

# Public Document Pack

MEETING	<b>STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)</b>
DATE	<b>Monday, 7th June, 2021 4.00 pm</b>
VENUE	<b>VIRTUAL - MICROSOFT TEAMS</b>
ENQUIRIES	ALISON PHILPOTT Email: <a href="mailto:alison.philpott@southampton.gov.uk">alison.philpott@southampton.gov.uk</a>
MEMBERS	SEE ATTACHED LIST



## A G E N D A

1. **WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**
2. **MEMBERSHIP**
3. **ELECTION OF CHAIR**
4. **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING INCLUDING MATTERS ARISING**  
(Pages 1 - 4)

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2021, attached.

5. **FEEDBACK FROM LOCAL AND NATIONAL EVENTS**  
  
NASACRE ANNUAL CONF – PROF ADVISER & ELIZABETH JENKERSON  
RE NETWORK EVENT – SUZANNE UNDERWOOD  
MEMBER UPDATES – ALL MEMBERS
6. **NASACRE REPORT ON SACRE BUDGET – PROFESSIONAL ADVISER**  
**(REPORT ATTACHED)** (Pages 5 - 14)
7. **DISCUSSION REGARDING PAPER PUBLISHED BY THEOS ON**  
**WORLDVIEWS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (LINK ATTACHED)**  
  
<https://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/research/2020/10/21/worldviews-in-religious-education>
8. **AGREED SYLLABUS CONFERENCE UPDATE - PROFESSIONAL**  
**ADVISER**

9. **ACTION PLAN FOR 2021-2022 - PROFESSIONAL ADVISER**

AGREED SYLLABUS  
MONITORING  
RSE AND ADVICE

10. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING AND NOTIFIED AOB (NOTIFIED TO PROFESSIONAL ADVISER OR ACTING CHAIR AT LEAST THREE WORKING DAYS PRIOR TO THE MEETING )**

**Date:** 27 September 2021 **Time:** 1600 **Venue:** TBC

Friday, 28 May 2021

# STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

## MEMBERSHIP

### GROUP A

#### **Christian Denominations\***

*(\* Religions and other bodies listed in the SACRE Constitution)*

The Roman Catholic Church	VACANCY
The Baptists	Chris Davis (Southampton City Mission)
The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)	VACANCY
The Greek Orthodox Church	VACANCY
The Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches	Margaret Blake
The Methodist Church	VACANCY
The United Reformed Church	Susanne Dawson
The Assemblies of God	Neil Maddock
The Salvation Army	VACANCY

#### **Other Religions**

*Religions other than Christianity (as listed in the SACRE Constitution) – Baha'i, Buddhism, Judaism, Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism = 6*

Baha'i	Elizabeth Jenkerson
Buddhist	David Vane
Hindu	Priti Dave
Jewish	Dr Gil Dekel
Muslim	Anas Al-Korj
Sikh	Harmeet Singh Brar

### GROUP B

*(Four representatives of the Church of England)*

#### **The Church of England**

Rev Duncan Jennings  
Allan King  
Sam Jordan

#### **From diocesan education team:**

Richard Wharton

## **GROUP C**

*(Six teachers representing associations recognised by the Authority for the purposes of consultation and negotiation)*

National Union of Teachers (NUT)	Jackie Meering
The National Association of Schoolmasters/ Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT)	David Parrott
Voice	Dr R Palmer
The Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL)	VACANCY
Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL)	VACANCY
National Association of Headteachers (NAHT)	VACANCY

## **GROUP D**

*(4+substitute) - Four representatives of Southampton City Council, at least two of whom shall be elected members of the City Council)*

Councillor James Baillie  
Councillor John Jordan  
Councillor Valerie Laurent  
Councillor Warwick Payne

### **GROUP D SUBSTITUTE**

Mrs. Kate Martin

## **OTHERS (Non-voting)**

### **CO-OPTED MEMBERS**

South Hampshire Humanists                      Mary Wallbank

### **OBSERVER**

### **ASC Group**

Claire Belli (Springwell Special School)  
Suzanne Underwood (Bitterne Park Secondary School)  
Susanna Woodman (Sholing Infants School)

# Agenda Item 4

## STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 1<sup>st</sup> February 2021



#### ATTENDEES

NAME	INITIALS	ORGANISATION
<b>GROUP A</b>		
Elizabeth Jenkerson	EJ	Baha'I
Steve Deadman	SD	The Roman Catholic Church
Ruth Gill	RG	The Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches
<b>GROUP B</b>		
Richard Wharton	RW	The Church of England
Rev. Duncan Jennings	DJ	The Church of England
Rev. Tony Palmer	TP	The Church of England
Liz Allen	LA	Deputy Head Bitterne CoE Primary School
<b>GROUP C</b>		
<i>No attendees</i>		
<b>GROUP D</b>		
Councillor Kataria	Cllr K	Southampton City Council
Councillor James Baillie	Cllr B	Southampton City Council
Kate Martin	KM	Group D Substitute
<b>OTHERS (NON-VOTING)</b>		
Alison Philpott	AP	Southampton City Council
Mary Wallbank	MW	South Hampshire Humanists
Sam Jordan	SJ	The Church of England
Matt Gwyn	MG	Southampton City Mission
<b>IN ATTENDANCE</b>		
Martin Ball		Southampton City Council
Aine Rand		Southampton City Council
Gavin Muncaster		Southampton City Council

#### APOLOGIES

NAME	INITIALS	ORGANISATION
<b>GROUP A</b>		
Chris Davis MBE		The Baptists
<b>GROUP B</b>		
<b>GROUP C</b>		
Jackie Meering		National Education Union (NEU)
Sian Carr		National Association of Headteachers (NAHT)
<b>GROUP D</b>		
Councillor Matt Bunday		Southampton City Council (Swaythling Ward)
Councillor Valerie Laurent		Southampton City Council (Harefield Ward)

## **1 WELCOME and APOLOGIES**

AP highlighted that two new Group B members have joined SACRE, Liz Allen, who is the Deputy Head of Bitterne CoE Primary School and Reverend Tony Palmer. AP noted that Sam Jordan is also present, who was previously a Church of England representative at Southampton SACRE. SJ explained that she is working for a Christian organisation as a National Project Lead supporting churches to support their communities. SJ will be part of the Co-Opted Group going forward.

## **2 ELECTION OF CHAIR**

*This SACRE was not quorate, therefore an election of the Chair could not take place.*

## **3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (November 2020) AND MATTERS ARISING**

**To agree the minutes from November 2020 meeting and review any matters arising**

MW stated that the minutes incorrectly recorded the Humanists UK as the British Humanists Society and that the application is being made to cover all non-religious people to be included in SACRE.

## **4 REVIEW OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP AND DETERMINATION PROCESS**

**Draft discussion paper regarding update to Determination process to be circulated to members (attached) and link to two current guidance documents an update affects**

<https://www.youngsouthampton.org/images/03.17.27515-sacre-new.pdf>

<https://www.youngsouthampton.org/images/scc-collective-worship.pdf>

AP highlighted that the document attached is the most up to date draft of the guidance, however it needs to be updated. The main difference that has not been included previously is the that the process for an academy school to apply for a determination is different to a maintained school. AP noted that there is still a duty for a SACRE to grant a determination, but only for schools that are maintained, therefore an academy schools needs to follow a different process. AP included in the document that Southampton SACRE would like to be informed if an academy school is granted a determination. AP noted that there has only been one query in the 7 years that she has been involved in SACRE.

AP highlighted that applications can only be made by the headteacher of the school and the school must consult the school's governing body. The reason for this is so the headteacher will be aligned with the governing body of the school. Also, it gives the parents the opportunity to have their views heard.

SD noted that the guidance could include that having consulted the governing body, the parents and the senior leadership team should be consulted as the governing body is responsible for the overall strategy of the school. AP amended the document to "seek the views of all parents/guardians and staff".

AP highlighted that there is nothing in the guidance that states how long a consultation should be. LA stated that it is useful to have a time limit from the school's perspective to ensure that they are aware of the timeframe. EJ queried how practical it would be for larger schools to have the same timeframe as a smaller one. LA stated that 6 weeks may be ambitious as the governors need enough time to discuss this in the meetings to approve it, as well as with

parents and staff. AP amended the document to state “there is no set time period for any consultation to be taking place, but SACRE would recommend that this would be over the period of one term”.

Regarding how a decision will be made, AP read from the guidance that once an application is received a sub-group of SARE members will hold a pre-meeting before the next SACRE meeting. The meeting would have to have a representative from each group, a co-opted member, and AP. Regarding if the Chair should be present at the pre-meeting, LA mentioned that the Chair should not attend in the event that the schools wishes to complain about the SACRE sub-group. DJ suggested that the Chair does not attend the pre-meeting but is aware that there is a request and when the pre-meeting is taking place. AP amended the document to reflect what was discussed.

AP noted that in the guidance, there is not an inclusion of what the escalation would be if the determination is not granted. AP explained that a complaint would go to the Local Authority and AP will include this in the document. AP noted that this document will be submitted to the legal team after amendments are agreed. Legal will return the document with any feedback.

It is suggested that a representative from the faith in which the application is being made to be included in the sub-group. AP recommended that a representative can be invited or consulted if needed.

RW queried who inspects the worship at the school once the application is granted, AP explained that it is her understanding that an annual update would take place for the continuing relevance of the determination and monitoring visits would be carried out as usual.

AP shared the document for attendees to review the changes made during this meeting and members agreed for it to be submitted to legal for review. All changes were agreed and AP thanked the members for their input.

## **5 DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT VERBAL UPDATE (PROFESSIONAL ADVISER)**

Members confirmed that they had viewed the annual report and there were no questions regarding it. AP stated that the document is a final draft, subject to a final proof read.

MG noted that he should be in the Co-opted members list as he was co-opted before July 2020.

## **6 DISCUSSION REGARDING PAPER PUBLISHED BY THEOS ON WORLDVIEWS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION – LINK ATTACHED**

<https://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/research/2020/10/21/worldviews-in-religious-education>

AP noted that if there are any thoughts around the Theos, it would be helpful to receive them in writing.

## **7 STANDARD ITEM FEEDBACK FROM LOCAL/NATIONAL EVENTS FROM ALL MEMBERS**

EJ explained that there have been meetings of SACRE's from the South West of England for many years. The following meeting is on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March 2021 online, it is £20 per person, and it is for half a day. AP noted that there is funding for 3 people to attend. EJ stated that if any of the members are interested, to let AP know.

EJ explained that the NASACRE AGM is scheduled for the 24<sup>th</sup> of May 2021. It is not confirmed if it will be online, but it is likely that it will be. EJ requested that she is informed if any members have suggestions on any workshops.

**8 AGREED SYLLABUS CONFERENCE UPDATE (VERBAL REPORT FROM PROFESSIONAL ADVISER)**

AP explained that there have been initial discussions regarding the syllabus with colleagues from Hampshire, Portsmouth, the Isle of Wight, and some London Boroughs. There have been challenges regarding consultations due to COVID-19, but there is hope that consultation with staff can be done before the Easter Holidays, appreciating that teachers are very stretched currently. AP explained that she could put a preliminary date in for the week commencing 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2021 for the conference. Once the consultation is done, there will be more progress in to looking at the content of the syllabus. AP noted that it would be helpful for SACRE members to have a separate or joint consultation with the teachers. AP will set up the Teams link and circulate it to SACRE members. AP will also set up a feedback session for SACRE members.

**10 AOB (NOTIFIED TO PROFESSIONAL ADVISER OR ACTING CHAIR AT LEAST THREE WORKING DAYS PRIOR TO THE MEETING)**

**Update regarding the Humanist Application to Southampton SACRE:**

MW updated that there was a follow up on the representations of Humanist or non-religious people on Southampton SACRE. It was heard at a council meeting in November 2020 for a formal decision. There was advice from the Southampton Legal Team that the Councillors felt obliged not to admit Humanist or non-religious people at this stage. The reason for this was the threat of a legal challenge. MW noted that the next step would be for a judicial review, but the legal department responded asking why a legal challenge is being brought forward during a pandemic. MW noted that this process was started two years ago, and the timing has been down to the Local Authority and not the group making the application. MW stated that there has been mutual agreement between the Humanist group and the Local Authority to delay the legal process until November 2021.

AP noted that in the November 2020 SACRE, it was offered for Southampton City Council to write to the Department of Education (DfE) and asked MW if this would be something that would be helpful. MW stated that there would be no harm in this, however from the replies from the DfE, they have stated that they are civil servants and will not make a legal decision.

MW stated that she will forward the reply from the DfE to AP and EJ to circulate to other members.

**11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING AND NOTIFIED AOB**

**Date:** 7<sup>th</sup> June 2021 **Time:** 16:00 **Venue:** TBC

# SACRE funding in England



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

May 2021



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## Foreword

It is my pleasure, as current Chair of the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on RE, to introduce this report to our members, and to thank everyone involved in its production.

Levels of funding for SACREs have been a source of some concern and interest to the Association for some time. Discussions with the Department for Education during 2019 also demonstrated that advice on the levels and sources of funding was of interest to their teams, to ministers and to Members of Parliament. In 2019 NASACRE issued this advice:

*'...having looked at the statutory expectations that could reasonably be expected to be funded from CSSB<sup>1</sup>, set out a national recommendation that an LA should allocate at least 2% of the CSSB to SACRE in order that SACRE can carry out their statutory duties.'<sup>2</sup>*

SACREs are in the main made up of volunteers, supported by LA officers. Despite inadequate funding and appropriate support structures in some local areas, many SACREs have continued to meet, provide a syllabus and training to schools, and to provide advice on the interface between education and religion and worldviews. SACREs have also continued this work online during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Freedom of Information request underpinning this report emerged from another NASACRE and RE Council project on piloting 'Local Area Networks for Religion and Worldviews', as proposed by the Commission on Religious Education<sup>3</sup>. The FOI request was issued to LAs during the autumn of 2020. We cannot let the publication of the report go by without thanking all who responded, and all who helped FOI officers and SACRE Clerks find the answers during the Covid 19 pandemic, and its series of partial or complete lockdowns.

NASACRE is a non-statutory organisation supported mainly by volunteer executive committee members. The research and writing team gave freely of their own time and expertise to produce this summary of findings, and to offer some advice. The Department of Education has commented positively to NASACRE on this advice<sup>4</sup>, acknowledging that its officials might use NASACRE's estimate of a funding level of 2% of the CSSB to advise local authorities. However, authorities can, of course, determine their own budgets and where funding comes from to support SACREs.

NASACRE is likely to repeat this FOI request on a regular basis, and the executive committee is very happy to receive feedback on the process and the questions, and other areas we might focus on. Feedback has already shown us that the FOI request in itself helped SACRE officers and members to understand the challenges and complexities of current education funding levels. This report highlights the facts as submitted through LA data, and it shows that many SACREs deserve better support from their local authorities. 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.

We look forward to working with Chairs of SACREs, partner RE associations, politicians, and officials at the DfE on the next steps to achieving some parity of provision in terms of the financial and other resources. These are urgently needed to enable statutory bodies to achieve their obligations, operate efficiently within local democracy, and to promote excellent Religious Education and Collective Worship in schools.

I commend the report to you all.



**Linda Rudge,**  
Chair

The National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on RE

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<sup>1</sup> The CSSB (Central Services School Block) is funding allocated by central government (through the Education and Skills Funding Agency) to local authorities to carry out central functions on behalf of pupils in both maintained schools and academies in England.

<sup>2</sup> NASACRE (2019), SACRE Briefing 22, <https://mailchi.mp/8292b1171b7d/6g3v9uvmy6-1332313?e=da7db1e3e7>

<sup>3</sup> Commission on Religious Education(2018) *Religion and Worldviews: The Way Forward* Religious Education Council of England and Wales <https://www.commissiononre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Final-Report-of-the-Commission-on-RE.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> DfE (2019) email to NASACRE, 18<sup>th</sup> March.

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## Headlines

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*The majority of SACREs in England do not get a sufficient share of the CSSB to enable them to carry out their duties well.*

*Only 12 Local Authorities in 2019-2020 stated that they used 2% or more of CSSB funds on SACRE business, meaning 92% of SACREs were allocated less than 2% of the CSSB.*

*25 Authorities (18%) claim to use no funding on SACRE business in contravention of statutory responsibilities.*

*Over a quarter (27%) of Authorities told us they allocate no funds to professional support for the SACRE.*

*More than half of LAs (42, 53%) disclosed that they do not use any funds to support RE in schools.*

*Due to lack of adequate support it is increasingly difficult for some SACREs to fulfil their statutory duties; 7 LAs told us that their Agreed Syllabus was over 6 years old. One syllabus was last reviewed in 2010.*

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*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.”<sup>5</sup>

Local Authority funding has been reduced significantly in the last decade with, on average, a 21% real term fall between 2009 and 2019.<sup>6</sup> Financially squeezed Local Authorities often appear to underfund the work of SACREs. The last Ofsted subject report into RE suggested that:

*“Recent changes in education policy are having a negative impact on the provision for RE in some schools and on the capacity of local authorities and SACREs to carry out their statutory responsibilities to monitor and support it.”<sup>7</sup>*

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 underfunding<sup>8</sup>. When asked a parliamentary question about SACRE funding in March 2018, Schools Minister, Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP gave the following written answer:

*The Government is continuing to provide local authorities with funding for Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (SACREs) through the Central School Services Block from 2018/19 onwards. Local authorities are expected to ensure that SACREs are funded adequately to perform their duties. SACREs continue to play an important role in supporting schools to teach high-quality religious education.<sup>9</sup>*

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<sup>5</sup> 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](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/190260/DCSF-00114-2010.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> 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>

<sup>7</sup> Ofsted (2013) *Religious education: realising the potential*, Page 6

<sup>8</sup> Paul Smalley (2019): *A critical policy analysis of local religious education in England*, *British Journal of Religious Education*.

<sup>9</sup> HC Deb, 26 March 2018, cW, <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2018-03-21/133819>

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In a letter dated 15<sup>th</sup> August 2019, Secretary of State for Education, Rt Hon Gavin Williamson MP stated “it is important that SACREs should be resourced sufficiently to be able to fulfil their statutory functions”<sup>10</sup>. 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
- publishing the agreed syllabus and other SACRE materials (including agendas and minutes), most usually on the LA website
- NASACRE subscription and AGM attendance.

A small-scale survey carried out by NASACRE in 2019 suggested that many SACREs were being underfunded. This report, based on a much fuller data set, is intended to enable policymakers to make informed decisions about SACRE funding.

## Research Methodology

A freedom of Information request was sent to all Local Authorities in England on the 6<sup>th</sup> November 2020 by the National Association of SACREs. Specifically, the questions were as follows:

1. How much funding was allocated to your local authority in the ‘ongoing commitments’ category of the CSSB (Central Schools Services Block)
2. How much of the funding specified in (1) above (as a raw figure and a percentage) 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 2019-2020 did you spend on:
  - (a) Democratic services to support SACRE meetings through 2019-2020 (e.g., a clerk)
  - (b) Professional support (A Religious Education specialist advisor or consultant to support the work of SACRE)
  - (c) Support for schools, including CPD and training specifically for Religious Education and or Collective Worship
  - (d) Other costs: please specify e.g., for separate clerking costs
4. How much money from other funds outside the CSSB fund (e.g., the community integration fund) was used to support RE in your local authority with schools?
5. When was your last agreed syllabus for RE revised, and how much did it cost to complete this revision? (i.e., to write it, develop it, publish it and launch it including initial training for your schools)
6. How/Where would a member of the public access your Agreed Syllabus for RE?
7. Who is the contact for SACRE business in your LA? (Name and email address)
8. Are there any barriers for 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?

Responses were obtained from 136 LAs, with 15 not supplying answers by the end of March 2021.

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

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

## 1. Total Authority spend on SACRE

Of the 111 local authorities that reported any spending on SACRE, 82% of the total, the mean spend was £11,000.46. The remaining 25 authorities, 18% of the total, reported allocating no funding to SACRE. The biggest spend by any authority was £93,574, whilst one Authority appeared to use only £105.

One explanation for the wide variance in spending could be the size of the LA, and the number of schools; an LA with few schools may be expected to use less money to fund RE provision in those schools. It would be tempting to assume that those LAs providing the most significant levels of professional support were the largest authorities. That is not the case. Figure 1 below, indicates that there appears no correlation between the number of state-funded secondary schools in an LA (a reasonable measure of the size of the authority) and the amount spent by the LA on SACRE.

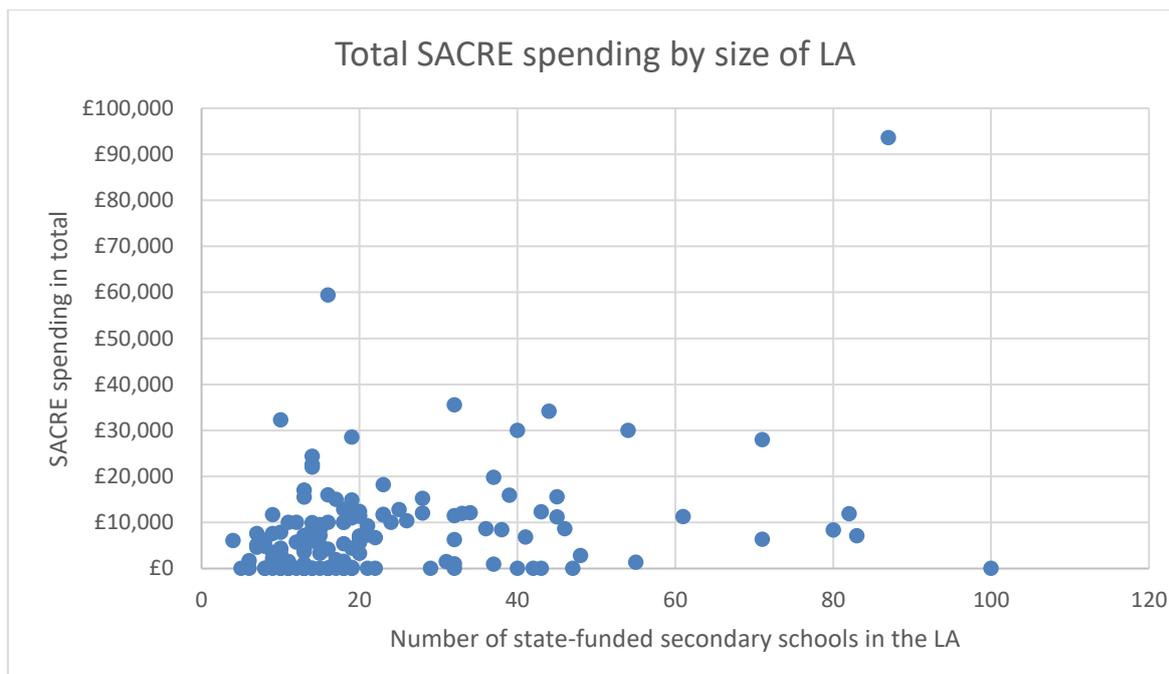


Figure 1

## 2. CSSB and Funding Sources for SACRE

The expectation of the Department for Education is that SACREs and Agreed Syllabus Conferences are funded from the Central School Services Block (CSSB).

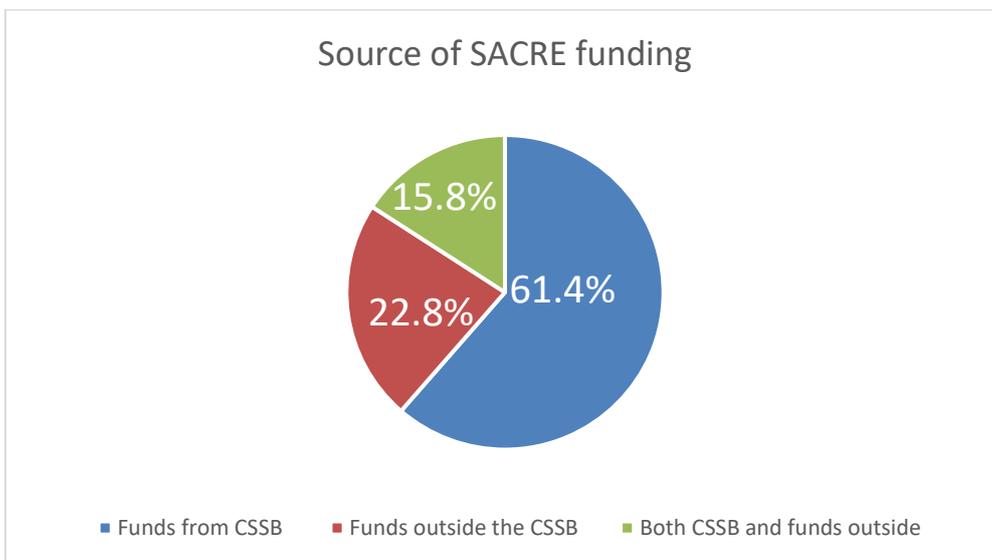


Figure 2

- 62 authorities (61.4% of the 101 that responded to this question) reported that they use funding for SACRE from the CSSB only
- 23 authorities (22.8% of the 101 that responded to this question) reported using funding from outside the CSSB only
- 16 authorities (15.8% of the 101 that responded to this question) reported using both sources.

The most well-funded SACRE received 6% of the CSSB from their LA in 2019/20. The average spending on a SACRE, Religious Education and Collective Worship, as a percentage of the allocated CSSB funding source (based on data from 136 LAs) was less than one percent, 0.72%.

Of the 136 SACREs who responded to the FOI, 79% (107) spent under 1% of CSSB fund or equivalent on SACRE, RE and Collective Worship in 2019/20. There is no correlation between the size of the LA and the proportion of CSSB that is used on SACRE business as the scattergram below shows.

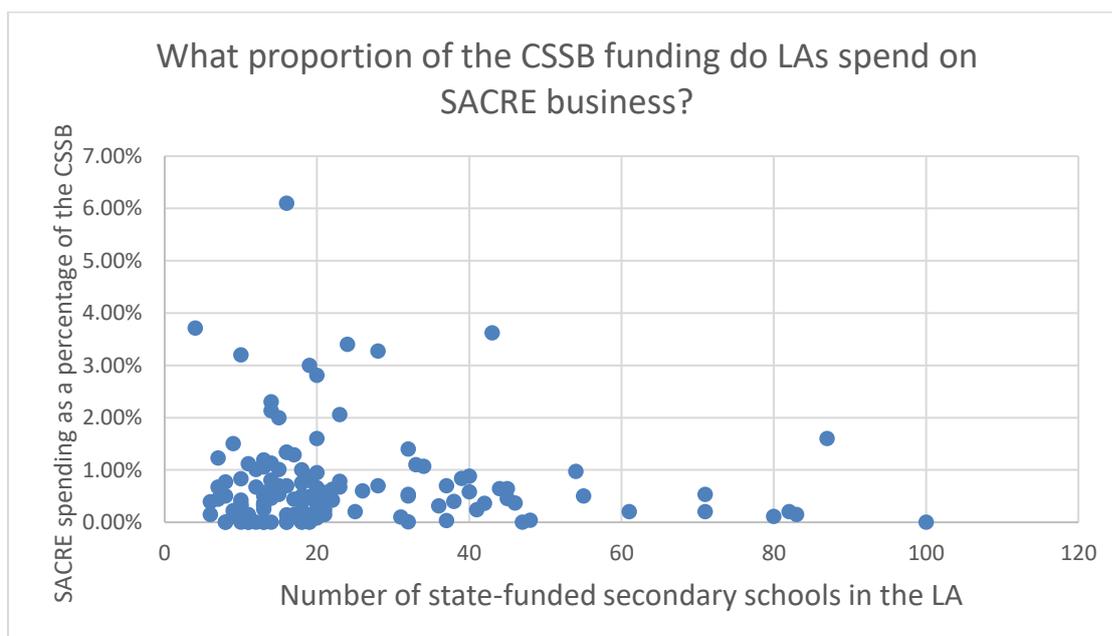


Figure 3

### 3. Spending on Specific Items

We asked LAs how much they allocated to **professional support** including advisers and consultants. 100 LAs answered this question. 27 reported that they allocated £0 of funding to professional support. The average spend on professional support by the 73 authorities that responded to say they allocate funding was £7,095.03. The responses ranged from £59,418 to £145.

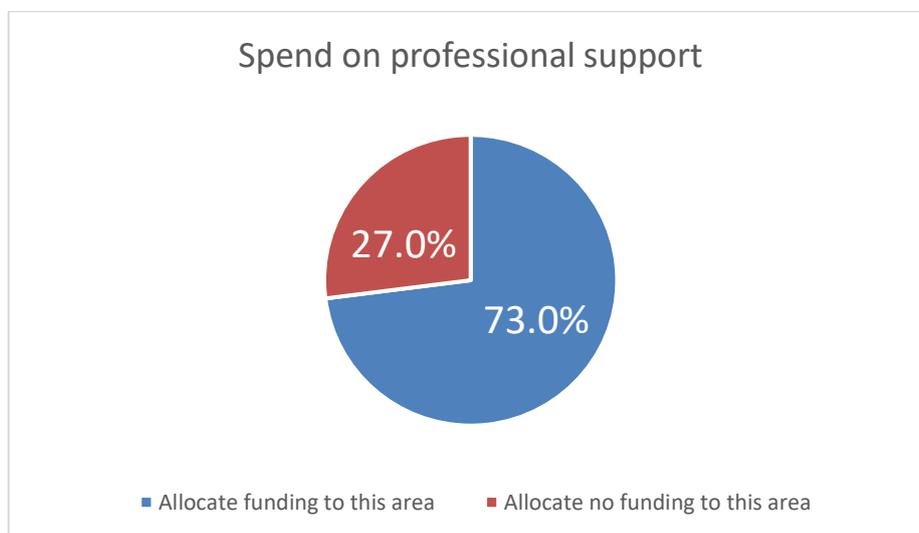


Figure 4

We asked LAs how much they allocated to **democratic services** (e.g. clerking). 49 authorities responded to this question. Seven authorities reported allocating £0. 42 authorities responded that they allocate some funds to this area and their mean spend on democratic services was £2648.18. The responses ranged from £25,574 to £200.

We asked LAs how much they allocated to **supporting RE in schools**. 80 authorities responded to this question. 42 authorities allocate £0. The mean spend for the 38 authorities who allocate funding to this area is £2529.07. The level of support ranges from £10,829 to £112.

***It is difficult to see how a SACRE can be fulfilling its statutory duties, let alone performing well, if an LA does not allocate some 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 review<sup>11</sup>. When the FOI was sent in November 2020 this would mean that the oldest syllabus review should have been 2015. Seven LAs told us that their syllabus was last reviewed earlier than that, three in 2014, one in 2013, two in 2012 and one in 2010, making it 10 years old. This most fundamental duty of LAs is subject to difficulties due to underfunding. When we contacted those SACREs they did tell us that those very old syllabuses were at various stages of review.

81 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 reported cost was £8,452. The most expensive Agreed Syllabus review was almost £45,000, with five Authorities spending committing more than £20,000 of resource to the last syllabus review; of these five, four were locally produced and one was licenced from RE Today. Most syllabuses (30) cost between £5,000 and £10,000. Three LAs claimed to have spent less than £1,000 on the review, with one suggesting a total cost of £81.

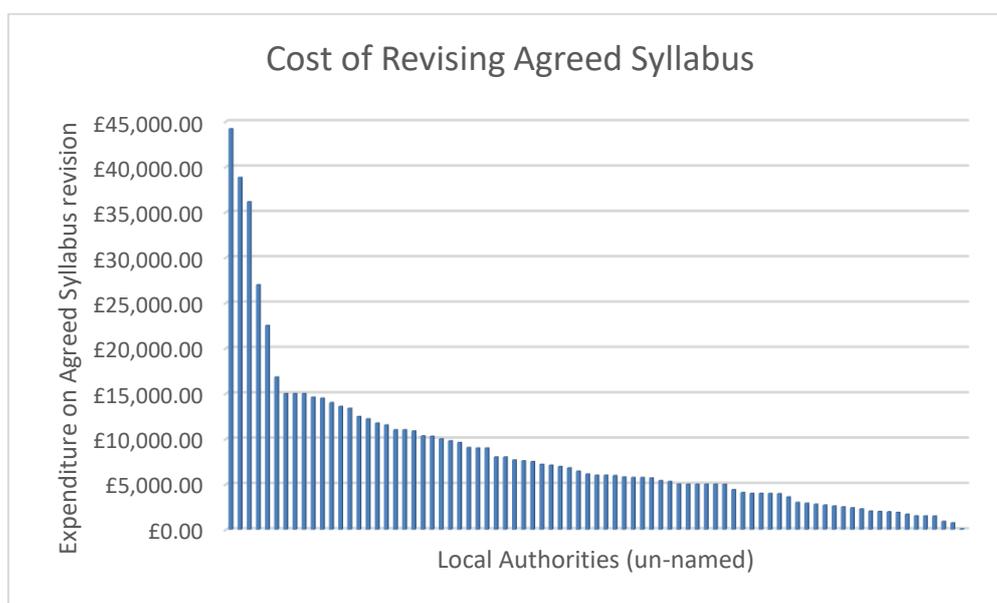


Figure 5

***It is difficult to see how a syllabus can be properly reviewed without a significant spend. If minor changes are required, we would consider £5,000 to be a very bare minimum spend. We would expect a proper review process to cost in excess of £10,000.***

<sup>11</sup> 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](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/190260/DCSF-00114-2010.pdf)

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## 5. Recommendations

### 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 November 2020 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.”<sup>12</sup> 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.<sup>13</sup>

### 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.<sup>14</sup> We consider 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 school standards; 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.”<sup>15</sup>

### C. The DfE

In line with the Secretary of State’s directive above, the department should write to 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 25 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.

## 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 Claire Clinton, Marie Cooper, Paul Smalley and Deborah Weston for putting this report together.

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*Cover photograph of a SACRE meeting taken by P. Smalley.*

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<sup>12</sup> Gavin Williamson (2019) private correspondence, 15th August. <http://www.nasacre.org.uk/file/nasacre/1-246-letter-from-gavin-williamson.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> 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](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/190260/DCSF-00114-2010.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*, page 11

<sup>15</sup> HC Deb, 28 March 2018, cW <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2018-03-28/134697>

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