



2019-0028339POSoS

**Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP**  
Secretary of State

Sanctuary Buildings Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT  
tel: 0370 000 2288 [www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus](http://www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus)

Paul Smalley  
Chair  
NASACRE

15<sup>th</sup> August 2019

Thank you for your letter of 31 July, congratulating me on my appointment and regarding the role of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (SACREs).

It is a real honour to have been appointed as Secretary of State for Education. From the time I first became a School Governor, to serving on the Education Committee as a County Councillor, education has always been close to my heart. It is a privilege to be able to work with our brilliant teachers, college staff, lecturers and social workers who are making such a difference to people's lives. Working together, I believe that we can build a truly outward looking and global Britain.

My priority is to drive up standards and ensure that our children can have the best start in life, making the most of their time and opportunities in education and going on to lead successful lives, wherever they are from. To be in this role and to be able to be part of delivering this agenda is something that really excites me.

We have no plans to specify the proportion of Central School Services Block (CSSB) funding that local authorities (LAs) must attribute to each of their statutory functions. If we did this, or ring-fenced any particular one, we would remove the flexibilities they need to be able to take account of local circumstances.

However, I agree that it is important that SACREs should be resourced sufficiently to be able to fulfil their statutory functions. While my department cannot direct the proportion of the CSSB that individual LAs allocate to supporting a SACRE, it would investigate any complaint that statutory responsibilities were not being delivered to ensure that the LA took any necessary remedial action.

As you say, my department has no specific plans regarding Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and health education and SACREs. However, officials have been asked to explore the current role SACREs play in supporting the delivery of RSE and health education locally and how they could support future implementation.

Thank you for your kind invitation to meet. My office is aware of your request and will be in touch if I am able to do so in the near future.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gavin Williamson', written in a cursive style.

**Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP**  
**Secretary of State for Education**