**Response to DfE announcement that PSHE and sex and relationships education will not be made a compulsory part of the curriculum.**

**Lucy Emmerson, Coordinator of the Sex Education Forum, said:**

‘Sex and relationships education (SRE) is every child’s right, yet the government has ignored the views of parents, teachers and pupils, and failed to guarantee that all children, in all schools, get this vital learning for life.

‘While a focus on improving the quality of SRE and a review of the guidance given to schools are welcome we need to go further. SRE must begin in primary school and build year-on-year to enable young people to understand a wide spectrum of issues, including the difference between acceptable and abusive behaviour, consent and sexual health.

‘By ignoring the groundswell of support for SRE, and the recommendations of parliamentarians, the government is depriving children of education that prepares them for adulthood, and helps them develop safe, healthy and happy relationships.’

**Anna Feuchtwang, Chief Executive of the National Children's Bureau said**:

‘Young people tell us time and again that they want better teaching on the essential topics covered within PSHE: sex and relationships, physical and mental health, financial and political education, and bullying. Yet despite this, PSHE is still woefully inadequate, with Ofsted finding that teaching fell short in 40% of schools.

‘A commitment to raise the quality of PSHE is good news, but simply keeping the status of PSHE in the curriculum under review is a missed opportunity to make PSHE a compulsory part of all pupils’ education. This would have secured sufficient time in the school timetable, and ensured the subject is taught by properly trained teachers, to the highest possible standard and subject to regular inspection.

‘With high levels of child obesity, increasing numbers of pupils with mental health needs, and a persistent gap between rich and poor, we do our children a serious disservice if we do not deliver on our responsibility to prepare them for life. PSHE must be a statutory part of a whole-school approach to promoting well-being if we are to guarantee all pupils their right to vital 'life lessons' to prepare them for adulthood.'