



Monday 12th February 2018

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing on this occasion as the CEO of Pro Bono Economics (PBE). PBE is a charity which harnesses the tools and insights from economics to help other charities and social enterprises understand and improve the impact and value of their work. Since inception in 2009, PBE has matched professional economists, working on a voluntary basis, with over 300 charities. We currently focus our work on wellbeing, supported by strands in education, employment, mental health and complex needs.

In November 2017, PBE published a report it had prepared on behalf of the PSHE Association, the national body for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, which is currently a non-statutory school curriculum subject in England. It was entitled: *Literature Review Evaluating the Impact of PSHE on Students' Health, Wellbeing and Academic Attainment* (www.probonoeconomics.com/resources/pshe-association).

In her introduction to the report, Diane Coyle, a Professor of Economics at the University of Manchester, inaugural Bennett Professor of Public Policy at the University of Cambridge, and a trustee of Pro Bono Economics wrote:

"The report is a systematic literature review, analysing three types of literature, covering the UK and other countries, in order to identify impact. Andrew Barnard is an economic adviser at the Cabinet Office and undertook this review with other UK government economists Andrew Carey (Department for Transport), Amy Regan (Ministry of Justice), Justin Seth (Cabinet Office) and Ravi Sharma (Home Office) ... The review reached broadly positive conclusions. **High-quality PSHE helps children develop skills and knowledge to be used throughout their lives, and supports their wellbeing.**

"The wider implications of these lessons will be clear to most of us, and so it is concerning to see Ofsted highlight the lack of high quality provision in many schools ... The lack of priority and resources given to this area may increase costs to the taxpayer in the longer term.

"There are some gaps in the existing research, and it is of course hard to disentangle the effects of PSHE from other influences. Yet the results here show that high quality PSHE education benefits young people, and may be particularly helpful targeted at those from disadvantaged backgrounds."

The evidence set out in the report shows clearly that PSHE education has proven benefits in the areas of physical health, mental health and behaviour. Importantly, those benefits will continue to stand students in good stead in their adult life too.

The report also supplies strong evidence of PSHE education's positive impact on academic attainment. This is achieved both through the removal of barriers to learning (e.g. mental health and behavioural issues, bullying) and by developing skills and attributes that enable young people to excel, such as confidence and positive risk-taking. Encouragingly, the report suggests that PSHE holds the greatest benefits for disadvantaged pupils, yet many of these young people will fail to reap these benefits because PSHE is not compulsory in state schools.

To date, the government has quite rightly emphasised the importance of PSHE; indeed, it has stated in the introduction to the National Curriculum document that all schools 'should' teach it. As this report shows, and as many British schools are already proving, it achieves the desired results cost-effectively in both the shorter term and the long term. In other words, it represents a sound investment in our young people, in the encouragement of social mobility and, ultimately, in the future of the country. It is both crucial and opportune for the government to build on this achievement by making PSHE statutory in British schools.

As CEO of Pro Bono Economics, I join the PSHE Association in recommending that the government uses the power contained in the Children and Social Work Act to make PSHE education statutory on the curriculum for all.

Yours Sincerely,



Julia Grant
Chief Executive, Pro Bono Economics