

The Schools Minister has also made some helpful comments in written answers to Parliament recently. The statutory duty for LAs to 'establish' and 'support' a SACRE, was reaffirmed by Nick Gibb in a written answer to Parliament in July 2017:

Local authorities have a statutory duty to support the activities of Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) and publish an agreed syllabus for maintained schools without a religious designation in their local area. Maintained schools with a religious designation and academies are not required to follow the agreed syllabus, although it can act as a useful benchmark for their curriculum planning.

SACRE membership must include representatives of the area's principal faith groups, teachers and from the local authority. This contributes to securing the confidence of local communities and enables the SACRE to take account of the circumstances of each area in creating an agreed syllabus that has regard to local context.

The Government does not have any current plans to remove the duty on local authorities to establish SACREs and include RE in the National Curriculum.

In November 2016 Nick Gibb also stated:

*Local authorities currently receive funding through the Education Services Grant to support **Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education**(SACREs) to develop an agreed syllabus for **religious education** (RE). Local authorities will continue to receive funding to develop an agreed syllabus for RE, once the Education Services Grant has been removed.*

There is therefore no reason for an LA to not properly support SACREs; it is a statutory requirement for which they are funded by central government. Failure to do so could lead to a legal challenge in the courts, or serious sanctions from the DfE.

If your SACRE is finding that your Authority is seeking to reduce the support that it gives, please let NASACRE know so that we can support you.