



STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

Date: MONDAY, 20 NOVEMBER 2023 at 6.30 pm

**Committee Room 8
Civic Suite
Lewisham Town Hall
London SE6 4RU**

**Enquiries to:
Telephone: (direct line)**

MEMBERS

Mukunthan Sathasiva Sarma	Hin duis m
Korkor Burnett	NA S/U WT
Shaun Burns	Chu rch of Engl and NE U
Simon Cardy	



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Joan Goldberg

Jud
ais
m
NE
U

Kim Griffiths

Ruth Griffiths
Karen Hansen

Chu
rch
of
Engl
and
Fre
e
Chu
rch
(Ass
emb
lies
of
God
)
Bud
dhis
m

Pastor Nick Hughes

David Hutchens

Councillor Liz Johnston-Franklin
Caroline Kalu

Sch
ool
Gov
erno
rs -
Pri
mar
y

L
L

Mandy Keeble

NA
SU
WT
NE
U

Kim Knappett

Aisha Lodhi

Isla
m

Elizabeth Maxted

Inde
pen
dent
Eva
ngel
ical



Lewisham



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

The public are welcome to attend our committee meetings, however occasionally committees may have to consider some business in private. Copies of reports can be made available in additional formats on request.

Judith Nweze
Councillor Jacq Paschoud
Gerald Rose

Labour Co-op

Monsignor N Rotheron

Jud
ais
m
Ro
man
Cat
holi
c
Chu
rch
Isla
m
Hin
duis
m

Imam Sabir

Mukunthan Sathasiva Sarma

Angela Scattergood
Councillor Aliya Sheikh
Jennifer Sutherland

L

John Turner

Hu
man
ism
Hu
man
ism
Bah
a'i
Chu
rch
of
Engl
and

Afonso Veiga

Paul Wynter

Members are summoned to attend this meeting

Ian Thomas
Chief Executive
Lewisham Town Hall
Catford
London SE6 4RU
Date: Date Not Specified



Lewisham



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

The public are welcome to attend our committee meetings, however occasionally committees may have to consider some business in private. Copies of reports can be made available in additional formats on request.

ORDER OF BUSINESS – PART 1 AGENDA

Item No		Page No.s																				
1.	<p>Agenda</p> <p style="text-align: center;">LEWISHAM SACRE ORDER OF BUSINESS</p> <p>For the meeting on Monday 20th November 2023 on zoom, starting at 6.30pm</p> <p>Chair of the SACRE Nick Hughes</p> <p>Vice Chair of the SACRE: Shaun Burns</p> <p>Chair of the ASC Kim Knappett</p> <p>School Improvement Officer: Denise Chaplin</p> <p>Minute Clerk: Stephen Sealy</p> <p>Please reply to: denise.chaplin@lewisham.gov.uk</p>																					
	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr style="background-color: yellow;"> <th style="text-align: center;">Item</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Title and purpose of item</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">1.</td> <td> Welcomes and introductions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Apologies for absence b) Confirmation of order of items for the meeting c) Membership update </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">2.</td> <td>Minutes of the previous SACRE meeting held on September 20th at Community Church, The Point, 401 Lewisham High Street, London</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">3.</td> <td> Matters arising from the minutes not on the agenda <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lewisham SACRE Constitution review – council meeting • Moving RE and multi-cultural Resources from the Renewal meeting for feedback and consideration of further dates to complete </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">4.</td> <td>SACREs Crisis Advice</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">5.</td> <td>Holocaust Memorial Day 2024 - update on Lewisham plans <i>Attachment – Theme paper from HMD Trust</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">6.</td> <td>Primary RE subject leaders' network meeting held on 16th November</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">7.</td> <td>NASACRE and London SACREs meeting (8th November) Feedback from members who attended and discussion on 3 items from meeting <i>Attachments – 3</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">8.</td> <td>Key Stage 4 Update - Anthony Doudle</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">9</td> <td> Towards the Annual Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attendance register – Stephen - Exam data </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Item	Title and purpose of item	1.	Welcomes and introductions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Apologies for absence b) Confirmation of order of items for the meeting c) Membership update 	2.	Minutes of the previous SACRE meeting held on September 20 th at Community Church, The Point, 401 Lewisham High Street, London	3.	Matters arising from the minutes not on the agenda <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lewisham SACRE Constitution review – council meeting • Moving RE and multi-cultural Resources from the Renewal meeting for feedback and consideration of further dates to complete 	4.	SACREs Crisis Advice	5.	Holocaust Memorial Day 2024 - update on Lewisham plans <i>Attachment – Theme paper from HMD Trust</i>	6.	Primary RE subject leaders' network meeting held on 16 th November	7.	NASACRE and London SACREs meeting (8 th November) Feedback from members who attended and discussion on 3 items from meeting <i>Attachments – 3</i>	8.	Key Stage 4 Update - Anthony Doudle	9	Towards the Annual Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attendance register – Stephen - Exam data 	
Item	Title and purpose of item																					
1.	Welcomes and introductions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Apologies for absence b) Confirmation of order of items for the meeting c) Membership update 																					
2.	Minutes of the previous SACRE meeting held on September 20 th at Community Church, The Point, 401 Lewisham High Street, London																					
3.	Matters arising from the minutes not on the agenda <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lewisham SACRE Constitution review – council meeting • Moving RE and multi-cultural Resources from the Renewal meeting for feedback and consideration of further dates to complete 																					
4.	SACREs Crisis Advice																					
5.	Holocaust Memorial Day 2024 - update on Lewisham plans <i>Attachment – Theme paper from HMD Trust</i>																					
6.	Primary RE subject leaders' network meeting held on 16 th November																					
7.	NASACRE and London SACREs meeting (8 th November) Feedback from members who attended and discussion on 3 items from meeting <i>Attachments – 3</i>																					
8.	Key Stage 4 Update - Anthony Doudle																					
9	Towards the Annual Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attendance register – Stephen - Exam data 																					



Lewisham



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

The public are welcome to attend our committee meetings, however occasionally committees may have to consider some business in private. Copies of reports can be made available in additional formats on request.

	10	Information Exchange & AOB - NASACRE Training programme – <i>attachment</i> - Withdrawal from RE lessons		
	11.	Dates of future meetings and venues already agreed. 2024 Thursday 22nd February - zoom Wednesday 24th April - Live meeting, Lewisham Islamic Centre nursery Tuesday 25th June - Live meeting, venue to be decided		
	12	End of meeting - 8.00pm.		
2.	1	SACRE meeting Agenda November 2023b	1	
3.	2	SACRE meeting minutes 230928draftfor November	2 - 9	
4.	5	HMD-2024-Theme-Vision	10 - 16	
5.	7a	20230808_SACRE-guidance-for-LAs	17 - 18	
6.	7a	Humanism and Group A of SACREs	19	
7.	7b	20230610-Final-Analysis-of-SACRE-Annual-Reports-2021-2022-with-front-cover	20 - 45	
8.	7c	Funding-Report-2023-FINAL	46 - 57	
9.	10	NASACRE Virtual-training-programme-23-24	58 - 59	



Lewisham



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

The public are welcome to attend our committee meetings, however occasionally committees may have to consider some business in private. Copies of reports can be made available in additional formats on request.

LEWISHAM SACRE ORDER OF BUSINESS

For the meeting on Monday 20th November 2023 on zoom, starting at 6.30pm

Chair of the SACRE Nick Hughes
Vice Chair of the SACRE: Shaun Burns
Chair of the ASC Kim Knappett
School Improvement Officer: Denise Chaplin
Minute Clerk: Stephen Sealy
Please reply to: denise.chaplin@lewisham.gov.uk

<u>Item</u>	<u>Title and purpose of item</u>
1.	Welcomes and introductions. a) Apologies for absence b) Confirmation of order of items for the meeting c) Membership update
2.	Minutes of the previous SACRE meeting held on September 2023 at Catford Community Church, The Point, 401 Lewisham High Street, London - <i>Attachment</i>
3.	Matters arising from the minutes not on the agenda <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lewisham SACRE Constitution review – council meeting 22 Nov • Moving RE and multi-cultural Resources from the Renewal site to Lewisham – feedback and consideration of further dates to complete the task update
4.	SACREs Crisis Advice
5.	Holocaust Memorial Day 2024 - update on Lewisham plans <i>Attachment – Theme paper from HMD Trust</i>
6.	Primary RE subject leaders' network meeting held on 16 th November - feedback
7.	NASACRE and London SACREs meeting (8 th November) Feedback from members who attended and discussion on 3 items considered at that meeting <i>Attachments – 3</i>
8.	Key Stage 4 Update - Anthony Doudle
9	Towards the Annual Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attendance register – Stephen - Exam data
10	Information Exchange & AOB <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NASACRE Training programme – <i>attachment</i> - Withdrawal from RE lessons
11.	Dates of future meetings and venues already agreed. 2024 Thursday 22nd February - zoom Wednesday 24th April - Live meeting, Lewisham Islamic Centre nursery Tuesday 25th June - Live meeting, venue to be decided
12	End of meeting - 8.00pm.

Agenda Item 3

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

Minutes of the Lewisham SACRE meeting

which was open to the press and public and was held on
Thursday 28 September 2023

At Catford Community Church, The Point, 401 Lewisham High Street, London SE13 6NZ.

These minutes were approved by the SACRE on: 2023.

GROUP	REPRESENTING	NAME	PRESENT
A	Baha'i	Vacant	
A	Buddhism	David Hutchens	Ap
A	Free Church (Assemblies of God)	Pastor Nick Hughes (Chair	y
A	Free Church (Baptist)	Vacant	
A	Free Churches (URC)	Vacant	
A	Hinduism	Sharmila Manoharan	y
A	Hinduism	Vallipuram Bala	y
A	Humanism	Jennifer Sutherland	y
A	Humanism	John Turner	y
A	Independent Evangelical	Elizabeth Maxted	y
A	Islam	Imam Ashraf	Ap
A	Islam	Imam Sabir	y
A	Judaism	Gerald Rose	y
A	Judaism	Joan Goldberg	Late Ap
A	Pentecostal	Layo Afuape	Late Ap
A	Pentecostal Layo's Substitute	Cheryl Abbam	
A	Pentecostal Substitute	Br Ogbu Olu	
A	Roman Catholic	Rt. Rev. Monsignor Nicholas Rotherham	y
A	Sikhism	Vacant	
B	CofE Diocesan Board of Education Diocesan RE Adviser (Primary)	Shaun Burns (Deputy Chair)	y
B	Church of England Primary teacher	Karen Hansen	y
B	Church of England Secondary teacher	David Osborne	
B	Church of England Minister/Governor	Vacant	
B	The Church of England	Ms Gwen Carney	y
C	Academy/Free School	Vacant	
C	Lewisham Headteachers & Deputies	Vacant	
C	NAS/UWT	Korkor Burnett	y
C	NEU	Kim Knappett (ASC Chair)	y

C	NEU	Simon Cardy	Ap
C	NEU	Sian Blackwood-Carlyle	y
C	NEU	Janey Joaovel	y
D	Director of Education	Angela Scattergood	Ap
D	Substitute for Angela Scattergood	Ruth Griffith	
D	LA members	Cllr Jacq Paschoud	Ap
D	LA members	Cllr Liz Johnston-Franklin	y
D	LA members	Cllr Aliya Sheikh	y
D	School Governors (Primary)	Caroline O Kalu	
D	School Governors (Secondary)	Vacant	
D	Substitute for Angela Scattergood	Anthony Doudle	y
OTHER	PREVENT (associate for consultation)	Martin Gormlie	
OTHER	Primary teacher	Judith Nweze	
OTHER	Rastafarian (co-optee)	Vacant	
OTHER	RE School Improvement Officer	Denise Chaplin	y
OTHER	Young Mayor Team	Katy Brown	
OTHER	Young Mayor Team	Nicholas Gunner	y
OTHER	SACRE Clerk	Stephen Sealy	y

Boxed text signifies action to be taken, while underlined text signifies decisions that had been made.

The meeting began at 6.40pm.

1 WELCOMES AND INTRODUCTIONS.

Kim welcomed all the to The Point, the community space for Catford Community Church where she is one of the leaders, summarising the activities for which the space is used. She explained that refreshments had been laid on by the NEU. The Chair requested Kim express the committee's gratitude for this.

The Chair introduced himself and thanked attendees for their commitment to SACRE. He recalled the student recently killed in Croydon and said that much of what the committee does is aimed at helping young people navigate life, recognising also that what the committee shapes in the borough can impact a generation in a powerful way.

1A APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

These are noted in the above table.

The Chair reminded members to provide substitutes if they're regularly unable to attend.

1B CONFIRMATION OF ORDER OF ITEMS FOR THE MEETING.

The order of items for the meeting was agreed.

1C MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Denise said that the number of new members was probably the largest recorded in a single meeting and she encouraged those who hadn't yet completed the NASACRE induction training to do so, adding that the next NASACRE event would be held in May 2024.

She added that she was awaiting confirmation of a new Baha'i representative.

2 Minutes of the previous SACRE meeting held in June 2023 at Emmanuel Church

These were confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting.

3 Matters arising from the minutes not on the agenda

Denise reported that she and Kim had met with the Young Mayor's Advisors at the start of the summer holiday. The young people hadn't been familiar with the work of the committee, but the census and constitution were discussed in the meeting.

Nick G reported that he had also discussed SACRE with the young people later who considered the term 'Religious Education' to be an unhelpfully restrictive term for the subject. They reported that the subject in many schools was taught by teachers who weren't RE specialists and suggested some schools' apathy about the subject. The young people from schools with a religious character considered the subject important whilst about 90% of the others present considered it a side issue in their education. They had also expressed a lack of knowledge on what multifaith assemblies were. He summarised that the reaction was therefore mixed, with some questioning why RE was taught in schools at all. The size of the group was around 25,

Kim reported that the young people obviously cared a lot about being part of Lewisham and that, although confused about RE, they remembered more of being taught the subject in primary school. They saw the value in knowing about others' faiths and beliefs and understanding and respecting difference. They also appeared to have been taught more 'dry, factual' information rather than having 'real', impactful experiences.

Denise suggested that the choice of name would be irrelevant if the delivery of the subject was not engaging.

She reported that she'd told them that the agreed syllabus would soon be reviewed and that the young people's input was sought, in the hope of the syllabus being engaging and exciting. Whether to give a full place to the Young Mayor's advisers was also discussed.

Nick advised that the decision was pending and was, ultimately, for Lewisham Council to decide.

Denise commented that Nick G's place was assured, but that the committee desired for the young people to be engaged and not necessarily expecting Nick to speak on their behalf. She expressed her desire for the young people to have a permanent place on the committee.

Anthony expressed his willingness to speak to Ruth about this but emphasised the importance of the committee meeting young people at their safe space rather than expecting them to attend meetings.

In response to Nick G seeking clarification on the commitment for full membership, Denise advised that it was attendance respecting their expertise as representatives of their generation in the schools – and giving time for asking specific questions related to their interest group.

Denise expressed her intention for SACRE to return to holding their meetings in a variety of places of worship, to which teachers would also be invited to meet the community before the SACRE meeting to also familiarise themselves with the space and suggested the young advisors may want to attend these.

Nick G advised that if young people were to attend meetings, the agenda points pertaining to them should be scheduled first, after which they could leave the meeting.

Shaun advised that the young people be encouraged to express their voice to the Mayor, at their schools and in other forms of governance.

Nick G questioned if SACRE attends schools to which Denise advised that the committee communicated with schools, but that this was at adult level.

Janey proposed the community held sessions at schools, with a positive spin put on how questions are asked.

Cllr Sheikh advised that she was passionate about the continuation of RE but that while engaging with the Young Mayor's team was desirable, the development of the curriculum should be formulated in the same way as for other subjects, with young people helping to shape how it's taught rather than its content. She suggested the committee should have the tools to decide the syllabus.

Anthony emphasised the importance of listening to the lived experience of the young people, but that good professional development for teachers was important, citing the adage that those who remember more, learn more.

Shaun advised that OfSTED inspectors had been asked to carry out more deep dives in RE.

Gerald Rose advised that he visited schools to deliver talks on his faith, primarily to primary schools. He suggested that an increase in visits of personnel like him could advance the cause and would also take the pressure off disinterested teachers.

He asked if any action could be taken to promote visits to secondary schools, recounting how, by setting up a synagogue and arranging a Shabbat evening in primary schools, he had made the experience interactive and engaging.

Elizabeth added that parents are often invited into primary schools to do this also, but that more links between primary and secondary schools would benefit secondary schools.

Cllr Liz emphasised how invaluable the student voice was, adding that the key aspect of teaching RE was focussing on the person, not just the 'religious' part.

With regard to RE being delivered by appropriately qualified staff, Denise said that SACRE didn't know where gaps in schools were, but that the committee had undertaken a school website trawl to review delivery.

Gerald reported a lack of progress on the matter referred to in the previous minutes regarding using the DBS service.

Anthony suggested that schools have the choice to use the update service, but committed to progress this matter and respond to Gerald outside of the meeting.

4 Lewisham SACRE Constitution review

(This item followed agenda point 7.)

In view of the discussion on the Young Mayor's team, Denise proposed that the constitution for the SACRE stay the way it was after amends made in the previous meetings and committed to send it through to Lewisham's Governance team as it formed part of the larger Lewisham Constitution.

5 Lewisham SACRE's Collective Worship Guidance

This was agreed by the committee as a satisfactory final draft.

6 NASACRE AGM – Feedback from members who attended

Kim reported that networking with members from other SACREs was beneficial. However, she rued the missed opportunity to meet with co-members after the official events to discuss how the training could be applied to the local SACRE. She suggested a Lewisham meeting after future events would be advantageous.

Denise reiterated the significance of the advice from the Rt Hon Charles Clarke that members engage with local politicians, elected members and MPs.

She commented that the organisation and management of the conference had faced significant challenges, as the lead organiser was taken seriously ill shortly before the meeting and the venue's lack of previous experience hosting a similar event meant the spaces used were not helpful, for example lighting was poor. The venue also implemented additional security procedures in view of their previous terrorist security incident at Fishmongers' Hall, London Bridge.

Shaun had considered the event to be positive and valuable. He summarised the key theme of Charles Clarke's message as urging members to be alert about the future of SACREs, ensuring that SACREs retain a role regardless of the political landscape, noting how this linked to Nick Gunner's previous appeal regarding the youth voice and Shaun's suggestion that young people use their voice to raise the place of RE to politicians.

Denise encouraged SACRE members to read about Charles Clarke's presentation in the latest NASACRE Briefing.

Denise added that whatever the future in relation to changing the legal framework for RE, SACRE's aim was to be able to hand over RE in its best possible position to whoever would inherit responsibility for it **if and** when the need arose.

Shaun reported that the charitable organisation Culham St Gabriel's is a funding source that SACREs can access. Denise added that the Westhill grant are another source of possible SACRE funding and that there were accessible online webinars about this.

7 Key Stage 4 Update

(This followed agenda point 3)

Anthony explained that he had been in post since the start of September 2023 and now replaced Sandra Roberts on SACRE as Angela Scattergood's substitute. Giles, his secondary school improvement colleague, had met with secondary schools individually last term, after talking with Sandra and Denise, to discuss curriculum issues including RE, on SACRE's request. Many of the schools that offered RE GCSEs had reported high grades, but not all students had been entered and the low number of schools taking up the subject for GCSE was an issue.

One of these schools had requested more support.

Anthony reported that he had visited the curriculum section of all of the secondary school websites earlier that day, noting that only two contained references to the Agreed Syllabus.

He felt a pertinent theme of the SACRE was about re-engaging its role, adding it was important for the committee to take schools with it on its journey. One of the two Prendergast Schools had linked to the Agreed Syllabus and he suggested that a minimum request for all the websites should be a link to the Agreed Syllabus.

Denise acknowledged that it had taken a while for the current syllabus to be operational due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and any revision of the syllabus would take time to be processed and agreed. She was concerned that the leadership of some schools may not appreciate that the agreed syllabus is statutory.

Anthony proposed that the network meetings be reinstated. Nick had already offered to host a Primary network; Denise asked Korkor/Janey if they could host a secondary network meeting each.

Anthony informed that he could ensure that information on these events were uploaded to the Services for Schools website once dates and times were arranged and agreed.

Denise committed to send through details to enable him to do so.

As the Secondary Leadership Forum was also imminent, he committed to mention this subject there.

The Chair expressed his concern for non-specialist teachers filling in for RE. Denise advised that teachers in schools without a religious foundation were legally permitted to withdraw from teaching RE if they chose not to teach it.

8 Moving RE and Multi-Cultural Resources from the Renewal site to Lewisham – feedback and consideration of further dates to complete the task

Denise reported that she had emailed Renewal requesting dates to avoid for the next session of organising the resources. For the benefit of the new members she summarised that the closure of the South London MultiFaith and MultiCultural Resources Centre, which Lewisham Council had previously operated, meant that its resources had been dispersed to several places, one of which is the Renewal site. The committee is working to return these resources to Lewisham and in a Summer visit to the Renewal centre, members had

organised about a third of the residual resources. She suggested a maximum of two more visits would be necessary, with the end goal being to reduce the volume of resources held to those with topical relevance and then host an open session for schools to take any resources that they desired.

She committed to circulate the dates when she has been informed of these.

Shaun added that as custodians of these resources, it was the committee's moral responsibility to look after these resources and make them available to Lewisham schools.

Denise said that any members wanting a wooden plan chest, glass fronted cabinet, coffee table and/or two chairs should contact SACRE to find out how to arrange collection of these.

She committed to take photos of the residual resources and circulate them via the briefing.

Kim advised that rubbish can be deposited by Lewisham residents in the Landmann Way Reuse and Recycling Centre which is in the vicinity of the Renewal centre.

9 Information Exchange & AOB

9A NASACRE TRAINING PROGRAMME

Denise reminded members that all members could access any of the available (Zoom) training events.

Shaun reported that Bishop Karowei, who was the Bishop of Woolwich, one of the three Episcopal Areas of the Diocese of Southwark, and a Lewisham resident of great faith, had died a few weeks previously and his funeral had been held earlier in the day.

On the prompt of Denise, Gerald advised that he hadn't received any updates on the 2024 Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD), referencing uncertainty over the Mayor's involvement in this event. He summarised that prior to the Covid lockdowns, a professional theatre group developed in Lewisham were commissioned to hold HMD sessions with schools, taking lessons from the Holocaust experience to encourage positive interpersonal relationships and culminating in an event usually held on the Sunday nearest 27 January (the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz). The Jewish community was hoping to revive these sessions.

Denise expressed the intention of the committee not to hamper or confuse the organisation of the event, but advised that Anthony and herself would alert schools about the availability of HMD resources.

Cllr Liz committed to contact Damian, the Mayor of Lewisham, and Brenda, on behalf of the SACRE about the importance of Damian's role in relation to the HMD activities, stressing the importance of Denise to proceed with notifying schools of this.

Shaun advised that the theme of the 2024 HMD event was 'Fragility of Freedom'.

Imam Sabir reported that some Muslim pupils had experienced inaccessibility of Halal meals in schools, which Anthony committed to look into.

Gerald advised that he had attended training sessions for personnel visiting schools, through the RE Hubs. He explained that the Jewish Board of Deputies had organised a session for Jewish SACRE representatives which any visitors to schools could now access.

Bala reported that January was Tamil Heritage Month and thanked Lewisham Council for its contribution in enabling this. He committed to share more details about this in the next meeting.

10 Dates of future meetings and venues already agreed

(There were no changes to the published dates.)

The meeting ended at 8.00pm.

Agenda Item 4

Holocaust Memorial Day 2024

Theme vision



HOLOCAUST
MEMORIAL
DAY TRUST

Learning from genocide -
for a better future

Fragility of Freedom

'That is when the trouble started for the Jews. Our freedom was severely restricted by a series of anti-Jewish decrees.'

Anne Frank, diary entry, Saturday 20 June, 1942 – reflecting back on May 1940 when the Germans arrived in the Netherlands



Barbed wire fences at Auschwitz-Birkenau © Chris Jackson / Getty

1. Introduction

Freedom means different things to different people. What is clear is that in every genocide that has taken place, those who are targeted for persecution have had their freedom restricted and removed, before many of them are murdered. This is often a subtle, slow process. **The ten stages of genocide**, as identified by Professor Gregory Stanton, demonstrate that genocide never just happens. There is always a set of circumstances which occur, or which are created, to build the climate in which genocide can take place and in which perpetrator regimes can remove the freedoms of those they are targeting.

Not only do perpetrator regimes erode the freedom of the people they are targeting, demonstrating how fragile freedom is, they also restrict the freedoms of others around them, to prevent people from challenging the regime. Despite this, in every genocide there are those who risk their own freedom to help others, to preserve others' freedom or to stand up to the regime.

HMD 2024 marks the 30th anniversary of the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda. 49 years after the Holocaust ended, 19 years after the genocide in Cambodia, the world stood by as Hutu extremists shattered the fragile freedom in Rwanda, following decades of tension and violence, culminating in the murder of over one million Tutsis in just one hundred days.

2. Eroding freedom

Freedom is fragile and it cannot be taken for granted. Here are some examples of ways in which the freedoms of people targeted during genocide are restricted, showing how fragile freedom is and how we must not be complacent about it.

Freedom of religion and freedom to self-identify

In 1933 the Nazis came to power in Germany, and life became increasingly difficult for German Jews. Anti-Jewish legislation was passed, which denied Jews many freedoms and restricted their rights, starting with removing them from certain professions and schools and universities. The Nuremberg Laws in 1935 restricted who Jews could marry, and went further than that: they defined anyone who had three or four Jewish grandparents as a Jew, regardless of whether or not that person saw themselves as Jewish. Thus the Nuremberg laws took away people's freedom of religion and freedom to self-identify. On 9 November 1938, Jewish shops and businesses in Nazi territories were attacked and destroyed. The night became known as The Night of Broken Glass. Jewish people were banned from cinemas, theatres and sports facilities.



Jewish shops and businesses were destroyed during The Night of Broken Glass in 1938
© Bettmann / Getty

As the German army swept through and started occupying European countries, Jewish people in those countries often had many of their freedoms taken away: they were forced into ghettos, living in cramped conditions and often doing hard labour for the Nazis or for German industries; they were deported to concentration or extermination camps. Being imprisoned or enslaved is the very antithesis of freedom. And this was simply because they were Jewish.

After the arrival of the Germans in the Netherlands, **Anne Frank** wrote in her diary:

'That is when the trouble started for the Jews. Our freedom was severely restricted by a series of anti-Jewish decrees: Jews were required to wear a yellow star; Jews were required to turn in their bicycles; Jews were forbidden to use trams; Jews were forbidden to ride in cars, even their own; Jews were required to do their shopping between 3.00 and 5.00p.m.; Jews were required to frequent only Jewish-owned barbershops and beauty salons; Jews were forbidden to be out on the streets between 8.00 p.m. and 6.00 a.m.; Jews were forbidden to go to theatres, cinemas or any other forms of entertainments; Jews were forbidden to use swimming pools, tennis courts, hockey fields or any other athletic fields; Jews were forbidden to go rowing; Jews were forbidden to take part in any athletic activity in public; Jews were forbidden to sit in their gardens or those of their friends after 8.00 p.m.; Jews were forbidden to visit Christians in their homes; Jews were required to attend Jewish schools, etc. You couldn't do this and you couldn't do that, but life went on.'

Anne and her family went into hiding, but they were betrayed and Anne died in Bergen-Belsen Concentration Camp, just three months short of her 16th birthday.

Freedom of reproduction

As part of the T4 euthanasia programme the Nazis sterilised hundreds of thousands of people because they were disabled or perceived to be disabled, physically or mentally. Franziska Mikus had her freedom of reproduction taken away by the Nazis, forcibly sterilised not once but twice, simply because she was deaf.

'With a heavy heart I [had] to be sterilised a second time. This was the cruellest thing I ever had to endure. I will never be able to forget that.'

Read Franziska's full life story at hmd.org.uk/franziska.

Freedom of movement

In the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, Eric Murangwa Eugène MBE's freedom of movement was shattered after the plane carrying the President of Rwanda was shot down on 6 April 1994. Radio broadcasts demanded people stay in their homes while soldiers crashed down their front doors to find those they deemed 'responsible'. Demanding people to stay home enabled perpetrators to find their target groups.

Read Eric's full life story at hmd.org.uk/eric.

In 1992, Kemal Pervanić was one of many Bosnian Muslim men incarcerated in the notorious Omarska Concentration Camp. One of his former schoolteachers became his camp guard. Kemal's freedoms were lost: every aspect of his life was controlled, living conditions were appalling and he suffered beatings and deprivations.

You can read more about his life at hmd.org.uk/kemal.

False freedom

Perpetrator regimes often deliberately conceal their genocidal actions and mislead those they are targeting, to keep them calm, for example, and to prevent revolts, creating a sense of false freedom among those who are persecuted. The gates at several concentration camps, including Auschwitz-Birkenau, welcomed prisoners with the now infamous slogan *'Arbeit Macht Frei'*, literally meaning 'work gives you freedom', but this was far from the reality.

In 1981, having survived the genocide in Cambodia, Var Ashe Houston BEM learned in a letter from a friend that her husband, Virak Phong, had flown back to Phnom Penh in early 1976 with several hundred other Khmer intellectuals. The group had been told that the communist regime led by Pol Pot could use their skills to rebuild the country, but this was not true. In reality, they were imprisoned upon arrival in Phnom Penh. Virak Phong died in prison that year.

You can read more about Var's life at hmd.org.uk/var.

The Khmer Rouge told Sokphal Din BEM that he was going to leave the labour camp they had imprisoned him in, to be reunited with the rest of their family. Sokphal was suspicious, but excited. However, his optimism was short lived. The Khmer Rouge led Sokphal deep into the jungle where he was abandoned without food, water or tools to help him survive. The Khmer Rouge had lied and Sokphal realised that he would never see his father again.

You can read more about Sokphal's life at hmd.org.uk/sokphal.

There are often limited options available to people attempting to flee persecution as their freedoms are restricted. Jewish people trying to leave Germany in the 1930s had to pay an increasingly heavy emigration tax, for example, and securing a visa became progressively difficult.



Sokphal Din BEM holding a photo of his mother, taken in a refugee camp in Thailand

El Sadiq 'Debay' Mahmoud Manees fled persecution in Sudan, choosing *'to go across the Mediterranean Sea – hoping either to be able to live in peace, or to die.'* This was not an easy decision to make, but if Debay had stayed in Sudan, he would almost certainly have been murdered. Debay was luckier than many others who attempted the journey. He was rescued and taken to Italy, where he slept rough. He had a long and difficult journey through Europe, unable to find work or safety, until he eventually reached the UK where he claimed asylum. Today, Debay lives in the UK, and was a key worker during the coronavirus pandemic in 2020. He is grateful to be safe, but his freedom feels incomplete because he cannot be with his family in Sudan. He says, *'Still my heart is in my village and the refugee camps with those I left in Darfur.'*

You can read more about Debay's life at hmd.org.uk/debay.

Freedom of expression

Often in genocides, people's freedom of expression is limited and restricted, with state-controlled media ensuring propaganda is fed to the general population. Those who speak out are often imprisoned or murdered. Jean Baptiste Kayigamba, a survivor of the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, now living in the UK said:

'The infamous hate Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines was spewing its venom against the Tutsis, blaming them for assassinating the president.'

Even after genocides have ended and societies are rebuilt, survivors making new lives in different countries may not be allowed to express themselves freely as new regimes make accommodations with the past, and when relatives in the home country may still face danger.

Freedom to live

Genocide is the ultimate manifestation of violence ending freedom to live. During the Holocaust, six million Jewish people – men, women, children and babies – were brutally murdered in fields, ghettos, concentration camps and death camps. In more recent genocides, vast numbers of people have been murdered purely because of their faith, ethnicity, or other form of identity.

Below: The Srebrenica-Potoari Memorial and Cemetery for those murdered during the genocide in Srebrenica, Bosnia © Giles Clarke / Getty



3. Risking freedom

It isn't only those directly targeted for persecution whose freedoms are affected by perpetrator regimes. Vali Rácz risked her freedom and her life to save Jews in Hungary during the Second World War. Despite knowing she would likely be murdered if caught, she built a false partition into a large wardrobe to hide people. She was arrested several times but with no proof that she was hiding Jews, was released.

Listen to a podcast with Monica Porter, Vali Rácz's daughter, at hmd.org.uk/vali.

Despite the horrific scenes taking place across Rwanda there were also acts of great bravery. Sula Karuhimbi was an elderly woman who lived alone on a small farm and had knowledge of natural medicines. When the genocide began she hid more than 20 Tutsis in her animal shed and fed them from her small stock of vegetables. When attackers came to her farm she used her reputation as a 'witch' to frighten them off and protect the people hiding, risking her freedom as she did so.

Five students from Munich University and one of their professors challenged the Nazi regime by forming the White Rose group. They asked German people to react to the violence and oppression which were all around them by standing up and fighting for freedom.

Although they were successful in spreading their messages, the members of the White Rose group were all beheaded by the Nazis, who wanted to discourage anyone else from fighting for freedom.

Read more about the White Rose group at hmd.org.uk/whiterose.



Vali Rácz, who risked her life to save Jews during the Holocaust © Monica Porter

4. Liberated but not completely free

It is a misconception that liberation from the perpetrator regime means the end of suffering and the start of a free life. Whilst allied liberators freed Holocaust survivors from the physical imprisonment of concentration camps, and dreadful conditions, the prisoners then found themselves alone, often unable to return home, and having to move to a new country, learn a new language and rebuild their lives from scratch. They had to rebuild new lives with the painful absence of family members and friends. Many have described the years post-liberation as 'being physically free, but not mentally free.'

Holocaust survivor Esther Brunstein said:

'The first few days after liberation were joyous and yet sad, confusing and bewildering. I did not know how to cope with freedom after years of painful imprisonment.'

Read Esther's full life story at hmd.org.uk/esther.

As Otto Rosenberg who was persecuted by the Nazis because he was Sinti noted, it was hard to enjoy freedom knowing his family members had been murdered:

'They say: "you have your freedom now, be happy". There was no way I could be all joyful, because I missed my brothers and sisters, always, to this very day. When the holidays came and people celebrated, or the families sat together, that was when this inner thing, this nervous strain came. That was very hard.'

Read his full life story at hmd.org.uk/otto.

Indeed, gay men who were imprisoned by the Nazis did not find the freedom they had hoped for as they were still regarded as criminals after liberation and it wasn't until 1968 when they would be safe from prosecution.

Read more about the persecution of gay people and what happened afterwards at hmd.org.uk/gay-people.

Just because one person was liberated, it did not mean that the rest of their family were safe. As Sabit Jakupović, a survivor of the genocide in Bosnia explains:

'And that was one of the very hard moments because I felt safe, and I felt lost. I was in a completely different country, different weather, different language. Then I remembered that I left my brothers behind. Those emotions were tearing me apart, you can't enjoy the freedom and liberty because the war is still happening.'

Read Sabit's full life story at hmd.org.uk/sabit.



Otto Rosenberg (front) with his mother and siblings, many of whom were murdered by the Nazis

5. Enjoying freedom

Some survivors were able to enjoy their freedom. After surviving ghettos, concentration camps and a death march, Holocaust survivor Alec Ward came to England. He said:

'We lived in Southampton for a while where I was intoxicated with the freedom in England. I could walk freely wherever I wanted, I could ride a bicycle and everyone was so extremely kind and helpful to me.'

Read his full life story at hmd.org.uk/alec.

6. Vulnerability of freedom

For some survivors, post-genocide freedom remains always vulnerable to being snatched away. Denial and distortion follow all genocides, and are on the increase where countries attempt to reshape their past. Holocaust distortion and antisemitism (anti-Jewish hatred) have been present since the end of World War Two and remain prevalent today.

Leon Greenman built a life in the UK after surviving Auschwitz, only to suffer an antisemitic attack on his home in London in the 1990s.

Antoinette Mutabazi did not feel free to return to her home village after the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda when she heard that a perpetrator had been released from prison and had returned to the village.

7. Freedom today

Today many people in western democracies take freedoms for granted – this HMD, we can reflect on how these freedoms need to be valued, and on how many people around the world face restrictions to their freedoms to live, worship, work and love freely.

For example, Uyghur Muslims in China are facing forced relocation to Xinjiang province, 're-education' that threatens to eradicate the Uyghur culture, and other limits to free expression, free movement and freedom of worship.

Hundreds of thousands of Rohingya Muslims are living in refugee camps in Bangladesh, having escaped religious persecution in Myanmar.

Conflict is still ongoing in the Darfur region of Sudan. Survivors of the genocide, now safe in the UK, are terrified for the safety of their family members still in Darfur, and scared to speak out publicly in the UK lest their family members' lives are threatened.

8. Holocaust Memorial Day 2024

Anne Frank's comment, quoted above, concludes '*You couldn't do this and you couldn't do that, but life went on*'. But of course, for Anne, and millions of others, life did not go on – they were deliberately murdered. Building upon the multiple restrictions on their freedoms, their freedom of life was destroyed.

On HMD 2024, we can all reflect on how freedom is fragile and vulnerable to abuse. As we come together in communities around the UK, let's pledge not to take our freedoms for granted, and consider what we can do to strengthen freedoms around the world.

Further Reading

As well as the links in this paper, the following are recommended:

- Our range of [life stories](#) of people affected by the Holocaust and genocide
- The [ten stages of genocide](#)
- Anne Frank, *The Diary of a Young Girl*, ed. by Otto Frank and Mirjam Pressler, trans. by Susan Massotty (Penguin Books, 2001)
- Horst Biesold, *Crying Hands: Eugenics and Deaf People in Nazi Germany* (Gallaudet University Press, 1999)
- Var Hong Ashe, *From Phnom Penh to Paradise: Escape from Cambodia* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1988)
- Sokphal Din, *The Killing Fields of Cambodia: Surviving a Living Hell* (Amsterdam Publishers, 2020)
- Otto Rosenberg, *A Gypsy in Auschwitz: How I Survived the Horrors of the 'Forgotten Holocaust'*, with Ulrich Enzenberger, trans. by Maisie Musgrave (Octopus Publishing Group, 2022)



@HMD_UK



HMD.UK



@holocaustmemorialdaytrust

Page 6 of 7

Find out more...

Explore our website for resources on this theme, including life stories, resources on marking HMD, suggestions for further reading and links to sister organisations:

hmd.org.uk

hmd.org.uk
enquiries@hmd.org.uk
020 7785 7029

@hmd_uk
 hmd.uk
 @holocaustmemorialdaytrust

Page 16 *Learning from genocide - for a better future*

Guidance for local authorities about membership of Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (SACREs)

This note provides information on a recent court ruling and shares the Department for Education's (the Department) view **that representatives from non-religious belief systems may be appointed to Group A of a SACRE and/or to an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC).**

Background

SACREs are established by local authorities, as required by legislation¹, and their membership must consist of the following groups:

- Group A: members that represent Christian denominations and other religions and their denominations who will appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area;
- Group B: members that represent the Church of England;
- Group C: members that represent the teaching profession or other relevant associations that, in the opinion of the authority, ought to be represented; and
- Group D: members that represent the [local] authority.

The recent legal case of *Bowen v Kent County Council*² (more details in the Annex) clarified that applications for Group A membership from persons who represent holders of non-religious beliefs should be considered in the same way as applications from those who represent holders of religious beliefs.

In the Department's view, the non-religious beliefs adhered to by the person to be appointed must be analogous to a religious belief. To be "analogous", the non-religious beliefs must, in accordance with case law under the European Convention of Human Rights and the Human Rights Act 1998, attain the necessary level of cogency, seriousness, cohesion, and importance to attract protection under the Convention Rights.³

The final decision on appointment of persons to a SACRE or ASC is a matter for local authorities. This may include consideration of whether such a representative would help ensure that the relevant traditions and beliefs in the local authority's area are appropriately reflected in Group A.

¹ [Section 390\(4\)\(a\) of the Education Act 1996](#)

² www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/Admin/2023/1261.html

³ This aligns with the policy in Wales, where a non-religious belief for the purposes of education is aligned with those philosophical beliefs that are protected following European Convention of Human Rights caselaw.

ANNEX

The claimant, Stephen Bowen, sought to be appointed to join Group A of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) of Kent County Council (KCC). KCC refused to appoint Mr Bowen because it took the view that, as a humanist, Mr Bowen does not represent '*a religion or a denomination of a religion*' for the purposes of section 390(4)(a) of the 1996 Act. KCC considered that it did not have the power to appoint Mr Bowen to Group A and that it would have been unlawful for it to do so.

Mr Bowen challenged this decision on the basis of it being discriminatory and so in breach of Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). He contended that pursuant to section 3 of the Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA 1998), section 390(4)(a) must be read in such a way as to avoid the breach.

The judge ruled that KCC's interpretation of section 390(4)(a) of the Education Act 1996 breached Article 14 of the ECHR. The KCC's decision was quashed as it "*... failed to interpret the provision in compliance with the Human Rights Act 1998 humanism is self evidently a belief system ... and would be encompassed within any Convention-compliant interpretation of section 390(4)(a) [of the Education Act 1996].*"

Humanism and Group A of SACREs

A recent judgement has been made concerning the position of Humanists on Group A. In the case of *Bowen v Kent County Council* Justice Constable clarified that applications for Group A membership from persons who represent holders of non-religious beliefs should be considered in the same way as applications from those who represent holders of religious beliefs.

NASACRE have long been asking the DfE to issue guidance to Local Authorities regarding the position of non-religious Worldviews on Group A, and we are pleased that this [guidance](#) was issued in August.

In brief, the guidance reiterates that the make-up of a SACRE is a matter for Local Authorities (not SACREs themselves), and that the membership of Group A should ensure that relevant traditions and beliefs in the local authority's area are appropriately reflected. This representation may include non-religious belief systems where they are analogous to a religious belief.

SACREs may wish to advise their Local Authorities that they should review the constitution of the SACRE following publication of the 2021 Census data and in the light of this guidance.



Department
for Education



ANALYSIS OF SACRE ANNUAL REPORTS 2021-2022 FOR THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STANDING COUNCILS ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (NASACRE)

Report written by: Dr David Hampshire FRSA

Date: 10 June 2023

ANALYSIS OF SACRE ANNUAL REPORTS 2021-2022 FOR THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STANDING COUNCILS ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (NASACRE)

It is my privilege to recommend this report to NASACRE members, the Department for Education, and wider education networks. As this report states, SACREs should be celebrated for what they do across England.

The executive summary and the concluding are essential reading. At one of the most difficult and challenging times in recent education history, Standing Advisory Councils and Local Authorities have been under real and extended pressure but their work continued, and in some cases flourished. The restrictions and longer-term effects caused by the Covid 19 pandemic have created unprecedented working conditions for committees and councillors, teachers, advisers, and representatives of local faith communities. These conditions affected relationships, data collection and reporting cycles for SACREs as they carried out their statutory duties, advised local authorities and supported schools. Many SACREs went beyond their statutory remit during this period, making vital contributions to wider education issues and to interfaith dialogue within and across worldviews.

The report emphasises the usefulness of the pro forma provided by NASACRE both as a working tool, and as a support for the professional development of SACRE members and officers. The author, Dr David Hampshire, also reminds us again in an timely fashion that LAs are responsible for the quality of education (including religious education) of all children and young people living in their local areas, including those not enrolled in maintained LA schools. SACREs and their members are right to ask questions about the quality of RE (and collective worship) provided across their areas.

On behalf of NASACRE and its members, thanks to Dr Hampshire for his detailed and insightful analysis and recommendations, and thanks to all SACREs who submitted their reports in this cycle.

Foreword, from Linda Rudge, Chair of NASACRE

ANALYSIS OF SACRE ANNUAL REPORTS 2021-2022 FOR THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STANDING COUNCILS ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (NASACRE)

Table of Contents

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
2. RECOMMENDATIONS.....	3
2.1 NASACRE.....	3
2.2 NASACRE DISCUSSION WITH THE DfE	3
2.3 ADVICE TO LAS CO-PRODUCED BY NASACRE AND DfE	3
3.1 INTRODUCTION.....	4
3.2 METHODOLOGY	4
3.3 ETHICS.....	5
3.4 DECLARATION OF INTEREST	5
3.5 CAVEAT	5
4.1 SACRE MEETINGS	6
5.1 SUPPORT FOR SACRES.....	7
5.1.1 PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT.....	7
5.2 FUNDING FOR SACRES	8
5.3 ATTENDANCE AND QUORACY	8
6.1 ADVICE TO THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	9
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION	9
AGREED SYLLABUS REVIEW	10
COLLECTIVE WORSHIP	11
7 ADVICE TO SCHOOLS.....	12
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION	12
COLLECTIVE WORSHIP	12
8 MONITORING RE, PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS AND COLLECTIVE WORSHIP	13
SACRE MONITORING RE AND COLLECTIVE WORSHIP	13
<i>Monitoring primary and KS3 RE</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Monitoring GCSE and GCE A Level Religious Studies.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Complaints and Withdrawals from RE</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Providing, Supporting and Monitoring Training for RE (including Agreed Syllabus implementation)</i>	<i>15</i>
COLLECTIVE WORSHIP	16
9. DETERMINATIONS AND WITHDRAWALS	16
DETERMINATIONS.....	16
WITHDRAWALS	16
10 OTHER FEATURES OF SACRE ANNUAL REPORTS	17
DEVELOPMENT PLANS.....	17
COMMUNICATION WITH SCHOOLS.....	17
REGULAR IN PERSON MEETINGS WITH TEACHERS SUPPORTED BY SACRE	17
RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION (RSE) AND HEALTH EDUCATION.....	18
DEMOGRAPHIC DATA.....	18

9 CONCLUSION	19
APPENDIX 1: CATEGORIES USED TO ANALYSE SACRE ANNUAL REPORTS	20
APPENDIX 2: SACRES REPORTING BY CATEGORY (MAXIMUM N69/100%)	21
APPENDIX 3: RESEARCH ETHICS	22
APPENDIX 4: RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE ANALYSIS OF SACRE ANNUAL REPORTS 2020 – 2021.	23

1 Executive Summary

1.1 In 2023 72 SACREs submitted their annual report for 2021 – 2022, 16 more than in 2022. This figure is similar to the number submitted in 2021 (n68) and would indicate that the main cause for not submitting a report last year was the Covid-19 pandemic, which continued to have an impact in the year under report. The pattern of submission of reports is more complicated than first appears. Only 29 SACREs have submitted a report in all three years (2021 – 2023), 37 submitted their report twice, 35 once and 52 not at all. There is no clear reason why this is the case but there is a need to contact those SACREs that have not submitted a report to the DfE or NASACRE to find out which SACREs have produced reports, and which have failed to do so, where those SACREs are responsible for submitting report to the Secretary of State¹.

1.2 Whilst the restrictions relating to the Covid-19 pandemic ended in February 2021 the impact of the pandemic continued to affect SACRE meetings and the ability of SACREs to fulfil some of their statutory responsibilities. Some SACREs had substantial issues with membership and vacancies. It is not clear whether this was an issue of the local authority not being able to appoint, but desiring to do so, or whether this was an issue that SACREs felt they had to address themselves. Whichever this was causing an issue for some SACREs.

2.2 One of the main influences on a SACRE's work was its relationship with the local authority. Where the local authority was fully engaged with SACRE and its work this was evident in a SACRE's report. Reports indicate that the level of support for a SACRE was proportionate to the importance of religion and belief in the local authority area, often related to concerns about community cohesion – although that language was rarely used.

2.3 Where SACREs covered more rural areas the importance of Church of England diocese and its schools was more likely to be evident. This led to reporting on standards of RE and collective worship through a scrutiny of SIAMS reports. At least one SACRE was served by a diocesan officer and others received reports from diocesan officers.

2.4 It was clear that SACREs took their work seriously and were trying their best to support RE, if not always collective worship, in the schools in the local authority – in at least one case with no obvious support from the local authority. This though could lead to a series of conflation in reporting, such as the professional advice given by an adviser or consultant with that of a SACRE and the conflation of data, such as workplace surveys, with standards in RE. SACREs rarely evaluated the impact of their

¹ This would exclude the States of Jersey and the Isle of Man.

advice or actions, and this should be addressed if SACREs are to show their impact and focus on areas of improvement.

2.5 In many areas SACREs also work in collaboration with other SACREs, especially in the area of Agreed Syllabus development, implementation and training. To that extent links with external bodies such as NASACRE remain important as does their trialling and supporting of national initiatives to support RE in schools, such as REQM and WIRE.

2.6 SACREs continue to support schools and communities, in some area, beyond their statutory remit and this shows how valued they are as providing something unique within a local authority. A number of SACREs reported how they made links with local inter faith and faith and belief forums.

2. Recommendations²

2.1 NASACRE

- i. Guidance for SACREs is produced on how to focus an annual report on the impact of SACRE's work by reporting on any actions taken in the previous year and the outcomes of those actions, including advice.
- ii. Guidance for SACREs on how they should not confuse the advice given by professionals, in their own right, with advice given by SACRE as a statutory body.

2.2 NASACRE discussion with the DfE

- iii. NASACRE should request the DfE to approach the Secretary of State to write a letter of thanks to all those SACREs that have submitted a report for 2021 – 2022³.
- iv. NASACRE should formally ask the DfE to write to Local Authorities whose SACREs that have not submitted an Annual Report in the last three years to enquire why this is case and request that these reports be sent to the DfE.

2.3 Advice to LAs co-produced by NASACRE and DfE

- v. That co-produced advice be produced for local authorities on good practice in supporting SACREs, including funding, officer support, the appointment of members and the role of each group in relation to those they represent.
- vi. Co-produced advice should also be developed for members of Group D as appointed by the local authority, representing the local authority and being an advocate for SACRE to the local authority and its elected members.

² Appendix 4 contains the Recommendations from the last report, some of these are still pertinent and are not duplicated here.

³ The NASACRE Executive will be sent a complete list of all SACREs that have submitted a report to the DfE and/or NASACRE with this report.

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The Analysis for SACRE Annual Reports 2021 – 2022 was commissioned by the NASACRE Executive with the agreement for the Department for Education (DfE) on the same basis as the report commissioned for in 2022⁴.

3.1.2 Of 153 SACREs in England, 72 submitted a report by the 19 May 2023 (47.1%) compared with 56 in 2022 and 68 in 2021, indicating that the biggest barrier to SACRE work and reporting in 2020 – 2021 was the Covid-19 pandemic, which officially ended in England on 21 February 2022 with the publication of the COVID-19 Response: Living with COVID-19 guidance⁵.

3.1.3 There is a recommended format for SACRE annual reports, which is available from [NASACRE](#) but not all SACREs use this format some using earlier formats and others being peculiar to a SACRE. Some reports ran to 31 pages whilst others were 9 pages. The analysis of the report published in 2022 did not use the NASACRE recommended format rather it identified 21 categories as the basis for data collection and analysis, see Methodology below. These categories were discussed with NASACRE's Executive Assistant during the process of data collection. See Appendices 1 and 2 for the categories used for analysis in this report. This format has been replicated in 2023 so that it is possible compare the two years.

3.2 Methodology

3.2.1 Reports were received from 4 February to 5 May 2023. As noted above the methodological approach was identical to that used in 2022 (see also Appendix 1 and Appendix 2) but two categories were added, detailed notes on attendance and regular in person meetings with teachers.

- Attendance
- Detailed notes on attendance
- Professional support
- Religious Education:
 - Advice to the local authority
 - Advice to schools⁶
- Collective worship:
 - Advice to the local authority
 - Advice to schools⁷
 - Determinations
- Monitoring:
 - Complaints (RE and CW)
 - Religious Education
 - Collective Worship
- Agreed Syllabus Review

⁴ See Appendix 4 for the recommendations in the 2021 – 2022 report.

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-living-with-covid-19>

⁶ Schools here refers to maintained non-denominational and controlled schools and academies and free schools without a religious foundation.

⁷ Schools here refers to non-denominational schools and academies and free schools without a religious foundation.

- Training for implementation of the syllabus
- SACRE funding
- Examination performance
 - GCSE
 - A Level
- Covid-19
- Communication with schools and others
- Regular in person meetings with teachers
- Collaboration with other bodies
- Development Planning
- Relationships and Sex Education/Health Education (RSE/RSHE)

3.2.2 The latter were added relative to the frequency they featured in reports received. These indicated areas that SACREs were working in their authorities. Where statistical analysis appeared above or below what might be expected from the range in other categories they were revisited to check and amended as necessary.

3.2.3 There was an obvious difficulty in collating the data as SACREs do not report in the same way under the same category. As instance would be that some SACREs under advice to schools reported training for schools, whereas some SACREs reported no advice to schools but put training in a different part of the report. Therefore, it was necessary to interpret what SACREs had done under the general framework provided by NASACRE and the legal requirement to report to the Secretary of State for Education. How this was done and where will become apparent in the report as necessary.

3.3 Ethics

See Appendix 3 for details.

3.4 Declaration of interest

The author has written SACRE annual reports for a number of authorities in the past. No work for a local authority or SACRE was undertaken during the period from agreeing to do this research to its completion. The author declares no interest relevant to this research. and has refrained from making judgements on the reports submitted.

3.5 Caveat

It does not follow that SACRE Reports report fully on their support or activities, given that some are relatively short. This report is based only on what SACREs stated. Where quotes from reports have been used these have been anonymised.

SACRE meetings are subject to The Religious Education (Meetings of Local Conferences and Councils) Regulations 1994⁸. SACREs must produce an annual report⁹ and send to the Secretary of State by December 31st in any calendar year¹⁰

4.1 SACRE meetings

4.1.1 Just over 90% of SACREs mentioned the pandemic or Covid-19 in their reports, and whilst restrictions were lifted in February 2022 (see 3.1.2 above) the impact of the pandemic was sustained. As one SACRE reported:

As you will know, this academic year has continued to be a challenge for everyone, not least for those involved in education, as we have all continued to journey through the rumbling on of the COVID-19 pandemic and its unprecedented and largely negative impact.

Online meetings for two SACREs had become the norm as a result of the pandemic:

Four SACRE meetings were held during the year. The first three – in October and November 2021 and March 2022 – were held virtually online as had become the norm during the restrictions on meetings applied during the pandemic.

Three SACRE meetings were held during the year. Wed 17th November 2021, Wed 9th March 2022 were held virtually online as had become the norm during the restrictions on meetings applied during the pandemic.

To what extent SACREs will have a mixed economy of meetings will remain to be seen, as explored in 4.1.2 below.

The pandemic may also have had the impact of giving SACREs new energy, as can be seen in one SACREs report:

Meetings have focused on the following areas: Inspiring children and young people to reflect on God's presence in the world as schools fully re-opened following the pandemic; this was achieved through an ambitious, well-resourced art competition and exhibition.

4.1.2 As noted in the 2020 – 2021 report it was not clear from the reports was whether SACREs, as locally appointed statutory bodies, were expected to operate in the same way as other local authority meetings over the period of transition from virtual to in person meetings. As previously noted, this would indicate in individual cases a local authority's understanding of the nature of SACRE and its significance in statute. Virtual meetings were still taking place during the year under report, although there was a mixture of online and in person meetings in most SACREs.

⁸ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1994/1304/contents/made>

⁹ Section 391(6) and (7), Education Act 1996.

¹⁰ Section 391(10), Education Act 1996 as amended by Education Act 2011 c21 Schedule 8 Abolition of the QCDA: consequential amendments.

4.1.3 As required by statute SACRE and ASC meetings must meet in public, with the exception on certain business specified in *Statutory Instrument 1994: 1309*. This remained an issue in 2021 – 2022 but some SACREs had found ways to make their meeting publicly accessible.

One SACRE report stated:

SACRE met three times – each time online and streamed live on YouTube.

Another:

There were four meetings of SACRE during the year 2021-22, all held via Zoom Meetings are open to the public and minutes are also available on-line.

It was also clear that for some SACREs having a hybrid format or online option helped the work of SACRE as it meant more members could attend and improve or ensure quoracy:

There were three meetings of SACRE during 2022, held in a hybrid format consisting of in-person and online attendance enabling all our meetings to be quorate.

Online meetings had proved in many ways to be more convenient, one SACRE expressed this sentiment:

We in SACRE have continued to have our regular meetings by Zoom and are now looking forward to reinstating the face-to-face meetings. The reason for the long period of virtual meetings was due more to convenience for members rather than to pandemic restrictions.

And another SACRE commented:

Although attendance is higher when meetings are held virtually, this has been to the detriment of quality networking and discussion.

5.1 Support for SACREs

5.1.1 Professional support

Not all SACREs have support from their LA:

This was another challenging year, for SACRE. As there is no RE advisor or paid support for RE in the LA, all development work is usually led by members of SACRE and/or local teachers.

Nevertheless 97.2% of SACREs reported that they had professional support from an advisor, consultant, consultancy and/or a clerk. In some cases, professional support came from the Church of England's Diocesan Team in the absence of a local authority adviser or consultant. The role of the adviser/consultant was welcomed by SACREs, as one reported:

SACRE members gave close consideration to the various national and local developments concerning the provision of RE. These discussions were prompted by the information provided to the SACRE through the regular updates from the RE Consultant and SACRE Adviser and NASACRE Briefings.

5.2 Funding for SACREs

5.2.1 As in the previous report the majority of SACREs (79.2%) reported funding available with over half of those (43.1%) specifying a figure or, in some cases, a detailed budget. Some SACREs simply noted:

The LA provides sufficient resource to enable the effective operation of SACRE.

5.2.2 NASACRE's FOI request on SACRE funding continued to be referenced in some reports as a benchmark against which to judge their own funding by the local authority.

5.3 Attendance and quoracy

3.3.1 87.5% of annual reports reported on attendance at SACRE meetings for the period of the reports, compared to just under 60% in the previous year. As in the reports received in 2022 there were a number of different ways of doing this:

- Giving a full list of SACRE members by Group and identifying which meeting they attended.
- Attendance reported as percentage for each group for each meeting.
- By member, but not by group.
- In a special appendix to the report but not submitted as part of the report.
- By providing hyperlinks to the minutes of meetings so that they could be viewed by those interested.
- Noting that all meetings were quorate but giving no detail.
- Noting apologies but not attendance.

5.3.2 Over half of the reports (56.9%) added detail to their reporting on attendance, but as can be seen from 5.3.1 this was varied. A small number of SACREs reported issues with being inquorate and business not being able to be carried out, e.g.

The Summer (July) meeting was not quorate due to lack of Group D (councillors) being present.

One meeting in this period was inquorate due to in attendance of Group B – Church of England.

In one case this also applied to the Agreed Syllabus Conference:

It was not possible to take the decision to convene the Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) as the meeting was inquorate.

5.3.3 As in 2022 a small number of SACRE reports ($\leq 4\%$) appended a constitution to the report submitted. It was not clear why, but this did enable readers to compare the membership of SACRE with the membership required by the constitution. 63.9% of

SACREs, though, included some form of development plan, some of which were costed. What was less common was any reporting on the development plan or equivalent.

5.3.4 *The Religious Education (Meetings of Local Conferences and Councils) Regulations 1994: UK Statutory Instruments 1994 No. 1304* (see footnote 5).

No SACRE reported on issues relating to SI 1994: 1304, although there clearly were continuing issues due to Covid-19 restrictions during the year under report and how these were managed when restrictions were lifted.

6.1 Advice to the local authority

Religious Education

6.1.1 NASACRE's guidance on SACRE Annual Reports¹¹ states:

The main purpose of the annual report is to hold the LA to account, by informing the Secretary of State and key partners what advice SACRE gave the LA during the year and how that was responded to; this includes advice on RE and Collective Worship in those schools for which the LA has responsibility.

This is consonant with government advice based on the requirements of the Education Reform Act 1988¹² and subsequent consolidated legislation.

6.1.2 During the year under report 43.1% of SACREs reported that they had advised the LA on matters relating to RE. It did not follow that advice was given even if it was referenced in the report, one SACRE quoted NASACRE's guidance above but gave no advice to the local authority on either RE or collective worship. Some SACREs though were clear in the way they reported advice they had given:

The following advice is given by SACRE to the local authority:

- 1. To review the funding of SACRE to ensure it is in line with national recommendations and good practice;*
- 2. To review the membership of SACRE to ensure it reflects the breadth and diversity of the borough in terms of faiths and beliefs and schools' structures.*
- 3. To ensure SACRE's annual report is considered carefully by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the Council and any of its content noted.*

6.1.3 In some SACRE reports there was a conflation of the RE advisor with SACRE, so that professional advice given to the local authority by the advisor was reported as advice from SACRE. It may be useful to make a distinction between SACRE's advice

¹¹

[https://nasacre.org.uk/file/nasacre/SACRE Annual Reports necessary desir.pdf#:~:text=The%20main%20purpose%20of%20the%20annual%20report%20is,responsibility.%20Suggested%20structure%20to%20the%20annual%20report%3A%201.](https://nasacre.org.uk/file/nasacre/SACRE%20Annual%20Reports%20necessary%20desir.pdf#:~:text=The%20main%20purpose%20of%20the%20annual%20report%20is,responsibility.%20Suggested%20structure%20to%20the%20annual%20report%3A%201.)

¹²

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/281929/Collective_worship_in_schools.pdf see paragraphs 98 - 100.

and the professional advice given by the advisor, which may not have been discussed by SACRE at all.

6.1.4 As in 2022 in some reports the advice related to resourcing and funding SACRE and Agreed Syllabus reviews. One SACRE was going to advise the local authority to convene an Agreed Syllabus Conference but couldn't because it was not quorate:

The agreed syllabus will be due for review in the academic year of 2022-23. Groups A, B and C will need to vote for a recommendation to the Local Authority to establish an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) for the review of the syllabus at the SACRE meeting in Autumn 2022. As Group D is the Local Authority, it does not get a vote. The voting was originally planned for the SACRE's meeting in June 2022; however, it did not take place as the meeting was not quorate.

6.1.5 Other SACREs advised on matters relating to schools and their statutory or contractual duties (in the case of Academies), for example where the workforce survey indicated that in some schools there was no RE provision:

SACRE has advised the council to carry out an investigation into these cases.

6.1.6 Another area of advice to the LA was SACRE membership, as noted above in 5.3.3. In response to a self-evaluation target:

To widen the membership of SACRE to ensure full representation from faith groups in the borough.

this SACRE reported:

As SACRE has been reconstituted, we have looked carefully at membership of different groups and we are conscious that diversity in representation is needed including the range of faiths and beliefs in the area as well as working with Multi Academy Trusts.

This SACRE also reported that there were 23 vacancies and noted:

SACRE needs to ensure there continues to be consistent attendance and needs more teacher representatives.

6.1.7 As in 2022 it was not evident, other than in response to advice to convene an Agreed Syllabus Conference, that local authorities had responded to the advice of SACREs. As noted in 2022 to that extent it appears that the conversation is one way but that may not be the case, it may simply be that SACREs are not reporting on the LA's response to its advice other than in a request for funding or the convening of an Agreed Syllabus Conference.

[Agreed Syllabus Review](#)

6.2.1 61.1% of SACREs reported that a new syllabus was being implemented, that a review had started or was in process or had just completed. Some SACREs reported

on their advice to the LA that the syllabus needed reviewing in line with statute¹³ and that there were funding implications to that. This was an increase of 16% in comparison to the previous year. Where the local authority's syllabus was shared with other authorities or written in collaboration with a consultancy or publisher this was usually stated. Again, the pandemic was clearly having an effect on the usual processes that SACREs follow, one noted:

During the year we discussed the new Agreed Syllabus due to be published in 2023. Due to the pandemic and having consulted with the other SACREs [with which the syllabus is shared], we decided along with them to delay this until 2024.

6.2.2 The reception of a new agreed syllabus also gave SACREs an opportunity to monitor its reception and use:

The implementation of the new Agreed Syllabus from September 2023 we hope will give us some indication of how well the current syllabus is embedded and what will help to improve it.

Collective Worship

6.3.1 8.3% of SACREs reported that they had given advice to the local authority with regard to collective worship, which is in line with the previous year. One SACRE put it succinctly:

Besides Religious Education each local authority must work with its SACRE to monitor the provision of daily collective worship.

6.3.2 Not that there was evidence of that in the report quoted in 6.3.1 or many reports. As noted below there is a danger of conflating professional advice to the local authority with advice from SACRE as a body:

The RE consultant to SACRE has given advice to the local authority on a number of occasions in 2021- 22. Some of these occasions have included assisting with parental objections to a part of collective worship. The meetings often have to unpack cultural and religious objections, offering a great learning experience for parents as well as school leaders.

Which in no way casts doubt on the quality of the advice but confuses the role of professionals and that of an appointed body.

6.3.3 Some SACREs were actively thinking about post pandemic collective worship and how they might help:

It has been difficult for schools to maintain an effective programme of collective worship during the pandemic and one of SACRE's key priorities in the coming year will be to remind, facilitate and support schools. This will include offering light-touch review conversations with practical suggestions.

¹³ In line with The Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education (Prescribed Period) Order 1999: UK Statutory Instruments 1999 No. 1728.

7 Advice to schools

Religious Education

7.1.1 58.3% of SACREs reported on advice that they have made available to schools, some of which was produced by SACREs before the period under report. The most common type of advice related to the implementation of the Agreed Syllabus but there was also advice more broadly than that relating to the curriculum, such as advice on fasting during Ramadan. One SACRE noted:

Advice is always available and open to whomever requests it. It has been shown that pre-pandemic there were more emails from schools regarding advice on certain elements within Religious Education, which the SACRE would discuss and help with.

This SACRE did not report on what had happened during the pandemic or in the post-pandemic period and what was not apparent was how schools received advice or acted up on it.

7.1.2 SACREs also continued to report on making available national initiatives such as the WIRE award (Widening Diversity in Religious Education) and how schools had responded, one report noted:

During the 2021-2022 academic year, three schools completed the requirements for the WIRE award. They will receive their awards in the Autumn term 2022. In addition, some schools who have already received the WIRE award are working towards their WIRE Gold Award.

Collective Worship

7.2.1 63.9% of SACREs reported that they had provided advice on collective worship to schools. As in the previous report much of this was signposting schools to existing resources such as model policies, protocols around visitors to collective worship, policies on withdrawal and advice on topics and resources for collective worship. Some SACREs were actively looking at updating their guidance:

SACRE have decided to undertake a review of guidance on collective worship around the UK with a view to creating new guidance for schools on collective worship and assemblies.

A small number of SACREs reported on the ways that they had supported schools in the authority, such as:

SACRE has done the following in relation to collective worship:

- *Produced borough wide resources to use within lessons and collective worship for Holocaust Memorial Day. This included activities produced by students from various schools.*
- *Produced and shared a sample Collective Worship policy for all schools.*
- *Produced and shared a sample SMSC policy for all school's which links to collective worship.*

- *Chair of SACRE led a CPD session on Collective Worship which all RE leads from all schools were invited to attend and resources shared.*

7.2.2 As in 2021 – 2022 SACREs were more likely to give advice to schools on collective worship than they were to give advice to the local authority 63.9% compared to 8.3%, and this followed a similar pattern in 2020 – 2021.

8 Monitoring RE, public examinations and collective worship

8.1.1 Whilst most reports in 2020 – 2021 stated that it was not possible to monitor RE, collective worship or examination results this had substantially changed in 2021 – 2022, but that depended on when the report was written. Some SACREs reported early in the 2021 – 2022 period and were still unable to monitor RE, collective worship or public examinations, others were increasingly able and some more able. It does not follow, though, that if a report references monitoring that it actually reports anything about the results of that monitoring. Hence, it may not be possible to derive anything about standards, compliance or issues relating to RE and collective worship from the monitoring of these areas. It did not follow that if a SACRE monitored RE and collective worship that the data generated then formed the basis of advice to the local authority and its schools. Given the resources that SACREs have it is clear that monitoring of RE and collective worship in schools depends on the local authority, as one SACRE noted:

Working more closely with the LA would enable SACRE to be more effective and to begin to gather more information about standards on RE across the LA.

8.1.2 This poses a serious question not only about what the relationship between LA officers and SACRE but also Group D, which represents the local authority and (as with all SACRE members) appoints them.

SACRE Monitoring RE and Collective worship

8.2. The date of the publication of a report had an effect on a SACREs ability to monitor RE and collective worship in schools. This was particularly true in relation to the release of public examination data. It can be reasonably expected that this will not continue to be an issue in the next reporting cycle.

Monitoring primary and KS3 RE

8.3.1 In 2020 – 2021 42% (n24) of SACREs reported monitoring primary RE this had marginally dropped to 40.3% (n29) in 2021 – 2022. More SACREs reported monitoring KS3 RE in 2021 – 2022, n27 (37.5%) than in 2020 – 2021 n24 (43%), but the percentage of SACREs is significantly lower, as can be seen. This can be explained by the increased number of reports submitted in 2023 and may be a more accurate picture of monitoring Primary and KS3 RE than those submitted in 2022.

8.3.2 Where monitoring was mentioned but not possible to undertake this was usually due to the impact of the pandemic on the work of SACREs. A small number of SACREs reported extensively on RE in Church of England (VA/VC and equivalent) schools and looked at SIAMS reports, but not on similar reports from other denominational schools. One report dedicated 4 – 5 pages on a diocesan update. Another SACRE used Ofsted

reports to monitor standards in RE and two thirds of the reports were voluntary aided schools.

8.3.3 In 2020 – 2021 nearly 40% of SACREs used Ofsted reports as the only way of monitoring RE schools and this reduced to about 20.8% in 2021 – 2022. As noted in the previous year’s report it did not follow that this exercise was useful as reports may not mention RE at all or include schools which come under SACREs remit. Some SACREs also reported on SIAMS reports, as noted above, and it may be the case that reason for this was that there was little else to report on due to the continued impact of the pandemic.

8.3.4 One area of data for SACREs was the workforce survey – *School Workforce Data Published* summer 2022 by the Joint Council for Qualifications – which in the absence other data enabled SACREs to see the number of hours of RE being taught per year in each school and some SACREs used this as a basis for advice to the LA, naming schools that appeared to have no or little RE. This was sometimes reported under ‘standards in RE’ data, and in some reports there appeared to be a conflation of provision with standards.

8.3.5 Some SACREs also found interesting ways to non-systematically monitor RE as they came out of the pandemic but were wary of face-to-face encounter with schools, as one report stated:

Monitoring for this academic year continue to take place via email conversations, online conversations and some face-to-face conversations where deemed safe as schools recovered after COVID-19.

8.3.5 As in the previous report schools and academy websites and online network meetings were also important sources of information for SACREs. This showed that SACREs could be learning organisations in their own right:

We learned to adapt with zoom meetings and monitoring of school’s RE activities via surveying their websites, together with on-line teacher training and other activities to maintain the profile of RE.

8.3.6 There were some SACREs that couldn’t access the data because the local authority or Academy Boards would not provide the data requested. This raises questions about the local authority as the appointing body and its support for that body. One SACRE appeared not to have a Group D at all, although records of the meetings during the period under report showed that two meetings had a councillor present and one a headteacher who ‘represented the LA’. It was clear from looking at the previous year’s report that this was an improvement and there had been engagement with the LA, but it was not clear that the LA had any role in appointing members to the four Groups required by statute.

[Monitoring GCSE and GCE A Level Religious Studies](#)

8.4.1 In 2020 – 2021 35% of SACREs reported on attainment in GCSE and 19% A Level 19% attainment. This had substantially increased in 2021 – 2022 to 65.3% reporting on GCSEs and 29.2% A Level. The level of detail changed from SACRE to SACRE, with some giving global figures and others school by school breakdown.

Complaints and Withdrawals from RE

8.5.1 In 2021 – 2022 70.8% of SACREs monitored complaints compared to 56% in the previous year. 55.6% monitored withdrawal from RE and a small number reported on the groups requesting withdrawal, this is compared with 30% in 2020 – 2021.

Providing, Supporting and Monitoring Training for RE (including Agreed Syllabus implementation)

8.6.1 In the year under report 93.1% of SACRE annual reports referenced training support for teachers, compared to 71.4% in the previous year. This was to be expected as school life got back to normal. As noted above, though, the move to digital had definite benefits, in that online training made the events more accessible to schools. As one SACRE noted:

An alternative version of the WIRE (Widening Inclusivity in RE) award using zoom and other means has been made available to enable schools to make contact with faith communities at a time when distance, availability and cost can be a problem in very rural areas.

8.6.2 Training was provided by a range of providers and where there were existing relationships with an organisation, such as providing a consultant or co-designing an agreed syllabus training was likely to be provided by that organisation. Monitoring the impact of training was less common, with only 31.9% of SACRES in 2021 – 2022 commenting on how well training was received, as one SACRE noted:

Our support for RE in schools continues through well attended and evaluated training sessions.

With some SACREs included comments by teachers to show how they valued the training they had received. This was a marked improvement on the reports submitted in 2022 where only 5.4% of SACREs did this form of monitoring.

8.6.3 As noted in the 2022 report the role of SACREs in ensuring the quality of resources and training courses in the delivery of the agreed syllabus has long been expected of SACRE, as can be seen in Education Reform Act 1988 s11 (2) consolidated in the [1996 Education Act](#) and reflected in the comment in [Circular 1/94](#):

It is for a LEA to decide what matters it wishes to refer to its SACRE; but the 1988 Act says that these should include, in particular, methods of teaching, the choice of teaching material and the provision of teacher training.

Noting that the LA should take a lead on this and positively decide what it should refer to SACRE. Given that the LA remains responsible for the quality of education provision for the children who live in the authority this extends to Academies and even other authorities where appropriate¹⁴.

¹⁴ [The Children Act 2004 c. 31 Part 2 General Section 10 \(2\)](#);

Collective worship

8.7.1 29.2% of SACREs mentioned monitoring of collective worship and for many of them it was the case that no monitoring had taken place or that strategies were being sort on how to monitor this area of their responsibility. As one SACRE noted:

In the year 2021-22, no collective worship monitoring has been undertaken, as schools gradually returned to normal processes for worship at various points in the year. As Covid outbreaks continued, some schools reverted for periods of time back to virtual collective worship, resuming in person worship when it was judged to be safe to do so.

Another:

Monitoring Collective Worship is recognised as an area for development.

8.7.2 One method for collecting data that a number of SACREs employed was asking schools to complete a self-evaluation exercise, predominantly these focused on RE but some included collective worship, as one SACRE noted:

91% of the schools who responded to the school self-evaluation survey confirmed that they are meeting legal requirements and providing a daily act of collective worship. The 9% of schools who indicated that they were not meeting this duty were all community primary schools.

8.7.2 At least one SACRE report made no mention of collective worship at all.

8.7.3 Some SACREs used website analysis to see if collective worship was happening in schools in the local authority:

SACRE occasionally discusses collective worship and has looked at schools' websites to check that it is part of the day in schools.

8.7.4 It was not clear that monitoring led to advice, rather it was ensuring compliance with the requirements placed on school by statute or funding agreement. It may be worth SACREs reflecting on the information they have received and forming advice for the local authority or non-denominational schools, including academies.

9. Determinations and withdrawals

Determinations

7.4.1 Of the 87.5% of SACREs that mentioned determinations in their annual reports the vast majority reported that there had been no applications for a determination. Where determinations had been made SACREs reported on each application and the period to which the determination applied.

Withdrawals

7.4.2 55.6% of reports mentioned withdrawal. Where details of the groups likely to withdraw their child were included in the annual report this usually related to RE and not collective worship, although it is possible to infer that where a report stated, for example, children of Jehovah's Witness parents were withdrawn from RE they would

be likely to be withdrawn from collective worship. Of the SACREs that reported on withdrawals from collective worship a few noted how few withdrawals there were:

From the LA's monitoring of schools, we know that two pupils have been withdrawn from collective worship from a total of 64,257 pupils. This means that almost 100% of pupils are in daily acts of collective worship.

7.4.3 One SACRE had used its monitoring to see if schools let parents and guardians know about the right of withdrawal:

Despite the legal requirement to let parents know of the right to withdraw children from the daily act, however, 13 of the sites failed to mention it.

7.4.4 Another SACRE noted, without reporting whether there had been any withdrawals from collective worship:

Parents have a statutory right to withdraw their children from collective worship. Guidance on good practice and protocols for withdrawal is available to schools; consultants are available if further support is needed. SACRE recognises parents' legal rights but hopes all children will be enabled to receive stimulating and balanced RE as part of their entitlement to a broad curriculum.

10 Other features of SACRE annual reports

Development plans

10.1 It was notable that some SACREs published their development plans (63.9% compared to 12.5% in the previous year) and in some instances these were used as a basis for self-evaluation. On the whole SACREs did not report on their progress in terms of the development plan within the body of the report, although one SACRE RAG rated the plan. It was also not always clear how the development plan was informing the work of a SACRE in 2021 – 2022.

Communication with schools

10.2 69.4% of SACREs that submitted a report in 2023 used e-newsletter or e-bulletins to communicate with schools, compare to 17.9% in 2022. The frequency of these bulletins varied, and the pandemic had an impact on some SACREs normal pattern. The most frequent pattern was a termly newsletter going to all schools. The impact of these was not reported on. It was obvious that some SACREs did communicate with schools but did not report on how this was done.

Regular in person meetings with teachers supported by SACRE

10.3.1 One feature of SACRE in 2021 – 2022 as the nation came out of the pandemic was the reporting on in person meetings with teachers, as indicated in some of the monitoring reported on above (8.3.6). 84.7% of SACREs reported on these in the form of online events, in person events, monitoring visits and training. Importantly, these were not simply one-off events but a programme of events which served multiple purposes, this is an increase 78.6% in the previous year.

10.3.2 In relation to teachers' meetings and communications one SACRE reported:

Our SACRE actively seeks to ensure all children in the borough have access to high quality and challenging RE and we provide support to primary RE subject leaders through the teachers' network meetings, now taking place in person again. These are free of charge to maintained schools and we urge school leaders to recognise the importance of allocating school time for staff to attend. We also produce a termly newsletter which signposts resources, draws attention to issues of interest in the RE world and highlights forthcoming festivals among other features.

10.3.3 One Chair of SACRE in their introduction noted:

Support for teachers in the region to develop best practice has been successfully expanded so that we now have more localised RE hubs with the leaders receiving ongoing CPD to help them disseminate great teaching and learning ideas.

The ability of SACREs to convene, in the broadest sense, meetings for teachers to improve their knowledge, understanding and confidence is something that is worthy of further exploration.

[Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education¹⁵](#)

10.4.1 Since the change in the law regarding relationships and sex education 8 SACREs (11.1%) reported an involvement in RSE, this is twice the number in comparison to the previous year's report. The involvement of SACREs relate to their relationships with faith communities and indicates the trust that these communities have in SACREs.

10.4.2 As in 2020 – 2021 was a recognition that SACREs do not have a remit for RSE/RSHE but that they can make a valuable contribution to this issue due to their connections across communities within the authority.

[Demographic data](#)

10.5.1 In light of the publication of the Census 2021 data some SACREs included data about the authority from the census relating to religion and belief, as one SACRE reported:

It is one of the most religiously diverse Boroughs in the U.K. While families from all religious backgrounds live in the Borough, Christians make up 39.3%, then Muslims 12.6%, followed by Jews 3.6%, other religion 2.3% Hindus 1.3%. There are a minority of Buddhists and Sikhs in the authority, and a significant proportion of families, over 31.6%, citing no religious beliefs.

The same SACRE also reported on the local authority's data on the ethnic make up of the school population.

¹⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>

10.5.2 Not all SACREs, depending on when the report was written in relation to the data release, drew upon the 2021 Census but relied on the 2011 Census recognising that its use was limited:

Although statistics from the 2011 National Census are now somewhat out of date they remain helpful in illustrating the diversity of the Local Authority.

No doubt this will be updated in the next reporting cycle.

10.5.3 Where this data appeared to be of most use was identifying the need for SACRE membership to represent the communities in the local authority. Generally, though, the implications of demographic data was not drawn out in SACRE reports. For example, mention of training relating to Humanism as a worldview did not reference the Census in terms of the growing number of people not identifying with a religious tradition.

9 Conclusion

9.1 This year's report has focused on the same methodology as the 2022 report, which allows some measure of comparison and contrast. The data set is larger, due to the lower number of reports submitted in 2022 and therefore there is some caution about drawing absolute parallels. In future years it may be an idea to focus on a number of specific areas to better inform NASACRE about specific issues facing SACREs in greater depth.

9.2 SACREs continue to serve their local authorities with no financial or other reward, other than being appointed as members of a statutory body that can have a direct impact on schools, teachers, pupils and their communities. They have come through the pandemic after a year of operating in the most unusual circumstances and developed new skills, as can be seen by their adaptation to online and hybrid working.

9.3 Some SACREs are working hard despite the lack of support from their local authorities, supporting teachers, organising training and finding ways to engage with schools. No doubt the academisation process has diminished some local authorities and focused their work more narrowly but SACREs still have the power to stay relevant and may be one of the few ways that teachers have an opportunity encounter the local authority other than in relation to Safeguarding.

9.4 Therefore, SACREs should be celebrated for what they do, especially where their task appears thankless. Reading 72 SACRE Annual Reports between February and May has been a real privilege and whilst not underestimating the challenges they have a real insight into the good will and hard work of many SACRE members across England.

Dr David Hampshire FRSA FRAI
10 June 2023

Appendix 1: Categories used to analyse SACRE Annual Reports

1. Attendance
2. Detailed Notes on attendance
3. Professional support
4. Budget specified
5. RE Advice to the LA
6. RE Advice to schools (including non-LA)
7. CW monitoring
8. CW Advice to the LA
9. CW Advice to schools
10. Withdrawal
11. Determinations
12. Complaints monitored
13. Monitoring Primary RE
14. Monitoring Secondary RE:
 - a. non-examination
 - b. Standards GCSE
 - c. Standards A Level
15. Agreed Syllabus Review
16. Training and support for AS implementation and RE
17. Monitoring training for schools
18. Covid-19
19. Communication (newsletter)
20. Regular in person meetings with teachers
21. Development Plan
22. Collaboration/links to other bodies
23. RSE/Health Education

Appendix 2: SACREs reporting by category (maximum n69/100%)

Category	Number of SACREs reporting in set categories	Percentage of SACREs reporting in set categories
Attendance	63	87.5
Detailed notes on attendance	41	56.9
Professional support	70	97.2
Funding/Budget	57	79.2
Budget specified	31	43.1
RE Advice to the LA	31	43.1
RE Advice to all schools	42	58.3
CW monitoring	21	29.2
CW Advice to the LA	6	8.3
CW Advice to all schools	46	63.9
Withdrawal	40	55.6
Determinations	63	87.5
Complaints monitored	51	70.8
Monitoring Primary RE	29	40.3
Secondary Standards: non-examination	27	37.5
Standards GCSE	47	65.3
Standards A Level	21	29.2
Agreed Syllabus Review	44	61.1
Training and support for AS implementation and RE	67	93.1
Monitoring training for schools	23	31.9
Monitoring Ofsted only as source of information	15	20.8
Covid-19	65	90.3
Communication (newsletter)	50	69.4
Regular in person meetings with teachers	61	84.7
Development Plan	46	63.9
Collaboration/links to other bodies	65	90.3
RSE/Health Education	8	11.1

Note: percentages are rounded to the first decimal point.

Appendix 3: Research Ethics

The author is a member of the British Educational Research Association and the British Sociological Association, and the Ethical standards expected by both bodies were applied during the research; see,

British Educational Research Association:

<https://www.bera.ac.uk/publication/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-2018>,

and

British Sociological Association:

https://www.britisoc.co.uk/media/24310/bsa_statement_of_ethical_practice.pdf.

During the research no local authority, SACRE, SACRE member, clerk to SACRE or RE Advisor or consultant was contacted for comment. SACRE Annual Reports are public documents the working presumption was that they were intended to be read by the interested public.

All data has been anonymised and no SACRE singled out for comment, a list of reports submitted to NASACRE and/or DfE are available on request and appear on the NASACRE website, when submitted. Where SACRE reports are quoted this has been for illustrative purposes not to make a judgement on the report used or the particular SACRE.

Appendix 4: Recommendations from the Analysis of SACRE Annual Reports 2020 – 2021.

Recommendations to NASACRE Executive

On the basis of the evidence it is recommended that NASACRE discusses the following recommendations.

2.1 NASACRE support for SACREs

- i. Advice should be developed for SACREs on advising their local authority on RE and collective worship and reporting on how the LA responded to advice¹⁶.
- ii. Advice developed on how SACRE annual reports could have a greater focus on the impact of their work, showing their value as statutory bodies.
- iii. NASACRE could develop a series of case studies to support SACRE members' training, exemplifying ways that SACREs have been creative in working with schools and other partners and the impact that this has had.
- iv. Revisit the annual report proforma on a regular basis.

2.2 NASACRE discussion with the DfE

- v. Discuss the ongoing strategy for ensuring 100% return on SACRE Annual reports as required by legislation.
- vi. Clarify what the response of the DfE would be where SACREs reported that the LA had not followed the advice of SACRE or where a SACRE could not function as a result of the lack of support from the LA.
- vii. Discuss how government can clarify and support the role of SACREs in relation to non-denominational academies in light of LA responsibilities to parents/guardians and their children in the authority¹⁷, with a view to revising current guidance which is now 10 years old¹⁸.
- viii. Discuss the need to update *Religious education in English schools: non-statutory guidance 2010*¹⁹ and *Circular 1/94*²⁰, both of which remain on the government's website as current advice.

2.3 Advice to LAs co-produced by NASACRE and DfE

- ix. Produce a guide for LAs, with the support of the DfE, to ensure authorities meet their statutory responsibilities.

¹⁶ [The local authority is responsible for securing the standard of education for pupils in or from the authority, that includes religious education and collective worship.](#)

¹⁷ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/section/10>

¹⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/re-and-collective-worship-in-academies-and-free-schools/religious-education-re-and-collective-worship-in-academies-and-free-schools?msclkid=3a97f159d07511ec9cb4ba4b39523eed>

¹⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/religious-education-guidance-in-english-schools-non-statutory-guidance-2010?msclkid=3a98619ed07511ec9a84ffc6a5aa5dc4>

²⁰

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/281929/Collective_worship_in_schools.pdf?msclkid=abf0da16d07711ecba73b170373fca63

- x. Advise LAs as to the continued nature of SACREs as statutory bodies appointed by the LA and that SACREs should at least have the same support and status as other local authority committees²¹.

²¹ In line with the requirements of [The Religious Education \(Meetings of Local Conferences and Councils\) Regulations 1994](#).

SACRE funding in England



A Second Report from the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education

Paul Smalley

August 2023



Edge Hill
University

Faculty of
Education



Foreword

It is my pleasure, as Chair of the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on RE, to introduce this new report to our members, and to wider education networks. We would like to thank everyone involved in its production, especially to all those in local authority Freedom of Information teams, and education officers supporting SACREs. Special thanks to the author, Paul Smalley at Edge Hill University for analysing the data and compiling the report. The headlines alone are compelling.

Our previous report on SACRE funding was published in 2021 and has had significant impact. For example, its findings were included in the Parliamentary research briefing *Religious education in modern Britain*¹, prior to the Westminster Hall debate on 1st November 2022.

The NASACRE executive committee is listening to members and to local authorities as we decide whether or not to repeat this FOI request in two years' time. We are very happy to receive feedback on the process and the questions again. Feedback has already shown us that the two FOI requests made already since 2019 have helped officers and members of SACREs to understand the challenges of current education funding levels, and the position of SACREs within existing education systems at a time of complex change.

As statutory bodies, SACREs have a right to raise questions about their levels of support, and to receive the funding that is needed to underpin their work. SACREs should also advise their local authority of any matters arising from the budget allocated for their activities in order to enable SACREs to achieve their obligations, to operate efficiently within local democracy, and to promote excellent Religious Education and Collective Worship in schools.

I recommend this report to all members, to the Department for Education, and to our wider education networks.



Linda Rudge,
Chair
The National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on RE

¹ *Religious education in modern Britain* (2022), House of Commons Library,
<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cdp-2022-0182/>

Headlines

The majority of SACREs in England still do not get a sufficient share of the CSSB to enable them to carry out their duties well, despite CSSB increasing by 3.8% in the year 2021-22.

Overall, spending on RE has increased by over 10% since the 2021 report (In the 111 Local Authorities who gave reliable data)

LA funding policies seem somewhat erratic, with little correlation in individual LA funding allocations between 2019-20 and 2021-22. Of the 101 LAs who returned a figure for both reporting periods, 55 reported an increase, 42 a decrease and 4 exactly the same allocation

There are signs that funding is improving for many of the most poorly funded SACREs: of the 15 worst funded SACREs from 2019-20 (who reported an allocation above zero), 11 had seen an increase in 2021-22

Only 3 Local Authorities in 2021-2022 stated that they used 2% or more of CSSB funds on SACRE business, significantly fewer than 2 years ago.

Only 2 LAs reported increased expenditure on Democratic Services (Clerking) in the last two years.

5 Authorities declared no spending on RE at all. A further 34 (39 in all, 31%) stated they do not spend any money supporting RE in schools.

Some Authorities are able to allocate sufficient funding for a proper review of the Agreed Syllabus in a timely fashion. But 21 authorities have a syllabus from before 2017, over 5 years old.

Note: All percentages are based on data from those authorities that provided an answer to that question.

Context

In the 1988 Education Reform Act, all Local (Education) Authorities (LAs) were given a statutory duty to establish a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE). In many areas they had existed prior to this date, to agree and support the local syllabus for RE. The latest guidance on RE confirms that “each LA must establish a permanent body called a standing advisory council on religious education”. The LA must also “establish an occasional body called an agreed syllabus conference (ASC) to review the agreed syllabus for RE adopted by the LA” and must “institute a review of its locally agreed syllabus within five years of the last review, and subsequently every five years after the completion of each further review”. “An LA should fund and support a SACRE and an ASC satisfactorily in line with the duty to constitute or convene each of these bodies and to enable them effectively to carry out their functions.”²

Local Authorities must carry out certain central functions on behalf of pupils in maintained schools and academies in England. SACREs are currently funded as one of those functions in the ongoing responsibilities category. This is allocated by central Government to each LA in the form of the Central School Services Block (CSSB)³. In total, across the 150 LAs that receive CSSB, £278,691,027 was allocated in the 2021-22 ‘ongoing commitments’ category. NASACRE considers that an LA would need to allocate at least 2% of the CSSB to the SACRE to enable it to carry out its statutory duties, and significantly more in the year that the Agreed Syllabus is reviewed. The following can reasonably be expected to be funded from the CSSB:

- a clerk
- a professional officer who has expertise in RE curriculum design
- a publicly accessible place to meet
- the reasonable expenses of members

² DCSF (2010) *Religious education in English schools: Non-statutory guidance*, pages 10-11. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/190260/DCSF-00114-2010.pdf

³ DfE (2022) *Central school services block national funding formula: technical note July 2022* [Central school services block national funding formula: technical note \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

- publishing the agreed syllabus and other SACRE materials (including agendas and minutes), most usually on the LA website
- NASACRE subscription and AGM attendance.

After a decade where Local Authority funding reduced significantly with, on average, a 21% real term fall between 2009 and 2019⁴, there was significant pressure on local finances in 2020-21 due to the COVID-19 crisis. Central government provided additional fiscal support and council funding saw a real-terms increase in 2021-22 (with further increases in subsequent years)⁵ Financially squeezed Local Authorities often appear to underfund the work of SACREs. A survey of SACREs completed in 2017 confirmed that a major concern of many SACREs was indeed their capacity to carry out even their statutory duties due to underfunding⁶. A small-scale survey carried out by NASACRE in 2019 suggested that many SACREs were being underfunded. The 2021 SACRE funding report showed that the majority of SACREs do not receive sufficient funding from their LAs. This second report is intended to enable policymakers to make informed decisions about SACRE funding.

When asked a parliamentary question about SACRE funding By Luke Pollard MP in July 2021, Schools Minister, Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP gave the following written answer:

In the 2021/22 financial year, the central school services block (CSSB) continues to fund local authorities for the ongoing responsibilities that they have a statutory duty to deliver for all pupils in maintained schools and academies. The total funding for ongoing responsibilities is £257 million in the 2021/22 financial year and is a 3.8% increase compared to the 2020/21 financial year, in order to keep up with inflation and pupil numbers. ... We do not specify what proportion of their CSSB funding local authorities should spend on specific central services - this is for local authorities' own discretion.⁷

Research Methodology

A freedom of Information request was sent to all 150⁸ Local Authorities in England on the 10th January 2023 by the National Association of SACREs. Specifically, the questions were as follows:

1. Can you confirm that the funding allocated to your local authority in the 2021-22 'ongoing commitments' category of the CSSB (Central Schools Services Block) was £{the amount from the Gov.uk website}?
2. How much of the funding specified in (1) above (as a raw figure) was allocated to SACRE related spending and if relevant to ASC (Agreed Syllabus Conference) related spending?
3. How much money from the CSSB funding for 2021-2022 did you spend on:
 - (a) Democratic services to support SACRE meetings in 2021-2022 (e.g. a clerk)
 - (b)
 - i. Professional support (A Religious Education specialist adviser or consultant to support the work of SACRE)
 - ii. Who provides the specialist RE support to SACRE in 3(b) e.g. No one, an RE specialist, a LA officer with an interest in RE etc.
 - (c) Support for schools, including CPD and training specifically for Religious Education and or Collective Worship

⁴ Neil Amin Smith & David Phillips (2019) English council funding: what's happened and what's next?, IFS Briefing Note, Available from: <https://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/14133>

⁵ Ogden, K and Phillips, D. (2021). *An initial response to the Local Government Finance Settlement* by IFS researchers The IFS. <https://ifs.org.uk/articles/initial-response-local-government-finance-settlement-ifs-researchers>

⁶ Paul Smalley (2019): A critical policy analysis of local religious education in England, *British Journal of Religious Education*.

⁷ Hansard, HC Deb, 20 July 2021, cW, <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-12/31532/>

⁸ FOI requests were not sent to The City of London or the Isles of Scilly as these do not receive CSSB funding, but receive a central grant from the government which includes funding for central schools' services, although they do not have any maintained schools.

-
- (d) *Other costs*
- (e) *Please explain what the amount in (d) was spent on.*
- 4.
- (a) *How much money from other funds outside the CSSB fund was used to support RE in schools in your local authority?*
- (b) *what was the source(s) of the funds in 4(a)? e.g. community integration fund*
- 5.
- (a) *In which academic year was your last agreed syllabus for RE published?*
- (b) *How much did it cost to complete the revision in 5a? (i.e., to write it, develop it, publish it and launch it including training for your schools)*
- 6.
- (a) *Where would a member of the public access your Agreed Syllabus for RE?*
- (b) *What is the weblink (url) for your syllabus or summary document?*
- 7.
- (a) *Who is the contact (Name) for SACRE business in your LA?*
- (b) *What is the contact's (email address) for SACRE business in your LA?*
- (c) *How many meetings of SACRE were held in the academic year 2021-2022?*
- (d) *how many of those meetings in 7(c) had representation from all four statutory groups (were quorate)?*
- (e) *Does your SACRE partner with any other SACRE?*
- (f) *If the answer to 7(e) is Yes, which other SACREs do you partner with?*
- (g) *What partnership activity is undertaken in 7(f)?*
8. *Are there any barriers to providing funding to fulfil your statutory duties in relation to SACRE and/or the Agreed Syllabus Conference that you want to tell us about?*
9. *Is there anything else you want to tell us?*

These questions were deliberately very similar to the questions asked in the previous FOI which were contained in the 2021 report, to allow for simple comparison. Responses were obtained from 142 LAs, with 8 not supplying answers by the end of March 2023. This is an increase on the response rate of the 2021 report, which was 136.

Following an analysis of the data received, the following conclusions were reached:

1. Total Authority spend on SACRE

The total national spend on supporting RE in English schools through the work of SACREs, from the 142 responding LAs was £1,429,424.

A number of Local Authorities gave quite opaque answers to some of the FOI questions, possibly suggesting that the respondent did not fully understand local government finance. For example, one LA answered that “the council provides funding for SACRE via its general fund budget and not from the CSSB of the DSG” but then answered that it did not draw any money from funds outside the CSSB. This LA, and others who answered in a similar way, answering that they drew no funding from CSSB or other funds, clearly drew funding from somewhere as they identified spending on professional advice, CPD or other costs. A number of LAs responded that they had no way of disaggregating spending on RE or SACREs. This may mean that for some LAs the total spend on RE is under-represented. There are 30 such authorities. Of these 5 Authorities declared no spending on RE at all – a significant improvement on the 25 authorities who reported allocating no funding to RE in 2021. There remain 7 authorities for whom it appears impossible to answer questions about funding, but where activity is clearly going on.

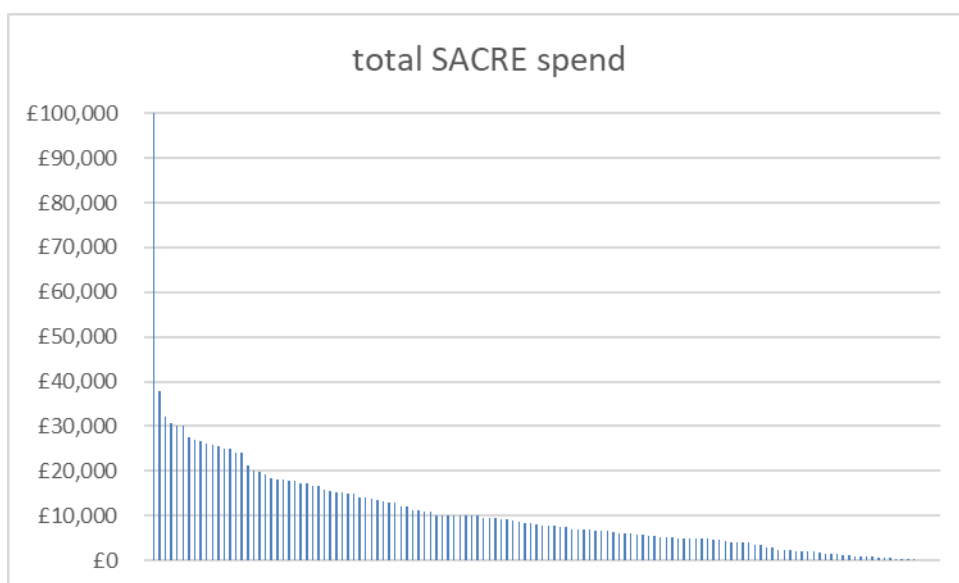


Figure 1

The largest total allocated by an LA was £100,000 with 5 more allocating over £30,000. Of the 111 Authorities who appeared to give reliable data (the same number as in 2021), the mean spend was £12,135 an increase of 10.3% over 2021's mean spend of £11,000.46. However, the increases and decreases in individual Authority spending appear to show no discernible trend. Of the 101 LAs who returned a figure for both reporting periods, 55 reported an increase, 42 a decrease and 4 exactly the same allocation. Of the 26 best funded SACREs in 21-22, only 2 had seen their allocation decrease. Conversely, of the 15 worst funded SACREs from 2019-20 (who reported an allocation above zero), 11 had seen an increase in 2021-22. The LA who gave the smallest allocation in the 2021 report has increased its spending on SACRE by over £10,000 after pressure from the DfE following that report.

This seems to show that LA funding decisions appear to be somewhat erratic, but pressure on the LAs who are the meanest funders may be having some effect. Being well or poorly supported in one year has little bearing on future levels of funding. The positive outlook is that where underfunding is identified, change can happen.

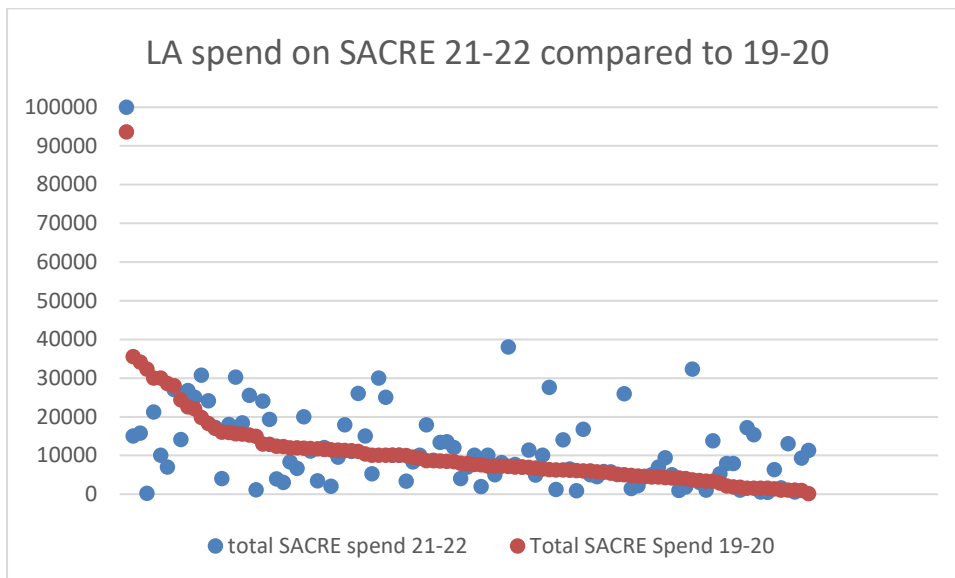


Figure 2

2. Funding Sources for SACRE, and percentage of CSSB.

The expectation of the Department for Education is that SACREs and Agreed Syllabus Conferences are funded from the Central School Services Block (CSSB). NASACRE recommends that for a SACRE to function well, that 2% of CSSB should be used for SACRE and RE.

40 LAs stated that they utilised funding from outside of the CSSB – a similar number to in the 2021 report. Some of these sources included Westhill grants, donations, recouped from charging schools and/or academies for services, but the majority of this income was explained as coming from the LA central funding or school improvement budget.

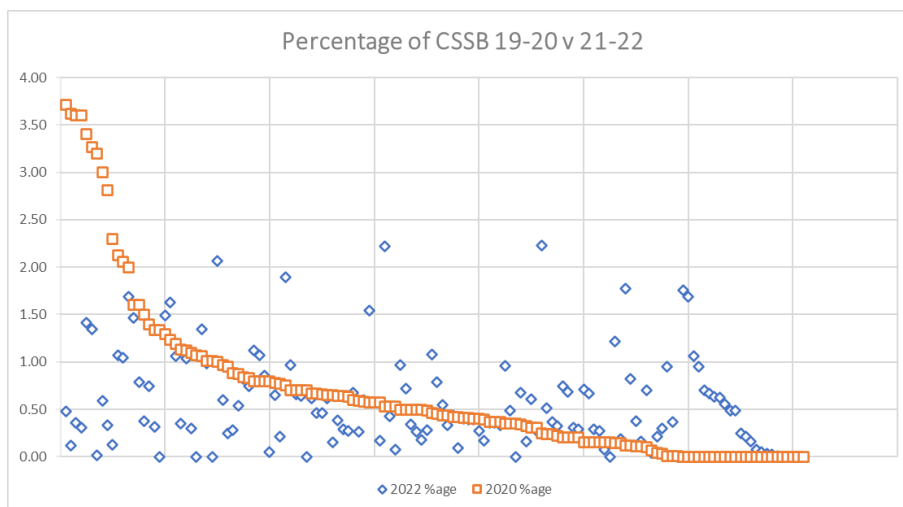


Figure 3

The most well-funded SACRE in the 2021 report received 6% of the CSSB from their LA in 2019/20; unfortunately, they did not respond to the FOI in 2023. The average spending on a SACRE, Religious Education and Collective Worship, as a percentage of the allocated CSSB funding source (based on data from 132 LAs) was less than one percent, 0.62%, 0.1% lower than in the 2021 report.

Of the 143 SACREs who responded to the FOI, (96) spent under 1% of CSSB fund or equivalent on SACRE, RE and Collective Worship in 2021-22. This is 10 fewer than in 2019-20. However only 3 (compared to 12 in 2019-20) spent over the 2% national recommendation.

It may be possible to summarise the data to say that there is a slight tendency towards the mean; SACREs well funded in 2019-20 are tending to have funding cut in percentage terms, whereas some that were poorly funded in 2019-20 have seen an increase.

3. Spending on Specific Items

We asked LAs how much they allocated to **professional support** including advisers and consultants. 118 LAs answered this question (18 more than in 2019-20). 30 reported that they allocated £0 of funding to professional support (in line with last time's 27). The average spend on professional support by the 87 authorities that responded to say they allocate funding was £7,081.45 (remarkably similar to £7,095.03 in 2019-20). The responses ranged from £25,000 to £100. 59 Authorities responded in both years; of these 26 spent more on Professional Support and 28 spent less, 5 remaining the same.



Figure 2

We asked who provides specialist RE support to SACRE and 109 LAs answered in a way that allowed the data to be analysed: 4 LAs stated that they did not get any specialist help. 17 took advice from an LA officer with an interest in RE and 4 from some other 'interested' person. Three of these four appeared to give their advice on a voluntary basis. Pleasingly, the majority (76) got advice from an RE specialist or adviser, however, the cost of this specialist advice ranged from over £25,000 -for a part-time specialist RE adviser to £100. It is questionable what amount and level of experience an LA can obtain for such a small amount of money: £100 may well be below minimum wage for three meetings.

We asked LAs how much they allocated to **democratic services** (e.g. clerking). Many LAs were unable to give a figure, despite assurances (in most cases) that they did use a Clerk. Those 84 LAs who gave a figure ranged from £6,300 to £181.12 and their mean spend on democratic services (excluding the zero responses) was £1,335 – less than the mean of £2648.18 from 2019-20. Somewhat worryingly one LA suggested that clerking was part of the role of the RE Adviser. Only 23 LAs were able to give a figure (more than zero) in answer to both FOIs. Of those 21 reposted less expenditure on Clerking in 2021-22

We asked LAs how much they allocated to **supporting RE in schools**. 126 authorities responded to this question. 39 authorities told us that they allocate £0. 48 authorities were unable to supply a figure although they did claim to offer support. The mean spend for the 36 authorities who allocate funding to this area is £2529.07. The level of support ranges from £10,800 to £9. This is a similar sort of range to the previous survey.

It is difficult to see how a SACRE can be fulfilling its statutory duties, let alone performing well, if an LA does not allocate a sizeable budget to professional support, democratic services and support for schools.

4. The Agreed Syllabus

The LA must “institute a review of its locally agreed syllabus within five years of the last review, and subsequently every five years after the completion of each further review⁹. When the FOI was sent in January 2023 this would mean that the oldest syllabus review should have been September 2017. 21 LAs responded with a syllabus review of 2017 or older. This is significantly more than the 7 that had an ‘out of date’ AS in 2021. The COVID-19 pandemic may be a reason for some delay. However, 9 LAs had an Agreed Syllabus from 2016 or before. The oldest is from 2013 but is currently awaiting agreement but has been reviewed. One LA declared that they had a primary syllabus from 2019 but a secondary one from 2012.

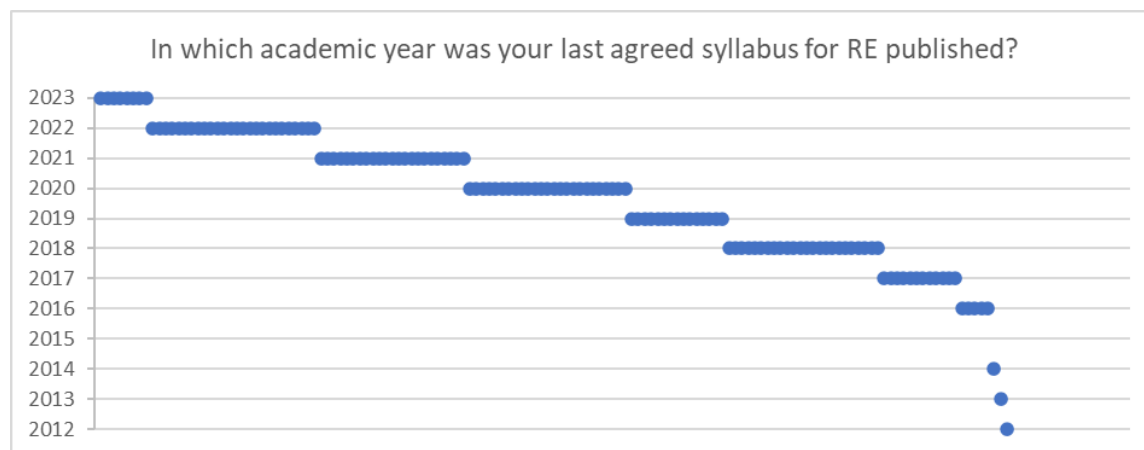


Figure 5

94 LAs disclosed the cost of completing their last revision of the Agreed Syllabus, including writing, developing, publishing and launching it with initial training for schools. The mean declared cost was £8,982 £500 more than two years ago.

The most expensive Agreed Syllabus review was £47,555, with 11 Authorities spending committing more than £20,000 of resource to the last syllabus review. Of the 8 most costly AS, 4 were locally produced and 4 licenced from RE Today. The remaining 3 costing over £20,00 were collaborations between LAs. Only one of these 11 reported the same figure as two years ago. Of the five who declared spending over £20,000 in the 2021 survey, one had renewed its AS (with a substantially increased allocation) one reported the same figure for the 2019 revision, one did not answer in 2023, and two reported a significantly different cost that they reported two years ago for the AS published in 2019-20. This does cast some doubt on the accuracy of the responses from the LAs, but it is good to see that a growing number of LAs are funding the Agreed Syllabus Review properly.

39 authorities had reviewed the AS in 2021-3. Of these 23 Authorities gave us a figure in 2020 for the cost of the previous AS revision. 13 had spent more this time, and 10 less.

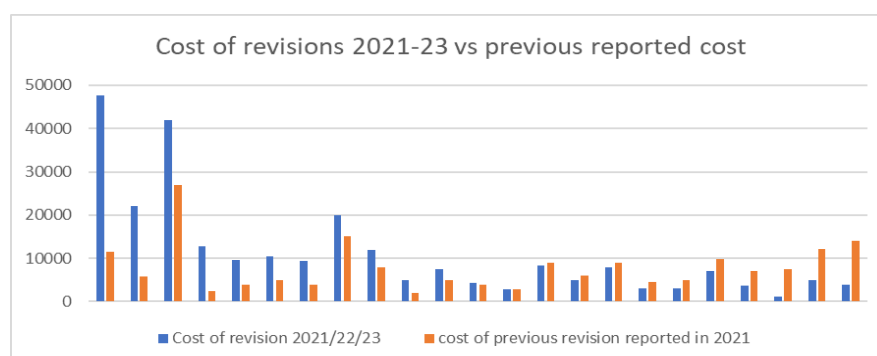


Figure 6

⁹ DCSF (2010) *Religious education in English schools: Non-statutory guidance*, Page 11. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/190260/DCSF-00114-2010.pdf

Of the syllabuses reviewed since 2021, the mean spend was £5,000. The minimum spend was £1,200 which was a syllabus adopted from another LA with minor alterations. 4 authorities declared that they had been able to complete the review without spending any money – although these were all over 5 years old.

It is difficult to see how a syllabus can be properly reviewed without a significant spend, unless it is essentially adopting another Authority's Syllabus. We would expect a proper local review process to cost in excess of £10,000.

5. Recommendations

Sadly, the recommendations have hardly changed since the previous report in 2021.

A. SACREs

SACREs should consider offering formal advice to the local authority about the level of spend required for them to discharge their functions properly. They should share this report with their LA and ask for it to be noted. They should request from the LA their response to our FOI of January 2023 and then compare their local data with the national data in this report. This would provide many SACREs with a rich discussion to have with their LA. The Secretary of State himself has stated that the DfE “would investigate any complaint that statutory responsibilities were not being delivered to ensure that the LA took any necessary remedial action.”¹⁰ SACREs should be able to set out ambitious work programmes without the fear of underfunding. Further clarification of the statutory responsibilities of LAs in respect of their SACREs and Agreed Syllabus Conferences can be found in the 2010 guidance.¹¹

B. Local Authorities

LAs must adequately fund SACREs to enable them to carry out their statutory duties and to support high quality RE and collective worship in schools.¹² They should ensure that there are adequate financial reporting mechanisms to be able to track the budget and spending allocated to SACRE business. NASACRE considers 2% of CSSB to be a reasonable spend to enable this. LAs must set aside sufficient money to ensure the Agreed Syllabus Review can be effective every five years. We reiterate that as a minimum expectation, LAs must provide the following:

- a clerk
- a professional officer who has expertise in RE curriculum design;
- a publicly accessible place to meet;
- the reasonable expenses of members;
- publishing the agreed syllabus and other SACRE materials (including agendas and minutes), most usually on the LA website.
- NASACRE subscription and AGM attendance.

The minister for schools; Nick Gibb MP included this statement in response to a parliamentary question from Stephen Timms MP. “If the Department is informed that an individual SACRE or ASC is experiencing difficulties in fulfilling its statutory duties, the Department will contact the local authority to remind them of their duty to support their activities satisfactorily.”¹³

C. The DfE

In line with the Secretary of State’s directive above, the department should write to those 21 LAs who have not published a timely Agreed Syllabus review and ask for an explanation and a project plan. They should also write to the 5 authorities who declared no spending on SACRE business and ask them how they can be expected to fulfil their statutory duties without using any funds.

D. Ministers

Finally, NASACRE recommends that government ministers should reiterate at every opportunity the expectation that Local Authorities will use a significant portion of their CSSB to adequately fund SACREs and Agreed Syllabus Conferences to discharge their statutory duties. They should consider enacting a National Plan for RE, to ensure the highest standards across the country.

¹⁰ Gavin Williamson (2019) private correspondence, 15th August. <http://www.nasacre.org.uk/file/nasacre/1-246-letter-from-gavin-williamson.pdf>

¹¹ DCSF (2010) *Religious education in English schools: Non-statutory guidance*, pages 10ff: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/190260/DCSF-00114-2010.pdf

¹² *ibid.*, page 11

¹³ HC Deb, 28 March 2018, cW <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2018-03-28/134697>

Thanks

NASACRE would like to express gratitude to all those who give so much to ensure that SACREs do their very best to support high quality RE and Collective Worship in schools across the country. Thanks also to Marie Cooper, for administering the data collection which enabled this report to be published.

Cover photograph of a SACRE network meeting.

NASACRE 2023-24 virtual training programme

We are delighted to announce that NASACRE is running another year of webinars to support SACREs in their practice. NASACRE-subscribed SACREs have unlimited access for all their members to each and every webinar for £50 annually which represents incredible value for professional development. SACREs may also book for individual sessions – prices are below.

- 1. Thursday 21st September 2023, 6:30-8pm: *So, you've joined your local SACRE...***
Led by Denise Chaplin, Catherine Hughes & Claire Clinton
Description: This session will help new SACRE members to understand their role, how SACRE works, its statutory responsibilities and how members make their contribution to this work.
Free session.
- 2. Monday 16th October 2023, 7-8:30pm: *Applying for and gaining a Westhill/NASACRE award***
Led by Linda Rudge & Anne Andrews
Description: This session will help SACREs to consider the opportunity afforded by applying for and gaining an award. Hear from successful SACREs sharing what the award has enabled their SACRE to do.
Free session.
- 3. November 2023 – dates TBC in each region, 6:30-8pm: *Regional meetings - for SACRE Chairs/Vice chairs, LA officers and professional support officers, working with their RE Hub lead and a NASACRE Exec member***
Description: This session taking place in regions will allow for a smaller number of SACREs to come together; it continues NASACRE's conversation with our membership, to share good practice, national and local news and giving time for SACRE leadership teams to raise, discuss and help to support each other.
Free session.
- 4. Tuesday 5th December 2023, 7-8pm: *How may SACREs effectively monitor schools?***
Led by David Levien, Catherine Hughes and Claire Clinton
Description: A chance for SACREs to come together and hear about a range of strategies and practices that build relationships with schools and enable SACREs to monitor RE and CW.
*Free to SACREs who have bought an annual webinar package.
£20 for a subscribed SACRE and £30 for a non-subscribed SACRE.*
- 5. Thursday 18th January 2024, 6:30-8pm: *Using data effectively as a SACRE***
Special guest: Deborah Weston
Description: This session will help SACRE Chairs/Vice chairs and professional support officers to make effective use of the data that NATRE, NASACRE and the DfE provides, ensuring local data can be drawn upon.
*Free to SACREs who have bought an annual webinar package.
£20 for a subscribed SACRE and £30 for a non-subscribed SACRE.*
- 6. Thursday 22nd February 2024, 4-5:30pm: *Being an effective SACRE clerk, part 2***
Led by David Levien, Catherine Hughes and Claire Clinton
Description: This session will help SACRE clerks to reflect on their present practice and share with other clerks around the country some top tips for fulfilling the SACRE clerk's role; it will focus on minute-taking, SACRE's constitution/terms of reference and composition.
*Free to SACREs who have bought an annual webinar package.
£20 for a subscribed SACRE and £30 for a non-subscribed SACRE.*

7. **Monday 26th February 2024 7-8pm: *Dealing with beliefs and practices about loss & death in your Agreed Syllabus***
Led by: Denise Chaplin and Paul Smalley
Description: This session will help SACREs to reflect on what they do a present to cover this aspect of the curriculum in schools. It will provide input from the national body of funeral directors, as well as examples from 2 different SACREs of their support work around these issues within their Agreed Syllabus.
Free to SACREs who have bought an annual webinar package.
£20 for a subscribed SACRE and £30 for a non-subscribed SACRE

8. **Tuesday 12th March 2024, 7-8pm: *Convening an Agreed Syllabus Conference – legalities and processes***
Led by: Paul Smalley with Linda Rudge
Description: This session will share the legal process and best practice suggestions for convening an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) for your SACRE.
Free to SACREs who have bought an annual webinar package.
£20 for a subscribed SACRE and £30 for a non-subscribed SACRE.

9. **Wednesday 26th June 2024, 6:30-8pm: *So, you've joined your local SACRE...***
Hosted by Exec members
Description: A rerun of the September session, to help new SACRE members to understand their role, how SACRE works, its statutory responsibilities and how members make their contribution to SACRE's work.
Free session.