc.gov.uk)) and the contents of them are copied below for the Panel's information.

#### WHY WE NEED COMPULSORY PSHE LESSONS IN OUR SCHOOLS

30th January 2017



What is the purpose of schools? An odd question, you might think, for a Police and Crime Commissioner to be posing. Schools, many people would say, are there to teach our children English, maths and science and prepare them for exams. But is that all?

How about preparing our young people for life in the wider sense? Helping them to make wise choices and to keep them safe?

I am talking here of personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. And, more particularly, about sex and relationships education (SRE) which is delivered as part of PSHE.

Reports in the mainstream and specialist education media last week suggested that too little focus on sex education in Ofsted inspections was risking pupils' health and wellbeing.

Analysis by the [British Humanist Association \(BHA\)](#) suggests that SRE gets fewer mentions in Ofsted reports than any other subject.

BHA researchers checked every Ofsted inspection report for 2015-16, some 2,200 across both primary and secondary levels, for mentions of SRE and PSHE.

They found SRE specifically mentioned in less than one per cent of reports and PSHE in 14 per cent.

By contrast art and music were mentioned in 31 per cent, PE in 59 per cent and religious education in 22 per cent.



The Department for Education said ministers were "actively considering what further steps we could take to improve the quality and accessibility of sex and relationships education".

A spokesperson said: "High-quality education on sex and relationships is a vital part of preparing young people for success in adult life - helping them make informed choices, stay safe and learn to respect themselves and others."

*And yet the Government has once again stopped short of saying that SRE is to be made compulsory in our schools.*

My concern, as your Police and Crime Commissioner, is that, with the rapid increase in school academies and free schools, many of our young children run the risk of being left in the dark about this vitally important aspect of education.

Freed of local authority influence, and in the absence of a National Curriculum requirement for PSHE, heads and governors could decide (perhaps because of the religious nature of their school) that PSHE and SRE are not suitable subjects.

That is why I, and my fellow PCCs, feel strongly that the Government should make PSHE compulsory, with a mandatory SRE element, in all our schools. And that the delivery of such lessons should be taken into account within school assessments, alongside exam results.

A recent report by MPs on the women and equalities committee spoke of "the shocking scale" of sexual harassment in schools. The campaigning group Stonewall has spoken of widespread bullying of gay pupils in secondary schools.

Then there is child sexual exploitation. We are all aware of the scandals in Rotherham and Oxford. Those young girls who were befriended, made to feel special, and then horribly abused, were victims who were preyed upon. Did they have the benefit of PSHE lessons? I somehow doubt it.

And how about, further down the line, the risk of entering a controlling and coercive relationship? It can happen as soon as university.

Then there are the awful risks associated with drugs misuse and alcohol.

I could go on.

My office has sought to help young people locally to be equipped for some of the issues they will face, but surely this is a national issue which calls for national standards.

Teaching PSHE is no doubt challenging and sometimes embarrassing. It touches on sensitive areas and there will be parents who feel their children should be excused on religious grounds.

Nonetheless, the Government has an important duty to protect our children. I hope that the MPs who represent the people of Wiltshire and Swindon will do all they can to ensure that PSHE has a compulsory place, and time, in the curriculum.

Useful information can be found on the [PSHE Association](#) website.

## THE CHANGING FACE OF CRIME

### 20 February 2017

We are all used to crime prevention advice about locking doors and windows, and keeping valuables in our cars out of sight (although some still don't heed the advice and so make life far too easy for burglars and other opportunist thieves).

But the nature of crime is changing and, even if we have secured our windows and doors, a new breed of offender may well find a way to steal from us without needing to cross the threshold and ransack our rooms.

I'm talking about cyber criminals who may well operate from bases thousands of miles from Wiltshire and Swindon, way beyond the reach of our community policing teams.

In my new Police and Crime Plan for 2017-2021, which will be published in March, I talk about the need for vigilance as criminal threats evolve and become more complex, and I suggest that the way our police operate will need to change to meet this new online threat.

There have been welcome signs that the Government intends to tackle this cyber crime revolution head on. You may well have seen the Queen on the TV news or in the papers the other day as she opened a centre to protect the nation from cyber attacks. Her Majesty was shown how hackers could target the UK's electricity supply.

As consumers are encouraged to embrace the so-called "internet of things" and buy gadgets allowing them to activate household appliances whilst away from home, and as the advent of driverless cars draw nearer, so does the risk of a hacking attack. Just imagine the chaos that could be caused if such an attack was to happen.

The [National Cyber Security Centre](#) (NCSC), which is part of the Government's GCHQ intelligence agency, has been set up in London as part of a £1.9bn five-year strategy with the ambition of making the UK the hardest target for hackers.

I was pleased to read that the NCSC aims to protect wider society as well as protecting against, and responding to, high-end attacks on Government and business.

Closer to home, I am pleased that Wiltshire Police is working hard to keep people safe online. The Force continues to issue very useful advice online and in schools and works closely with other partners to ensure up to date information is available on the [get safe online in Wiltshire](#) website.

I am regularly briefed on fraud matters by Det Sgt Jonathan Lee. He investigates complex fraud cases, but I applaud him for finding the time once a week to offer advice to the public on BBC Wiltshire's lunchtime programme. Just a week or two back, I heard Jonathan talking about online scams and two listeners rang the station to say they had just received suspicious calls from someone claiming to be from their respective banks. Jonathan was able to offer immediate advice to the callers, which would have been of great value to other listeners.

In another welcome development, I heard the other day about additional help for local residents. [The Wiltshire Bobby Van Trust](#) has been operating in Wiltshire and Swindon since 1998 to help elderly, vulnerable and disadvantaged people who are victims of crime, or thought to be at risk. The volunteer Bobby Van drivers fit window locks, door chains and fire



alarms. But now, to reflect the changing criminal landscape, the service is looking to offer cyber crime prevention advice.

All of us, whether running a business, a public sector organisation or simply a household, must be on guard against cyber criminals. Changing passwords can seem a chore, but think of it as locking the door to keep out unwelcome visitors. There is plenty of useful advice available and simple steps that we can all take to reduce the risk of falling victim to the scammers.