



House of Commons
Education and Skills Committee

Bullying

Third Report of Session 2006–07

Report, together with formal minutes, oral and written evidence

*Ordered by The House of Commons
to be printed 5 March 2007*

The Education and Skills Committee

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Summary

There has been an increasing awareness over the past few decades of bullying and the effect it has on the educational and social achievements of children and young people. We took evidence on the effects of bullying which suggested that it causes a number of problems ranging from general unhappiness, poor concentration, low-self esteem, psychosomatic symptoms and anxiety to depression, self-harm or suicide. The *Every Child Matters* agenda also highlights the damage that bullying can do to young people and their educational and social achievements. There appears to be a lack of research on how bullying affects bullies, although the evidence we received suggests that there may be significant problems for individuals and the community generally if bullying behaviour which occurs in childhood is not tackled and changed.

We strongly believe that bullying should not be tolerated, either within school or in the wider community. Bullying can have a negative affect on both the bully and the victim. The idea that bullying is in some way character building and simply part of childhood is wrong and should be challenged. However, while there is no excuse for bullying we believe that bullying behaviour is influenced by attitudes and behaviour in society in general.

Defining what bullying is and identifying instances of bullying is the first potential barrier to successfully tackling the problem. We welcome the current DfES guidance to schools, that they should involve the entire school community in agreeing a definition of bullying. Schools may need additional guidance on how to ensure difficult issues, such as the use of homophobic language and more subtle forms of bullying like excluding people from friendship groups and spreading rumours, are included in this process. Teachers, other staff, pupils and parents should all be aware of their school's definition of bullying and how this affects their own behaviour and what is expected of them. The attitude and engagement of head teachers is vital to tackling bullying.

We are concerned that some schools try to tackle bullying by attempting to change the behaviour of the victim. The focus of anti-bullying work should be tackling bullying behaviour and making it clear that such behaviour is not acceptable, and guidance to schools should make this clear. Schools should ensure staff feel confident in dealing with prejudice-driven bullying and are consistent in their approach. To help staff, schools' anti-bullying policies should specifically mention disability-related, faith-based and homophobic bullying.

We support the right of schools to use exclusion as a disciplinary sanction. However, we are concerned to hear that some schools are excluding the victims of bullying on health and safety grounds. Violence in retaliation against bullying is unacceptable and schools are right to discipline the perpetrators of violence. However, we urge the Department to issue new guidance to local authorities and schools, covering not only when exclusions should be used, but also when they must not be used, for example, to prevent the victims of bullying from attending school.

We have become convinced that a lack of accurate reliable data on bullying is one barrier

to more effective anti-bullying work. We are concerned that decisions on anti-bullying policy are being made with very little evidence to guide them. We urge the Government to commission a long-term study of a number of schools, looking at both general trends in bullying and also the effectiveness of different approaches in different circumstances.

Advice for schools, including on what services are available for those bullies whose behaviour cannot be dealt with in a school setting, should be made available. We urge local authorities to ensure schools have clear guidance on what services are available to work with this type of persistent bully and to ensure that young people in their area who are excluded as a result of bullying have continuing access to the support necessary to change their behaviour.

A robust complaints procedure is needed at school and local level. This should include a credible independent appeals procedure to help ensure that pupils and parents have confidence that their concerns are taken seriously. It is vital that governors, who are the first formal recourse parents have if they wish to complain about the way that school has dealt with an incident of bullying, understand and are engaged with the anti-bullying policy and practice of the school.

We consider that it is unrealistic to expect anti-bullying work to completely eradicate bullying. We believe it would be more helpful for the Government to foster a culture where schools are encouraged to be open about incidents of bullying, have effective ways of dealing with bullying when it occurs and provide support the victims of bullying, rather than a culture where schools feel reporting incidents of bullying will damage their reputation.

1 Introduction

1. We announced our inquiry into bullying on 21 July 2006 following an earlier evidence session on 10 May 2006. We took evidence from a range of individuals and organisations involved in the development or delivery of anti-bullying programmes. They included schools, campaigning organisations and support organisations.

2. During our inquiry, we examined the progress that has been made since the introduction of the *Don't Suffer in Silence* pack that was first issued in 1994 and the barriers that prevent schools from tackling bullying effectively. We also explored issues that have become more widely discussed in recent times such as prejudice-driven bullying, including SEN-related, homophobic and faith-based bullying, and cyber-bullying.

3. In the course of our inquiry we took oral evidence from EACH (Educational Action Challenging Homophobia); Kidscape; Ofsted; the head teachers of New Rush Hall School, Redbridge and Hornbury School, Wakefield; Barnardo's; SARI (Support Against Racist Incidents); The National Autistic Society; the National Union of Teachers; Professor Peter K Smith; Jim Knight, Minister of State for Schools and Parmjit Dhanda, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children, Young People and Families. We have previously taken evidence from Professor Sir Al Aynsley Green and Sir Alan Steer. We received written submissions from a wide range of organisations and individuals and have used this to inform the conclusions and recommendations of this Report.

2 Context

4. There has been an increasing awareness over the past few decades of bullying and the effect it has on the educational and social achievements of children and young people. Some of the earliest research on bullying and development of anti-bullying programmes in Europe was carried out by Norwegian academic Dan Olweus in the 1970s. In the UK, the Sheffield Anti-Bullying Project was funded by the then DfEE and ran from 1991–94. A guidance pack for schools called *Don't Suffer in Silence*, based on the findings of the project, was produced in 1994.

5. In its memorandum to the Committee, the DfES states that “since 1999 the Government has regarded bullying in schools as a key priority.”¹ Section 61 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 introduced a legal requirement for schools to have an Anti-Bullying Policy (as part of a Pupil Discipline Policy) from 1 September 1999. A revised edition of *Don't Suffer in Silence* was launched in 2000 along with a *Don't Suffer in Silence* website. The Education Act 2002 required schools and Local Authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and subsequent guidance made it clear that safeguarding the welfare of children “encompasses issues such as pupil health and safety and bullying.”^{2 3} Two research briefs were produced in 2003 by the DfES, *Tackling Bullying: Listening to the views of children and young people* in March and an evaluation of the *Don't Suffer in Silence Pack* in April. This was followed in November 2003 by the *Anti-Bullying Charter for Action*.

6. The Practitioners' Group on School Behaviour led by Sir Alan Steer reported in October 2005 and made two specific suggestions about anti-bullying work. These were

“Recommendation 3.1.5: the DfES should work with the professional associations and other partners to promote the Anti-Bullying Charter for Action, by reissuing it to schools every two years and promoting it at regional events.

Recommendation 3.1.6: the DfES should issue further advice on tackling bullying motivated by prejudice. This includes homophobia, racism and persecution in all its various manifestations.”⁴

This was followed by the *Higher Standards, Better Schools for All* White Paper which suggested ways to tackling bullying and emphasised that schools should set out, clearly, punishments and sanctions for bullying and stated that victims should not be blamed; instead “responsibility should be directed where it belongs.”⁵

1 Ev 90

2 Department for Education and Skills, *Safeguarding Children in Education* 2004.

3 *Ibid* p 8

4 Department for Education and Skills, *Learning behaviour: The Report of the Practitioners' Group on School Behaviour and Discipline*, October 2005, p 36.

5 Department for Education and Skills, *Higher Standards: Better Schools for All* White Paper, October 2005, para 7.36.

3 What is bullying

7. We strongly believe that bullying should not be tolerated, either within school or in the wider community. Bullying can have a negative affect on both the bully and the victim. The idea that bullying is in some way character building and simply part of childhood is wrong and should be challenged. However, while there is no excuse for bullying we believe that bullying behaviour is influenced by attitudes and behaviour in society in general

8. Casual attitudes to violence seem to be becoming more common, for example with the growth of so-called ‘happy-slapping’ attacks. Poor parenting and lack of discipline at home can lead to a lack of respect for other people, a lack of respect for difference and anti-social behaviour, as well as bullying. We believe that parenting and the home environment are as important, if not more so, than school discipline in addressing these issues. The Minister for Schools told us that “it is often quite difficult for a parent to accept that their child might be bullying, but we need them to be able to deal with that if it arises.”⁶ If parents refuse to accept that their child’s behaviour is unacceptable this creates serious problems for any attempt by the school to address that behaviour. All these problems need to be addressed if bullying is to be tackled successfully.

9. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 gave head teachers the power to take action on behaviour that occurs outside school premises and when a member of staff is not in charge of the student.⁷ The Act also stated that disciplinary powers should only be extended as far as is reasonable. We are concerned that in the past some schools have refused to take action on bullying that has taken off school premises, for example bullying on the way to or from school and welcome the message in the Act that schools should consider extending the areas that their discipline covers.

Defining and Identifying bullying

10. Defining what bullying is and identifying instances of bullying is the first potential barrier to successfully tackling the problem. The DfES told us that

“The Government defines bullying as:

- Repetitive, wilful or persistent behaviour intended to cause harm, although one-off incidents can in some cases also be defined as bullying;
- Intentionally harmful behaviour, carried out by an individual or a group; and
- An imbalance of power leaving the person being bullied feeling defenceless.

Bullying is emotionally or physically harmful behaviour and includes: name-calling; taunting; mocking; making offensive comments; kicking; hitting; pushing; taking

6 Q 233

7 Education and Inspections Act 2006, section 89.

belongings; inappropriate text messaging and emailing; sending offensive or degrading images by phone or via the internet; gossiping; excluding people from groups and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours.”⁸

11. The British Psychological Society argue that “there is no universal agreed definition of bullying or methods to assess it.”⁹ They go on to note that some definitions

“strongly emphasise direct bullying and aggressive actions. Research reports looking at interactions between gender and forms of bullying suggest that more sensitive definitions may be required for children to report on female forms of bullying or more indirect forms of bullying.”¹⁰

12. Not everyone sees the same incidents in the same way. Michele Elliot, the Director of Kidscape, stated that “it is all bullying when it is deliberate. Teasing is very easy to describe. I can tease you and you can tease me and, if we are enjoying it, that is great. If it is causing pain, then that is bullying.”¹¹ However, Save the Children note that, during the Independent Educational Advocacy Project they ran, children would report bullying if they had fallen out with a friend but not necessarily if they were actually being bullied.¹² While we do not wish to perpetuate the unhelpful idea that bullying is an inevitable part of school life, it is clear that behaviour which can, in certain circumstances, be seen as bullying, is not always regarded as such by any of the parties involved. Physical bullying is much easier to identify, both in terms of the perpetrator’s actions and the effect they have on the victim, than verbal bullying or more subtle types of bullying such as excluding the victim from social groups or spreading gossip.

13. This is a problem not only for schools and teachers, who may not be able to recognise when intervention is necessary, but also for students, who Save the Children argue “are also likely to have an incomplete understanding of the different forms bullying can take, and tend to exclude aspects of relational bullying within their concept of bullying.”¹³ This can be true of both perpetrators, who may not realise or accept that their behaviour is bullying, and victims, who may not seek help because they do not realise that they are being bullied. Evidence we received suggests this may be more of a problem for children with Special Educational Needs. Both Mencap and the National Autistic Society stated that children with SEN might find it difficult to identify when they were being bullied. Mr Benet Middleton, Director of Communications and Public Affairs for the National Autistic Society, said

“Often a child with autism will not appreciate that he or she is being bullied. Such a child will not know the social rules. That can be quite extreme and can range from a child who is told by another boy that he will be hit every day so he believes that that

8 Ev 90

9 Ev 150

10 *Ibid* para 2.3

11 Q 3

12 Ev 186

13 Ev 193

is the rule to much more subtle types of bullying where the child may be led into quite inappropriate behaviour.”¹⁴

14. Several witnesses told us of difficulties in identifying prejudice-based elements of bullying. Dr Shobha Das, Deputy Director of Support Against Racist Incidents (SARI) stated that “often schools do not struggle to identify an incident of bullying. [...] For us the problem is one of identifying incidents of racist bullying. [...] they [schools] do not want to put the stamp of prejudice on it because somehow they feel it makes them look bad.”¹⁵ When asked about introducing a statutory duty on schools to report homophobic bullying similar to the one in existence for racist bullying, the Minister for Schools, Jim Knight MP, said “there are some real difficulties around definition and getting some consistency.”¹⁶

15. The Ofsted report *Bullying: Effective action in secondary schools* noted that

“Staff in the schools visited showed rather less certainty in dealing with name-calling and other verbal abuse about sexuality than any other matters. Pupils also find this area difficult. They were aware that, under the guise of ‘having a laugh,’ some pupils make personal comments about others’ sexuality, such as using the expression ‘you’re gay,’ of boys, in a condemnatory, homophobic tone. [...] While many pupils dismiss such statements as simply silly, others, particularly those trying to make sense of their own sexuality, can clearly feel very uncomfortable in a climate marked by crude stereotyping and hostility to difference.”¹⁷

The Minister also noted that

“From the feedback that we have had from schools, it is a very difficult issue for them to be consistent about and in any behaviour policy consistency is crucial. Things like the use of the word ‘gay’ as a derogative term to describe people is in fairly common usage amongst young people in this country”¹⁸

16. Without a clear definition of bullying it is impossible for schools to have an effective, consistent anti-bullying policy. Written evidence from the Children’s Legal Centre suggests a statutory definition may be necessary.¹⁹ However, the Children’s Commissioner argues that

“Agreeing ownership for a workable definition is one of the key elements on establishing and implementing an anti-bullying policy. [...]. Children and young people’s involvement is crucial, as is simplicity.”²⁰

The DfES states that

14 Q 154

15 Q 151

16 Q 219

17 Ofsted, *Bullying: Effective action in secondary schools*, 2003, para 36.

18 Q 219

19 Ev 172

20 Ev 193

“The Department also encourages schools to consult with the entire school community in agreeing a definition of bullying appropriate to the individual school. This is an important part of developing an effective strategy to deal with bullying.”²¹

17. Involving the whole school community in agreeing a definition of bullying can help to highlight behaviour that is unacceptable, ensuring there is a shared understanding between students, parents, teachers and other staff. **We welcome the current DfES guidance to schools, that they should involve the entire school community in agreeing a definition of bullying. We recommend that additional guidance is given to schools on how to ensure difficult issues, such as the use of homophobic language and more subtle forms of bullying, are included in this process.**

18. A report by the Office of the Children’s Commissioner on the complaints procedure for bullying states that “it is inevitable that what is regarded as bullying in the eyes of one child or parent may not be so regarded by another.”²² We recognise that even when a definition of bullying has been produced in consultation with the whole school community, such disagreements are likely to occur. However, to minimise such disputes **all schools should ensure that parents, pupils and staff are aware of the agreed definition. Teachers, other staff, pupils and parents should all be aware of how the definition affects their own behaviour and what is expected of them. Schools should review their policy and reported incidents regularly and use this as an opportunity to achieve consistency in reporting and responding to incidents of bullying and to develop teachers’ skills in tackling them.**

19. There are specific times and locations where children can be more vulnerable to bullying. These can include big events such as the transition between schools but also certain times within the routine school day such as lunchtime. **We would recommend that schools target their attention on key times and locations where bullying is more prevalent.**

Types of Bullying

20. During this inquiry we have taken evidence about specific types of bullying and their prevalence as well as bullying in general. Many of the witnesses mentioned two types of bullying in particular—cyber-bullying and prejudice-driven bullying. However, written and oral evidence we took also highlighted the following points:

- Bullying is not confined to secondary education but is also a problem for primary schools.²³
- There is a tendency for girls to use verbal and relational tactics to bully and to be the victim of this type of bullying more often, and for boys to use and be the victims of

21 Ev 90

22 Office of the Children’s Commissioner, *Bullying in Schools in England: A Review of the Current Complaints procedure and a Discussion of Options for Change*, November 2006, p 2.

23 Q 158

more physical types of bullying. However, there seems to be an increase in girls using more aggressive and physical types of bullying with other girls.²⁴

- Evidence from the DfES suggests that boys tend to be bullied by other boys while girls are bullied by other girls and by boys.²⁵

Cyber-bullying

21. We were concerned about the use of new technology in bullying. Professor Peter Smith said that “Cyber-bullying is a new challenge and probably going up.”²⁶ The DfES suggests that “schools and parents find cyber-bullying a particularly challenging area to address”.²⁷ The Anti-Bullying Alliance told us that, based on a study of 11,000 pupils the proportion of those who had received a nasty or threatening text message or email rose from 5.8% in 2002 to 5.9% in 2003, 7.4 % in 2004 and 7% in 2005. As separate study in 2005 found that 7% of a group of 92 pupils had experienced some form of cyber-bullying in the preceding couple of months.²⁸

22. There are clearly challenges when dealing with cyber-bullying. Bullying can take place away from school and out of school time. Despite the introduction of the ‘right to discipline’ in the Education and Inspection Act 2006 there is still a clear limit to what teachers and schools can or should do about bullying that occurs outside school. The charity Beatbullying told us that it “believes quite strongly that schools are not responsible for bullying that takes place off their premises. In our experience [...] making schools responsible for all bullying across a community is self defeating.”²⁹ The Minister for Schools said that

“Cyber-bullying is an area we have been very active on, and we have convened a group from industry to help us look at how the technology is being abused. I do not think it is going to be possible to shut down technology that is being abused. [...]. We need to teach them [young people] how to use technology safely and responsibly. [...]. Again, it is an area where we are looking to advise schools later on this year.”³⁰

23. The Committee recognises that there are unique problems when dealing with cyber-bullying. We welcome work being done to provide advice to schools. **Given that it is more common for cyber-bullying to take place outside schools we urge the Department when it produces guidance to ensure that it includes guidance for parents and pupils as well as for schools.**

24 Written evidence from Michele Elliot [not printed]

25 Ev 90

26 Q 173

27 Ev 90

28 Ev 60

29 Ev 205

30 Q 232

Prejudice-driven bullying

24. During this inquiry we have been interested in the issue of prejudice-driven bullying. The DfES told us that:

“The distinctive feature of prejudice-driven bullying is that a person is attacked not only as an individual, as in most other offences, but also as the representative of a family, community or group. As such other members of the same group, family or community can be made to feel threatened and intimidated. [...]. Moreover, this kind of bullying has wider social implications, extending beyond the school setting and schools, therefore, are in a significant position to limit the negative consequences this bullying can have on wider society.”³¹

However, we recognise that bullying also occurs for other reasons and that an increasing awareness of prejudice-driven bullying should not detract from the ability of schools to deal with other types of bullying. Professor Smith said

“I think it is good that there has been an emphasis on prejudice-based bullying in the sense of bringing those particular groups into full awareness, because in the past there was insufficient awareness of, say, the difficulties experienced by gay people in school. It is absolutely right that that should be fully brought into awareness; similarly for people with disabilities and other kinds of prejudice-based bullying. We should not neglect the mainstream types of bullying which may simply arise because somebody behaves a bit differently, or because someone takes a dislike to somebody else, or because someone is a bit timid, a bit of a swot or whatever it is.”³²

25. Caroline Day, Researcher for Barnardo’s, told us that Barnardo’s had found, through their work, that young people tended to see identity-related bullying as worse than general bullying because identity related bullying focused on things that could not be changed. The three main things that young people mentioned in relation to identity-related bullying were sexuality, race and culture, and disability.³³ The view that prejudice-driven bullying is different from other forms of bullying was supported by much of the evidence that Committee received throughout the inquiry.

26. One group that may be more at risk of bullying are children and young people with special educational needs. Mencap state that most children with SEN will be bullied and the National Autistic Society told us that its own survey found 41% of parents whose children had autism reported that the children have been bullied,³⁴ with the figure rising to 59% for those whose children with Asperger syndrome or high-functioning autism.³⁵ One problem raised in the evidence we received is that children with SEN may not always understand when, either as a victim or a perpetrator, behaviour is bullying.

31 Ev 90

32 Q 216

33 Q 127

34 Ev 136

35 Ev 29

27. Some evidence identified homophobic bullying as different from other types of bullying. Both Stonewall and Education Action Challenging Homophobia suggest that the degree of isolation is greater for the victims of homophobic bullying because they may have to ‘come out’ in order to report the bullying. While this may be part of the reason young people who are suffering homophobic bullying do not report it, a 2003 study about bullying in general found that only 51% of Year 5 pupils and 31% of Year 8 pupils would find it easy to speak to a teacher about bullying.³⁶ Evidence also suggests that it is not only young people who are suffering from homophobic bullying who feel they lack sympathetic peers. The British Psychological Society state that

“Friendship and social status have been another area where evidence suggests both a protective factor and a risk factor. Victims are often at greater ‘social risk’ as they lack supportive friends at schools and tend to be more rejected by their peers.”³⁷

Evidence we received does suggest that gay, lesbian and bisexual young people, and those perceived to be gay, lesbian or bisexual, may be more at risk of bullying. While determining the extent of bullying is difficult, due to lack of record keeping and problems with establishing a consistent definition, the Anti-Bullying Alliance states that “between 30–50% of young people in secondary schools attracted to people of the same sex will have directly experienced homophobic bullying (compared to the 10–20% of young people who have experienced general bullying).”³⁸

28. Race, culture and religion can also lead to prejudice-driven bullying. Studies on racist bullying suggest that it is a problem for schools. The Children’s Commissioner told us that a 1994 survey found 17.75% of primary school children and 9.2% of secondary school children had been on the receiving end of derogatory comments relating to their colour, and a 2001 study of the victims of bullying in Islington found that 29% of those who had been bullied had been racially insulted. Worryingly, separate research in 2001 found that when children from black and minority ethnic communities experience bullying it is twice as likely to be severe bullying.³⁹ A recent article in *The Times Educational Supplement* suggested that attacks on Muslim pupils have increased since the July 7 bombings, and reported on the assault of an 11-year-old student while she was praying at school.⁴⁰

29. Schools have a duty to report racist incidents and to have an anti-racism policy. However, there are no corresponding duties for other types of bullying. Denys Robinson, Chair of Trustees, Educational Action Challenging Homophobia, told the Committee that “a lot of this problem that we have would be solved if the same practice that is followed on racist incidents, were applied to homophobic incidents.”⁴¹ However, Dr Shobha Das argued that the practice on racist bullying was not satisfactory. She said that schools are

36 Oliver, C and Candappa, M, *Tackling bullying: listening to the views of children and young people*, 2003.

37 Ev 150

38 Ev 60

39 Ev 193

40 *The Times Educational Supplement*, 10 November 2006, p 5.

41 Q 21

reluctant to report racist bullying and “feel that they are black-listed for reporting racist incidents”.⁴² The Minister for Schools stated that

“We recommend in our guidance that schools should report all incidents of bullying. We do not make it a requirement [...] except in racist incidents, principally because of the burden that it places on schools but also because there are some real difficulties around definition and getting some consistency. We have some concerns around that in terms of the reporting of racist bullying: that some schools may be reluctant to report incidents because they do not want to get a reputation as a school for having a racist problem.”⁴³

30. Archbishop Vincent Nichols of the Catholic Education Service doubted that anti-bullying policies needed to deal specifically with different types of bullying:

“it is very, very important to have a clear, unambiguous policy put into practice about bullying. If you begin to pick out particular sections then the list of special policies is going to get very, very long [...] from the teachers who have discussed these things, [the advice] is that a strong, coherent policy which addresses all bullying is the most effective way of dealing with this.”⁴⁴

Benet Middleton of the National Autistic Society suggested that different approaches for different types of bullying could lead to some types of bullying not being dealt with as robustly as others. He added that “in the guidance more emphasis is placed on the person with the disability than on dealing with the behaviour [...] whereas with sexist and racist bullying it is a bit clearer that one should be addressing the bullying behaviour.”⁴⁵

31. Other witnesses felt that it was useful to have specific policies for prejudice-driven bullying. Shobha Das stated that “because of the lack of confidence of authorities in dealing in particular with prejudice-driven bullying I think we need to cast a special eye on that field.”⁴⁶ Chris Gravell, Policy Officer, Advisory Centre for Education said that

“often, in anti-racist bullying policies one has a strong rights-based approach which is absolutely correct, but often one does not find that in the disability and special needs bullying code where it seems to be far more to do with protecting the victims and victims being trained in social skills so they do not get bullied.”⁴⁷

EACH suggests that, as with bullying that is related to SEN, action to tackle homophobic bullying can focus on the behaviour of the victim rather than the bully. They note that

42 Q 152

43 Q 219

44 Q 650, 11 December 2006, Citizenship Education

45 Q 131

46 Q 132

47 Q 132

“Teachers not infrequently respond in exasperation when confronted with a pupil who has been ‘outed’—‘Why can’t you just keep your head down? Why do you have to keep drawing attention to yourself?’”⁴⁸

32. This is not to suggest that working with victims is never beneficial. Some of the evidence that the Committee has received suggests that working with the victims of bullying on assertiveness or social skills can help them deal with bullying. Professor Smith told the Committee that “one important component of anti-bullying work is assertiveness training which helps everyone, but it could be potential victims, to know how to cope when they are provoked or attacked in some way.”⁴⁹ However, we feel that work with the victims of bullying, if used, should only be part of an overall anti-bullying programme. **The focus of any anti-bullying work should be tackling bullying behaviour and making it clear that such behaviour is not acceptable.**

33. We are concerned by the evidence that the lack of consistency in recording bullying and the lack of information about the extent to which bullying occurs is a barrier to increasing the effectiveness of anti-bullying programmes. Deborah Duncan, Head teacher, Horbury School, when asked why schools do not record bullying, stated

“Of course, schools are very busy places and we have all sorts of pressures on us to do a variety of other things. Just last term we had to fill in the self-evaluation form; we had to restructure the entire staffing of the school. It is just another thing to do. But if you already have proper systems in place, it is not a difficult thing to do. I think that they do not do it just because they are not required to do it.”⁵⁰

We have, through the course of the inquiry, become convinced that a lack of accurate reliable data on bullying is one barrier to more effective anti-bullying work. We recommend that the Department introduces a requirement for schools to record all incidents of bullying along with information about the type of bullying incident.

34. We welcome the Minister’s statement that

“whatever the setting, so whatever the ethos, whoever the external partner to a school might be, school might be, if they have got one, be it the Catholic Church or anybody else. We should not tolerate bullying in any form, we should not tolerate people not respecting the difference that people have and I think that applies to homophobic bullying, it applies to faith-based bullying, it applies to all forms of bullying in all settings.”⁵¹

However, the evidence we have seen suggests this does not always happen in practice.

35. We are concerned that, particularly in relation to disability-related and homophobic bullying, attention is focused on the victim rather than the bullying. While there is undoubtedly good practice in some schools, in others teachers may feel they lack the

48 Ev 1

49 Q 216

50 Q 56

51 Q 228

knowledge or the ability to deal with these issues. The Committee welcomes the fact that the Department has commissioned research from Beatbullying and Stonewall about faith-based and homophobic bullying respectively and will be producing guidance for schools later in 2007. **We believe the DfES should commission new research on SEN related bullying and its impact, leading to guidance for schools.**

36. Although some witnesses have argued against targeting specific types of bullying this approach has led to a lack of clarity, consistency and confidence in dealing with certain types of bullying in some schools. **Unless these specific kinds of bullying are explicitly included in anti-bullying policies, we believe there is a danger that they will not be adequately addressed. We urge the Department to ensure their guidance to schools makes clear that the focus of anti-bullying work should be on changing bullying behaviour rather than on how victims can change their own behaviour. As a result of the evidence we have taken, we believe the Department should require schools' anti-bullying policies to specifically mention disability-related, race-related, faith-based and homophobic bullying. Schools should ensure staff feel confident in dealing with prejudice-driven bullying and are consistent in their approach.**

Bullying of Teachers

37. The Teachers' Support Network told us that harassment and relationships with people in the school environment, both other adults and pupils, were some of the main issues teachers contacted them about.⁵² They also argued that the school environment could be more intense than other workplaces, making it harder for teachers to avoid their bullies.⁵³ When asked if they bullying of teachers was increasing, Steve Sinnott, Secretary General of the NUT told us that

“It [bullying] is being raised with the National Union of Teachers by teachers in ways that it was never raised before. [...] we are creating an environment in which everybody feels under stress. Sometimes it is the stressed head teacher or head of department who takes particular action against a teacher who then feels that he or she has been bullied or harassed. Sometimes that has found an outlet in remarks that are made by a teacher in relation to another teacher that are entirely inappropriate.”⁵⁴

He also told us about students bullying teachers, saying that

“There are lots of examples of schools behaving entirely properly where a teacher has been assaulted or bullied by a youngster or group of youngsters. I can also give you examples of ways in which schools have behaved inappropriately in protecting teachers. [...] I can give you example after example of that type of incident.”⁵⁵

38. The Teacher Support Network told us that the bullying of teachers could “have a negative effect on impact on the educational experience of young people as teachers lack the enthusiasm for their subject and their confidence to deliver their classes effectively.

52 Ev 233

53 *Ibid*, para 26

54 Q 208

55 Q 210

Prolonged periods of absence can disrupt much needed continuity in teaching.⁵⁶ **School leaders should ensure that anti-bullying policies do not overlook the bullying of teachers, either by students or by other staff and that incidents of bullying that involve staff are dealt with appropriately.**

Medium and Long-term effects of bullying

39. Surveys of young people consistently identify bullying as the issue that they are most concerned about. Barnardo's told us that

“In 2004, Barnardo's carried out consultations with young people asking them about the topic of emotional wellbeing and mental health. The key message that arose from the research was that young people saw bullying as the factor most harmful to their mental health.”⁵⁷

We are aware that bullying can, potentially, be very damaging to the children and young people involved. During the inquiry we wanted to explore what form this damage could take and how long the effects of bullying could last. Evidence on the effects of bullying suggested that it causes a number of problems ranging from general unhappiness, poor concentration, low-self esteem, psychosomatic symptoms and anxiety to depression, self-harm or suicide. The DfES said that there was evidence which showed “primary school children who were bullied were more likely to report disturbed sleep, bed-wetting, feeling sad, headaches and stomach aches.”⁵⁸

40. Written evidence from the DfES identifies targets in two of the five *Every Child Matters* outcomes that are related to bullying.⁵⁹ A joint target for the DWP and DfES in the ‘stay safe’ strand is a reduction in the percentage of 11–15-year-olds who say they have been bullied in the last 12 months. In the ‘make a positive contribution’ strand, the Home Office monitor the percentage of 10–19-year-olds who admit to a) bullying another pupil in the last 12 month and b) attacking, threatening or being rude due to skin colour, race or religion. A recent report on bullying states that this “categorisation is inevitably a simplification. Bullies and their victims do not sit in distinct categories in term of the adverse consequence they may experience. Bullying can affect children and young people’s potential to achieve all the outcomes.”⁶⁰

41. According to Beatbullying, 36% of all truants blame bullying. Beatbullying also note that there is a link between truancy and youth crime; 23% of young offenders sentenced in court have truanted to a significant degree and 45% of young people who have committed an offence have also truanted.⁶¹ The DfES states that truancy has a negative impact on

56 Ev 233

57 Ev 24

58 Ev 90

59 The five *Every Child Matters* outcomes are: Be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well being.

60 Office of the Children’s Commissioner *Bullying Today: A Report by the Office of the Children’s Commissioner, with Recommendations and Links to Practitioner Tools*, 2006, para 4.12.

61 Ev 205

future life chances⁶² while the British Association of Psychologists notes that links between poor attainment and self-reported victimisation by peers have been found at primary and secondary level.⁶³

42. Exclusion can also have a negative impact on the educational achievement and life chances of children and young people. We are concerned by the evidence that it is sometimes the victims of bullying who are excluded. Chris Gravell told the Committee that “schools unlawfully exclude children for so-called health and safety reasons if they are victims of bullying.”⁶⁴ Both Chris Gravell and Shobha Das reported that there were cases where bullying had not been tackled by the schools until the victim had retaliated and they had then been excluded. Chris Gravell reported that about 5% of the exclusion cases ACE deal with related to pupils having been excluded because they had retaliated against bullying.

43. We support the right of schools to use exclusion as a disciplinary sanction. However, we are concerned to hear that some schools are excluding the victims of bullying on health and safety grounds. Violence in retaliation against bullying is unacceptable and schools are right to discipline the perpetrators of violence. However, we would expect previous bullying to be taken into account when deciding on appropriate disciplinary measures. We urge the Department to issue new guidance to local authorities and schools, as a matter of urgency, covering not only when exclusions should be used, but also when they must not be used, for example, to prevent the victims of bullying from attending school.

44. We have heard evidence that pupils felt aggrieved that some forms of punishment—exclusion and isolation were in fact no real punishment at all. We have already acknowledged that support and mentoring need to be available to the perpetrators of bullying—as part of ‘rehabilitation’ but we would strongly agree with the views of pupils that punishment should indeed be a punishment and a deterrent to other would-be bullies.

45. We recommend that punishment regimes are reviewed to incorporate where permissible ‘pupil suggested’ punishments i.e. litter picking and school clean ups. This will bring pupils to the heart of the process and they will feel that they have had a real influence in the measures to tackle the issue. It also means that the pupils will have determined what they feel is a ‘fair punishment’ for these matters.

46. The majority of the evidence we have seen suggests the effects of bullying can last into adulthood. Barnardo’s notes that

“There is a great debate about the effect of resilience in young people for coping with bullying behaviour as it is widely understood that bullying affects some young people worse than others.”⁶⁵

62 Ev 90

63 Ev 150

64 Q135

65 Ev 24

The DfES suggest “bullying can continue to affect the individual long after the bullying has actually stopped. In some cases anxiety, insecurity, lack of trust and feelings of unhappiness persist long into adult life.”⁶⁶ Parents are also concerned about the long-term effects of bullying, with a Parentline survey finding 97.6% of parents believe that bullying had long term effects.⁶⁷

47. While bullying can have a lasting effect on the attainment and well-being of victims, during the inquiry we became increasingly concerned about the effect of bullying on the bullies themselves. The DfES told us:

“bullying behaviour learnt as a child can continue into adult life, particularly if such behaviour was not challenged during childhood or was an everyday part of the child’s upbringing [...] Adults who bullied other children during childhood can behave similarly towards other adults and children, particularly those in their immediate circle [...] Aggressive bullying behaviour has also been linked to anti- and asocial behaviour in adults. Some adults who were bullied during childhood can find it difficult to form functioning adult relationship. Others might see violence and aggressive behaviour as an acceptable part of adult life.”⁶⁸

48. Beatbullying suggests that there may be long-term effects on children who bully but caution that there is a lack of research in this area.⁶⁹ However, Professor Smith referred to UK and Norwegian studies that found a link between bullying and criminal convictions later in life. Written evidence from the British Psychological Society notes

“Not many studies have appeared on the effects of bullying on those who bully. A large study in Finland [...] found that children who bully are at an increased risk of depression, to the same extent as victims of bullying [...] Children who bully may be at a high risk of criminal convictions in later life: 25% of adults who had been identified by peers at age 8 as ‘bullies’ had criminal records, as opposed to 5% who had not been identified as such.”⁷⁰

Beatbullying stated that

“in our experience approximately 5–7% of young bullies are so unreachable—so out of control that any programme of prevention is doomed to failure. Many have significant mental health issues and anger management issues which need to be dealt with by mental health professionals and not in schools or the community.”⁷¹

49. We are concerned that there may be significant problems for individuals and the community generally if bullying behaviour which occurs in childhood is not tackled and changed. There also appears to be a lack of research on how bullying affects bullies. **We recommend the Department commissions research into the long-term effect of**

66 Ev 90

67 Ev 121

68 Ev 90

69 Ev 205

70 Ev 150

71 Ev 205

bullying on those who are bullied and those who bully and on effective ways of challenging bullying behaviour. Advice for schools, including on what services are available for those bullies whose behaviour cannot be dealt with in a school setting, should be made available. We urge local authorities to ensure schools have clear guidance on what services are available to work with this type of persistent bully and to ensure that young people in their area who are excluded as a result of bullying have continuing access to the support necessary to change their behaviour.

4 Current anti-bullying policy

50. The DfES currently provides some funding for anti-bullying work along with guidance for schools. There is no ring fenced funding at local authority or school level. Schools must have an anti-bullying policy and also have duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2002 to have an anti-racism policy and report racist incidents. The Children's Commissioner suggested that the Department's approach was not necessarily what children and young people wanted:

“Government has combined its tightening of the statutory framework and its varied support programmes with the clear and understandable message that bullies should always be punished. Children and young people, including victims of bullying, often favour problem-solving, mediated approaches.”⁷²

On the other hand, the Anti-Bullying Alliance suggests that a zero-tolerance approach is the correct approach to take.⁷³ The Department has, however, supported mediation approaches. During Anti-Bullying week 2006, the Department announced increased funding, from £200000 in 2006–07 to £480000 in 2007–08, for the ChildLine in Partnerships (CHIPS) programmes that trains peer mentors. The *Don't Suffer in Silence* pack for schools includes a variety of approaches that can be used as part of a school's anti-bullying programme.

Research

51. A general feeling among the witnesses the Committee spoke to was that bullying has been decreasing slowly. However, this assessment is not universally shared. A report from Barnsley Council's Children's Services Scrutiny Commission says that calls received by Childline about bullying have increased year on year since 2003. During focus group sessions that the Scrutiny Committee held with pupils, none felt that bullying was decreasing, some felt that it had plateaued and some felt that it was increasing.⁷⁴ However witnesses also mentioned the difficulty in commenting on general trends in bullying due to a lack of research.

52. Professor Smith told us:

“Given that we have been doing inspection work for 10–12 years one would expect there to be some impact, but we need a much better auditing base to find out what is happening both across different regions of the country and schools which try different approaches and over time, and for different types of bullying and harassment, including prejudice-based bullying.”⁷⁵

72 Ev 193

73 Ev 60

74 Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council *School Related Bullying in Barnsley*, 2006 p 20.

75 Q 204

David Moore of Ofsted said that while the Government does carry out some short term research this is not adequate on its own:

“One of the dilemmas for the Department for Education and Skills is that they do undertake research but it is always short-term research. To get to the heart of these issues, someone has to be prepared to say that they’re going to undertake a five-year study. Otherwise, you are just dipping in and getting a little snapshot. One could look at a longer term study that can feed back at different points but it is about someone being prepared to make that commitment to a long-term study.”⁷⁶

53. Professor Smith also told us

“I believe that the most useful piece of research would be detailed case studies of particular schools looking at the kinds and range of sanctions they use and in which circumstances they are used, trying to pin down in which circumstances certain kinds of approach work best, or do not work. That is an area where there is a lot of controversy, it is very important to know what a school’s reactive approach should be when it happens, and we need to know more about that.”⁷⁷

Recording incidents of bullying

54. The Committee heard from several witnesses that there is not a strong base for research because schools do not record bullying, even when there is a statutory duty to do so. There may be several reasons for this. One is that young people themselves are often reluctant to report bullying. In addition, anti-bullying programmes such as the No Blame method specifically state that records of incidents should not be kept. Schools may also be unwilling to record incidents because of the effect this will have on their reputation. A report from Barnsley Council’s Children’s Services Scrutiny Commission found that only 18% of Parent Governors and Governor Chairs felt that bullying was a problem in their schools compared with 64% of pupils. The report from Barnsley Scrutiny Commission also notes that

“One area of concern for the Commission was that some schools are reporting ‘Nil Returns’ for bullying. The Commission heard that it was difficult to tell whether schools were wanting to avoid getting a ‘bad reputation’ if they reported incidents of bullying.”⁷⁸

While there is a lack of comprehensive evidence about the extent of bullying, we feel it is unlikely that the majority of schools will have no incidents of bullying.

55. We believe that the lack of clear data on the extent of bullying hampers the development of effective anti-bullying policies. **The Department and local authorities should work towards creating a culture where schools are open about any bullying taking place within them. We recommend that all local authorities, in partnership with schools, develop a robust system for the collation, evaluation and reporting of bullying**

76 Q 9

77 Q 215

78 Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council *School Related Bullying in Barnsley*, 2006, p 24.

for the purpose of effectively improving the tackling and management of this issue across all schools in their area. We recommend that Ofsted regularly inspect the effectiveness of this process.

56. We are concerned that decisions on anti-bullying policy are being made with very little evidence to guide them. We urge the Government to commission a long-term study of a number of schools, looking at both general trends in bullying and also the effectiveness of different approaches in different circumstances.

Balance between national and local anti-bullying policy

57. Throughout the inquiry one of the issues we have addressed is how extensive national policy should be and how much flexibility should be given to local authorities, schools and teachers. We are aware that there are arguments on both sides. Professor Smith says that

“At present every school develops its own policy and framework for tackling bullying. The good feature of this is that they feel ownership of their policy, and it can be responsive to local conditions and issues. The bad side is that many policies can be poorly worded and inadequate (for example, omitting certain types of bullying such as homophobic bullying or cyber-bullying; being unclear about liaison with parents; being unclear about how incidents will be recorded; etc)⁷⁹

58. Given the complexity involved in defining bullying there are clear problems with a rigid national framework. On the issue of defining bullying, the Children’s Commissioner noted that

“However encompassing and generally satisfying the definition finally adopted, some of its key elements have margins of ambiguity that complicate implementation at practitioner level.”⁸⁰

Many of the witnesses said that a whole school ethos is one of the ways to prevent bullying and ensure that bullying behaviour is seen as unacceptable. We feel that a good anti-bullying policy developed by a school in conjunction with pupils, staff and parents is an important part of developing this ethos. School councils have the potential to make a contribution to this process.

59. However, we are concerned that there are schools where staff and senior management are unwilling or unable to deal with bullying. When talking about homophobic bullying Denys Robinson of EACH said that

“If a school is denying that they have a problem [...]the last thing they will do is spend part of their precious budget on getting in-service training about how to deal with gay and lesbian pupils”⁸¹

We believe that there is a similar risk in terms of anti-bullying policy. Where schools are not dealing effectively with bullying, either because they lack the ability or the inclination,

79 Ev 57

80 Ev 193

81 Q 37

they are unlikely to formulate an effective anti-bullying policy. We note that in 2003 only 67% had an anti-bullying policy that was separate from a more general behaviour policy.⁸² Pupils at some schools are therefore disadvantaged by the freedom schools have in this area.

60. We accept that there are significant advantages to schools being allowed to develop their own anti-bullying policy. However, the Department and local authorities should provide clear guidance on how to develop effective policies. This guidance should include information on the minimum standard expected for schools' policies and what should be included. The minimum standard should apply to all state funded schools, including those with a faith-based ethos.

82 Smith, P and Samara, M *Evaluation of the DfES Anti-Bullying Pack: RBX06-03*, April 2003.

5 Current anti-bullying practice

Current DfES Advice

61. We recognise that there has been a significant increase in the amount of anti-bullying work done by the Government since 1999. Written evidence from the DfES states that the department will provide around £1.4m in 2006–2007 as part of the anti-bullying strand of the Department’s Improving Behaviour and Attendance Programme. The Department has produced guidance for schools and has been working with a range of voluntary organisations, such as Childline, Stonewall and Beatbullying. The majority of schools surveyed in 2003 found that the DfES *Don’t Suffer in Silence* pack was effective.⁸³ The Government have also produced further advice targeting specific areas of bullying.

Effective anti-bullying programmes

62. There do seem to be some anti-bullying programmes that are more effective than others. However, claims about the effectiveness of particular anti-bullying programmes are not always accepted by other anti-bullying practitioners. We are aware of the controversy surrounding No Blame (or the Support Group method). While its proponents claim it is one of the most effective way to deal with bullying, others, including Kidscape, have criticised it. In oral evidence Michele Elliot stated that the system that No Blame is based on, developed by Anatole Pikas, ‘was bastardised [...] to the point that it became totally ineffective.’⁸⁴ At one stage No Blame was one of the anti-bullying programmes suggested by DfES guidance although it is no longer included with other anti-bullying programmes recommended by the DfES.

63. The Government have recently provided funding to expand the peer mentoring system established in some schools. The 2003 Ofsted report *Bullying: effective action in secondary schools* is positive about this approach but notes

“The use of peer mentoring is not without its problems. Where this method was effective, the agreed ways of working were clear. There was an understanding that peer mentoring is not a substitute for adult action but part of the school’s response to give immediate support while staff take matters further. Particular care is needed in the way the pupils involved are presented and present themselves to others if they are not to be the butt of hostile comments. Nevertheless, the strength of character of peer mentors met in the schools visited was impressive.”⁸⁵

The report also notes

“The effect of the ‘circle of friends’ on victims of bullying was significant. They felt less isolated and knew their peers would not remain passive if anyone intimidated or

83 Smith, P and Samara, M *Evaluation of the DfES Anti-Bullying Pack: RBX06-03*, April 2003.

84 Q 38

85 Ofsted *Bullying: effective action in secondary schools*, 2003, para 72.

troubled them. The friendship group broke down the isolation of the victims and helped them to belong.”⁸⁶

64. When asked about effective anti-bullying work witnesses tended to talk about the aspects of good anti-bullying work in general rather than specific programmes. Aspects of good work included substantial pupil involvement, good communication,⁸⁷ and a focus on both the individual and the whole school ethos.⁸⁸ Steve Sinnott, Secretary General of the NUT said that

“In my view what is effective is to ensure that the way it is dealt with meets the circumstances of the particular situation [...] I do not think there is one way to deal with that. I think you deal with it in terms of the circumstances and the context of the school’s policy.”⁸⁹

65. We believe that schools should have a range of methods they can use to tackle bullying. However, Beatbullying expressed concern about some options:

“There are [...] numerous resources, programmes and intervention models which are introduced into schools that have absolutely no proven track record of success or impact. Hundreds of thousands of pounds are paid to charities and limited companies by schools. Prevention models must be independently reviewed and analysed to ensure that the resource and intervention is rigorous, provides value for money and is proven to work.”⁹⁰

The DfES suggests that some attempts to change this at a national level are being made:

“As part of the awarded grants for the 2006–07 period we have asked external organisations to provide information on how they will evaluate their work for us to ensure they meet all agreed outcomes. This data will allow us to monitor the effectiveness of our relationships with external partners.”⁹¹

However, this will not affect schools directly.

66. We recommend that there should be research conducted to assess the effectiveness of anti-bullying programmes recommended by the DfES to ensure that schools, local authorities and the Department are using their budget effectively. We would expect this research to address the issue concerning which anti-bullying programmes are effective in different situations, and for guidance to schools to follow to help teachers choose the most appropriate method to use for individual cases.

86 Ofsted, *Bullying: effective action in secondary schools*, 2003, para 67.

87 Q 163

88 Ev 150

89 Q 202

90 Ev 205

91 Ev 90

Work carried out by the voluntary sector

67. The Government works with the voluntary sector in a number of ways, for example funding CHIPS [Childline in Partnerships] and Parentline Plus and working with Stonewall and Beatbullying on new guidance for schools. However the good practice developed by individual organisations is not always shared. Caroline Day, Barnardo's said that

“I believe there is some merit in having a mechanism to link up good practice so people talk about it more. As a voluntary organisation we often have pockets of practice that do not really get shared. Certainly, I think that it would be useful given the difference between the voluntary and educational aspects.”⁹²

We believe that existing organisations can carry out this work. Beatbullying told us that

“the Anti-Bullying Alliance should, with the guidance of the DfES, undertake a [...] review of primary purpose, its democratic structures, how excellent work and prevention models should be communicated to young people and professionals and how best member organisations can justify the hundreds of thousands of pounds of public money being spent.”⁹³

While the Committee has received no other evidence to suggest the ABA should review its primary purpose or structure the issue of how best to ensure best practice is made more widely known is important. **We recommend that the Anti-Bullying Alliance, together with the Department, consider how it can better promote good practice across all schools, local authorities and voluntary organisations involved in anti-bullying work. If necessary, the Department should provide additional resources to enable the ABA to spread good practice to schools and encourage robust discussion about the effectiveness of different anti-bullying programmes.**

Teacher training

68. One issue the Committee became increasingly concerned about during the inquiry was how bullying was addressed in teacher training, both initial teacher training (ITT) and continuing professional development (CPD). The DfES told us that

“Training to manage pupil behaviour figures prominently in programmes of initial teacher training.”⁹⁴

However, Professor Smith states that

“The limited research available suggests that many teachers and trainee teachers lack a good knowledge base about bullying and how to tackle it—but would welcome

92 Q164

93 Ev 205

94 Ev 90

such knowledge [...] teacher training in this area relies on in-service courses where provided, and the possibility of some short lecture or two during basic training”⁹⁵

69. We believe that is important to distinguish between general behaviour management training and anti-bullying training. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children, Young People and Families, Parmjit Dhanda stated that

“It is a part of initial teacher training, but we are actually putting in place a £1.1 million programme to further that, including getting teachers on that initial teacher training course.”⁹⁶

70. This appears to contradict other evidence we have taken. When asked during an evidence session about how much anti-bullying work is included in ITT Professor Smith replied “basically, at the moment there is nothing.”⁹⁷ This view was supported by Steve Sinnott.⁹⁸ Michele Elliot told us that students on initial teacher training courses would be pleased to have any anti-bullying training. She went on to say that

“There is one university [...] that I go to every Christmas [...] I speak to the teachers in training. We spend one half of one day speaking about bullying”⁹⁹

71. Witnesses were also critical of in-service training. Professor Smith said

“It may well be that there is some in-service training, and there is quite a lot of such training going on but it is rather haphazard. It is really a matter of chance whether one’s school or local authority provides that. I believe that many trainee teachers and those in place feel that they would benefit from that sort of training.”¹⁰⁰

Steve Sinnott told us that

“Specifically in relation to professional development and training of teachers in bullying, we believe that there needs to be separate and earmarked funding. If we say that the first priority is to have schools where youngsters feel safe then we think there should be separate funding for this.”¹⁰¹

When asked what priority this training should have, given that there are a number of pressures on CPD time Mr Sinnott told us “we say that it is the first priority.”¹⁰²

72. There may also be a problem with the content of the training courses that are available. Ofsted report that

95 Ev 57

96 Q 239

97 Q 184

98 Q 186

99 Q 8

100 Q 185

101 Q 188

102 Q 189

“Aspects of bullying that many staff in schools find difficult to approach are those concerned with race and sex. The training programmes did not always give enough attention to these aspects, perhaps on the assumption that they would be dealt with under training of another kind.”¹⁰³

73. We are concerned that there is insufficient focus in teacher training on bullying; especially given the negative impact bullying can have on the attainment and well being of children. It appears that the current behaviour management section of ITT does not contain sufficient training on how to tackle bullying. **We recommend that that all ITT courses include a clear focus on how to prevent and address bullying.** We also consider that current in-service training is too dependent on the leadership in schools. This means that teachers in schools where the head and senior managers are already committed to anti-bullying work are more likely to receive training than teachers in those schools where the senior management team do not view it as a priority. **We recommend that every school is expected to review its anti-bullying policy every three years and that this should include a review of the training needs of staff. We also urge local authorities to assess the content of courses to ensure staff receive sufficient training on how to deal with bullying related to SEN, race, gender and sexuality.**

The Curriculum

74. We believe that as part of a whole school ethos, the curriculum should support anti-bullying work. In their report Ofsted note that

“In the schools visited, the curriculum was planned so that pastoral sessions and subject lessons could contribute to raising pupils’ awareness and understanding of the need to combat bullying.”¹⁰⁴

Ofsted says that work in English, drama and personal, social and health education lessons could all be used to support anti-bullying work and also that

“The organisation of subject lessons can also make a practical difference, as observations showed. Teachers in these schools often provide good opportunities for pupils to work constructively with each other, developing team work through co-operative activities. Without necessarily being conscious of the effect, or being explicit about it, good teachers managed lessons well in order to stress the unacceptability of personal comments and ‘put-downs.’”¹⁰⁵

Save the Children notes that

“The current focus on both the SEAL [social and emotional aspects of learning] programme and citizenship education provided an idea tool for working with children around issues of culture and sexuality as well as empathy for other children.”¹⁰⁶

103 Ofsted, *Bullying: effective action in secondary schools*, 2003, para 35.

104 Ofsted *Bullying: effective action in secondary schools*, 2003, para 46.

105 Ofsted *Bullying: effective action in secondary schools*, 2003, para 48.

106 Ev 186

This is supported by the Children’s Commissioner:

“Feedback from schools using SEAL materials seems to have been positive in terms of its ability to generate empathic, pro-social attitude and prevent bullying, even though the weightiness of the material can be off-putting.”¹⁰⁷

75. Several witnesses agreed that citizenship education could help anti-bullying work in schools. Chris Gravell said that

“There is recent evidence from the programme run under UNICEF about rights education in schools that really does help. Anything that increases the reasons for mutual respect, as Sir Alan Steer called it, will help, and a rights-based citizenship programme will obviously be itself in that regard.”¹⁰⁸

However, while most evidence we have received is positive about the use of SEAL, citizenship and PSHE [personal, social and health education], written evidence from the Children’s Legal Centre suggests “it is still unclear whether the drive to increase tolerance through the teaching of PSHE and citizenship has had any positive impact.”¹⁰⁹

76. We recognise that anti-bullying work is likely to be more effective when it is supported by the curriculum. We accept that most of the evidence we have received about the effectiveness of SEAL [social and emotional aspects of learning], Citizenship and PSHE [personal, social and health education] is based on the impressions of practitioners rather than on hard evidence but this is, unfortunately, not unusual in the field of anti-bullying work.

77. We urge schools to review the use of the curriculum to support anti-bullying work and to monitor the effectiveness of this approach. Consideration should also be given to a higher profile for bullying in schools by inclusion in citizenship and PSHE lessons. These lessons should be available from an earlier age in all schools.

The School and Wider Community

78. Bullying can take place before and after school, during the journey to school and during lunchtime. Provisions in the Education and Inspections Act 2006 allow schools to take disciplinary action for behaviour which has occurred outside school. However Beatbullying suggest in that there is a limit to how much schools should be expected to do.¹¹⁰

79. All staff, not only teachers, need to be involved in implementing a school’s anti-bullying policy. There are also others who need to be engaged for anti-bullying work to be successful. Parents, governors and students all have a role to play in tackling bullying. The Minster for Schools stated that

“I think we need to certainly involve parents and ensure that parents have a good understanding of what the signs are that either their child is being bullied or is

107 Ev 193

108 Q 142

109 Ev 172

110 Ev 205

bullying. It is often quite difficult for a parent to accept that their child might be bullying, but we need them to be able to deal with that if it arises, but the wider community as well so that those places [...] where bullying might take place, we can try and tackle that in the wider community and make sure we are not giving a bad example to young people.”¹¹¹

80. We welcome the Government’s funding of Parentline Plus. In order to ensure that this resource is as effective as possible we urge the Government to ensure that schools promote it to parents. We also urge to Government to review what guidance or help is available to governors in relation to anti-bullying work. It is vital that governors, who are the first formal recourse parents have if they wish to complain about the way that school has dealt with an incident of bullying, understand and are engaged with the anti-bullying policy and practice of the school. We strongly believe that School Governing Bodies have a key role to play in effectively tackling bullying, and we urge that all Governing Bodies appoint a ‘champion’ to take responsibility for this issue, and that termly reports are made to the relevant Governing Body, setting out any incidents and actions taken. However we believe that where there is a clear ethos in a school which included respect for others and their right which is underpinned by the curriculum that this is a protective factor against bullying.

Complaints

81. Evidence we have received suggests that there are parents who feel that not only have schools failed to fulfil their expectations in relation to bullying but that the current complaints procedure has also failed them. The DfES recognise that

“Schools need to work effectively with parents. Failure to involve parents fully when dealing with bullying can lead to a breakdown in confidence and communication between the parent and the school.”¹¹²

Ofsted also note that “effective liaison with parents is vital to tackle bullying successfully.”¹¹³

82. The Advisory Centre for Education say that parents have three main requirements:

“(i) They want schools to have effective strategies in place to minimise bullying and to deal effectively with it when it occurs.

(ii) They want their concerns to be responded to by the school.

(iii) They want somewhere to go other than the school when the school has failed to deal with bullying and for the source of help to be able to intervene with the school on their child’s behalf to resolve the problem”¹¹⁴

111 Q 233

112 Ev 90

113 Ofsted, *Bullying: effective action in secondary schools*, 2003, para 61.

114 Ev 34

Case histories from ACE and a report from the Office of the Children’s Commissioner, *Bullying in Schools in England: A Review of the Current Complaints System and a Discussion of Options for Change* suggest that the current complaints procedure is a source of frustration for many parents.

83. At present parents who are unsatisfied with the way a school has dealt with bullying can complain to the Governors. If they are still dissatisfied they can continue with the complaints procedure and make a complaint to the local authority. A report from the Office of the Children’s Commissioner states that

“the normal response of the local authority is that the complaint related to a matter of internal discipline within the school and the local authority has no basis on which to intervene. A final complaint may be made to the Secretary of State for Education [...] if the complainant believes that the governing body or local authority has acted unreasonably or is failing to carry out its duties properly. However, to the best of the authors’ knowledge, and having asked the DfES, no such complaint has ever been upheld.”¹¹⁵

84. We feel that the lack of a robust complaints procedure increases the likelihood of children and young people being withdrawn from education, which could have serious consequences, both for the attainment of the child and for the parents. **We recommend that the Government work with the Office of the Children’s Commissioner, Parentline Plus, the Advisory Centre for Education and other organisations working in this area to establish the requirements necessary for a robust complaints procedure at school and local level. They should also develop a credible independent appeals procedure to help ensure that pupils and parents have confidence that their concerns are taken seriously.**

¹¹⁵ Office of the Children’s Commissioner, *Bullying in Schools in England: A Review of the Current Complaints System and a Discussion of Options for Change*, 2006, p 3–4.

6 Difficulties with delivering more effective anti-bullying programmes

85. We have concluded that two significant barriers to delivering more effective anti-bullying work are lack of long-term, detailed research and a lack of teacher training, both during ITT and as part of CPD. However, we are aware of other barriers to improving anti-bullying work. Without a doubt, effective school leadership is vital for the establishment of effective anti-bullying policies. Head teachers have a major role in facilitating in-service training for their staff. Heads should also take responsibility for recording incidents of bullying. The NUT argues that

“The school which condones bullying of pupils will almost always have a similar culture amongst its staff. A bullying culture pervades a school ethos and colours the experiences of staff and pupils.”¹¹⁶

86. While all members of a school have a role to play in ensuring there is an ethos within the school that says that bullying is unacceptable, head teachers and other senior managers must lead in this area, in the way they deal with staff, students and parents.

87. A report by the Office of the Children’s Commissioner suggests that there is also a problem with the way that some heads deal with complaints:

“In spite of the strong emphasis placed on the need to address bullying in schools, some Heads still respond to parents by rejecting the suggestion that there is any bullying in the schools.”¹¹⁷

The attitude and engagement of head teachers is vital to tackling bullying. However, it appears from our evidence that head teachers do not always have the knowledge or training to deal with these issues, particularly given the problems with teacher training which we have already discussed. We recommend that the Government, together with the National College for School Leadership, develops a programme for school leaders on how to tackle bullying and complaints about bullying.

Judging success

88. It can be difficult to judge the success of an anti-bullying programme. Reporting is not always a reliable indicator. As Barnardo’s told us,

“Once schools introduce anti-bullying policies they often witness an increase in the reporting of incidents, which at face value appears to indicate that bullying has increased as a result of the policy. In fact it is about creating a culture in which young

116 Ev 48

117 Office of the Children’s Commissioner *Bullying in Schools in England: A Review of the Current Complaints System and a Discussion of Options for Change*, 2006, p 6.

people feel safe to disclose. Once this is in place, bullying that has remained hidden for so long often begins to emerge.”¹¹⁸

Conversely, Michele Elliot suggested that reported incidents of bullying could decrease in schools where anti-bullying work was ineffective because students felt that reporting would make the situation worse.¹¹⁹

89. It is also unclear how much of a reduction in bullying would constitute a success and how much of a reduction in bullying it is reasonable to expect. Several witnesses, including the Minister for Schools, noted that the wider community has a role to play in reducing bullying. The National Association of Head Teachers states

“Bullying is an insidious social problem [...]. It is unrealistic to say that there will ever be a time when bullying within schools has been eradicated until and unless it is eradicated throughout society.”¹²⁰

While the wider issues of bullying beyond schools is beyond the scope of this inquiry, it is clear that bullying in the home, workplace or community is linked to bullying in schools. **We urge the Government to initiate an open and honest discussion about how to judge the success of anti-bullying work. We consider that expecting anti-bullying work to completely eradicate bullying is unrealistic. We believe it would be more helpful for the Government to foster a culture where schools are encouraged to be open about incidents of bullying, have effective ways of dealing with bullying when it occurs and provide support the victims of bullying, rather than a culture where schools feel reporting incidents of bullying will damage their reputation.**

118 Ev 24

119 Q 38

120 Ev 145

Conclusions and recommendations

Defining and Identifying bullying

1. We welcome the current DfES guidance to schools, that they should involve the entire school community in agreeing a definition of bullying. We recommend that additional guidance is given to schools on how to ensure difficult issues, such as the use of homophobic language and more subtle forms of bullying are included in this process. (Paragraph 17)
2. All schools should ensure that parents, pupils and staff are aware of the agreed definition. Teachers, other staff, pupils and parents should all be aware of how the definition affects their own behaviour and what is expected of them. Schools should review their policy and reported incidents regularly and use this as an opportunity to achieve consistency in reporting and responding to incidents of bullying and to develop teachers' skills in tackling them. (Paragraph 18)
3. We would recommend that schools target their attention on key times and locations where bullying is more prevalent. (Paragraph 19)

Cyber-bullying

4. Given that it is more common for cyber-bullying to take place outside schools we urge the Department when it produces guidance to ensure that it includes guidance for parents and pupils as well as for schools. (Paragraph 23)

Prejudice-driven bullying

5. The focus of any anti-bullying work should be tackling bullying behaviour and making it clear that such behaviour is not acceptable. (Paragraph 32)
6. We have, through the course of the inquiry, become convinced that a lack of accurate reliable data on bullying is one barrier to more effective anti-bullying work. We recommend that the Department introduces a requirement for schools to record all incidents of bullying along with information about the type of bullying incident. (Paragraph 33)
7. We believe the DfES should commission new research on SEN related bullying and its impact leading to guidance for schools. (Paragraph 35)
8. Unless specific kinds of bullying are explicitly included in anti-bullying policies, we believe there is a danger that they will not be adequately addressed. We urge the Department to ensure their guidance to schools makes clear that the focus of anti-bullying work should be on changing bullying behaviour rather than on how victims can change their own behaviour. As a result of the evidence we have taken, we believe the Department should require schools' anti-bullying policies to specifically mention disability-related, race-related, faith-based and homophobic bullying. Schools should ensure staff feel confident in dealing with prejudice-driven bullying and are consistent in their approach. (Paragraph 36)

Bullying of Teachers

9. School leaders should ensure that anti-bullying policies do not overlook the bullying of teachers, either by students or by other staff and that incidents of bullying that involve staff are dealt with appropriately. (Paragraph 38)

Medium and Long-term effects of bullying

10. We support the right of schools to use exclusion as a disciplinary sanction. However, we are concerned to hear that some schools are excluding the victims of bullying on health and safety grounds. Violence in retaliation against bullying is unacceptable and schools are right to discipline the perpetrators of violence. However, we would expect previous bullying to be taken into account when deciding on appropriate disciplinary measures. We urge the Department to issue new guidance to local authorities and schools, as a matter of urgency, covering not only when exclusions should be used, but also when they must not be used, for example, to prevent the victims of bullying from attending school. (Paragraph 43)
11. We recommend that punishment regimes are reviewed to incorporate where permissible 'pupil suggested' punishments i.e. litter picking and school clean ups. This will bring pupils to the heart of the process and they will feel that they have had a real influence in the measures to tackle the issue. It also means that the pupils will have determined what they feel is a 'fair punishment' for these matters. (Paragraph 45)
12. We recommend the Department commission research into the long-term effect of bullying on those who are bullied and those who bully and effective ways of challenging bullying behaviour. Advice for schools, including on what services are available for those bullies whose behaviour cannot be dealt with in a school setting, should be made available. We urge local authorities to ensure schools have clear guidance on what services are available to work with this type of persistent bully and to ensure that young people in their area who are excluded as a result of bullying have continuing access to the support necessary to change their behaviour. (Paragraph 49)

Recording incidents of bullying

13. The Department and local authorities should work towards creating a culture where schools are open about any bullying taking place within them. We recommend that all local authorities, in partnership with schools, develop a robust system for the collation, evaluation and reporting of bullying for the purpose of effectively improving the tackling and management of this issue across all schools in their area. We recommend that Ofsted regularly inspect the effectiveness of this process. (Paragraph 55)
14. We are concerned that decisions on anti-bullying policy are being made with very little evidence to guide them. We urge the Government to commission a long-term study of a number of schools, looking at both general trends in bullying and also the effectiveness of different approaches in different circumstances. (Paragraph 56)

Balance between national and local anti-bullying policy

15. We accept that there are significant advantages to schools being allowed to develop their own anti-bullying policy. However, the Department and local authorities should provide clear guidance on how to develop effective policies. This guidance should include information on the minimum standard expected for schools' policies and what should be included. The minimum standard should apply to all state funded schools, including those with a faith-based ethos. (Paragraph 60)

Effective anti-bullying programmes

16. We recommend that there should be research conducted to assess the effectiveness of anti-bullying programmes recommended by the DfES to ensure that schools, local authorities and the Department are using their budget effectively. We would expect this research to address the issue concerning which anti-bullying programmes are effective in different situations, and for guidance to schools to follow to help teachers choose the most appropriate method to use for individual cases. (Paragraph 66)

Work carried out by the voluntary sector

17. We recommend that the Anti-Bullying Alliance, together with the Department, consider how it can better promote good practice across all schools, local authorities and voluntary organisations involved in anti-bullying work. If necessary, the Department should provide additional resources to enable the ABA to spread good practice to schools and encourage robust discussion about the effectiveness of different anti-bullying programmes. (Paragraph 67)

Teacher training

18. We are concerned that there is insufficient focus in teacher training on bullying. We recommend that that all ITT courses include a clear focus on how to prevent and address bullying. (Paragraph 73)
19. We recommend that every school is expected to review its anti-bullying policy every three years and that this should include a review of the training needs of staff. We also urge local authorities to assess the content of courses to ensure staff receive sufficient training on how to deal with bullying related to SEN, race, gender and sexuality. (Paragraph 73)

The Curriculum

20. We urge schools to review the use of the curriculum to support anti-bullying work and to monitor the effectiveness of this approach. Consideration should also be given to a higher profile for bullying in schools by inclusion in citizenship and PSHE lessons. These lessons should be available from an earlier age in all schools. (Paragraph 77)

The School and Wider Community

21. We welcome the Government's funding of Parentline Plus. In order to ensure that this resource is as effective as possible we urge the Government to ensure that schools promote it to parents. We also urge to Government to review what guidance or help is available to governors in relation to anti-bullying work. It is vital that governors, who are the first formal recourse parents have if they wish to complain about the way that school has dealt with an incident of bullying, understand and are engaged with the anti-bullying policy and practice of the school. We strongly believe that School Governing Bodies have a key role to play in effectively tackling bullying, and we urge that all Governing Bodies appoint a 'champion' to take responsibility for this issue, and that termly reports are made to the relevant Governing Body, setting out any incidents and actions taken. However we believe that where there is a clear ethos in a school which included respect for others and their right which is underpinned by the curriculum that this is a protective factor against bullying. (Paragraph 80)

Complaints

22. We recommend that the Government work with the Office of the Children's Commissioner, Parentline Plus, the Advisory Centre for Education and other organisations working in this area to establish the requirements necessary for a robust complaints procedure at school and local level. They should also develop a credible independent appeals procedure to help ensure that pupils and parents have confidence that their concerns are taken seriously. (Paragraph 84)

Difficulties with delivering more effective anti-bullying programmes

23. The attitude and engagement of headteachers is vital to tackling bullying. However, it appears from our evidence that headteachers do not always have the knowledge or training to deal with these issues, particularly given the problems with teacher training which we have already discussed. We recommend that the Government, together with the National College for School Leadership, develops a programme for school leaders on how to tackle bullying and complaints about bullying. (Paragraph 88)

Judging success

24. We urge the Government to initiate an open and honest discussion about how to judge the success of anti-bullying work. We consider that expecting anti-bullying work to completely eradicate bullying is unrealistic. We believe it would be more helpful for the Government to foster a culture where schools are encouraged to be open about incidents of bullying, have effective ways of dealing with bullying when it occurs and provide support the victims of bullying, rather than a culture where schools feel reporting incidents of bullying will damage their reputation. (Paragraph 90)

Formal Minutes

5 March 2007

Members present:

Mr Barry Sheerman, in the Chair

Jeff Ennis
Paul Holmes
Fiona Mactaggart

Mr Gordon Marsden
Stephen Williams
Mr Rob Wilson

Bullying

The Committee considered this matter.

Draft Report, proposed by the Chairman, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the Chairman's draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 89 read and agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Third Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chairman make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

Ordered, That memoranda be appended to the Report.

Ordered, That the memoranda appended to the Report be reported to the House.

[Adjourned till Wednesday 7 March at 9.15 am

Witnesses

Wednesday 10 May 2006

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Mr David Moore, Ofsted, **Ms Michele Elliot**, Director, Kidscape, and **Mr Denys**

Ev 4

Robinson, Chair of Trustees, Educational Action Challenging Homophobia (EACH)

Mr John D'Abbro, Head teacher, New Rush Hall School, Redbridge, and **Mrs**

Ev 13

Deborah Duncan, Head teacher, Horbury School, Wakefield

Wednesday 22 November 2006

Ms Caroline Day, Researcher, Barnardo's, **Mr Benet Middleton**, Director of

Ev 39

Communications and Public Affairs, National Autistic Society, **Dr Shobha Das**,

Deputy Director, Support Against Racist Incidents (SARI), and **Ms Chris Gravell**,

Policy Officer, Advisory Centre for Education

Mr Steve Sinnott, General Secretary, National Union of Teachers (NUT), and

Ev 70

Professor Peter K Smith, Head of the Unit for School and Family Studies, Goldsmith

College, and Head of the Research and Advisory Group, Anti-Bullying Alliance

Wednesday 24 January 2007

Jim Knight, a Member of the House, Minister of State for Schools and 14–19

Ev 111

Learners, and **Mr Parmjit Dhanda**, a Member of the House, Parliamentary Under-

Secretary of State for Children, Young People and Families, Department for Education

and Skills (DfES)

List of written evidence

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3	The National Autistic Society	Ev 29
4	The Advisory Centre for Education (ACE)	Ev 34
5	National Union of Teachers (NUT)	Ev 48
6	Professor Peter K Smith, Goldsmith's University, London	Ev 57
7	Anti-Bullying Alliance	Ev 60: Ev 79
8	Department for Education and Skills (DfES)	Ev 90: Ev 115
9	Schools OUT	Ev 117
10	General Teaching Council (GTC)	Ev 118
11	Parentline Plus	Ev 121
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13	The Support Group Method	Ev 132
14	Mencap	Ev 136
15	Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF)	Ev 138
16	Sian Laing	Ev 144
17	National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT)	Ev 145
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19	The British Psychological Society	Ev 150
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21	Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL)	Ev 163
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23	The Children's Legal Centre	Ev 172
24	Luke Roberts, Lambeth Children and Young Peoples' Service	Ev 174
25	The Children's Society	Ev 181
26	Save the Children	Ev 186
27	Stonewall	Ev 189
28	Office of the Children's Commissioner	Ev 193
29	beatbullying	Ev 205
30	YWCA	Ev 232
31	Teacher Support Network	Ev 233
32	Response Newcastle Action Against Bullying	Ev 240

List of unprinted written evidence

Additional papers have been received from the following and have been reported to the House but to save printing costs they have not been printed and copies have been placed in the House of Commons Library where they may be inspected by Members. Other copies are in the Record Office, House of Lords and are available to the public for inspection. Requests for inspection should be addressed to the Record Office, House of Lords, London SW1. (Tel 020 7219 3074). Hours of inspection are from 9:30am to 5:00pm on Mondays to Fridays.

Michele Elliot, Kidscape

Mark Cull, Hove YMCA—Youth Advice Centre

Reports from the Education and Skills Committee, Session 2006–07

First Special Report	Government's Response to the Committee's Fifth Report (Public Expenditure) of Session 2005–06	HC 211
First Report	The Work of the Committee in 2005–06	HC 301
Second Report	Citizenship Education	HC 147

Oral evidence

Taken before the Education and Skills Committee

on Wednesday 10 May 2006

Members present:

Mr Barry Sheerman, in the Chair

Mr Douglas Carswell
Mr David Chaytor
Jeff Ennis

Helen Jones
Mr Gordon Marsden
Stephen Williams

Memorandum submitted by Educational Action Challenging Homophobia (EACH)

1. Homophobic bullying in schools is a behaviour issue which has very serious effects on a minority of pupils. It frequently results in those bullied failing to achieve their full potential at school, or to their truancy, self-harm and in some cases, suicide. Such victims may or may not actually be growing up gay or lesbian—they may merely be thought to be so by their fellow pupils.

2. When EACH goes into a school to provide training to the whole staff, or to those responsible for personal, social and health education [PSHE], we stress that homophobic bullying is an issue for the whole school, not just for a victimised minority. It is not a matter of “political correctness”. It is an issue about pupil achievement, pupil behaviour and the right of parents to feel confident that their child will be safe in school.

3. A school where homophobic bullying is permitted to continue unchallenged is a school which is not safe for all its pupils, and where boys in particular usually feel the need to appear “macho” and are not likely to feel comfortable about being open about their emotions. Displays of threatening or violent behaviour are not uncommon, and this will not infrequently go hand in hand with an attitude that schoolwork is “uncool”.

4. Many schools are simply in denial about the problem. Head teachers will say airily that they are unaware of any gay or lesbian pupils in their school. Yet in a DFES survey (2002) 82% of teachers surveyed said they were aware of verbal incidents and 26% said they were aware of physical incidents of homophobic bullying. Almost certainly a school with such a headteacher is a place where such pupils feel unsafe about “coming out”. The word “gay” is likely to be readily used by pupils as a common insult or disparaging comment, and this can too often go unchallenged by staff.

5. Yet the likelihood is that a quite significant proportion of the school roll will be affected by homophobic bullying. In my own experience of 30 years’ teaching in both maintained and independent schools, day and boarding, single-sex and mixed, I would expect to be aware of one or two pupils in each form group of 25–30 pupils who appear to be growing up gay or lesbian. In a five-stream entry 11–18 comprehensive, this represents some 50–70 pupils.

6. It will readily be seen that if most of those pupils are under-achieving because of the pressure of homophobic bullying, this is having quite a serious effect on that school’s performance in SATs, at GCSE and at A-level. It may well also be affecting attendance and truancy rates.

7. It should also be borne in mind that the bullies themselves are not happy people. Not infrequently they are, whether consciously or not, uneasy about their own sexuality—boys wanting to show they are “tough”, girls wanting to commit to a friendship group by excluding a girl who can be picked on for being too “boyish”. Again, such pupils are on the whole unlikely to be doing very well at school.

8. Homophobic bullying can take many forms. Most commonly it is verbal abuse, in which a string of insulting words, jokes and anecdotes are levelled at the “target” pupil. One victim told me “I was never able to set off down a corridor at that school without expecting someone to say something unpleasant to me.” To have this kind of abuse over several years at school can have appalling long-term effects on self-esteem. Even where the target of such abuse appears to have coped with the difficulty and survived, it is not unknown for them to develop severe depression in early adulthood and to take their own lives.

9. Teachers not infrequently respond in exasperation when confronted with a pupil who has been “outed”—“Why can’t you just keep your head down? Why do you have to keep drawing attention to yourself? Be normal like the others!” Quite apart from the insulting subtext here that the pupil is being asked to be other than him or herself, and that actually most of the time the pupil wishes s/he were invisible, that advice when it is taken too often leads to burying and internalising the problem with the tragic results described earlier.

10. Not infrequently, verbal abuse can turn to physical attack. Schoolwork is defaced, clothing ruined, and victims are set upon (sometimes by several pupils) and beaten up.

We received a report about a 14-year old girl who, after disclosing to a friend she might be a lesbian, is now forced to sit outside the changing rooms before and after sports lessons until the “normal” children have changed. Another recent report was of a 16-year old in west London recently who, after years of being beaten up for being gay, is now provided with a security guard to accompany him to and from school.

11. In its training, EACH draws attention to the characteristic isolation of pupils who are the targets of homophobic bullying. The old joke “Why is it better to be black than gay?”—“You don’t have to tell your mother you’re black” is highly pertinent. A 14-year old who is beginning to realise he is gay may know very well that he cannot possibly confide this to his parents. He may know of no teacher in whom he would have sufficient confidence to “come out”. To tell his friends is extremely hazardous—many a pupil has made themselves a target for the whole peer group by sharing this “secret”.

12. It is also quite difficult to lead the life of an ordinary teenager in these circumstances. “Ordinary” teenagers go to discos and parties and “go out with” people of the opposite sex. Gay and lesbian teenagers either pretend to feelings they don’t have—which can lead to all kinds of complications, or hide themselves away and don’t have a social life. Especially in rural shire counties it is unusual for them to have access to a LGB social group where they can unwind in congenial and safe surroundings.

13. To be under such pressure at a young age when you yourself are learning to cope with unfamiliar and perhaps unwelcome feelings is often intolerably difficult if you have to cope alone.

14. Other agencies through surveys have indicated that pupils who come out or are “outed” to their parents all too frequently meet with a hostile or at best confused and traumatised reaction. Some are verbally and physically abused, told they are “unnatural” and that their sexuality is unacceptable. There are those who find themselves out on the street and homeless within the hour. EACH warmly welcomed a DfES decision that teachers were no longer required to notify parents that their child had “come out” to them if they had reason to believe that that pupil’s mental or physical well-being might be put at risk by such a communication. Some times it is wiser to wait until the young person is capable of living independently before the disclosure is made.

15. EACH is strongly aware that teachers and other school staff may also be isolated and under pressure because they are gay or lesbian. Not all school staffrooms are comfortable places to be “out”, and many gay and lesbian teachers fear that if identified they may lose standing, influence or promotion opportunities. Pupils are not the only people in schools to be the targets of homophobic bullying.

16. This carries the clear implication that some staff in schools are themselves guilty of homophobic bullying. EACH has received many reports from pupils of insulting remarks made by teachers to individual pupils sometimes in front of their whole class. “Straight” pupils take their cue from such public abuse—clearly homophobic attitudes are acceptable in this school.

17. A games teacher lambasting his soccer team at half time by saying “You played like a lot of poufs” may well not realise that one of his players is gay, and finds the comment really offensive. Yet he would not have dreamt of using the word “nigger” in front of pupils. One cannot help thinking that the deputy head who called out to a sixth-former in a crowded lobby where a group were setting up a Christmas tree “Adam, shouldn’t you be on the top of the tree?” was not so forgivably unaware.

18. A school which is creating an ethos of inclusiveness will certainly be a school where members of staff at the very least are comfortable with colleagues who are gay or lesbian, and where, for example, there would be no problem with a staff member bringing along a same sex partner to a staff party.

19. It should not be assumed that homophobic bullying is purely a secondary school phenomenon. Young children of primary school age readily pick up the verbal insults and “bad words” that they hear older children using, and “gay” is quite a common playground insult in many primary schools. EACH does not believe that it is appropriate to engage children of primary age in teaching about sexual acts—however, they can perfectly well be led by teachers to understand that people of the same sex sometimes have loving relationships. It is by no means unknown these days for a child in school to have “two mummies” or for a young child to be aware that an older brother or sister is gay. Certainly primary school teachers should challenge inappropriate language.

20. EACH believes that homophobic bullying will be most successfully challenged where there is leadership from the very top. This starts with central Government. The repeal of Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988 has been a highly important step. Far too many headteachers and teachers have hidden cravenly behind what were supposed to be the provisions of this legislation, which in fact never prevented teaching about homosexuality, let alone preventing teachers punishing homophobic bullying.

21. Though we are emphatically not a campaigning organisation, EACH believes that a new section in the Education Bill currently going through Parliament imposing a specific duty on governors and headteachers to safeguard the well-being of gay and lesbian pupils would send an important and welcome signal to all schools.

22. The Department for Education and Skills has made some welcome forward steps, especially with the publication of the document *Stand Up For Us*—challenging homophobia in schools (2004) to which EACH contributed, and which EACH would warmly commend to the Committee’s attention. It contains both valuable statistical evidence and a range of strategies that can be used in schools. EACH is currently participating in developing new guidance to schools around these issues.

23. However, we feel strongly that no document, however well conceived, is a substitute for face-to-face in-service training where problems and ideas can be exchanged and developed. No two schools are quite the same, and the particular mix of people in a school staff room or management team will need to confront their own situation in their own way. Schools with a specific religious ethos, for example, will have special training needs.

24. Although EACH is a registered charity, we are very limited in the training work we can provide free to schools and colleges. It is normal for us to charge fees and travelling expenses. Since this funding has to come from schools' in-service training budgets, it can easily be seen that homophobic bullying is not likely to be prioritised as a topic for in-service training by those headteachers who are in denial about the problem or are themselves homophobic. They head the schools that are likely to be most in need of such training.

25. Accordingly, it would be a great step forward if the DfES would either host themselves (or provide ring-fenced funding to LEAs to host) in-service training days around homophobic bullying and relationships education. If this training could be provided (ideally for PSHE coordinators in each school) free at the point of use, take up would undoubtedly be greatly increased. EACH has suggested that the DfES pilot such training in two specimen LEAs (perhaps one inner city and one rural shire county) but so far there have been no initiatives in this area.

26. The requirement for Ofsted [their framework from September 2005] to report how a school is promoting five outcomes including pupils "being physically and mentally healthy", "staying safe, and being protected from harm and neglect", provides a ready made opportunity for inspectors to evaluate how schools are confronting homophobic bullying. If schools are aware of Ofsted's interest in this area, that will be an important lever to improvement.

27. A local education authority can give an important lead to its schools by promoting authority-wide in-service training—perhaps by gathering together all the PSHE co-ordinators for their secondary schools. The LEA is sending a valuable signal that it attaches importance to this issue, expects them to address it, and is prepared to help them to do so.

28. Similarly, at the level of the individual school, leadership must come from the top. The headteacher needs to get the majority of the governing body on board for addressing homophobic bullying. This can be challenging, but if this issue is presented as a matter of pupil safety, it will in the end be a brave governor who will actually defends bullying.

29. The headteacher then needs to convince and enthuse the senior management team of the importance of the issue—again not from a "bleeding heart liberal" or "politically correct" perspective—but as an issue of improving pupil achievement and ensuring that all pupils are safe at school.

30. EACH would strongly recommend that school behaviour policies are developed by the whole staff working together with the whole pupil body—perhaps in tutor groups in PSHE sessions. Schools are required to have anti-bullying policies. Alarming few however make specific mention of homophobic bullying as such or statements of inclusivity that make it explicit that gay and lesbian people are welcome and valued at the school. Pupils can be actively involved in discussions which lead to whole school behaviour policies being agreed—policies for which the pupils feel some genuine ownership.

31. It is a huge step forward when every pupil is aware of where their school stands on the issue of homophobic bullying and that gay and lesbian people are not going to be disparaged any more than people from ethnic minorities. In disputes whether public or private, such agreed statements provide a vital point of reference.

32. Good practice will vary from situation to situation, but EACH was impressed to be told of a system developed in some German schools and tried here where the pupils themselves elect "Teachers of Trust". In Germany these teachers are then legally empowered to act as counsellors and listen to pupils maintaining complete confidentiality if in their judgement this is appropriate.

33. This system (or something like it) in every school would be a great benefit to those pupils who feel so isolated because they are being picked on as gay or lesbian and very badly need to talk to a responsible adult. However, it is simply a fact of life that all too often a pupil under this kind of stress will turn to a particular staff member they happen to see as sympathetic and friendly.

34. For this reason, EACH believes strongly that every staff member should have some training in how to handle a situation where a pupil "comes out" to them. It is a very challenging situation for a teacher who has perhaps little personal knowledge of gay people or their needs and concerns. To respond inappropriately could be disastrous.

35. We would also welcome the use of pupil mentors and "bully buddies" (strangely, sometimes the bullies themselves can be recruited and "turned round" with appropriate training). Obviously there is a need here for effective staff support and oversight.

36. Lessons about "homosexuality" are, in our view, to be avoided—though, as has been said above, sessions where school rules or behaviour policy are being debated can be useful opportunities to ventilate both attitudes and information.

37. Rather, we would recommend that in much the same way that the achievements and history of black people have been increasingly drawn into the curriculum, it should become ordinary and uncontroversial for teachers to mention in lessons that (for example) distinguished writers, musicians, actors, statesmen, sporting and film stars, war heroes have been or are gay or lesbian, or to mention where relevant but without comment their same sex partners. Gay young people have told EACH that this can be remarkably reassuring and important for their self-esteem—like all young people they need role models.

38. There are hazards in this area in school life which need to be addressed pro-actively by senior management. Where contract buses are used (common in rural areas) to get pupils to and from school, arrangements should be made for them to be supervised—perhaps by senior pupils. Bullying can often take place on school buses, and victims may not have any viable travel alternative. School discos can be a flashpoint for homophobia—will the school permit boys who have become partners to behave in the same way they allow boy-girl couples? The very genuine discomfort “straight” boys feel when undressing or showering along with a known gay pupil does need to be taken into account—and perhaps some schools need to be a little more considerate of the need for personal privacy in this area for all their pupils.

39. We would not wish to prescribe solutions for these or other situations—what we do recommend is that school managements give them active consideration and do not just allow matters to drift. Pupils deserve better.

40. Unsurprisingly, improving the situation in the schools of England and Wales about homophobia is down to good school leadership which promotes working with all those involved in the school community to get them to accept that all pupils should be included and treated with respect. Schools need leadership that agrees and sets firm rules on this and sticks by them.

41. No-one would pretend that we have won the battle with racism in school. However it is normal now in the vast majority of schools for every pupil to understand that racism is regarded by the school as unacceptable. The need is urgently to work towards a situation where it is clear to all pupils that homophobia and homophobic bullying of all kinds are regarded as equally unacceptable.

May 2006

Witnesses: Mr David Moore, Ofsted, Ms Michele Elliot, Director, Kidscape, and Mr Denys Robinson, Chair of Trustees, Education Action Challenging Homophobia (EACH), gave evidence.

Q1 Chairman: Welcome to our witnesses, David Moore, Michele Elliot and Denys Robinson, on this auspicious day. I have just heard from Australia that Britain has won the bid to host the Skills Olympics in 2011. Many of us have been working for that. We have beaten Australia, Paris (France) dropped out, and we have beaten Sweden. It is going to be rather exciting, and so what a good day to have a session of the committee as we cover education and skills. Today we are going to talk about bullying. I will ask David, Michele and Denys if they want to say anything about bullying to get us started, or we can go straight into questions.

Ms Elliot: Kidscape has been dealing with this problem since 1984. There are two or three very important matters. The reason people are bullied is because the bully has a problem and the bully looks for something to bully somebody about. We run courses for children who have been severely bullied, 50% of whom have attempted suicide. These children come from nice families; they have not done anything to deserve the bullying; they are usually quite intelligent, gentle and sensitive. There is no one particular way to stamp out bullying but many ways. What we have found has worked and the best way is to have a good head teacher. When the head sets the actual ethos of the school, things go well from there. That has been our experience for the past 21 years. We have a list of excellent schools out there doing fantastic work. I will give you one example where it does not work. A 15-year-old girl was stripped to her waist in a school playground, photographs were circulated. She attempted suicide and when the

mother, grandmother and father went in to talk to the headmaster, his comment was, and I quote, “It was a bit of horseplay”. That is not what we need.

Mr Moore: Since Ofsted was established 10 years ago, we have always commented in our reports on issues of bullying. Under the new Section 5 arrangements, while there is no specific requirement for inspectors to comment on bullying within the text, they do have to record a response to a judgment statement that action is being taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism. In practice, most inspectors do make a comment on bullying if it is judged to be an issue. Schools are expected in this self-evaluation form to say what strategies and policies they have to improve behaviour. This is pursued by inspectors during the course of the inspections through discussions with staff, interviews taking place with groups of pupils, normally by year group or with the school council, and with ordinary pupils in lessons. One of the questions that is frequently asked, and it is something which has to be asked to all, is: what happens if you are bullied? That way the child starts to tell you what actions they would take if they believed they were being bullied or they believed someone else was being bullied, which then confirms whether in fact the systems at the school are as they say that they are. Under our new arrangements, the inspection regime gives shorter notice. At one time, there used to be parents’ meetings and the one question that had to be asked in those parents’ meetings was: what happens if your child is bullied? Invariably, some parents

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would say, "My child was bullied and nothing happened". In those meetings, other parents would say, "That is not true because when it happened to our son/daughter, we contacted the school and this is what happened". One thing one has to recognise where parents are concerned in issues of bullying is that they are extremely upset and angry; they feel powerless to support their child. We give them the opportunity, through a questionnaire, to respond to a whole series of questions. One of those is about their child feeling safe in school and how well they perceive the behaviour in the school to be. Parents then use that form to make comments. Some of them write on the back of the sheet. When the reporting inspector draws the evidence from the questionnaire, all those where there is writing on the back or an additional letter are set aside and an analysis is done. If people raise issues about bullying or behaviour, that is then pursued by the inspectors, again during the course of the inspection, although they cannot comment on specific individual cases. They are looking at the systems to ensure that these things do not happen. In addition to that, we also carry out specific work in terms of reports. I believe that you have been given a copy of our last inspection report, which was *Bullying: effective action in secondary schools*. That is now two years old. That has led to a number of things being pursued by the Department for Education and Skills, namely the work that they have just put on to the website to look at incidents of racist bullying and how that should be tackled. They have now formed a group, on the basis of part of our report, that is starting to look at the impact of homophobic bullying and what advice can be given to schools to counter that.

Mr Robinson: I have been asked to present evidence specifically about homophobic bullying. As our organisation, EACH, provides training and support to teachers and other education professionals, I think we are in a good position to do that. Could I make three, fairly brief points? The first thing I would say is that it is quite important, and we always say this when we provide training in schools, that this is a whole school issue; it is certainly not about political correctness, and it certainly should be seen in the sense of whole school attainment, whether or not each child can fulfil their personal best. If, on a daily basis, you are being insulted and humiliated, having your coursework vandalised or your clothing ruined, or indeed frightened to walk home because you might be set on and beaten up, you are not likely to do well in your SATs, GCSE or A level. In many schools there are enough of such pupils for this to be significantly impacting on the school's exam results, attendance figures and truancy rates. The second point is that what is perhaps unique about homophobic bullying is the degree of isolation of the victims. If you are being bullied because you are black or disabled or ugly, or whatever it may be, your parent knows and is likely to be supportive. Your teachers are likely to be supportive. If you are being picked on because you are thought to be gay or lesbian, it is very likely

that you cannot go home and say this. Indeed, many kids that do that find themselves out on the street and homeless within the hour. This is a real fear that many pupils have. It is never particularly clear to them exactly which teacher they might confide in. It is always going to be an extremely difficult business for any professional teacher when suddenly faced with a pupil who wants to come "out" to them. If they have no previous experience of dealing with a gay or lesbian person to their knowledge, then they are in a very difficult situation, but their reaction of course is absolutely critical to the future health of that pupil. I would stress isolation and we have to think about strategies on what might be done about that. In terms of ways forward, our basic rule of thumb would be that we need leadership from the top, and in many ways I absolutely support what Michele Elliot has said about good leadership in schools. I think we also need leadership from central government. We have had that to a very reasonable extent. The DfES has produced very good written guidance which has gone into school that it is revising. However, I have to say that we strongly believe there is no substitute for face-to-face professional in-service training and that Government should be sponsoring this. Likewise, at local authority level, leadership there could make it clear to schools that this is an attainment wellbeing issue that the LEA rates highly. Bristol, for example, has chosen to pay for in-service training to each of its secondary schools. Alternatively, they might organise day conferences with PSHE teachers or pastoral heads. Above all, at school level, governors and head teachers need to make it clear to staff, pupils and parents that homophobic bullying is not acceptable, that difference is to be respected, and that all pupils have a right to be safe at school. Personally, in my own experience as a school teacher, I would say that getting all the pupils together, perhaps in their PSHE sessions, and developing a code of conduct which specifically addresses this issue, amongst many others, is a way of getting a kind of agreed statement which then is a vital point of reference in future when there are incidents, but you need incident-reporting mechanisms and all sorts of things around that.

Q2 Chairman: Before we start the questioning generally, can we get some facts? Stephen Williams has been very keen on us having a session on bullying, and he is going to be leading the questioning. One thing that sparked our interest in particular was the evidence from the Children's Commissioner about the priority or the ranking of this concern amongst children that they hold. How endemic, how much of a problem, is it? Can we get it in proportion? How much of a problem is this, David?

Mr Moore: Our dilemma, as we reported in our survey, is that there are no kept statistics. What you have are numbers of telephone calls to things like Kidscape or ChildLine. There are recorded incidents of bullying when a child who was

perpetrating it has been punished. From the work that Kidscape and ChildLine have done, it is interesting that if you survey children and ask what their fear is, their fear is about bullying. There is a difference between fear of bullying and actual bullying. It is very difficult to determine. To give you an example, one of the ways that girls bully is by using non-verbal communication. A girl walks into a classroom. Other girl she thought were her friends come into the classroom, deliberately walk towards her, but then walk away and sit somewhere else and so they isolate her. The same would happen with boys in terms of homophobic bullying. Nothing is said but that diminishes the youngster in their self-esteem and self-confidence. Denys is quite right; it stops them from participating in learning. It is important that in the schools where bullying is dealt with effectively, head teachers do not perceive that you have to tackle it because it is the socially correct thing to do; they tackle it because it stops children from learning, and they are quite firm about that. It is quite difficult to gauge the scale of it.

Mr Robinson: On the homophobic bullying front, DfES's answer in 2002—and I am afraid all this survey evidence is a bit dated now—was that 82% of teachers interviewed were aware of verbal incidents of homophobic bullying; 26% were aware of physical bullying of that kind. Of 190 lesbian and gay men and women interviewed in the study by Rivers in 2000, 68% of the males reported hitting or kicking that they had received and 31% of the female sample; 72% reported regular absenteeism; and they were “more likely to have left school at 16, despite gaining six GCSE at Grade C”. Perhaps that gives us a little idea of the scale.¹

Ms Elliot: We have kept several surveys over the years. We did a survey in late 1999 of 1000 adults who had been bullied as children to find out how this affected their lives, and so it was a retrospective survey. They were seven times more likely than the general population to have attempted suicide, et cetera. Our most important surveys are with the children themselves, who do not just express fear of bullying. The surveys that we do ask, “Have you been bullied in the last year and, if so, how?” It varies so much that it is difficult to put a figure on it, but anywhere between 38% and 65% said they had been bullied in the past year. We have been doing this for 20 years and just keeping our records. Therefore, my IT person has developed a way to keep records for schools, a software package that is slightly beyond my technical expertise but does work. It is vital that we have research into what works, that we find out what numbers are being bullied, and that we define it. Otherwise, everyone everywhere has been bullied.

Q3 Stephen Williams: Could the three of you briefly comment on how you would define bullying? None of you have said that so far. Perhaps you could split it up into a spectrum from teasing to physical violence or something like that.

Ms Elliot: We would define bullying as a sustained, deliberate attack on somebody with the intention of causing pain, and that could be verbal, physical, sexual, racial, whatever you want to call it; it is all bullying when it is deliberate. Teasing is very easy to describe. I can tease you and you can tease me and, if we are enjoying it, that is great. If it is causing pain, then that is bullying.

Mr Moore: For inspection purposes, we define it as “aggressive or insulting behaviour by an individual or group, often repeated over a period of time, that intentionally hurts or harms. Research confirms the destructive effects of bullying on young people's lives. Although some can shrug it off, bullying can produce feelings of powerlessness, isolation from others, undermine self-esteem and sometimes convince the victim that they are at fault. It can lead to serious or prolonged distress and long-term damage to social and emotional development”. That is the definition to which we work.

Mr Robinson: I think that covers it very well. Obviously we are involving here: name-calling; public ridicule (and could I say that is most damaging when it comes from members of staff, so do not, please, let us assume that homophobic bullying is restricted purely pupil-on-pupil as that is not the case); hitting and kicking; rumour mongering; and social isolation, which particularly seem to be techniques used by girls.

Ms Elliot: Except that they are getting more violent.

Q4 Stephen Williams: The common definition appears to be: an intention to cause pain. Has the method of bullying changed in any way from *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, where you got thumped and roasted in front of the fire, to more sophisticated bullying that is harder to detect as Denys has mentioned? For instance, you read about text-message bullying. Has bullying become more sophisticated?

Mr Moore: I think there is an issue that as more teachers become aware of the range of types of bullying, it changes its shape, so that the school mechanisms kick in to limit it. It is not about eradication but about limiting the impact of it. Children then find other ways. It is about trying to keep ahead. For example, the advent of mobile phones and youngsters carrying mobile phones has caused a dramatic change in bullying in so far as you were bullied in school and you were bullied on the street, if those schoolchildren saw you on the street, but you can now be in your bedroom, which ought to be a safe place. A text comes up with this foul statement, and that then brings it into your safest location. I suppose with the advent of more technology, people find other ways. It is interesting that there is a comment, I think in one of the broadsheets, about Friends Reunited, which is an organisation through which you get in touch with people you were with at school. When some people who had been bullied registered their names, they started getting messages from these old bullies. It is quite bizarre.

¹ Note by witness: I. Rivers “Social exclusion, absenteeism and sexual minority youth”. *Support for Learning* Vol 15(1), pp 13–17.

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Q5 Chairman: Apologising?

Mr Moore: Oh, no, renewing the bullying.

Mr Robinson: Of course that IT development is also followed up, and Michele alluded to this, by this very unpleasant practice of subjecting a victim to something very humiliating and filming it using a mobile phone camera and then circulating the photographs.

Ms Elliot: Or putting it on the internet. Bullying has changed in a lot of ways over the years. Early research in the Eighties by Dan Olweus in Norway showed that boys were more physical and girls were more verbal. It also shows, from retrospective research of these 1000 adults, what happened to them. What is tending to happen now is that bullying is being reported at a younger and younger age, both by teachers and by parents. Parents ring our helpline, and teachers as well, saying that there is deliberate, sustained nastiness from a 7-year-old to a 4-year-old in nursery. We are getting many more reports of weapons. Girls are becoming more physically violent as well as using emotional violence. People are setting up websites about victims and inviting other people to write in to the website so that it is not just that you are not safe with your mobile phone and texting, et cetera; the bullies are very adept at using technology and, as it comes along, they figure out what to do with it.

Q6 Stephen Williams: We are primarily concerned here with the welfare of children but, in the evidence that your organisation submitted to this inquiry, it was mentioned that bullying can often be extended into adult life as well. Victims can become victims in their adult life, or the bullies tend to be domineering characters later on in life. It can involve teachers as well. I have come across a case in my constituency of a teacher who was subjected to homophobic abuse and was not well supported by the school. Could you briefly comment on support for teachers who may be bullied, ostracised or ridiculed by pupils within schools?

Mr Robinson: I did say originally that it was a whole school issue. Frankly, if a staffroom is not a place where teachers who are gay or lesbian can be comfortable “out” and socially accepted by their colleagues, then it is going to be a fairly similar account for the pupils, one would guess. The leadership does need to be set from the top and the ethos needs to be developed along those grounds. I am afraid those cases that you allude to are not uncommon.

Mr Moore: There are four features of good practice that have to be there. You have to have a strong ethos in the school. What does this school stand for and how does it promote tolerance and respect, including respect for difference and diversity? You have to have positive leadership from the senior staff and governors on how bullying is to be dealt with within the overall policy on attitudes and behaviour. That applies to everybody. You cannot have a school that articulates a strong ethos about care and support for pupils when it does not support all adults that work in the institution. It is all part and parcel of the piece. You have to have a very clear statement about

bullying, which has input from staff, governors, parents and pupils and which includes examples of how instances of bullying will be handled. The final point is that you have to have a planned approach to the curriculum and tutorial programmes on the issues of bullying in the context which promotes self-esteem and confident relationships. If I can go one step further, it is not just about PSHE being taught in schools; it is about classroom teachers. For example, if a child is name-called and the teacher chooses not to comment, the victim interprets that the teacher is agreeing that the comment was made, and particularly when it comes to slurs against people’s sexuality. That does not mean that the teacher then has to challenge the individual who said it and have a huge row. There is a simply a statement that needs to be said: “In this room we do not do that”. You are setting the tone. There is a boundary. That is sufficient to support that child. The issue can then be followed up at a later stage.

Q7 Chairman: Do teachers in training get that sort of message? Are teachers trained to deal with bullying in their training period?

Mr Moore: The training that is offered to teachers is incredibly packed because it is a short period of training.

Q8 Chairman: Everyone tells us that. They do not have time to learn about special educational needs. They do not have time to learn about how you teach children to read. What do they have time to do?

Mr Moore: I cannot comment in detail on that but steps are being taken to try to do more in terms of their understanding of the nature of managing behaviour. A significant part of their training takes place on the job. If you start in a school that is not good at these things, you will not learn how to do them well.

Ms Elliot: In fact, there is one university, which will remain nameless, that I go to every Christmas, because teachers do not want to teach on the last day of class. I speak to the teachers in training. We spend one half of one day speaking about bullying. They are so keen because it is almost impossible to teach anything else if the children that you are teaching are bullies or being bullied because all they are thinking about is “how am I going to bully somebody when I get out of here?” and the child is sitting there thinking, “what is going to happen to me?” It is vital that we do this. Even if you gave them two days, they would be grateful.

Q9 Stephen Williams: Chairman, can we come back to your question at the start about measuring the extent of the problem? The impression I gained is that the statistics are patchy and rely either on charities or organisations receiving calls, and that is probably only the tip of the iceberg, or parental surveys that Ofsted mentioned. Do you think that schools, LEAs and the DfES should have a more systemic approach to collecting and understanding this problem?

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Ms Elliot: I think so. One of the difficulties has been the rather now discredited approaches like *No Blame*, which, by the way, has surfaced under another name. Many authorities took this up. Part of the actual approach was that you do not keep records; you do not keep any written records of anything that happens. Therefore, you really have no idea how effective you are at stopping something. One of the other problems, going back to something that you were saying about how you can combat bullying, is that if there are no consequences to bullying, children will stop telling and the bullies will just continue to go on.

Mr Moore: I would agree with all of that. One of the dilemmas for the Department for Education and Skills is that they do undertake research but it is always short-term research. To get to the heart of these issues, someone has to be prepared to say that they going to undertake a five-year study. Otherwise, you are just dipping in and getting a little snapshot. One could look at a longer term study that can feed back at different points as to the progress that is being made, but it is about someone being prepared to make that commitment to a long-term study. It is interesting that if you look at work that has been done in Australia, New Zealand and the States, people do undertake the longer term studies. Therefore, they feel more confident in articulating a range of strategies that can then follow from that.

Q10 Mr Carswell: I was very struck by something that Michele said that if no action is taken and there are no consequences, the problem remains. There is a school in my constituency where there is a big bullying problem and we are now being asked to raise it. I have been given a long lecture about something called restorative justice.

Ms Elliot: No blame by another name.

Q11 Mr Carswell: Do you think that is effective? That is what triggered the last question.

Ms Elliot: I do not have any problem with a whole range of approaches. I do not think there is one method for every school that is going to stop bullying, except the common sense one of the head, and that will stop it. If you do not make a clear judgment and make it clear to the students that this is the line that you do not go over, they will continue to go over it. That is what kids do. All of us who have been parents know that. Restorative justice can work in the right ethos but, if the bullying is continuing, the bullies have got the other message that “nothing is going to happen to me”. Very briefly, we did a study in two young offenders’ institutions. We went in and talked to 95 of these young offenders. It will not surprise you that over 90% of them had been bullies at school. Nobody stopped them. Maybe they would not have been where they were if they had been stopped. Whenever I say this, people tend to think I believe in the “hang them high, discipline, I want to hit kids”. No, none of that, and we never hit either one of our sons, luckily because they are 6 feet 3 now. The reality is that discipline has to be there and

consequences, and good consequences as well when you behave well. It is very simple. It does not take rocket science to stop bullying. That is what is so frustrating.

Q12 Stephen Williams: Are there any differences between the nature of bullying in primary schools and in secondary schools? Also, are there any differences between the ways boys bully and girls bully?

Ms Elliot: There are differences. The differences that we have had in the past, as I said briefly earlier about boys bullying boys, tend to be more up-front –punching or hitting. In the primary schools, if you get the girls at around age eight and nine—and I am sure every female in the room will recognise this—you see, “you are my friend today, you are not my friend tomorrow”, that sort of thing, but it is at a much lower level, and it is very easy to stop it at that level. I was a primary school teacher. You change the seating around; you change the lunch rooms around; you assign people to do things; you bring in peer mentoring, et cetera. By the time you get to secondary school, you do not suddenly have full-sprung bullies there. They were the ones who were not stopped in primary school and the victims are the same ones who are going forward with their “oh, I am a victim” mentality. It is more sustained; it is more underground; they are much better at hiding it; and it is much more insidious and more difficult to stamp out. That is one of the reasons we do these courses for children who have been bullied. Our most requested course, and we ran one last week and we will run one on Friday, is offered to kids making that transition stage, the kids from primary school who have been victims and who are going into secondary school still with that mentality, and, believe me, the bullies are there waiting for them. We try to change the mentality before they go there.

Q13 Mr Chaytor: Do all bullies know that they are bullies?

Ms Elliot: No.

Q14 Mr Chaytor: What is best practice in getting the bully to confront the fact that he or she is a bully?

Ms Elliot: At an early stage, many of them do not know they are bullies and they are just responding as they would at home and this is what they have got away with. Many of these children, when you point it out to them, will actually stop. Some of the other ones do know that it is a way to have power, that it is what they are successful at, that they are popular because the other kids circle around them and do not want to be part of the victims. Those children are much more difficult to deal with. We have invited them on courses and they just do not come.

Mr Robinson: In our area, there is a very peculiar thing that develops from time to time. I have talked to several people who have been through this themselves. They at 14 or 15 and know or suspect that they are turning out gay. They see some other

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person in the class being picked on for that reason. They join in the bullying in order to cover themselves, and of course later on they are feeling absolutely terrible about that.

Q15 Mr Chaytor: In terms of assessing the scale of the problem in schools, earlier you gave us different figures and identified certain ways in which it is reported, but what more needs to be done to get a more accurate picture of the scale of the problem in all our schools, and whose responsibility is that?

Mr Moore: There are issues about recording incidents in schools. What tends to happen is that when a case has been proven and someone has been punished, that is recorded. There is an issue about schools logging. Many do that simply by having something called a bully box. Children drop in a letter or a note saying, "I am being bullied" and the school keeps a log of all of those and that is how they work out their scale.

Q16 Mr Chaytor: But there is not a standard procedure?

Mr Moore: There is not a standard procedure across schools.

Q17 Mr Chaytor: Is there a standard procedure for logging incidents of proven bullying or not?

Mr Moore: It is difficult to say because sometimes, if violence is used, the child is excluded for violence, not bullying, although bullying is the underlying issue. It tends to be whatever one they record on the form. That obscures some of that bullying.

Ms Elliot: The schools tell us that they do not have any clear guidance on doing it. They download our bully incident log from our website. That is by Kidscape and it is not nation-wide.

Q18 Mr Chaytor: So this is an issue for the DfES presumably to look at more effective standardised procedures for recordings?

Mr Moore: It would be true to say that the DfES is constantly trying to refine that. One of their difficulties is that they have to be careful that they do not, as it were, impose too many burdens on schools. There is a tension between the requirement not to do that and other measures that could be put in place.

Q19 Mr Chaytor: There is a requirement to log incidents.

Mr Moore: There ought to be.

Q20 Mr Chaytor: What about racist incidents? Is there a requirement to log racist incidents?

Mr Moore: Yes.

Q21 Mr Chaytor: But not homophobic incidents?

Mr Moore: No, there is no requirement at the moment.

Mr Robinson: In many ways, a lot of this problem that we have would be solved if the same practice, that is very good practice that is followed on racist incidents, were applied to homophobic incidents, but it is not, I am afraid. In the same way, for example, where

schools of course are all required to have an anti-bullying policy in place, only 6% of schools make any kind of specific reference to homophobic bullying.²

Ms Elliot: And some schools keep no records at all.

Q22 Mr Chaytor: On the evidence of the statistics that have been collected, what proportion of all children (a) in primary and (b) in secondary schools are subject to bullying? What is your best estimate of that?

Ms Elliot: If you look at everything from the Sheffield research straight through to Dan Olweus, all kinds of research, that can be anywhere from 18% to 38%.

Mr Robinson: On a rule of thumb basis, and I can only speak here from personal experience of 30 years as a teacher, I would say that in each class you have probably got one or two pupils who are growing up gay or lesbian. Then there will be two, three or four more who do not quite fit in with the general feel of the class; they are perhaps a little sensitive, a little uninterested in sport or whatever, if they are boys, and so they are likely to be victims. If you think of the ones who genuinely are in later life going to turn out to be a gay or lesbian, and total that up for a school of 1,000, we are probably talking about 50 or 60 pupils. That is why I say that it can have quite a serious effect on GCSE results and league tables.

Q23 Chairman: Is the independent sector better at dealing with bullying than the state sector?

Mr Moore: I do not think there is any evidence to say that this.

Q24 Mr Chaytor: Could I ask about the new inspection arrangements? Given that we have now got shorter notice, shorter inspections, lighter touch inspections, is that going to reduce the likelihood of identifying bullying as a problem? In the old system, there were more opportunities for the parents and the pupils to report directly to the inspectors their perception of the school. Presumably, those opportunities are less available with the new inspections?

Mr Moore: The new inspection regime has only been running two terms, in effect. The way that colleagues are organising those inspections, it is interesting that time is cut out of that inspection time to talk formally to pupils. If you are doing a secondary school inspection, you speak to a representative group in each year and the school counsellor. Time is being made for that. They are still doing that in primary schools because they see that as an important way of validating what the school is saying. As you have said, we do not have the parents' meeting. I would be surprised if Ofsted were to want to curtail that. If issues are flagged up, even when we are looking towards proportional inspections that they offer for schools deemed to be already outstanding, someone is going in for a day and they would still want to check against the issues around children's safety because there is the "every child matters" agenda. You have to be confident and the school has to be able to evidence what it is they do. That is what you then look at when you start to question them on it.

² Note by witness: DfES *Bullying: don't suffer in silence*, 2002.

Q25 Mr Chaytor: In assessing children's safety and general wellbeing, what specific criteria are used within the new inspection framework? Is there one that specifically refers to bullying?

Mr Moore: Yes, because you have to ask if the school complies with the requirements of *Every Child Matters* and there is the issue about child safety. Bullying automatically comes into that.

Q26 Mr Chaytor: Is it a specific criterion on which the school is assessed?

Mr Moore: Yes, we have to form a judgment, as I said at the beginning. There is a form on which you have to make a judgment. It says, "What is the school's strategy? Is that strategy effective for dealing with things like bullying and racial harassment?"

Q27 Mr Chaytor: Finally, can I ask about training because there was some comment earlier about the paucity, in training teachers, of identifying the symptoms of bullying. Equally, if the consensus is that it all stems from the head teacher, it should be an easier problem to resolve by ensuring that all head teachers are effectively trained as part of their professional development. What is there for head teachers? Is it systematic or is it arbitrary?

Mr Moore: I believe those sorts of issues are covered in the National School Leadership Programmes. Local authorities lay on very good training and they bring in people from a range of expertise across the country. We know from one of the authorities we inspected that there is a direct correlation between incidents of bullying being reported by parents from particular schools and those schools never going to that in-service training, and there is nothing that anybody can do. Because schools have a high degree of autonomy, if they choose not to participate, then technically there is nothing that can be done. I suppose those letters could be passed on from the local authority to an organisation like ours. Complaints go to the DfES. They could come to us and we could then look at the inspection regime and whether that school should be brought forward for inspection.

Q28 Helen Jones: Is there any detailed research that tells us why children bully and which children are the most likely to start bullying others in school? We hear a lot of anecdotal evidence but how much real, detailed research is there in this area?

Ms Elliot: The research has been done mainly by Dan Olweus in Norway. You have heard me mention his name. He is the guru. It is very specific research. Basically it says that these are children who come from homes where there is inconsistent discipline. Some of his research shows children who are particularly hyperactive. There is a whole list, and I will give that to you rather than go through the whole thing. He then studied these children and followed them for 40 years. The results were really fascinating because they were four times more likely to end up in prison than the regular population, and a whole range of other things. In addition to children coming from homes where bullying is basically fostered, we found a whole other group of bullies who come from

homes where they are so indulged that they go to school and they are little gods and they think that everything revolves around them. We call them the brat bullies basically, but we do not have research to say how many and which they are. His research, as far as I know, is the only long-term research being done on the bullies themselves.

Q29 Helen Jones: What about those who become victims of bullying? Again, we hear anecdotal evidence about people getting themselves into a victim mentality. Equally, on occasions an outsider might wonder why on earth someone has been picked on to be bullied? Do we have any evidence about the victims of bullying, why they are targeted, what happens to them when they are targeted, and how that affects their learning, their later life, and so on?

Mr Robinson: I have referred to a number of studies by academics and by the DfES. Those are a bit out of date now. I would urge DfES, and perhaps the Department for Health as well, to spend some money on carrying out much more thorough research. I think this would be a reasonable task for government, frankly.

Mr Moore: You might want, at some point, to have a discussion with those organisations that support, for example, women who have been victims in terms of abuse by their partners. I suspect there is a high correlation between what happened to them when they were at school and the mental state that it got them into and then becoming caught up in that. There is an important difference about one of the underlying causes of boys bullying and girls bullying. Girls tend to talk about themselves more than boys. Boys operate at quite a superficial level and talk about football and all sorts of other things. They do not make big disclosures. The difficulty is that the more that you disclose about yourself, the more ammunition people have to harm you. That is an important difference that underlies some of the girls' bullying. You can track that by looking at older people. You have to look at older people and track back.

Mr Robinson: Without wishing to be crass, it is possible that boys who are growing up gay tend to reveal more about their inner selves than straight boys do. There is something about the whole way in our culture that boys perceive themselves to be men. If you have this terrible pressure that there is now for boys to be macho, to be tough, not to show their feelings, to treat girls as sex objects, to be harsh and rough and all the rest of that, then obviously somebody who does not fit those parameters, whether they are gay or not, is likely to be at risk.

Q30 Helen Jones: Denys, is there a difference, in your experience, between those who bully people who are gay or lesbian, or perhaps bully them on racist grounds, and what you might call the more generalised bullying: "I bully someone because I do not like the way she looks or dresses", or whatever? Is there a difference or can you trace the same pattern in those that carry out that kind of bullying?

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Mr Robinson: The people who are likely to take it up and do something about it are probably the same types all around but, that said, they are probably more likely to have grown up in homes where casual vile comments about gay or lesbian people are tossed around and not challenged and thought to be great. They import that into school and cannot see any reason why they are being challenged—“Doesn’t everybody think gay people are contemptible? What’s the problem?”

Ms Elliot: We are keeping records. We are dealing with children who are victims of bullying. Going back to your question of what makes a victim, we have been keeping pre-imposed questionnaires that have been independently evaluated. I will leave *this* with you. It is about working with victims. It is the very severe end that we are dealing with and so I cannot tell you what makes a victim except that the bully is looking for a victim.

Q31 Helen Jones: That would be interesting. Denys, you said in your evidence that 94% of British schools do not have policies that address homophobic bullying. Why is that, do you think, and what would such policies look like? You referred earlier to the fact that you need a whole school approach to bullying in general. What changes would you like to see addressed on that particular issue?

Mr Robinson: The critical thing, surely, is that the school has agreed. As I say, it is so much stronger if all the pupils have been actively engaged in discussing this stuff in their groups and have come up with a conclusion themselves, rather than it just being decided by the head and governors and handed down. There needs to be an explicit statement that this school will not tolerate homophobic bullying. It needs to be spelt out somewhere so that it is a point of reference.

Q32 Chairman: We do not want to get to the stage where there is a good code against homophobic bullying and racist bullying but not other for bullying. That has to be clearly examined.

Mr Robinson: I entirely agree with that. Could I backtrack to a question that Helen Jones made? I am not trying to make a political point here exactly but the baleful influence of Section 28 for very many years from 1988 gave many schools and head teachers, some of whom frankly are homophobic, the excuse to hide behind that legislation by falsely claiming that it prevented them from teaching about homophobia, or indeed even taking effective action about homophobic bullying. Now that that has gone, we have a battle to make people realise that it has gone. It is surprising how many people will still say, “Oh, we cannot touch that; it is Section 28”.

Q33 Jeff Ennis: The Children’s Commissioner, earlier on this year, suggested that we ought to be thinking in terms of having an annual survey on bullying in order to get a better monitoring system off the ground. Do you all agree with that suggestion?

Ms Elliot: I agree, as long as it does not interfere with actually doing practical work. One of the problems in all of these types of issues is that the Government

throws money at “let’s have a survey, let’s have anti-bullying week, let’s do this”, and it becomes window-dressing. “Let’s tell the children to tell”: fine, we told all the children to tell and then what happened? Not a lot. A survey is fine as long as there is a practical outcome to it and so that the kids are actually helped.

Q34 Jeff Ennis: We have looked at the different aspects of what bullies are. Can bullying be class-based? Does it cover all social classes? Are there any features that working class bullies might have over middle class bullies?

Mr Moore: It cuts across all groups, but one form of bullying that does exist is around differences between socio-economic groups in the same school. If you have highly motivated pupils and an under-culture of disengagement, that group then bullies those children. They use words like “swat” and the rest, but it pulls down a group that is motivated. It is about how a school tackles that bottom-end culture. That is why that policy is so important and the expectations of the schools are clearly articulated to the children.

Mr Robinson: Swats very quickly become poofs.

Q35 Jeff Ennis: Are the legal duties on schools centred around bullying strong enough or do we need to beef them up?

Mr Moore: There is a point when bullying starts to become a criminal offence if you are over a certain age because it involves intimidation and threatening behaviour. There is a raft of laws already around dealing with certain types of behaviour that a school could employ. What may inhibit them is the fear of criminalising a child. At the end of the day, and both my colleagues have said this, if the school does not make it clear what the consequences are or could be, because schools have the power to exclude a child if they believe their behaviour is unacceptable, there is another set of laws that the children need to be aware of: if you do this, then somebody can bring a civil action or a criminal action against you, and you need to understand that. It is about schools being up-front and saying that to the young people and to their parents so that when the parent says, “I refer to this, that and the other”, you then say, “You may well do in your own home but in this community this is the way that things are. It is not negotiable”. The good schools that we have inspected took that line: it is not negotiable and this is unacceptable.

Q36 Jeff Ennis: How can we make it easier for children who have been bullied to tell an adult and open the process?

Mr Robinson: I refer to one suggestion in my written evidence, which we came across and I have not been able to track down in detail. We were told that there is a system running in certain schools in parts of Germany where the pupil body elects teachers of trust, so-called, who then, under German law, have the legal ability to receive confidential information which they are not then obliged to pass on. They almost have a sort of priest function, I suppose, in a sort of way. In many ways, it would be helpful in every

school for there to be people like that who are not head teachers or LEA appointed, because it is coming from the grass roots up.

Ms Elliot: On the first assembly you make it clear to the entire school that this is a school that does not tolerate bullying. You put in pupil helpers, call them what you will, peer mentors, and do not give them too much responsibility because I worry about that a lot. Put up things like bully boxes but do not call them bully boxes; call them suggestion boxes, and a child can put something in if he thinks he is getting too much homework. Then a kid walking by putting something in is not thought just to be a child who is reporting. Several of the schools that I visited in Norway, granted they were the smaller schools, had a brilliant system because each child needed to have a bus pass or a lunch voucher and, to get that, they went to a particular teacher. During that time, which was once a week or once a month, the child actually saw the teacher and could tell the teacher things that they would not otherwise tell. Our experience with the victims of bullying is that the older they get, the more rarely they tell. They certainly do not want to distress their parents, or the teachers for that matter.

Mr Moore: Our evidence tells us that a significant number of schools now have peer mentors or buddies, as they are called, who receive proper training; they have drop-in centres and pupils use those. They also turn to learning mentors. One of the questions we ask is: if you were being bullied, where would you go? Invariably, children will name a member of staff, be that a teacher or an adult, and say that if they were concerned, they would start with them. Quite often they will make the disclosure to that member of staff but not want it to be taken any further. That member of staff then is stuck in a position until they can talk the child round into taking it further, because they recognise that they need to be working with the child. There are quite a lot of systems already in place.

Q37 Jeff Ennis: What specific anti-bullying programmes or approaches do you think are the best and work most effectively?

Ms Elliot: I am prejudiced, obviously. I think the systems that work the best are the ones that involve the parents and the children; that put down specific suggestions about what will happen; that get the kids involved in making up contracts, and following through. Again, it is not a magic thing; it is such common sense. It is good teaching. It is good parenting, basically. We have followed schools that put in things like bully courts, for example: where the children themselves come up with ideas about what should happen. It sounds draconian. They have not set up voodoo dolls yet, but who knows what they will do in the future? Maybe bear traps in the playground! But we do find that they actually work, if you just make it up front that, "This school will not tolerate bullying", and on you go. Then any kind of system can work. You can do anything in that.

Mr Robinson: I would absolutely support all of that and so I will not go over it again. However, I would make one final point. The vital thing in our area is in-service training, or indeed initial teaching training, the TDA. The problem is, because the Government

has, very rightly, devolved an awful lot of financial management to schools, headteachers are in charge of the in-service training budget. We therefore have a reverse situation going on. If the school is aware that homophobia is a problem, or are willing to acknowledge it, it might just be willing to include in-service training on this problem in its programme. If the school is denying that they have a problem, or indeed the head is homophobic to start with, the last thing they will do is spend part of their precious budget on getting in-service training about how to deal with gay and lesbian pupils, or people who are thought to be so. So you do actually need either government sponsorship to pay so that the training is free, or LEA likewise. Otherwise, you have a perverse incentive going on.

Q38 Chairman: Where did the no-blame thing come from? You seem to agree that it did not work and does not work, but where did it come from?

Ms Elliot: It originally came from Sweden, from Anatole Pikas who is a researcher at the University of Uppsala. It was brought into this country by George Robinson and Barbara Maines. It was bastardised—that is the best word I can use—to the point that it became totally ineffective. There are seven steps, which include the victim telling or writing down what has happened; the teacher then taking that to the bully; setting up a group of bullies, with other people involved to decide what to do; not keeping any records. These are the seven steps, trusting to the children that it will happen and going back and saying, "Did it happen?". What we found—and I have brought this and will leave it with you—20, 30 or 40 letters from the kids and the parents that this has actually happened to. What does happen is that the child says, "I'm not going to tell again because you have just told the bully everything about me; so they know exactly what to do". It has come back, by the way, and it has been around as the "support group method" or the "seven-step solution".

Q39 Chairman: There is a bit of snake oil, in your view!

Mr Moore: There is one final point, to do with the in-service training of staff and the initial teacher training. Government has control over initial teacher training. We can therefore suggest that newly qualified teachers have such-and-such experience. The issue is around the existing staff in schools. Denys is quite right. The responsibility for their in-service training is the headteacher's. So the issue is about what sorts of discussions need to take place with headteachers to ensure that those issues become part of ongoing training for staff in managing children.

Q40 Chairman: David, everything you have said is absolutely sweet reason, but why is not Ofsted doing more about it? You recognise the problem. It is not reported. You do not seem to have encouraged more than 6% of schools to keep a

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register, so we do not really know the stats. Surely Ofsted should be much more active in this than you have been?

Mr Moore: I think that Ofsted is very active in it, but we do not make policy; we merely report back to the Department.

Q41 Chairman: Come, on David! You go into schools; part of your job is to assess the overall culture and effectiveness of the education in that school. If loads of kids are not learning because they are being bullied, or even because they are bullying, surely that is an Ofsted responsibility? Everything you have said has been first-class. I have to say that I have been very impressed by what you have said, but it does not seem to reflect what Ofsted is doing on the ground.

Mr Moore: I think it is what Ofsted is doing on the ground.

Q42 Chairman: Why is it only 6% of schools? You go in; the school does not have a policy on bullying; schools do not have a proper system of reporting. Why are only 6% doing it, if Ofsted is doing its job?

Mr Moore: They are figures that are given that people say have been said. It is not hard evidence.

Chairman: It leaves me with a feeling that Ofsted could do a lot better. Wind up, Stephen.

Q43 Stephen Williams: I will wind up briefly. What single thing could the DfES do to improve this situation—from each of the three of you? Is it to do with collecting statistics? Is it a particular policy a school needs to have in place, or what?

Mr Moore: The one thing they could do would need the support of people like yourselves: that headteachers have to ensure that there is proper training for their teachers, and not just leave it all the time to initial teacher training to try and resolve that problem, in the short space of time they have. It is an ongoing issue and it has to be regular, updated training of people.

Ms Elliot: I think the one thing that schools could do would be to ensure that, say, every pupil had something—and this is actually done by one of your MPs, Dan Norris—

Q44 Chairman: A very good MP, if I may say so.

Ms Elliot: Yes, and I agree.

Q45 Chairman: Universally admired!

Ms Elliot: He is going to absolutely love that!

Q46 Chairman: He is sitting behind you.

Ms Elliot: Is he? No, he is not! This is just an example. It was done in his constituency, locally. Argos is now going to pay for this to go across the entire country. That is good practice. The same with this, which is a DVD that we developed. It is now going to every secondary school in the country, to give them exactly what they can do. Not a method. Here is a smorgasbord of things that work. Kidscape, which is tiny, had to go out and find the money to send this out. I have only 10 members of staff. It would have been very nice for the DfES to send this out free to every school, and to every primary school. We have just raised the money to do a DVD for primary schools. So the reality is practical things. Let us do things that actually get to the children, so that we do not keep getting the calls from these distressed parents, saying, “My kid has attempted suicide, aged nine, because they’re being bullied”.

Mr Robinson: High-quality in-service training, paid for from the top, either by the DfES itself or by the local education authority. There is really no substitute.

Q47 Chairman: Thank you very much. That was an excellent session. We learnt a lot. I am sorry if I was being bit hard on you there, David.

Mr Moore: That is all right. I am used to it.

Chairman: We have to be hard on Ofsted. Again, thank you very much. We have learnt a lot, and we are now going to talk to some heads about bullying.

Witnesses: **Mr John D’Abbro**, Headteacher, New Rush Hall School, Redbridge, and **Mrs Deborah Duncan**, Headteacher, Horbury School, Wakefield, gave evidence.

Q48 Chairman: Can I welcome you, John D’Abbro and Deborah Duncan, to our proceedings. I know that you have heard some of the evidence we have just taken. We now want to drill down with the two of you, who have a particularly interesting professional experience of this problem. As with the last three witnesses, we gave them a chance for an introductory comment. We have your CV and your background, but is there anything you would like to say to start us off? Deborah, it is particularly nice to see someone from Yorkshire and who is not from Barnsley! John, it is very good to have you here too. Who would like to start? Deborah?

Mrs Duncan: I will start. I think that you have seen my CV. I have been in post for just one year as a headteacher. Previously I was a deputy head in

Bradford. So I am still getting a feel for the school; what policies they have; as you have just been talking about, what systems are in place; and having to make sure that the systems that are not in place are put right. In terms of bullying, in fact last week we had an anti-bullying week, where we reinforced all our policies with the students. So it is quite fresh in my mind and, when I answer your questions today, hopefully that will be reflected.

Mr D’Abbro: In terms of the comments I can make, I cannot reflect on what happens in mainstream schools because I work in the segregated sector of special education; but in the particular field of special education where I work, which is with children with behaviour, emotional and social difficulties, we have a microcosm of society within

there. I have to say from the beginning that I can only give you a perspective from special education, although I think it is germane to and has inroads into the mainstream schools as well.

Q49 Chairman: Tell us a bit more about your special school. How did it come about? How big is it, and so on?

Mr D'Abbro: It is a group known as the New Rush Hall Group and it consists of an all-age specialist school for children with behaviour, emotional and social difficulties; three pupil referral units; an adolescent psychiatric unit; a behaviour outreach support team; and we are currently in negotiation with our Children's Trust and LA, to pick up an early years provision. I am really, for want of a better word, an executive head. I still teach a bit. Although I am not sure the children would say that I teach very well, but I still do teach a little bit. I think that is important.

Q50 Chairman: How many pupils?

Mr D'Abbro: Right across the whole services, we work with about 400 children. Within the day school, that is funded for 72 children, all-age—so from as young as five up to 16.

Q51 Chairman: And they all come from one local authority area?

Mr D'Abbro: No. We are the London Borough of Redbridge, but we do take out-of-borough children.

Q52 Chairman: The proportion of those, in and out?

Mr D'Abbro: About 20%. There are issues there about other authorities referring children to that, taking up Redbridge places as it were. But I will not get into the politics of that today.

Q53 Stephen Williams: How big was the problem in your particular school? Perhaps Deborah would be best placed to start off with this. I understand that you are new in post, but have you got the impression that bullying is a significant problem in your school?

Mrs Duncan: I think that it is a problem in any school, and any head who denies that they have got bullying is deluding themselves. That is the first thing I would start with. Secondly, you have been talking about systems this morning and I have brought in a system called "positive discipline" this year, which has been working. As part of that, we record all bullying incidents. Before I came here today I got a print-off of all the bullying incidents that have happened in this last year. We have had 39 cases of recorded bullying since September and we have 1,055 children. What you might then say is that not all cases of bullying have been reported and recorded. These are all cases where we have actually punished the child as a result of someone being bullied; but often, as you know, there are cases of bullying where it is best just to discuss with the two parties; you talk it through with the children, and you do not actually punish them; so

then it is not necessarily recorded. However, every time it is reported we are recording it on our system. Going back to the earlier discussion, I think that it would be good thing to have a formal requirement for schools to report the number of bullying incidents. We have to do it for racial incidents. I have a special form I have to fill in for racist ones, but not for homophobia or any other sorts of bullying. I do not see that that would be a burden on us particularly, because we are already doing it as a school.

Q54 Stephen Williams: That was a remarkably candid response, particularly as the press are here and statistics on your bullying may well end up in your local paper.

Mrs Duncan: I do not think that is a high number. I do not think that is a high number at all. What I do personally as the headteacher is, if there is an incident of bullying and it is not resolved If there is just one incident of bullying, often it can just be resolved by a punishment or a discussion. If it becomes a recurring incident, I always see the parents personally, because I take bullying very seriously. I am a parent and I think, "What would I feel like if it was happening to my child?". I always try to make myself think that, and then it makes you more sympathetic. So I always see the parents, and then we work out strategies how we are going to tackle it. Punishing it is not always the strategy, because it can make it worse.

Q55 Stephen Williams: We heard in the earlier session that only 6% of schools have a specific acknowledgement or a policy to deal with homophobic bullying. Does your school? If it does, what is actually in that policy?

Mrs Duncan: I have it here. When you were talking about homophobia, I did check and we do have the word "homophobia" in there. Racism, sexism, homophobia are given as examples of bullying. We review this bullying policy every year with the governors, and then we reintroduce it to the staff and children. For example, last week was our anti-bullying week. All the children when they come into school also get this booklet, which is called *Blot it Out*. It is our anti-bullying booklet, and they all get one in Year 7 when they come in. Then, once a year, we have a week when we focus on it for the week, just to remind them. This has activities which they do in their tutor periods, and in personal and social education, where they do little activities about role playing: "What if this happened? What would you do?". In it, it says very clearly across the front, "Horbury School is a telling school"—to encourage them to always tell. In terms of what I found when I got to Horbury, these policies were all in place. I just wanted to refresh all the students' and staff's memories about them. There is a danger that when the children come in Year 7 it is a big thing and you focus on it and then, as they move through to the older years, you do not discuss it any more; and then they are less likely to tell.

Q56 Jeff Ennis: Continuing on the theme of keeping proper records, why is it do you think, Deborah, that many schools do not keep proper records at the present time? What is the reasoning behind it, do you think?

Mrs Duncan: You could argue that it is because they do not have to do it mandatorily. Often, if you do not tell somebody to do something, require them to do something, they do not do it. Of course, schools are very busy places and we have all sorts of pressures on us to do a variety of other things. Just last term we had to fill in the self-evaluation form; we had to restructure the entire staffing of the school. It is just another thing to do. But if you already have proper systems in place, it is not a difficult thing to do. I think that they do not do it just because they are not required to do it.

Q57 Jeff Ennis: It is not going to be a big step to require headteachers to do it, because there is already a procedure set down from the anti-racist issues.

Mrs Duncan: It is good practice. If I were a parent going to look round a school and it was not doing that, then I would have questions to ask.

Q58 Jeff Ennis: Do you think schools, and in particular senior management teams, ought to be more proactive in trying to detect incidents of bullying in school, rather than depending on the pupils to come forward to a particular teacher, to the headteacher, or whatever? Do we need to be more proactive?

Mrs Duncan: You can be proactive in the sorts of things that you deliver, in the way that you educate children how to deal with it. Often, for me, when a child is being bullied, sometimes they are being bullied because of some of the actions they are taking. I have one child in particular in my school who very much tells tales on other children very openly, in front of them; so then she gets bullied. We have been working with her. I have a behaviour mentor who works for me, who is not a teacher; who is there, available, all day. Children tend to go to her, and she teaches them strategies how to avoid being bullied. That is a really obvious one, but sometimes you can teach children how to avoid that sort of thing. So she does work with them. When we know that somebody has been bullied, we work with them; but we do not actually go out looking for examples of bullying—not really. If it comes up, then we deal with it; but we try to educate to prevent. Preventative education is the best, I think.

Q59 Jeff Ennis: I am wondering, from John's perspective, working with EBD children, et cetera, how many of your pupils would you say have been victims of bullying? Would it be higher than the normal school setting?

Mr D'Abbro: Yes, and unfortunately many of them have been bullies. It is getting back to the point—understanding the reason why they are bullies. Can I just pick up something that Deborah said? All the things that Deborah said as good practice I would

suggest are good practice in any school. What is good practice in a special school, an independent school—dare I say that?—a large secondary school, or a primary school, is good practice. There is one thing I would want to take away from that—and I was mindful, Chair, when you mentioned Australia, of the great Australian educator Bill Rogers' line—is that it is the certainty of the consequence that is more important than the severity. As a parent, what was really important for me when my children were growing up was that they knew that if I said X was X, then X was X, and it was not going to be A or B. It is the same in schools. If children know that if they do something wrong there will always be a consequence and it is always followed through, that will establish the ethos in a school around lots of things; but I would particularly say in relation to behaviour management. It is the point Michele made. Children will test boundaries. That is part of what being a child is about. You have to learn what is right and what is not right. That is where teachers, by being role models, must set examples and always challenge children when they get it wrong. I am not talking about hanging and flogging children; it is about saying, "That's the line, and if you step over that line there will be a consequence". I am not suggesting that children should be frightened, but they should be absolutely clear that there is a consequence for every action, because all of us have to take responsibility for our actions. I just wanted to endorse that bit. In the context of the children I work with—and I was thinking about this when you invited me to come—is there a correlation that looks at why children bully? I think it is about relationships. The most important thing in my world is the relationships I have with the people I love and care for, and hopefully they think the same way back. In my experience, in 25 years of working outside the mainstream, I think that it is a society-based problem, not a school-based problem. It is about children who are unable to make relationships. Because they are unable to make relationships, they use other forces, i.e. they are physically bigger; they are intellectually more able to intimidate people. They bully people so that they can feel good about themselves, by making other people feel bad about themselves. I have no evidence to back that up but I just have an instinct that, given how important I think relationships are in our culture, in our world, if you cannot make relationships then you have to use more covert ways of doing it. I think that may be something that causes people to become bullies. Equally, the other side of it is why do some people become victims? That is learned. As a parent, I think, "Have I got my bit wrong?" but—

Q60 Chairman: You are both saying the same thing really, because Deborah is saying—did you call her, or him, a "relationship counsellor"?

Mrs Duncan: She is a behaviour monitor, but she does all sorts. She works with all the vulnerable youngsters. She is there and they know she is there, and they can go to her at any time.

Q61 Chairman: That is the other side. What about tackling the inability to build a relationship that John has put his finger on?

Mrs Duncan: She can do that sort of thing as well.

Q62 Chairman: She can do that as well?

Mrs Duncan: Yes, she is a trained counsellor and she uses all sorts of mechanisms. I look at this list that I have of people who have been bullies during this year, and they are for a variety of reasons, as was mentioned earlier. For example, some are bullies because their parents are bullies. I see that when they come in and challenge me, if I discipline their child. They try to bully me, and shout and swear at me, and so on. I have had a couple of cases of that just this week actually. Often they are learning that bullying behaviour at home; or sometimes, like you say, it is because nobody loves them at home and so they are seeking to get attention and love at school, and they do it in that way. There are different reasons for it.

Q63 Jeff Ennis: I guess that the person you have in the school that the kids can go to would be very much along the same lines as the German model—a teacher to trust, as it were—mentioned in the previous session. It is a similar principle, I guess.

Mrs Duncan: Yes, it is a similar principle, but we have a confidentiality policy. The children are clear that sometimes she will have to take it further and tell. She is our child protection officer as well. So every week, on a Tuesday morning, she comes to see me and she tells me any significant things that are going on, to keep me briefed—which is also important.

Q64 Jeff Ennis: Do you think that sort of formal structure would have more impact on the bullying situations in school?

Mrs Duncan: I think so, because it is sometimes an issue in large schools that children do not know who to go to and do not know who they can trust. It is having clear people who are marked out as, “These are the people you can go to if you are being bullied”. Going back to the teacher training, that is important. I think it is happening with initial teacher training now, because the ones I am getting through on interview are very clued up on it. I asked a safeguarding question last Friday on interview: “How can we safeguard the safety of our children in schools?”. They were very clued up on child protection, bullying, all that sort of thing. I think that the other speaker was right: the established teachers may sometimes need to be reminded, and we have to do that with in-house training.

Q65 Jeff Ennis: Do you think that the development of Children’s Trusts and that sort of situation within the *Every Child Matters* agenda, and all of that, will impact positively upon bullying in schools?

Mrs Duncan: I do and, going back to my point that if you make schools do it they will do it, we now have a responsibility with the *Every Child Matters* agenda, and Ofsted are looking at “How are you tackling safe, secure and healthy?”. In our school

self-evaluation form you have to say, “What are you doing to make sure that every child is safe in school?”.

Q66 Jeff Ennis: Does the DfES give a consistent message on bullying or could it offer more support to schools, do you think?

Mrs Duncan: It is not consistent, I think—because we are both pausing. We know where to go to look for advice and help on bullying. We know about Kidscape; we know about some of the websites. Again, I do not think it is as strong a message as we have had on, say, racism.

Q67 Chairman: What about my criticism of Ofsted? It seemed to me that you have good evidence but, if there are only 6% . . . He has gone.

Mrs Duncan: He has not!

Q68 Chairman: Oh, dear! But do you think Ofsted could do more?

Mrs Duncan: I will defend David slightly, in that, under the new arrangements for inspection and in the self-evaluation form, there is a whole section where you have to talk about children’s safety, security, personal well-being and emotional well-being. So they are doing it indirectly through that particular section.

Q69 Chairman: We have let him off the hook!

Mrs Duncan: Which is rare!

Q70 Chairman: John?

Mr D’Abbro: It is rare for a headteacher to defend Ofsted. Yes, I would have to defend David. We need to understand—and I am coming at this from a special school perspective—that children learn behaviour from adults. We have to look at where does this problem fit vis-à-vis society and school. Schools are such a socialisation agent. I do not want to get into the macro politics of that, but basically we get the sort of children we have always wanted, because we put certain procedures and certain systems in place. In my experience, most children learn their bullying habits from their parents or carers. I would hate to believe that, within the workforce that I manage, we have got bullying within the staff; but, if we did, it would follow that staff would bully pupils, and pupils would bully pupils. We can look at Ofsted and say, “Is Ofsted doing it?” or “Is the DfES doing it?”; but it is actually an endemic problem within society, in the same way as we now have legislation that safeguards the rights of minority groups. We need to look at that in relation to bullying. It is Deborah’s point: if we made schools do it, I think that it would have more impact than it does currently.

Q71 Mr Carswell: In terms of tackling bullying, I am concerned about something I have heard about called restorative justice. There is a school in my constituency where it is used as a tool. Do you think that it is part of the problem or the solution? Is it something that you would use in your school, or

would you be wary of it? My fear is that it means that people can do things and not face consequences. Do you share that concern?

Mrs Duncan: I went to a conference in London recently about behaviour management strategies and I was speaking about positive discipline, which is one I have used in my school. Going back to what John was saying, the system I have is a pyramid and it says very clearly, "If you do this, this will happen". The next stage is, "If you do this, this will happen". So every child in the school knows exactly what will happen. I think that is really important. Having to follow through on those this year in my school has been quite difficult, because I have gone into a school where that has not been the case. There has been a lot of talking about what you have done and being sorry for it, but not being punished for it. I very much believe that you do need to punish bullies. Otherwise, they will carry on doing it. At the same time, however, I have colleagues in the Association of School and College Leaders who have tried restorative justice. I think that it is good practice to discuss things and be open about them, but only if the victim wants to be involved in that. As we heard earlier, if the victim is then presented in front of the bullies, it can make them feel even more vulnerable. So if it comes from the victim and they want to do it, then it can be good. I would never discourage activities where children discuss, in circle time or tutor time, if somebody has done something wrong and they are sorry. I think that you can have a combination in a school, but I very much believe that, if people bully and do it persistently, they need to be punished for it. That is what I am doing; but I am getting a hard time from some parents about it, because I am seen to be too strict.

Q72 Helen Jones: We talk about the learned behaviour of children. I wondered if we could talk a little about methods for encouraging good behaviour and how you feel that impacts on bullies. I always feel that when we are discussing a problem like that we are in danger of missing the fact that many of our children do behave well. I can remember my own experience of teaching, where we had, for instance, a number of children with disabilities. I was very impressed by the way the young people looked after them, sought to include them in everything, and it was a positive relationship on both sides. What sort of a role do you think having strategies for encouraging good behaviour has in tackling bullying, and in rewarding good behaviour?

Mr D'Abbro: I think that you have to catch children being good. The big problem with schools is that often we catch children being inappropriate. I would like to think that, within the service areas that I manage, we actually have systems in place that catch children getting it right, so that children learn that they get praise for getting it right rather than being highlighted because they get it wrong. That is not to say you do not have the systems in place to challenge children when they get it wrong. I would contend that the single most important thing in the work that we do is the quality of relationship between the adult

and the child. Within the context of the quality of the relationship, if you have effective and positive relationships that is the tool that you will use to effect change and challenge children when their behaviour is inappropriate. If you are saying do we use enough opportunities to role model—to show children the right way of sorting out issues—then I think that in effect, in practice, yes, you should do. You challenge children when they get it wrong and you have procedures, but what underpins that is the quality of relationship and the quality of care between the teacher, the facilitator of learning, and the student, the pupil.

Q73 Helen Jones: Deborah, you said you had a positive discipline strategy. Does that include positive rewards, and so on?

Mrs Duncan: Yes, we have a pyramid of rewards as well.

Q74 Helen Jones: I have had a local school that did that very successfully.

Mrs Duncan: Yes, there are a lot of these systems about behaviour for learning, positive discipline, and that sort of thing. What we talked about was that there is a large number of children who we call "ghost children". They come into school, do as they are told, do exactly what they are asked to do, and go home. Nobody talks to them; nobody praises them; nobody has anything to do with them. In this system we have changed that, and you get a stamp in your planner for turning up on time every day for a week, for not getting any bad comments, for just being well-behaved and doing what you are supposed to do. The other thing we did was, at the beginning of the year, we taught the behaviour that we want. I think that to assume that children know how to behave these days is a false assumption. Some children have never been taught how to behave. I have just had a manners and respect fortnight, where we have talked about how to behave properly. I am at the moment teaching my daughter, who is three, that; but some of these children have either never learned it or have forgotten it. So we have been giving them praise for opening a door for another person; for saying "please" and "thank you"; for just using basic manners. Some of them thought that it was a bit of a joke, but it has made them think about it. I think that you have to teach behaviour; you have to teach the children what you expect. Then you can hold them to account if they do not do it; but if you have never taught them and they are not taught it at home, then it is not their fault, is it?

Q75 Chairman: This is such clear and sweet reason coming from the two of you. Why does it not permeate the culture of every school in the land?

Mrs Duncan: I do not know. I would argue that there are a lot of schools where there is very good practice in terms of tackling bullying.

Q76 Chairman: I am switching and swatching here, in the sense that all the stuff that you see in the press about "horrific schools" and so on, I do not find. I find that most of the schools I go to are very good

schools, operating well, and all the rest. On the other hand, when we get the Children's Commissioner saying, "Bullying is endemic", you do worry that, below the surface, there are a lot of children who are not getting the best out of their educational opportunities, because bullying is not recognised in the way that you two seem to recognise it: as a genuine problem.

Mrs Duncan: It is always there, and what slightly worries me is the rise of the use of technology for bullying. I have just been dealing with one incident that built up over the weekend on MSN. These girls were emailing each other nasty messages all weekend, and then it erupted in a fight on Monday. It is often, particularly with girls, texting and emailing, and things like that. That has increased in recent times; so I think that bullying just takes different forms as you go through time.

Q77 Chairman: What rules do you have on mobile phones and technology like that? What are the rules in your school on the carrying and use of phones?

Mrs Duncan: The rule in my school is that they can have one in their possession, but it has to be switched off or on silent, or whatever, and they cannot use it during the school day between 8.30 and 3.30. However, I am mindful that, particularly with girls, parents often want them to have one for safety reasons. I am trying to move with the times, but if they are using them during the school day they are confiscated.

Q78 Chairman: John?

Mr D'Abbro: The same as that, yes. I can think of occasions where children may have legitimate uses, or, rather, a legitimate need to use the phone during the school day, and they would have to ask permission—and I think that is reasonable.

Q79 Chairman: Having four children, I have been familiar with bullying. One child particularly was bullied. What is the rule? I remember complaining to a head that the child was being bullied, and the feeling was, "The bullying is taking place just outside the school gate, and my remit only runs to the school gate". What do you see as your remit in terms of bullying? You have just said that the technology allows someone to bully all weekend, remotely.

Mrs Duncan: I cannot punish a child if they have bullied somebody at the weekend, but sometimes that spills over into school the next day. So I punish them for what happens as a result.

Q80 Chairman: What about the kids that bully by, "I'll wait for you outside the school"?

Mrs Duncan: I have always taken the view—and in my previous school when I was deputy we also took this view—that while the children were in their school uniform, going to and from school, they are not my responsibility but I will take action if they misbehave. For example, if a member of the public rings up and says, "Some of your children were having a go at my daughter on the way home from school", then I will punish. That is not legislation yet. I am not actually allowed to do that yet, but it is

in the new White Paper. We have always done that, because we feel that when they are wearing our uniform and they are moving to and from school they are representing the school, and they are seen to be a part of Horbury School.

Mr D'Abbro: I go back to the certainty-of-the-consequence line again. I just think that it is such a powerful one. We had an interesting phenomenon at school recently, where some of our older children, who previously may well have been bullied, were allocated laptops. They were saying that they were frightened to go home, because the word had got out and they were saying, "We're going to be bullied by other children because they know we've got laptops". We then had to rethink our procedures for getting children home. I think that it does extend outside the school gates. If it means that we will escort children on to the buses so that they feel safe, that is the bottom line. If the bottom line of *Every Child Matters* is that you cannot learn unless you feel safe, then I think that it behoves us, as the people *in loco parentis*, to make sure that children do feel safe and that we do what it takes. I am sure that will not be popular with some of my colleagues; but, as a parent, what was really important for me to know was that when my children were at school they were safe, because, if they are safe, they are happy and they learn. If it means we have to go that extra mile, then I think that we do it. To come back to one of the points and why do not all schools do it—and I am not saying that they do not, I am not bashing the profession—it is much easier sometimes to turn a blind eye than see through the course of action set down by your procedures and policy. Sometimes it is more work to carry out an investigation, or do an audit, or follow something through; but my money says that if you do that, in the long run it will save you more work. The ethos you establish within your community is, "There will always be a follow-through—whether it is a positive one if you are getting it right, or a potentially negative one if you are getting it inappropriately wrong".

Q81 Chairman: When we did our investigation into school transport, we found that one of the problems was bullying on the buses, whether it was school buses or buses. There was an argument that a dedicated school bus system gave you much more control of that phenomenon. Is there anything in your experience that touches on a school transport system and bullying?

Mrs Duncan: It has not really been an issue in my current school. In my last school it was a bit of an issue, and we had sixth-form monitors. They rode on the buses and that was their responsibility. They came and reported any incidents or anything that was going on on the buses. It does not really make any difference if it is a bus dedicated just to the children from your school or if it has other people on it: I think that incidents will still occur.

Mr D'Abbro: I think that it is acknowledged that there will potentially be a problem. If you acknowledge that there is a problem, you then put steps in place to manage it if there is a problem or, conversely, to stop it happening in the first place.

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Again, I can think of some of our children who were ridiculed and bullied because they went to a special school. So we had to teach them strategies about how to manage that, which is not about lashing out physically—because that was the easiest way—but using different strategies. When the children saw—because there was a consequence for the children from the mainstream school who had been ridiculing them—that that was followed through seriously by the school, we found that they did not have to resort to physical violence to sort it out: they used more appropriate assertiveness techniques to resolve those issues.

Q82 Mr Chaytor: We have focused very much, in both the earlier session and now, on secondary schools. Presumably children do not just suddenly start becoming bullies—or do they? In your experience, is it a habit that continues over a number of years, or can children become bullies for a short period of time and then the problem is cured?

Mr D'Abbro: People bully—because it is people, not just children, and we must not lose sight of that—because they do not feel good about themselves. I think that starts in the school process for some children when they are very young. Yes, we can put fixes on a secondary school. In some ways, some of the procedures that we have talked about are more effective in the secondary sector; but they need to be because the schools are smaller. It is actually an issue we need to address in all sectors, but particularly with young children. The children I work with are that extreme of children who are most bullied or the most bullying at a very young age. What I passionately believe is that, by giving children the right resources, i.e. human resources, we can effect change in children's lives and they can learn not to be bullied. It is not a quick fix. Sometimes problems will take as long to solve as they took to come about. It is acknowledging that there is a problem and that you can get, believe it or not, five and six year-olds who bully their parents. That is a really quasi-flip of bullying, but I have seen it. You then have to say that, if we do not address it at five and six, by 14 and 15 we will have a child who will be banged up, either in residential schooling or with a custodial sentence.

Q83 Mr Chaytor: Are we doing enough in primary schools in terms of early assessment and in terms of passing information to secondary schools?

Mrs Duncan: Yes, the information is passed to us. If you are working, as we work, on a pyramid principle.

Q84 Mr Chaytor: So you would get a list of potential bullies?

Mrs Duncan: And people who have been bullied as well. That is passed to me and then we will keep an eye on them; do some sort of work to prevent it happening early on. The only thing that worries me is when I get information passed about victims of bullying. I had some parents who came to see me when the child had just joined in Year 7 and said, "We're very worried about her coming. Our

daughter has been bullied at primary school. We were bullied at school, and we know that she is going to get bullied here". They had already set that in her mind. She was waiting to be bullied when she arrived. So you have to be a little bit careful, because sometimes coming to secondary school can be a fresh start for children. They can maybe leave that circle of bullies behind and make that fresh start. You have to be aware of what has gone on before, but let us not make it a big issue so that it just carries on.

Mr D'Abbro: My experience of victims—limited and not of the vast numbers of children that Deborah has—is that there is often a correlation between the mental health of their parents and that child, and that they become the symptom-bearers, in jargon terms, for their parents.

Q85 Mr Chaytor: Given the crucial significance of parents in all of this, are there examples of good practice, of working with parents over a period of time rather than just bringing in the parent to discuss a particular incident? Is that possible?

Mrs Duncan: The behaviour mentor lady that I am talking about, I do not see her at work every single day, but in one of the meetings we had with parents she told the parents some strategies to use with the child. She said, "When she comes home at night, I want you to ask her to think of two or three positive things that have happened during the day". Because, again, what the parents were doing was saying, "What's happened today? How bad has it been?". So saying, "Come on, tell me some positive things. You can tell us the bad stuff afterwards, but tell us three positive things first". She has worked in the holidays with groups of parents of vulnerable children, to give them those sorts of skills. It is not across the board. We do not do it across the board with parents.

Q86 Mr Chaytor: This is the initiative of one individual school.

Mrs Duncan: Yes.

Mr D'Abbro: Going back to the point that Helen made, in the school where we work we have our own child or family counsellor. I know it was something that was in Sir Alan Steer's report: the importance of—we call it something different, but we would call it someone who is a link between the school and the family of who is at the school. Our child and family counsellor will go out and meet parents before the child comes into the school. So they are actually a bridge, as it were. Further to the intake conference, they are the bridge, the facilitator of the process by which the child comes into the school. We find that has given us vast reams of information about the child and their family, in the context of their family and in their home; but also alerts us so that we can be aware of where there are things that are not written down about the child being a bully or the child being a victim. On a different model, it is the same sort of process. It is about saying, "Let's use other paraprofessionals to support our anti-bullying strategy".

Mrs Duncan: I think that workforce remodelling is a good thing, which has contributed to helping children who are being bullied. I have appointed three pastoral support officers, and they work with two year groups each. They do that sort of work. They ring home; they are constantly in conversation; sometimes they go out to the houses. Then I also have my behaviour mentor. All these people are there all day long, to be able to deal with issues to do with welfare. In the past, you had a head of year who had a teaching timetable and would say, "I'm really sorry you're crying and in a mess, but I'm going to go and teach PE now. I'm sorry". We have gone past that now, and we are now employing people specifically to look after the welfare of children—which I think is a really good thing, if only we had the money to back that up. However, that is another argument. We are now doing that and it is a really good thing, but it does cost money to do it, of course.

Q87 Mr Chaytor: What is the level of liaison between the staff that you have working in your school on those issues and the comment that John made about the relationship with mental health? Surely this is something that goes beyond the school and needs a multi-agency approach between education and health? Are there examples of where this is happening now?

Mrs Duncan: John will work even more so with the agencies, but we work with CAMS; we work with—

Q88 Chairman: CAMS?

Mrs Duncan: CAMS is the Children's Mental Health . . . I cannot remember what it stands for.

Q89 Helen Jones: Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.

Mrs Duncan: We work with them. We work with educational welfare officers very closely, who come in to school and then we say, "Can you go and visit this family?". We work with the youth offending teams. All those sorts of agencies will come in and liaise with us.

Q90 Mr Chaytor: Do you think the schools should get a score in their performance tables or their Ofsted report for the way they do these things?

Mrs Duncan: They do.

Q91 Mr Chaytor: Ofsted reports are fairly tentative—

Mrs Duncan: In the self-evaluation form you have to score yourself on how you manage the personal and social well-being of children.

Q92 Mr Chaytor: Yes, but parents are not interested in what you say about yourself; they are interested in what Ofsted says about you, are they not? Should it be higher profile in the whole question of information about—

Mrs Duncan: Yes, but the whole point about the new Ofsted is that you score yourself and then Ofsted will make sure that you are telling the truth. They will give a score for that.

Q93 Mr Chaytor: Should both your score and the Ofsted judgment then be public knowledge?

Mrs Duncan: It is public. It is on the website when you have had an Ofsted. It is there, so they can see what you have scored: whether you have scored "outstanding", "good", "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory" for that particular element of school.

Q94 Chairman: Would you show Ofsted that list of problems with bullying that you have?

Mrs Duncan: Yes. Once you start trying to cover up a situation, then I am questioning what is there to hide.

Mr D'Abbro: If you said to me that children in our school did not make racist comments, I would say that is not true: they do. But what actually happens is, if they do, they are absolutely challenged, both by their peers—and that to me is the evolution of the ethos—and not least by colleagues.

Q95 Chairman: Are you better on anti-racist behaviour?

Mr D'Abbro: The problem for me around the bullying agenda is that we do not celebrate diversity enough as a society, in the broadest sense of the word. I take what my colleague was saying about anti-homophobia. I am anti anything that is not okay. If it does not feel right, it is not right, whether it is racism; whether it is sexism. You must always challenge what is not okay. I can understand why there is a need to highlight certain trends within society. If we have a bigger emphasis at the moment on homophobic inappropriate behaviour, then let us challenge that; but let us not lose sight of the fact that all bullying is not okay. As I said earlier, if it does not feel right, it is not all right. That is where the teachers, my colleagues and other paraprofessionals have to challenge children and say, "That's not okay" every time.

Mrs Duncan: In terms of some of the language the children use and talking about the homophobia, I do not know if you have noticed this but there is a trend at the moment for children to use "gay" as a derogatory term. They say, "Oh, that's really gay". I say to them, "What do you mean? What does that mean?". I do not even think they know that it is a homophobic term. They are not using it like that, but it is common parlance and I always challenge that and encourage the staff to challenge that as well.

Q96 Mr Chaytor: Can I come back to the question of training or in-service professional development? What is your assessment of the quality of the professional development opportunities in dealing with bullying?

Mrs Duncan: There is plenty out there.

Q97 Mr Chaytor: Do your staff take advantage of it?

Mrs Duncan: I tend to target certain staff who deal with this sort of thing all the time and send them on that training. Every couple of years we will do a whole staff training day on it. I have just done one on the new safeguarding legislation and child protection, and in that we did cover some things to

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do with bullying. However, I think that it is patchy across the piece. I actually do not agree that the headteachers are trained very well in how to deal with it. I think that I have learned how to deal with it out of experience, and I cannot remember the NPQH qualification having anything about bullying in it at all.

Q98 Chairman: Could you spell that acronym out for the reporter?

Mrs Duncan: The National Professional Qualification for Headship.

Q99 Mr Chaytor: Can you tell us what the National College for School Leadership is doing? You are not impressed by the—

Mrs Duncan: I am impressed by the National College for School Leadership in many ways, but not in terms of training headteachers about how to deal with bullying, no.

Chairman: That is what we want to get on the record. I want to bring Jeff in here on a supplementary.

Q100 Jeff Ennis: Just a quick supplementary on the line of questioning that David has just pursued, particularly aimed at Deborah. Do you at any point in time discuss bullying in the pyramid meetings that you have with the primary schools at your school?

Mrs Duncan: Yes, we do. It is usually because there is maybe an initiative coming up, or for that reason. In terms of when we get that data about who is being bullied and who is being the bully, that comes as written data usually; or, when we are taking in children's special educational needs, then we do have one-to-one meetings and that is discussed.

Jeff Ennis: So you do not discuss it across the pyramid on occasions—okay.

Chairman: You are impressing me so much, I think that you ought to come in and look at the Parliamentary Labour Party. We only have about 5% of bullies, but they are a bit of a nuisance!

Q101 Mr Marsden: I have only just escaped from the dentist, so forgive me if these issues have been touched on before. Deborah, I wonder if I could ask you, in terms of the sort of bullying that you are dealing with—obviously there is a range of bullying, there is verbal, there is psychological, there is physical—in terms of your strategies to deal with it, and in terms both with teachers and with your support people, do you think you need different strategies with each of those groups to do it? Are there core principles that apply whether it is verbal, or psychological or physical, or indeed whether it is a mixture of all three?

Mrs Duncan: The core principles are always the same: that it is not acceptable. I always say this to the children and the staff. If we are going to work in the school—I have just over 100 staff altogether and nearly 1,100 children—we all have to get on with each other and have respect for each other. So the core principles are always the same: it is not tolerated. How you deal with it is different. I have had an incident this year where I have had to exclude somebody permanently, because they have

physically assaulted somebody else so violently that I could not let that child stay in the school. That is a different punishment to somebody who maybe is just name-calling. They still get punished, but at different levels.

Q102 Mr Marsden: That is in terms of the perpetrators. I am also interested in terms of dealing with the children who are being bullied. I notice in your biography that you say that you have pastoral support officers, who obviously help those children in that position. Again, in terms of the types of bullying, does that require a different approach, whether it is from teachers or whether it is from your support officers, in terms of dealing with children, depending on the type of bullying? I am thinking particularly in terms of training.

Mrs Duncan: I do not think that it necessarily needs lots of different approaches, because often a low-level bullying situation can then become one of physical attack later.

Q103 Mr Marsden: Do we have any statistics on that progression at all?

Mrs Duncan: I have not. I do not know if there are any out there.

Q104 Mr Marsden: Do you know, John? Is this the sort of thing where there are statistics out there as to the extent to which one sort of bullying then develops into another?

Mr D'Abbro: Some of the evidence we had earlier suggests that there are some correlations, but I think the consensus was that some of the evidence we have is quite patchy.

Chairman: We got something on the record from Kidscape and others in the earlier session but, you are right, it is still patchy.

Q105 Mr Marsden: Coming to you, John, and looking at your biography and your particular involvement with children with BESD, as you may know, we are currently conducting an inquiry into special educational needs. As part of that inquiry, the whole issue of children with SEN being taught in mainstream settings as opposed to special school settings is obviously a big issue. I wondered whether you had either any views or any evidence as to whether the increasing integration of children with SEN into mainstream schools over the last 15 to 20 years correlates in any way with levels of bullying against them; or indeed what views you have about whether children with SEN in mainstream schools—special schools as well, but specifically in mainstream—face particular problems and difficulties.

Mr D'Abbro: How long have you got? Ideologically, I wish we did not have special schools. That would give me early retirement! I believe in a concept that, when we segregate children within our society, we actually perpetuate a culture which says some children are different from others, in a negative way rather than a positive way. In an ideal world, therefore, we would not have segregated provision. However, some children cannot be worked with

within the mainstream sector, even because of their own disability or because the schools are not teed up for it. So I do believe that it is okay to have special schools within the way our culture runs. My own view is that I do not think there is any evidence to suggest that, when more children with disabilities take up their place within mainstream schools, there is a correlation with bullying. Having said that, some of the children we work with, as and when they go back to mainstream schools and they get mainstream opportunities, sometimes say, "The care that we get within this special school is better than the care that we get within a mainstream school". No disrespect to my mainstream school colleagues but, in a school where there are 80 children and 50 adults, you will get more individual care than in a school where there are 100 adults and thousands of children. I think it is about saying what is the most appropriate environment for each individual child. It is not a cliché, but all children have their own special needs and all children are special. Lots of children can work in mainstream schools, get their needs met and be very effective, and some children need something different. I do not know if that answers the question, but I do not think that, because there are more children with special needs and disabilities in mainstream schools, there is more bullying.

Q106 Mr Marsden: It is also true, is it not, that children can be—sometimes unthinkingly, sometimes deliberately—very cruel in picking out aspects of what they regard as physical or indeed behavioural difficulties? That is obviously a factor. Deborah, in terms of your school—I have no idea how many children you have in your school who are statemented or with SEN—in your experience, does this form a significant part of a bullying pattern? If so, do you have a particular strategy to deal with it?

Mrs Duncan: I think that it is on an individual basis, really. Sometimes children who have special needs can be bullied in the mainstream, because of the facts you have talked about and because we do not have the staffing levels to be able to give them that sort of individual help. I have one girl in my school at the moment who has Kabuki syndrome. She is a very small girl and she has particular features. The students go out of their way to look after her, to look out for her, to help her, to be kind to her. There has been no evidence of bullying with her. It is almost the other way: they all love her and they all look out for her. Yet there has been an example of one boy who has had to go from my school to a special school, because he was so weak in his ability to access the curriculum. So he could not go into the mainstream classes with the children; he had to be in our base, which is our SEN area. He could not interact with the other children because they did not understand his needs, and he did get bullied and then also became a bully back, because he was hitting people who were making fun of him. So I think that it is very much on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Q107 Mr Marsden: Do you think that things have improved across the piece? I just think back to my own school days and some of the people I was with

who perhaps had very, very slight physical or behavioural difficulties. Other children can be very cruel in picking on those sorts of things. We have become much more aware, in the best sense of the word we have become much more correct, about the way in which we deal with not just children with disabilities but with people with disabilities. Do you think that is reflected sufficiently in the system or do we actually need to do more, does the department perhaps need to do more, in terms of focusing on those children with special educational needs so that they are not the focus for bullying or intimidation?

Ms Duncan: I am thinking how we could help the situation more, and I know I have already said this once and I should not say it again, but it comes down to funding. If you have got enough staff there to give them that help, attention and support, then it will make their passage through the school easier, if they have got special educational needs.

Q108 Chairman: You have already said that you have got a lot more resources than you used to have.

Ms Duncan: Did I?

Q109 Chairman: You did. I think you gave an answer to Helen that there was a time—

Ms Duncan: The head of year.

Q110 Chairman: The head of year.

Ms Duncan: I was saying that I have chosen. It is probably another topic.

Q111 Chairman: You have got more support staff than you used to have, surely.

Ms Duncan: Yes.

Mr D'Abbro: Schools are much more complex institutions than they were 20 years ago.

Ms Duncan: They are more complex, yes, but I just have chosen to spend the money on them instead of something else. It does not mean to say I have got more resources. I have to manage my budget in a clever way so that I have got these pastoral support officers.

Q112 Stephen Williams: Something that we have not really looked at so far is emotional support for the victims of bullying. What guidance is available to schools for the different emotional needs of different types of victims? There is a clear indication from the evidence that we have got from each of you of what is the difference between being black and being gay. The answer is that you do not have to tell your mother that you are black. If you are a gay pupil or a pupil who is perceived as being gay and you are bullied, you have different emotional needs to other categories of people who are being bullied because you might have a peer group you can relate to, but when you are 14, 15 or 16 you probably have no idea at all in your school whether any other people in your class or in your school are in the same situation as you, and you have got no-one to empathise with. Is there any guidance available to schools as to how they are meant to support people in that situation?

10 May 2006 Mr John D'Abbro and Mrs Deborah Duncan

Ms Duncan: Not really any very clear guidance. There are always opportunities for professional development for staff to go and train on specific areas of bullying, like homophobic bullying; but, no, we do not really have mechanisms whereby we could have a gay support group in school because I think the legislation is still hanging over us that we are not supposed to be encouraging students to be gay but we want to support them if they are, type of thing. We have not got the type of system where we can get them together so they can support each other, you are quite right, whereas if you are black, you can get together with other children who are black and support each other. No, I cannot think of any instances.

Mr D'Abbro: To go back to your point, I mentioned the quality of the relationship that the teacher has with his or her students, and I would like to think everyone in the room can have thought of someone at their school who they had a relationship with. I think it is about the leader creating an ethos within their school that says every child will have someone who they can relate to, either an older peer or a mentor or a teacher or another paraprofessional who is in the school, so that you ensure that everyone has got someone they can go to. It is easy for me to say that in a smaller setting than in a larger setting. I would imagine most of us went to large schools at some stage in our school career and we can all think of someone we could have gone to, and I think we have to maximise those opportunities within school life.

Ms Duncan: For children who do not make friends naturally, we do artificially pick somebody else out in their class and say, "I want you to stick by them and look out for them and look after them", and so we make sure they are not entirely on their own.

Q113 Stephen Williams: Basically, the answer is that there is not any guidance all from DfES on how to emotionally support the victims of bullying.

Ms Duncan: I do not know. If there is some out there, I have not seen it.

Q114 Stephen Williams: You are the sort of head who would actively seek it out?

Ms Duncan: I hope so, yes.

Q115 Chairman: Are you surprised that the evidence that was presented in the first session shows that there is more bullying in the lower schools, in the primary and junior schools, rather than in secondary?

Ms Duncan: Yes, I am actually.

Q116 Chairman: I imagine, like all behaviour, the earlier we crack it and confront it and deal with it the better.

Ms Duncan: Yes.

Q117 Chairman: Is that part of your feeder school relationship?

Ms Duncan: Absolutely. As we talked about before, we do discuss it as a pyramid. We do share the information with each other.

Q118 Chairman: John, you are not surprised?

Mr D'Abbro: I am not surprised, no. I think the manifestation of the bullying that we see in secondary, in my experience, has started much further down in the primary sector, and, in some cases, God forbid, pre-school. We are now beginning to identify that within some of the pre-school groups. Some of our colleagues are beginning to assess children who they think will not have the right skills and the right competency of getting on with people when they are actually coming into the school; and that raises questions about the parenting and nurturing experiences that very young children are getting or are not getting.

Q119 Chairman: This has been an excellent session. Thank you very much for your evidence. I am afraid you have been so good you are in danger of members of this Committee popping in to see your school, Deborah, particularly the Yorkshire dwellers here, but you also, John, because you are not too far from here. Thank you very much for the information you have given us.

Ms Duncan: Thank you.

Wednesday 22 November 2006

Members present:

Mr Barry Sheerman, in the Chair

Mr Douglas Carswell
Mr David Chaytor
Jeff Ennis
Paul Holmes

Helen Jones
Fiona Mactaggart
Stephen Williams
Mr Rob Wilson

Memorandum submitted by Barnardo's

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Barnardo's helps the UK's most vulnerable children have a better start in life, and therefore the chance of a better future. As the UK's leading children's charity, we work directly with over 120,000 children, young people and their families every year. We run 370 vital projects across the UK, including counselling for children who have been abused, fostering and adoption services, vocational training and disability inclusion groups.

1.2 Every Barnardo's project is different but each has the same goal: protecting, nurturing and providing opportunities for the most vulnerable children and young people, over the long term, enabling them to transform their lives and fulfil their potential.

1.3 Barnardo's vision is that the lives of all children and young people should be free from poverty, abuse and discrimination. We use the knowledge gained from our direct work with children to campaign for better childcare policy and to champion the rights of every child. By researching what works for our wide range of childcare professionals, and responding to young people's concerns, we help to offer a better start in life for children and young people across the UK.

1.4 Barnardo's welcomes this consultation. Our response is based on research conducted by the Policy and Research Unit (PRU) which focused specifically on disability, homophobic and racist bullying and links with children and young people's emotional wellbeing mental health.

2. BARNARDO'S RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 *Strengthened anti-bullying policies*

Anti-bullying policies should be endorsed by the whole school structure. All teachers and students need to know exactly why the policy is in place, what it aims to achieve and how it is being endorsed. Adequate training and support should be provided to teachers and students to ensure a culture of tolerance and understanding.

2.2 *Increased awareness of sexuality and homophobic bullying*

Children and young people are concerned that sexuality and homophobia are not being adequately addressed within the whole school environment. Young people want to see a greater awareness of these issues in school, possibly through PSHE/citizenship lessons, which could promote greater tolerance amongst peers and be reflected and endorsed in all school policies.

2.3 *Greater participation of children and young people*

Children and young people should be involved in all stages of the development of policies and strategies to tackle bullying within the school environment. Including young people in the decision making process gives them ownership and as a result policies are strengthened and more likely to be adhered to and bullying tackled in a successful way

2.4 *Greater involvement of parents and carers*

Parent and carer support is a vital element for success in addressing bullying. Further work should be done with parents to challenge prejudice and intolerance and encourage them to make links with their children's schools to encourage understanding and support of school systems, policies and practice.

2.5 Consideration of other vulnerable groups

Additional groups of children are also vulnerable to bullying and should be addressed in future research and policy. This includes children who are disabled, suffer from learning difficulties or care for disabled siblings or parents. Children in residential care, either through the looked after or youth justice systems, are particularly vulnerable to bullying as a result of their current and previous experiences (The Social Exclusion Unit (SEU, 2003) found that 60% of looked after children reported being bullied in comparison to 17% of children overall). In addition refugee, asylum seeking and economic migrant children are at risk.

2.6 Appropriate support systems

Support systems should be available in school to both the victim of bullying and the bully. Children and young people who bully are often vulnerable themselves and this needs to be addressed in a positive way and not just focus on punishment.

2.7 Greater dissemination of good practice examples

Schools and other organisations working with children and young people should be more actively directed to literature and websites illustrating examples of good practice when tackling bullying. For example, the DfES children and young people's mental health website "Teachernet" (www.teachernet.gov.uk) contains a number of case studies about behaviour in schools, including specific examples of innovative approaches to tackling bullying.

3. EXTENT AND NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

3.1 How bullying should be defined

3.1.1 In 2004, Barnardo's carried out consultations with young people asking them about the topic of emotional wellbeing and mental health. The key message that arose from the research was that young people saw bullying as the factor most harmful to their mental health.

3.1.2 The majority of definitions of bullying outline the behaviours which constitute bullying and highlight the difference between strength of power. Early definitions have centred on overt forms of bullying, such as physical and verbal bullying (name calling, taunting, threats, mocking, making offensive comments, kicking, hitting, pushing, taking and damaging belongings). Latterly there has been a recognition that social exclusion, indirect verbal bullying or rumour mongering are also bullying. Bullying using mobile phones and the Internet is an increasing phenomenon and has been found to be experienced by a number of young people (although there is less evidence of this growth than portrayed by the media).

3.1.3 Barnardo's research has shown that while some children and young people are bullied because of certain physical characteristics, bullying can take place for any reason or difference. A group of peer researchers trained by Barnardo's research unit consulted with young people across Yorkshire to find out about their experiences. The findings were developed into a series of six posters (Appendix 1) and are available,¹ alongside the written report *Involving Young People in Research* (Tyler, Turner and Mills, 2006), at: www.barnardos.org.uk/bullyingresearch

3.1.4 Barnardo's is committed to challenging the cultures that allow bullying in both personal and organisational contexts. We have a comprehensive bullying policy, recently reviewed and currently undergoing internal consultation, which is signed up to by staff across all levels of the organisation (Appendix 2).²

3.2 The extent and nature of the problem of bullying in schools

3.2.1 Barnardo's research found that bullying was the most reported cause of unhappiness in young people and the biggest thing that made them unhappy at school. This was echoed in an Ofsted report (2005) on the progress of schools in promoting young people's emotional wellbeing and mental health. Further research endorsing this view was carried out by the DfES (Oliver and Candappa, 2003). Results showed that 50% of all primary school children and more than 25% of secondary school children said they had been bullied in the last year. The same study showed that 51% of primary school children and 54% of secondary school children thought that bullying was either a "big problem" or "quite a big problem" in their school.

¹ Not printed.

² Not printed.

3.3 *The extent of homophobic and racist bullying*

3.3.1 Barnardo's consultation with young people discovered that not only do young people see bullying as the most harmful factor to their emotional wellbeing, but that "identity related bullying" ie bullying someone because they are Black minority ethnic or lesbian, gay or bisexual, is particularly harmful. The views of young people in Barnardo's have been recently supported by the report released by ChildLine (ChildLine, 2006) which reports approximately 2,725 young people call ChildLine each year to talk about sexual orientation and particularly homophobic bullying.

3.3.2 Barnardo's work has also raised the issue that you do not have to be gay to be homophobically bullied. The ever present gender stereotypes often mean that young people are bullied for being gay when they are not. This is emphasised by the changing role of language, for example the diversification of the word "gay" which young people involved in Barnardo's research frequently used to describe someone/something stupid or not trendy enough (ie you wear gay trainers) and which appears to have become a popular slang word to make someone feel daft or inferior.

3.3.3 Many young people feel that the issue of homophobic bullying is not being addressed well enough in school and through the curriculum. Research indicates that because homophobic bullying is often targeted at heterosexuals, many schools do not take it as seriously as other forms of bullying. Young people want to see a greater awareness and tolerance developed, not only about their own sexuality but about wider issues such as having lesbian, gay or bisexual parents, siblings or other relatives.

3.3.4 The majority of research with young people from BME groups shows that these young people are more likely to be victims of bullying than their peers. This has also been supported by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation who established that BME young people are particularly vulnerable to race hate crimes in the community.

3.3.5 Young people involved in Barnardo's research cited skin colour as one of the main reasons young people are bullied. This broad term also encompassed cultural issues, such as dress and language, as well as religion and perception of asylum status, which was viewed particularly negatively.

3.3.6 One of the key issues in schools is the degree to which racial bullying is considered as racism or bullying, and how these perceptions in children affect their responses.

3.4 *Why some people become bullies and why some people are bullied*

3.4.1 Children and young people can both bully and be bullied at the same time. However, some groups of children and young people appear to be more likely to experience bullying than others. A key factor identified by young people accessing Barnardo's services was the notion of difference. This could vary from skin colour, religion, disability, dress, sexuality, language, individual appearance or wealth, which could make a young person stand out within the community in which they live and therefore become vulnerable. In addition, research conducted in Northern Ireland by the National Children's Bureau (Schubotz and Sinclair, 2006) on behalf of the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) identified young people who have few friends, or friends who are themselves poorly regarded by peers, as being more vulnerable.

3.4.2 It is well recognised that children who display bullying behaviours are often themselves lacking in self-esteem and a positive sense of who they are, and seek to empower themselves by diminishing others. Alternatively young people may have learned the behaviour at home, at school or in the community and believe it to be a good way to treat other people. Children and young people involved in Barnardo's research were very quick to identify that a person who bullies may themselves have been a victim of abuse or bullying, at school or in the home, and that this may be a contributory factor to the behaviour they display.

4. SHORT AND LONG-TERM EFFECTS

4.1 *The effect of bullying on academic achievement, physical and mental health, and social and emotional wellbeing*

4.1.1 Barnardo's believes that all young people have the right to a balanced and healthy physical and emotional wellbeing. Barnardo's definition of emotional wellbeing and mental health is:

- Having the capacity to build positive relationships and cope with the ups and downs of life.
- Being able to realise your own potential.
- Having the opportunity to develop emotionally, intellectually and spiritually.

4.1.2 Barnardo's recognises that bullying impacts on a number of areas of a young person's life, including their physical and mental health and their social and emotional wellbeing. In line with the NHS National Electronic Library for Mental Health, Barnardo's recognises a number of health problems associated with bullying. These include sleeping difficulties, bed wetting, feeling sad, headaches, stomach aches, irritability/poor concentration, depression, suicidal ideation, self-harm, somatic symptoms, anxiety and social dysfunction.

4.1.3 With the majority of bullying occurring in school, it is not surprising that this has a subsequent impact on a young person's education. Young people report difficulties with concentrating on school work, being afraid to go to school and experience psychological and physical distress at the thought of having to do so. As a result young people describe bullying as one of the main reasons for continued absence from school. Truancy can be a less frightening option than attendance.

4.1.4 There is great debate about the effect of resilience in young people for coping with bullying behaviour as it is widely understood that bullying affects some young people worse than others. Children who have a stable home, with supportive parents and a reliable friend network are reported as being more likely to cope with bullying behaviours and focus on other areas of their lives in comparison to young people whose home lives are also chaotic and have fewer people which they can turn to.

4.2 *Whether and how the effects of being bullied persist into adult life*

4.2.1 Health problems connected with bullying can continue into adult life. Victims are more likely to be depressed, anxious, lonely, have low self-esteem and feel less comfortable with the opposite sex. Adults can have vivid memories of being bullied and recurring memories can cause long-term psychological distress.

5. TACKLING THE PROBLEM

5.1 *The Government's policy on bullying*

5.1.1 Under the children Act 2004 and *Every Child Matters*, all professionals who work with children and young people are expected to work towards the five national outcomes for children: Be Healthy, Stay Safe, Enjoy and Achieve, Make a positive contribution, Achieve economic wellbeing. Bullying can certainly hinder and ultimately prevent these from happening if not addressed.

5.1.2 The 2004 Healthy Schools initiative takes a whole school approach to improving children's experience of education. Promoting the emotional wellbeing and mental health of young people has been core to this, particularly in encouraging pupils to understand and express their feelings, while building their confidence and emotional resistance. By identifying vulnerable individuals and groups, appropriate strategies can be put in place to support them.

5.1.3 The Race Relations Act 2000 requires schools to work towards stopping racial discrimination, including racist bullying.

5.2 *How schools deal with bullying*

5.2.1 Bullying research and work today remains grounded in the work of Olweus, who developed a number of methods through which to consult young people about their experiences. The most significant was the theory of the "whole school approach" to bullying, as adopted in 2004 by the Department of Health and the Healthy Schools approach. The "whole school approach" places emphasis on the structure of the school and proposes that schools will be more successful at tackling bullying if there is a commitment to do so from all levels of the school structure—from the classroom to management. This starts with identifying a definition of bullying agreed by all.

5.2.2 Schools have introduced a number of methods to tackle bullying when it occurs. Every school is now required to sign up to "Bullying—A Charter for Action". Additional methods include peer support schemes, worry/anxiety boxes for young people to raise awareness of their issues anonymously, bully courts, mentoring schemes, school councils and teachers with specific responsibility for bullying behaviours or more general palliative care.

5.2.3 Those who bully often have low self-esteem and feel insecure and are being bullied themselves elsewhere. Bullying is unacceptable behaviour and needs to be prevented. One of the best ways of preventing bullying is to work with children and young people to develop their emotional skills and coping strategies so they have a range of alternative behaviours to bullying.

5.2.4 Creating a positive environment where children can learn while developing personally in line with the *Every Child Matters* outcomes, is a good way to ensure that the opportunities for bullying are minimised and bullying is not tolerated when it does occur. Effective implementation of anti-bullying policies is a crucial part of preventing and dealing with bullying. Pupils need to be clear that such policies are not just words, but a statement of expected behaviours from the whole school community.

5.2.5 Once schools introduce anti-bullying policies they often witness an increase in the reporting of incidents, which at face value appears to indicate that bullying has increased as a result of the policy. In fact it is about creating a culture in which young people feel safe to disclose. Once this is in place, bullying that has remained hidden for so long often begins to emerge. This enables it to be dealt with appropriately and the levels of bullying should then begin to reduce.

5.2.6 Barnardo's believes that schools need to be aware of the importance of the participation of young people in the development of policies and strategies to tackle bullying within the school environment. Including young people in the decision making process is to give them ownership and as a result policies are

more likely to be adhered to and bullying tackled in a successful way. Barnardo's, as part of the Anti-Bullying Alliance, supports the development of activities and areas of policy making that children and young people can be involved in, such as:

- Involving pupils in decisions about how to tackle bullying.
- Identifying priority issues that need to be addressed (which will often include bullying).
- Involving pupils in the development and delivery of the taught curriculum, which can focus on aspects of bullying and discrimination.
- Peer support including mediation, listening, advocacy and mentoring for those experiencing, or at risk of, bullying or being bullied.
- Reviewing, auditing and developing anti-bullying policy and practice and giving feedback to Ofsted.
- Volunteering and supporting others in the wider community to promote inclusion and reduce bullying.

5.3 *How parents can help if their children are being bullied or are bullying others*

5.3.1 Unfortunately many young people still see disclosing to parents as an ineffective way of tackling bullying. Young people in Barnardo's research were aware that telling parents could often make the situation worse and cause bullying to increase. Alternatively young people said parents would tell them "to ignore it" believing this would encourage it to stop.

5.3.2 To combat bullying a partnership of understanding needs to be developed, not only enforced in the classroom, but also in the home. Children learn from and are most greatly influenced by their parents, therefore parent and carer support in addressing bullying is vital. Working with parents to build self-esteem and challenge prejudice and intolerance can be an effective way to teach children and young people about respecting others' values and opinions and reinforcing the schools ethos in the home. Most parents welcome and support anti-bullying policies, therefore involvement in school systems, such as parents' evenings and keeping abreast of the school ethos through newsletters and bulletins is vital to ensure children receive the same messages both within the school and wider communities.

5.4 *What support and guidance the DfES provides to schools and to those affected by bullying and how effective they are*

5.4.1 Since 1998, schools have been required by law to have a written anti-bullying policy. An anti-bullying pack was subsequently published by the DfES in 2002 giving guidelines for drafting such policies and implementing a range of preventative strategies. Since 2004 all schools have been encouraged to sign up to "Bullying—A Charter for Action" devised by the DfES Anti-Bullying Alliance. This encourages measures such as "worry/anxiety boxes", peer mentoring/buddying systems to encourage children to talk about their concerns whilst being confident they will be dealt with in a safe and effective manner. More recently the DfES produced the pack "Don't Suffer in Silence: An anti-bullying pack for schools"; a comprehensive resource guide of anti-bullying materials and strategies.

5.4.2 Barnardo's believes an element of caution should be taken here to ensure that bullying policies are fully endorsed at all levels of a school environment. The policy should be signed up to at all levels and not adopted to "tick a box".

5.5 *The role of other organisations, such as non-governmental groups, in providing support*

5.5.1 A number of organisations are now involved in the campaign to eradicate bullying. Many of these operate under the umbrella organisation the "Anti-Bullying Alliance". This includes Barnardo's, NSPCC, NCH, ChildLine, Kidscape and Victim Support, amongst many others. Established in July 2002 by the NSPCC and NCB, the Alliance brings together 65 organisations into one network with the aim of "reducing bullying and creating safe environments in which children and young people can live, grow, play and learn". It aims to raise the profile of bullying and the effect it has on the children and young people involved, to develop a widespread understanding of what bullying is and to equip children, parents and staff with the skills and knowledge to address the issue effectively.

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October 2006

Memorandum submitted by The National Autistic Society

I was bullied in my old school. I was left out. It was hard. I was left out. They would not play with me. They chatted with each other but not to me. That made me feel sad because I wanted to be friends with them.

Anna, 14

He made a serious suicide attempt. Climbed over the safety barrier of a bridge and was found wanting to jump onto a busy dual carriageway.

My child is bullied—the school says it is his fault for being “annoying”.

The National Autistic Society (NAS) is the leading charity for people with an autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) in the UK.³ It has a membership of 15,000, a network of around 70 branches, and 90 partner organisations in the autism field. The NAS is in a unique position to comment on issues affecting people with autistic spectrum disorders because it operates in all four nations of the UK. The NAS exists to champion the rights and interests of all people with autism and to ensure that they and their families receive quality services, appropriate to their needs. There are approximately 535,000 people with autistic spectrum disorders in the UK.

Autistic spectrum disorders are a lifelong developmental disability that affects the way a person communicates and relates to people around them. People with ASD experience difficulties with social interaction, social communication and imagination—known as the “triad of impairments”.⁴ The NAS estimate the prevalence for autistic spectrum disorders in the total population as one in 110.⁵ As such, everybody working with children should expect to work with children on the autistic spectrum.

In 2006 the National Autistic Society carried out the largest ever survey on autism and education as part of the make school make sense campaign.⁶ We received 1,400 responses from families, and we also interviewed 28 children with autism about their experiences. The statistics and quotes in this report are from that research.⁷

WHO GETS BULLIED?

According to our survey, 41% of children with autism have been bullied. For children with Asperger syndrome or high-functioning autism this is even higher with 59% of parents reporting their children to have been bullied at school. This may be an underestimate: one study found that over 90% of parents of children with Asperger syndrome reported that their child have been the target of bullying in the past year.⁸

It’s the same group of people just annoy me all the time. They do a range of different stuff—chucking stuff at me, paper and stuff in class [. . .] not usually in break time [. . .] Happy slapping me once, that got seriously dealt with. I went up [to] the learning zone straight away before it got around. They got detention and badly shouted at.

Hugh, 14

I was feeling very down. I think there were builders, stress and headaches, it was year 10 and I was feeling lonely, the new girls were really mean [. . .] I think I was bring robbed a lot—money, my phone, phone charger out of spite, anything [. . .]

Ellie, 17

Children are more likely to be bullied in secondary school, particularly between the ages of 11 and 16, where 56% have been bullied. Children in mainstream schools are most likely to be bullied (54%), although

³ Here we use the terms autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) and autism to refer to a group of disorders including classic autism, Asperger syndrome and high functioning autism.

⁴ Wing, L and Gould, J (1979) Severe impairments of social interaction and associated abnormalities in children: epidemiology and classification. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, Vol 9(1), pp 11–29.

⁵ How many people have autism spectrum disorders? (2003) NAS: London.

⁶ Batten et al (2006) *make school make sense: autism and education, the reality for families today* (NAS: London).

⁷ All quotes are from parents unless otherwise stated.

⁸ Little, L (2002) Middle-class mothers’ perceptions of peer and sibling victimization among children with Asperger’s syndrome and non-verbal learning disorders *Issues in comprehensive pediatric nursing* 25 (1) 43–57.

figures across the board are still unacceptably high. Parents of children in ASD-specific special schools were most likely to say their child had never been bullied, but still more than one in five (22%) had experienced bullying. Girls were slightly less likely to have been bullied than boys, with 36% of parents of girls reporting bullying, compared with 42% of boys.

Is there anyone who is horrid to you?

No. There was one or two people but they have stopped now. They were teasing, physical contact sometimes. They were just teasing me, trying to get me into trouble. I tend to know what bullies try to do. They attack and tease you and try to make you to lash out and then go and tell the teacher and try and get me in trouble.

Do you find it hard to keep your temper under control?

I did but I'm getting better. My main tactic is just to run. I'm a very fast runner when I feel like it. They mainly pick on me in the playground and I'd run round the quiet area.

Ben, 11

Autistic spectrum disorders are a hidden disability. Children with ASD have difficulties with non-verbal behaviour, such as making eye contact, using and interpreting facial expressions and body language. They can find it difficult to understand social cues and conventions, and may find it difficult to make friends. They may also act in ways which seem unconventional or strange, as a result of not understanding social rules and norms. Some children with autism may have difficulties with physical co-ordination, or have sensory difficulties, such as an oversensitivity to certain smells or noises. They may have difficulties in managing their personal hygiene, for example, some children may dislike having their clothes washed. Others have special or very narrow interests in certain topics. All of these mean that children with autism may not fit in easily with their peers and can be more susceptible to bullying than others. Because of the nature of their disability children with autism may not always be able to identify when they have been bullied, particularly with more subtle forms of bullying. If another child appears to be friendly, then a child with an ASD may trust them even where the other child later acts in malicious ways.

They laugh at me sometimes. I don't know why and they tease me [. . .] I hide under the desk, because there are lots of boxes and that is a good place to hide. I talk to a teacher, I talk to Mrs Waddington [the SENCO]. She is not my form teacher, but I always talk to her because she is nice. I once took my little cat out to play and "they" took it off me and threw it to each other and then they threw him in the mud and then they were making me chase them. But then they got big told off, so big that they got put into another room all by themselves and the head teacher came down and I heard them shouting really loud. They have never done it since.

Jamie, 11

Have you been bullied at school?

Depends really, cos there's some people I don't like. I don't get bullied as such [. . .] I'm not really sure if I've got bullied or not. I know some people try to make fun out of me but I don't particularly care about them [. . .]

Michéal, 15

Alex doesn't tell when he is being bullied. I have to figure it out, sometimes from bruises. His teachers don't seem to notice—perhaps because of inadequate playtime supervision.

There was this boy, I'll just call him Colin [. . .] he used to say I'm autistic. It sort of got more annoying. I didn't do anything to him but he just started on me, because I acted differently [. . .] one of his friends came and tapped me on my back, I started on him, he followed me back and beat me up [. . .] then some sixth form students came and helped [. . .] It carried on for a bit longer, but Colin did know it was wrong and wanted to apologise [. . .] he admitted that he'd done wrong and I'm not one to hold grudges [. . .]

Eoin, 17

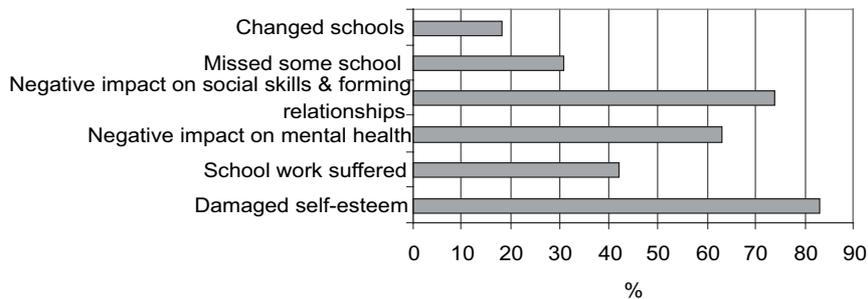
In the past everyone used to bully me, especially year 6s when I was in years 4 and 3. Called me names [. . .] worst thing, in my class, one or two people who were hitting me. I felt really annoyed. No one helped. I did ask the teachers but it takes its time. I do usually tell the teachers. One person in particular calls me a very large amount of names. Let's just say that I learnt some of my rudest swear words from what that person used to, or still, calls me. I don't know what the point of that is; he even sounds stupid, not just looking stupid.

Alexander, 11

HOW DOES BULLYING AFFECT CHILDREN WITH ASD?

The negative effects of bullying on children with ASD are clear. It has damaging effects on children's self-esteem, mental health, social skills, and progress at school. 83% of parents tell us that their child's self-esteem was damaged, and three-quarters reported that it affected their child's development of social skills and relationships. Because children with autism often find it difficult to understand social rules, when other pupils take advantage of this, it can make it even more difficult for children with ASD to develop their social understanding. Bullying can also seriously disrupt children's education. 62% of parents said that it had caused their child to miss school or even change schools.

Impact of bullying



It is also extremely worrying that of children who have been bullied, 63% of parents also felt the experience has affected their mental health. Many parents said that bullying has led their child to self-harm or even become suicidal. Nevertheless, many children with ASD struggle to access Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services, yet in some parts of the country children with ASD are most likely to be using the most specialised children's mental health services.

My son was bullied to the point of wanting to end his life and has self-harmed. He attends therapy to help him deal with this. We feel he will never recover from these feelings.

The school denied all. He became suicidal at seven-years-old, and anxiety levels so high he became very hypersensitive and cannot wear normal clothing. Bullying was one of the causes of his anxiety.

My daughter changed from being trusting, happy un-self aware to being paranoid, depressed and suicidal. She wanted to change gender to being a boy as she felt she could survive better if she was "tough".

A lot of teasing and children copying the way she walks etc. She is aware of it and confidence is affected. She would self-mutilate, scratching herself etc.

She wouldn't eat for a week, she also picks at her skin causing it to become infectious, and had to have antibiotics. She wanted to die, head banged on wall before taking to school.

The bullying was so bad that at 13 she tried to commit suicide. She has been mentally ill/paranoid/depressed/phobic ever since.

Bullying can have a devastating impact at any age, but more parents in our survey reported negative impacts among the oldest children in our survey (aged 16–19), with typically 10% more parents reporting negative effects than parents of younger children.

He attempted suicide and started to self-abuse and became reclusive. He has remained suicidal, reclusive and self-abusive—he just uses different forms of substances to self-abuse and attempt suicide. I continually have to haul him away from alcohol, cigarettes and drugs. They want to live but can't get away from their self-destruction.

Secondary school (mainstream) destroyed him and nearly caused him to commit suicide. Bullying was by staff as well as students. Five years on, it caused Simon huge courage, even to try at a mainstream college.

CHILDREN'S REACTIONS TO BULLYING

A child with ASD may lack the social skills to handle difficult situations, and can be easily led or provoked by bullies. A classic pattern for children with autism who exhibit challenging behaviour is that low-level bullying and teasing from other children triggers a sudden and violent response. Five families in our survey said their child had been excluded from school as a result of their reaction to bullying. One in five children with autism has been excluded from school, and one in four children with Asperger syndrome. Of these 67% had been excluded more than once.

We moved him at the end of year five because of bullying, which had resulted in physical injury. The bullying in secondary was classified by the staff as "regular teasing" and was therefore ignored. When he reacted to it, first by school refusal, then by minor acts of violence, then by significant self-harm issues, he was classed as having emotional and behavioural difficulties and excluded.

Jenny suffered extreme mental bullying about her severely autistic sister, and because of her poor social and language skills she lashed out. The school refused to address the issue and just excluded her for her retaliation.

My son is at a mainstream school where he is being bullied. He can react very aggressively, and last week he knocked a child unconscious last week. Now he's refusing to go back to school.

Children with ASD can sometimes be the perpetrators of bullying too. There may be a wide range of reasons for this, and it is important that schools and families work together with children who are bullying others to prevent it and address the underlying reasons. One mother called our helpline concerned that her

eight-year-old son was bullying another child in his class. Although the parents had reported these incidents to the head she was worried because she felt the school were not supporting her efforts to stop her son doing this.

There is this boy who I hated from day one at school because he asked too many questions and he is actually quite dyslexic but I really can't stand him. When I was little I used to hate people because they had ginger curly hair because I didn't like that sort of style of person and I was scared of them so I started to tackle them. And there's this other boy who I used to insult and throw rock at because I didn't know better [. . .]

Tom, 12

Social skills training is another simple and effective intervention which can help children with ASD deal more effectively with social situations and can alleviate bullying. It may also help children with ASD who bully others to understand the impact of their behaviour, and how to manage situations more appropriately. However parents in our survey identified the lack of social skills training as the biggest gap in provision for their children.

EFFECTS ON THE FAMILY

Bullying does not just impact on children with autism. Their brothers and sisters may also experience bullying as a result of their sibling's disability.

My older son suffers because he was bullied and excluded because my younger son (who has ASD) was odd at school.

Tom, Jamie's younger brother, was also bullied and became very distressed and withdrawn, requiring play therapy and lots of support.

His younger brother (at same school) is bullied because of his older brother and therefore he even joins in and he bullies his younger brother at home.

Ostracism felt by whole family due to failure of educators to identify and accept problem until child was 14 despite parents seeking support from age four. Constant fighting with school to get understanding—affected whole family Younger siblings frightened that school would be similarly “cruel” to them.

Some children feel unable to return to school as a result of bullying, or their parents feel they have to care for their child at home because of the mental and physical impacts on their child. This can mean they are unable to work.

Development of child's severe depression and school's inability to manage bullying. Appropriate support meant mother's employment badly disrupted.

She is extremely distressed about going to school following episodes of extreme bullying. Constantly crying all day at school and being sent home. I've got her at home today and she's still crying and in a distressed state.

Our son was a quivering, nervous wreck by the time his first school finished with him. We were forced to pull him out as we had grave concerns about his mental health.

He has always been bullied and he has changed schools before because of this. He has come home with bruises and scratches all the time. I removed him from school today because I'm concerned what will happen to him.

BULLYING POLICIES

Bullying on the grounds of disability need to be dealt with in the same way as other forms of bullying. The DfES guidance for schools *Bullying: Don't suffer in silence*⁹ contradicts this principle and the NAS would like to see this rectified. Strategies to deal with incidents of bullying on the grounds of race, gender or sexual orientation are directed at changing the bully's attitudes and behaviour, or initiating a whole-school approach. Strategies include putting in place effective recording systems; multi-agency working with police, youth services and others; being aware that even young children can understand the consequences of their actions. Strategies for bullying on the grounds of disability focus on helping the bullied pupil to deal with the bullying. Strategies include teaching assertiveness and other social skills; role-playing in dealing with taunts; providing special resource rooms at playtimes and lunchtime.

The contradiction sends out the message that bullying on the basis of race, gender and sexual orientation is unacceptable, but that bullying on the basis of disability is a problem that needs to be dealt with by the bullied child.

All schools must have an accessible and effective anti-bullying policy under the School Standards and Frameworks Act 1998. However when asked about this almost one in four parents (23%) tell us they don't know whether such a policy is in place in their child's school (whether their child had been bullied or not).

⁹ DfES (2003) *Bullying: Don't suffer in silence*.

The situation was slightly better overall in mainstream provision (rather than resource bases or special schools), where 83% of parents were aware of the school's anti-bullying policy. Parents of the youngest children (aged 2–5) were least likely to know whether there was an anti-bullying policy in place.

Anti-bullying policies need to be explicit in terms of the steps that will be taken by the school when incidents of bullying are reported or identified by staff, parents or children. They should set out what the options are for parents if they feel that an incident is not being dealt with effectively. The Government has published Good Practice Guidance which recommends that as part of the school's anti-bullying policy, staff should be aware of the vulnerability of children with ASD to bullying.¹⁰ Children with ASD should also be consulted with and involved in drawing up policies on anti-bullying.

PREVENTING BULLYING

Of those parents whose children had been bullied, 47% of parents feel their child's school had taken effective action to stop the bullying. Mainstream schools seem to be slightly better at dealing with bullying where it does occur.

The school handles bullying sensitively and as far as we know bullying has significantly reduced. They have whole school meetings when any incident takes place.

Because of bullying he has a lunchtime library pass which means he can be safe. He goes to keyboard lessons.

Our son comes out of school (10 mins early) (now only after requesting it for four years!) because of bullying in front of me. I pick him up/drop him off, meet him always.

My son likes to be near a member of staff at break times, so he often spends them in his class tutor's "den" and this keeps him out of the way of the bullies.

A whole-school approach to bullying is the most effective way to stop bullying.¹¹ All staff, including teachers, learning support assistants and lunchtime supervisors, should be trained to be able to support children with ASD who find social interaction difficult, and all staff should understand the school's anti-bullying policy and receive training in tackling bullying.

Approaches such as peer mentoring, befriending and buddying schemes, structured play activities during breaks and circles of friends can be an effective way of supporting children with ASD and preventing bullying. Raising awareness of ASD among other children can help them understand why someone may act differently to them. It can encourage them to support children with ASD and discourage bullying among their peers.

We have used Circle of Friends for seven children to address a whole range of issues, including lack of friends, isolation, annoying classmates, getting into trouble, bullying, and behaviour in general. One child with ASD was obsessed with his book. It was almost impossible to get him away from it so his teacher had to constantly tell him to put it away. Now the kids remind him and usually that works. Also, they give him thumbs up when things go well, look out for him in the playground, talk to him and take him to a teacher if there is a problem.

Primary school special educational needs co-ordinator

Many of these approaches are simple to implement and will be of benefit to many other children too.

However 44% of parents say no action has been taken. For young people over the age of 16 nearly two-thirds of parents said that action was not taken to stop bullying. Some feel that schools ignore the bullying, even blaming it on the children themselves. In some cases children report that the teachers are actually conducting some of the bullying.

He has tried strangling himself because he is being bullied so much at school. Most of the bullying is because he takes everything so literally. The teachers are not helping the situation and feel that as he is not being bullied all the time there is not really a problem.

My son faced daily discrimination and bullying by both other pupils and staff.

I am happier to have her at home, educating her whilst we wait for an appropriate school. At school she regressed, wasn't given support adequately, she was sexually taken advantage of, bullied, blamed and generally unhappy and ultimately they were not protecting her. The LA were kept informed throughout but did nothing; they did attend an annual review but that was all.

After our daughter was bullied and injured we had to get our GP and paediatrician to demand that she could be kept inside if she wanted to stay inside. We also had to fight to get her a 1:1 on the school yard and a 1:1 lunch-time (to feed her—because she only weighed 18 kg at 10-years-old).

¹⁰ DH, DfES (2002) *Autistic spectrum disorders: Good practice guidance*.

¹¹ Fiddy and Hamilton (2004) *Bullying: a guide to the law*, Children's Legal Centre: London.

No allowances are made [by the school] for different learning style, her need to withdraw, her terror from bullying peers. They said she was a natural “victim” and brought it all on herself. The bullying was simply “the rough and tumble of everyday life in school”.

How you did feel at the school?

At the beginning they were quite nice. Once I started settling in it turned out to be a terror school [. . .] well there were several times they hurt me and were unfair. I had an OCD incident and they were violent to me and pushed me around. I was scared about the work that had been put on the table, and I got scared.

Donald, 13

I sometimes get into trouble and get shouted at and get told off for saying stuff I wasn't saying [. . .] they (the older children) don't like me. The teacher doesn't do a lot to stop it and she shouts at me. But it doesn't happen when my helper is there. I feel safe then.

Ruaraidh, 9

School can be a scary place for children with autism. It's time to make school make sense.

RECOMMENDATION

National government should:

- Fund, develop and distribute resource packs on ASD for teachers and support staff, which provide practical information, ideas and support on how best to support the differing needs of children with ASD.
- Work with the Training and Development Agency for Schools to incorporate ASD into initial teacher training.
- Work with the National College for School Leadership to ensure that the Head teacher Induction Programme and the National Standards for Head Teachers promote inclusive practice with explicit reference to ASD.
- Ensure that all SENCOs (special educational needs co-ordinators) are qualified teachers, and work with local authorities to ensure that SENCOs receive training in ASD. This training needs to be sufficiently in depth that they are able to meet the needs of children with ASD, and can disseminate best practice to other staff in their school.
- Revise the DfES guidance on bullying to give bullying of disabled children the same emphasis as homophobic and racist bullying, particularly in light of the new Disability Equality Duty to promote equality for disabled people and eliminate disability-related discrimination.

Local authorities should:

- Secure the provision of ASD support and advisory services to mainstream schools. This should include ring fencing resources for outreach services so that the delegation of SEN funding to schools does not erode such services.
- Ensure that all school governors with responsibility for SEN receive appropriate training in ASD.

Schools should:

- Embrace the new Disability Equality Duty as an opportunity to provide a positive, supportive environment for children with ASD and eliminate disability-related harassment and discrimination and promote positive attitudes towards disabled people.
- Be guided to review to review child's support needs before taking disciplinary action, and where appropriate initiate statutory assessment.
- Ensure that anti-bullying policies are explicit in terms of the steps that will be taken by the school when incidents of bullying are reported or identified by staff, parents or children. They should set out what the options are for parents if they feel that an incident is not being dealt with effectively.

October 2006

Memorandum submitted by The Advisory Centre for Education (ACE)

INTRODUCTION

1. The Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) is an independent national charity working to empower parents and carers, encourage changes in education law and policy and promote good practice in the education system for the benefit of all children, young people and families. Our vision is of a fair education system for all, which encourages parents to engage with the education system for the benefit of their children. We have a particular commitment to reach out to the marginalised and those who find themselves excluded from the system.

2. In 2005, ACE took more than 7,000 calls from parents about problems with schools. Over 11% of those calls concerned bullying. On the line dedicated to referrals from Parentline Plus, calls about bullying made up nearly a third of calls.

3. ACE has evidence from such calls that if schools do not act quickly and effectively to stamp out bullying it can spiral out of control and become a triple blow for families:

- Strike 1—The child suffers bullying at school.
- Strike 2—The parent feels the school is not doing enough and their child is in danger so keeps their child at home. The child misses out on their education.
- Strike 3—The school and the local authority (LA) continue to leave the bullying untackled and instead threaten the parent with prosecution. The family faces more stress and the child falls further behind in their schooling.

4. And there is a fourth effect: that of the worm turning, where a child retaliates against a bully and is excluded. In over 5% of ACE's exclusion calls parents said that the reason for the exclusion was a response to bullying.

5. Many schools simply do not respond quickly or effectively enough to put a stop to bullying. This puts massive pressure onto entire families and can lead to huge problems. But in ACE's experience, this issue is the most difficult for parents to get an effective response from schools.

6. Parents have three main requirements:

- (i) They want schools to have effective strategies in place to minimise bullying and to deal effectively with it when it occurs.
- (ii) They want their concerns to be responded to by the school.
- (iii) They want somewhere to go other than the school when the school has failed to deal with bullying, and for that source of help to be able to intervene with the school on their child's behalf to resolve the problem.

7. ACE notes Ofsted's findings in its 2004 report on bullying in secondary schools that schools should actively involve pupils and parents in combating bullying, and that "effective liaison with parents is vital to tackle bullying successfully" (para 61).

8. That report reveals that over two-fifths of the schools studied did not take comprehensive enough action to ensure that bullying did not re-occur. Many also had difficulties communicating with parents and ensuring that parents knew that their concerns were taken seriously.

9. We attach a set of recent case histories from our advice lines to illustrate the failures we have encountered.

Recommendations

10. The effects on children and young people, and their families, can be extremely destructive, even fatal, and can leave survivors with long-term damage to their confidence and to their attainment. ACE therefore believes that parents need an effective and speedy remedy when they have exhausted the complaints procedures of the school and local authority to no avail. We recommend:

- a fresh look at what can be done to provide that speedy and effective remedy;
- anti-bullying policies to be made mandatory on schools, with inspection checking on how "live" those policies are, and use of interviews etc. specifically targeted at the experiences of individual pupils who may otherwise be overlooked in gross performance data;
- those policies to make explicit links with special needs and anti-racism policies, disability equality schemes, and to contain anti-homophobic bullying policies;
- the formation of an agency in each LA area to which parents and children can turn, and which can offer mediation between parent, child and the school and advise the school on training and behavioural issues; and
- LAs, in their role as champions of children and parents as envisaged by *Higher Standards, Better Schools for All*, being empowered to direct schools to draw up effective anti-bullying policies and strategies where parents' complaints have shown these to be missing or ineffective.

BARRIERS TO SCHOOLS PREVENTING OR DEALING WITH BULLYING

Accountability is not clear or strong enough

11. The formal requirements on schools to act to tackle bullying are relatively weak when compared with their accountability on truancy and exclusions, where data collection makes visible problems to governing bodies and LAs.

12. Small numbers of complaints may conceal acceptance of a culture of constant bullying as normal. As with looked after children, the outcomes for bullied children need to be subject to individual attention. High ratings for schools and LAs may conceal the problem. The comparatively small numbers of bullied children mean they can be invisible in the management information used by local authorities and in school performance tables.

Schools persist in lacking policies, training and awareness

13. ACE remains surprised by the number of calls we have that indicate the school has no anti-bullying policy, let alone one that is drawn up with pupils and reviewed each year to ensure that it is agreed by the school community as a live document informing everyone's behaviour.

14. ACE supports the "core belief" of the Practitioners' Group on School Behaviour and Discipline (the Steer Committee) that:

"Respect has to be given in order to be received. Parents and carers, pupils and teachers all need to operate in a culture of mutual regard."

15. Such a culture needs to prevail in the staff room and senior management team as well as between staff and pupils, pupil and pupil, and school and parents. Bullying, including racist¹² and homophobic bullying, is known to occur among staff as well as among pupils. Indeed, one web site claims that teachers, lecturers and employees in education are the single largest group of callers to the UK National Workplace Bullying Helpline.¹³

16. ACE is also aware of the ineffectiveness of harsh punishments used instead of preventive measures, and that some bullies are in need of as much support as the pupils they victimise. Complex problems such as these call for thoughtful long-term solutions rather than firing from the hip.

17. ACE is extremely concerned by the plight of children in schools that are in difficulties, with demoralised staff and little capacity to protect victims.

Resistance to acknowledging the problem

18. Our cases below show how resistant schools can be to responding to parents' concerns, even where there is clear evidence from other professionals as well as from parent and child of how damaging the bullying is. This is why we believe parents need speedy and effective intervention on the child's behalf. At the moment where parents have tried everything to no avail all we can do is advise seeking medical support for keeping the child at home so that prosecution for non-attendance does not follow, and to seek an alternative school, which of course is no guarantee the problems will cease.

BULLYING STORIES FROM CALLERS

19. These are examples from a much greater number of calls, picked to exemplify how powerless parents are when faced with tackling a school which will not take action on bullying.

CASE 1

The child was out of school for five months for mental illness caused by bullying. During this time the LA offered her 2.5 hours tuition a week at centre for children with medical needs with the aim (LA's) of reintegration back into the same school.

The school's governors then had a meeting and decided to ban the child from the school for health and safety reasons to protect her from the other pupils. The LA was ineffective in challenging this unlawful and inappropriate use of health and safety procedures, and the parent only achieved a multi-agency meeting with the school after complaining to the Secretary of State. At that point the school agreed to a reintegration plan, but then said that it would go ahead only if the parent agreed to withdraw her bullying complaint against the school. The LA remained ineffectual, with the director of education writing to the parent to point out the child was in danger of permanent exclusion if she returned to the school.

¹² "Black teachers face bullying and racism, survey finds", *The Guardian*, 8 September 2006.

¹³ <http://www.bullyonline.org/workbully/teachers.htm>, accessed 11 September 2006.

CASE 2

A child aged four was very unhappy at school, telling her mother that she was being teased and isolated by her peers. She frequently came home crying and did not want to go to school. Her mother believed she needed help with play skills and peer relationships as she had a language impairment. She was not statemented so depended on the school to put such a programme into place. She was receiving blocks of direct speech therapy from the local NHS, but the school did not seem to be getting advice from the therapist.

The mother raised her concerns with the child's teacher, who responded a week later by saying that she had investigated and the child was "obsessing" about these issues. The teacher did not suggest how the child, who was in her view obsessive and unhappy, might be helped.

The child was then injured in the playground to the extent of needing stitches. The head told the mother that this was not bullying because children of that age did not bully.

Throughout the SENCO was not informed or aware of these difficulties.

CASE 3

A 13-year-old with severe asthma had been bullied for two years. The school's response to the parent's complaints was to informally and unlawfully exclude the child for health and safety reasons. The mother was frequently called to the school to take her daughter home, so frequently that she could not make any arrangements to be elsewhere. The school then told the parent that they could not guarantee the child's safety at break times and asked that she be kept home altogether. The mother kept her daughter home for two weeks.

The mother supplied some education while her daughter was off school but could not match what the child would have received at school.

After speaking to ACE, the parent involved the police who attended a meeting with the bully and staff at the school. According to the parent, things got sorted because the bully was faced with the threat of prosecution. She now talks to the girl who had been doing it, who says, "Because I wasn't stopped I just carried on."

The daughter is now happy to go to school, but still suffers from anxiety and lacks confidence. Her mother is concerned that her education suffered during the prolonged interference from the bullying, and that she has had no compensatory education now it has stopped.

CASE 4

A Year 7 boy had been out of school for three months because his parents did not believe he was safe at school after he was physically assaulted as the culmination of a series of bullying events. Although the parents were not being pursued over the child's absence, nothing was being done by the school or local authority to provide education otherwise than at school, to draw up a plan for safe reintegration to the same school, or to ensure transfer to a school which could ensure his health and safety. The child had a statement of special needs.

CASE 5

Another Year 7 boy was in hospital when his mother called ACE, recovering from an operation after a physical assault. The mother had made four formal complaints over repeated assaults by fellow pupils on the school bus in the two terms the child had attended the school. The child was one of only a very few Black African pupils in the school, and the only one on the bus. The school, the mother said, was "not helpful", and refused to follow up her suggestion that racism might be a factor.

CASE 6

A Year 8 boy had been frequently assaulted, and had refused to attend school for the previous six weeks because he was afraid. He had special needs but no statement. His mother was having to leave her work to persuade him to attend school, but did not like forcing him to do so. She was doing this because of threats to prosecute her.

CASE 7

A Year 9 boy with Asperger's syndrome had been excluded for seven days for physical assault against another pupil. He was receiving no support in the school, and the parent believed that his subject teachers were not aware that he was on the autistic spectrum. The pupil said that he had hit the other pupil because of persistent teasing. His mother maintained that the other children knew that his response would be extreme because of his anxiety and were out to provoke him.

CASE 8

A Year 9 boy was refusing to attend school because he was being bullied. He had special needs, and some professionals believed he was autistic, but he had not had a diagnosis. The local authority's education welfare officer and social services called a multi-agency conference over his non-attendance at which papers were tabled which alleged the mother was agoraphobic (she had no such condition) and suggested that if she did not agree to their plan for the child he would be considered for fostering.

CASE 9

A Year 7 girl was repeatedly assaulted. The school had been classified as failing by Ofsted, and the parent blamed that for the staff's inaction on the bullying. The parent had asked repeatedly for the school's anti-bullying policy, but only obtained it after two months of asking. The school left it to the parent to contact the school after incidents which caused injuries on the school's premises. The police were now involved in an investigation over the most recent injury. Bullying and assaults were a known general problem at the school.

CASE 10

In spite of the GP's advice to stay home after frequent extreme attacks (one of which resulted in a broken arm), a Year 10 boy was insisting on attending school because he was anxious about his GCSEs. When the mother complained to the local authority that the community school was not dealing with the problem, the LA suggested alternative schools, but all were unacceptable to the pupil and his parents because they were lower on the league tables than his current school. Instead of tackling the aggressors, the school had offered the pupil a pastoral support plan and a restorative justice counsellor.

CASE 11

A Year 10 boy had been subjected to persistent bullying after joining the school in Year 9.

The school failed to take action, and only after the police arrested the perpetrators of the most recent attack did the school admit that the victim was being subjected to unprovoked assaults. His coursework had also been stolen. The parent wanted a safer school in spite of the consequences of changing schools during GCSEs because she believed his physical and mental health was in danger as well as his GCSE chances, but the LA was not helping her. Two other local schools had informally refused places for apparently unlawful reasons. The parent had taken out a formal complaint against his current school.

CASE 12

A teenage girl who was one of only a small number of black or mixed race children in a rural school was becoming depressed by constant racial taunts. Her mother, also black, had been to the same school herself and suffered similar treatment. The school felt because the girl was popular and doing well in school that the bullying was not serious and only tackled it in a half-hearted way. The family were considering moving back to London where "you are looked at as a person rather than for your colour".

CASE 13

A Year 8 boy who was plump was being physically and verbally attacked by other pupils. During one such attack, he escaped the bullies and was running away in panic when a teacher put out an arm to stop him. He "ran through" the teacher's arm, and was then excluded for a week for that. His mother drew the school's attention to the bullying, including evidence of abuse on a web site and mobile phone messages. The parent says the school has ignored this and the child remained excluded.

CASE 14

A Year 9 girl who was severely asthmatic experienced mental and physical bullying from the same pupils (who transferred with her from primary school) for four years. She then had a mental health breakdown. On her return the school isolated her and appointed a mentor to work with her, but did not deal with the general problem among the other pupils. The mother decided to keep her at home, supported by her GP and clinical psychologist, who described the impact of the bullying as a "lasting effect on her self-confidence and self-esteem". But the school's reaction was to treat her absence as unauthorised, involving the education welfare officer to pursue the parent for her child's non-attendance.

The parent had attempted to persuade the school to deal with the bullying by every means at her disposal, writing to the head, governors, LA, and involving the police.

October 2006

Witnesses: Ms Caroline Day, Researcher, Barnardo's, *Mr Benet Middleton*, Director of Communications and Public Affairs, National Autistic Society, *Dr Shobha Das*, Deputy Director, Support Against Racist Incidents (SARI), and *Ms Chris Gravell*, Policy Officer, Advisory Centre for Education, gave evidence.

Q120 Chairman: I welcome the witnesses to our deliberations. Thank you very much for giving up time to come before the Committee. We take our inquiry into bullying very seriously. We hope to get some information to add to the very good written submissions that you have sent to the Committee. Starting from the left with Mr Middleton, in a couple of minutes can you say why we should be holding this inquiry? What is the problem? There is frenetic activity taking place in anti-bullying week. A good many Members of Parliament like myself have been to schools. I went to a school in Skipton on Friday and participated in an anti-bullying session. How big is the problem, and do we need this inquiry?

Mr Middleton: The National Autistic Society provides a lot of services to a lot of people with autism. It probably supports about 2,800 children across the UK and runs six special schools with around 400 students in them. It also provides an education advice line, so the society has a lot of direct contact with children and families and feedback about their experience of bullying. The society has also carried out some research recently which highlights the full extent of the problem. About one in 100 children have autism which is a condition that creates barriers to communication and social interaction. Inevitably, by its very nature it makes children much more susceptible to bullying. The studies suggest that about four out of 10 children with autism—that is probably an underestimate because those are parental views rather than necessarily direct experience—rising to six out of 10 children with Asperger's syndrome experience some form of bullying. Whilst we recognise that a lot of schools are going the extra mile to support children with Asperger's syndrome and autism, and many parents tell us about really good policies in some schools, an awful lot are not. That creates major issues which often lead to a spiralling of bad behaviour and bad relations with schools that can have a major impact on people's lives. We think that strengthened guidance on bullying, particularly for disability and autism, and training for teachers and schools to take a whole school approach to thinking about disability and autism within their anti-bullying and other policies is absolutely critical.

Q121 Chairman: Last week I was talking to an old school friend of mine. I said that I could not remember any bullying ever in my school. Then he said, "What about those two boys who could not march in step in the cadet force? We made their lives a misery." I totally forgot that. One can assume one's school days were free of bullying. It brought me up very sharply.

Ms Gravell: I work for the Advisory Centre for Education which advises parents. We fund help lines and hear about bullying from the parents' point of view. I think you will see from our written evidence that we have some powerful case studies which show that special educational needs or disabilities are a big

feature among the victims. I can certainly back up what Mr Middleton has said about the need for school policies to include a read-across to things like SEN and disability equality policies. From our point of view, parents find that persistent bullying is one of the most intractable problems to deal with in schools. Where schools do not respond there is nothing very much that parents can do about it. They can go right up the ladder of complaint to the local authority and still not get anywhere. Sometimes the local authority threatens to prosecute parents when their child does not attend school because it has become frightened or mentally ill because of persistent bullying. We do not want new legislation because the Education and Inspections Act has just been passed.

Q122 Chairman: This Committee bears the scars!

Ms Gravell: Section 60 and following provisions of that Act now enable local authorities to intervene where children are not safe in schools. They can issue warning notices that require schools to do something about what is happening. It seems to me that this would be an excellent use of that power. We have suggested that there is an agency in each local authority to which parents can go to offer mediation so that things can be settled at a much lower level, but if they face total intransigence in a school that is falling apart and may not have the capacity to put itself together on its own children are victimised along the way and suffer awful things. When I was on the advice line on Monday I heard about a child who had been concussed and was in hospital for two days. The school, possibly in an effort not to report it properly, just brought him home by car to his parent's house and did not tell her what had happened. It was only later when he started to become dizzy that she realised he had a head injury. This sort of thing is positively dangerous and cannot be allowed to go on. There needs to be some arrangement whereby there is speedy and effective reaction by the statutory authorities to make sure that the duty of care to children is fulfilled.

Q123 Chairman: What about parents who complain about bullying outside the school gate? That is something with which I and my children were familiar. Traditionally, the head would say that his remit finished at the school gate. How do people these days react to that view?

Ms Gravell: I would go along with the current idea of extending behaviour and anti-bullying policies as much as possible into the community and getting the whole school community to agree the strategies, principles and so on. To some extent that reaches into the community. There are disciplinary powers in the new Act which allow punishment to be imposed for behaviour outside school where the school is involved in some way. What we would be looking for is not so much punishment—we are not in favour of extremely punitive responses to bullying—as constructive preventative work that a

lot of schools do. I am sure that you have read a lot of the research by now and heard about it. That should involve the whole school.

Q124 Chairman: Last week some parents, who were not my constituents, wrote to me to say that their 13-year-old daughter had been badly beaten by three girls on the top deck of a bus whilst going home from school. It was stopped by another passenger. There was very slow action taken, and no action was taken by the police. Is that not to be taken seriously?

Ms Gravell: Absolutely. One of our cases is like that. A child was persistently being picked on, taunted and subjected to physical assaults on a bus to and from school. She was the only black child in the school. Something must be done. I am not necessarily in favour of asking that the police intervene, but sometimes that is the only thing we can advise parents to do.

Q125 Helen Jones: You talked about having constructive policies to deal with bullying, with which I agree, but the problem many of us encounter all the time is that schools whose teachers are not well trained in dealing with it can use that as an excuse for doing very little about bullying. That makes the victim feel as if he or she is not being taken seriously. How do you stop that happening?

Ms Gravell: I go back to the issue that local authorities may be able to require schools to be trained properly. If one has a school like that it is probably chaotic all the way round. Discipline will probably not be followed through consistently and there will not be a culture of respect.

Q126 Chairman: Dr Das, what is your view on this? You have a big and impressive team of 23 staff and volunteers.

Dr Das: Not all of them work in a specialist way with young people. We have two people who work with children in schools. For us, one of the interesting matters is that we have been doing case work for about 15 years and every year the single biggest client group has been the under-16s. That is quite telling. I understand that nationally the statistics suggest that in relation to racist incidents, which is our field of expertise, about 50% involve a young person under 17 as either victim or perpetrator. This is a huge issue. To echo some of the things that have been said, it has a tremendous effect on the lives of young people. We have experience of children who have turned to bleaching themselves to try to turn white because of the constant taunting about the colour of their skin. One sees under-achievement and truancy. In a sense it sets up communities for failure. To go back to the point raised by Helen Jones, part of the problem is that teachers do not have confidence to deal with this. There is a lot of fear about talking of issues to do with race. People are scared about terminology; they do not how to talk about it, so often they end up not talking about it at all. Basically, you send to the victims the impression that teachers do not care when that may not be the case; it is just that they do not know what to do about it. That sets up circles of retaliation. If

15 times you have been bullied and reported it to the teacher nothing has been done on the sixteenth occasion you may raise your fist and hit back, but then immediate disciplinary sanctions work really well. This puts communities in a very unfavourable light in some senses. Part of the problem is that for children bullying happens not just round schools; it happens around homes as well. As for a lot of the people we deal with, in school they are bullied and are called “black bastard”—all kinds of things. I am sorry for the language, but racism and bullying are ugly. When they come home it is not as if they have peace and quiet for eight hours of play time and they can go into the garden or relax in their rooms and listen to music. The children are waiting for the next brick to come through the window. It is that dramatic for the lives of many children in the cases that we deal with. There is also very poor joint working in some instances. Bristol is very lucky and is a very good model. We work across four local authorities in an area formerly called Avon and now known as CUBA: Bristol, Bath, North and North East Somerset and South Gloucestershire. Three of those local authority areas are very rural with small BME populations. Bristol is relatively more cosmopolitan. I believe that Bristol’s children and young people’s services has geared itself up a little more to deal with issues to do with racism and racist bullying in schools. They have learned how better to connect with other organisations, such as the police, SARI and Bristol City Council. It is working in a much more integrated fashion. One of the problems is that sometimes schools will say that they have done what the policy says they need to do, but they need to go beyond that. Often schools will say that they have it on a piece of paper and so they are safe; they can tick the box, but those documents do not live; they stay in a filing cabinet and nobody ever refers to them. I believe that if we do not deal with it we set up strategies like community cohesion for absolute failure.

Q127 Chairman: I ask Caroline Day to come in.

Ms Day: I am from Barnardo’s. The track that we have been taking on this matter is to work directly with young people and children. We work with 120,000 children a year. One of our key areas of work is to look at their mental health and emotional wellbeing. In young people’s own words, bullying is the most significant factor that is harmful to their own emotional wellbeing and mental health. They have also identified that it is the one thing that makes their schooling most unhappy for them. They have been particularly concerned about identity-related bullying. We did some research with them on the question of what identity-related bullying was and whether they thought this was worse than any other kind. They were able to articulate what they saw and thought was different about people. Whilst difference was the main thing—it could be any factor from weight and height to the clothes that people wear—the three important things that they mentioned were sexuality—the fact that a person might be lesbian, gay or bisexual—race, colour and the different factors that go with that, such as

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culture, dress, language and accent; and also whether or not you were disabled. The research revealed, quite interestingly, young people's perceptions about what could be done to improve this and whether or not bullying was worse because of those three factors than general bullying. That view was generally supported because they were things that could not be changed. We have done a lot of work directly with young people to hear what they have to say about it: how they want things to change, their views on present policies and how it can be taken forward from there.

Chairman: We have a very good general impression. The more I listen and learn about the subject the more depressed I become. Let us try to look at particular types of bullying.

Q128 Mr Chaytor: To pursue Caroline Day's point, in terms of what may be described as prejudice-based bullying is it different in kind from other kinds of bullying? Are the techniques that children use against those who are victims because they belong to some minority group or other different from other methods of bullying?

Ms Day: It seemed to vary sometimes. Those were the very specific factors that they picked out and were the things that put young people more at risk. Vulnerability and resilience also seemed to be two factors which young people identified. We had some situations where young people said that, say, someone of Chinese origin would be bullied at school, whereas in another situation someone of Chinese origin was the most popular boy in the school and everybody thought he was wonderful. We were trying to unpick the reason for that. It was something different that made you vulnerable. We also realised that it very much depended on the bullies themselves. Young people were very quick to identify two types of bully. There were the ones who said that they wanted to be big, clever and popular; they did it as a method of control. But there were also bullies who were very insecure and could in turn have been bullied and abused not just within the school but possibly at home as well. It was their way to try to establish themselves. If they could make themselves feel better by using that control and domination over somebody else that was the factor they would use.

Q129 Mr Chaytor: Do the bullies tend to use different techniques against minority group victims, or are the techniques common across the board?

Ms Day: I would say that based on our research they are fairly common. There might be different techniques between gender. Sometimes the methods used by boys would tend to be more violent, whereas girls would use far more emotional and verbal tactics to exclude people. The general methods themselves seemed to be common whatever the reason for the bullying in the first place. It could be physical or verbal. The whole area of relational or emotional bullying seems to be quite a big problem. Young people have begun to mention the use of technology—cyber bullying and the use of mobile

phones—but in our research that has not been as great as suggested in other pieces of research or in the media at the moment.

Q130 Mr Chaytor: Do you believe there is a case for a separate set of policies for prejudice-based bullying or not? Is it so distinct that there should be separate guidelines, or if the techniques are broadly the same can they just be rolled up in general anti-bullying policies?

Ms Day: Often it is about the whole ethos. What young people were saying was that no bullying was acceptable. It is about having that ethos in schools with a whole school approach and everybody having those values so that there is no bullying within those kinds of brackets. I do not know that different policies or one policy that covered all is the way forward.

Q131 Mr Chaytor: Does anyone feel strongly that there ought to be a separate set of guidelines to deal with prejudice-based bullying?

Mr Middleton: No, not at the moment. One of our concerns is that if you look at the DfES guidelines on bullying in schools they already take a different approach. Certainly, from the perspective of disability it seems to us that it is not as strong. In a way, in the guidance more emphasis is placed on the person with the disability than on dealing with the behaviour. It is subtle; it is not black and white, but certainly there is more emphasis placed on the child, whether it is finding safe havens for the child or teaching the child to be assertive, whereas with sexist and racist bullying it is bit clearer that one should be addressing the bullying behaviour. For the moment, the guidance differs and that is not really acceptable.

Q132 Mr Chaytor: Therefore, what would you like to see added to the DfES guidelines to make them more effective?

Mr Middleton: We would like to get rid of the distinction between different types of bullying which appears to be in the guidance already and make it absolutely clear that a school should be tackling bullying as a whole and dealing with the bullying behaviour, not necessarily thinking about how to remove the child from that situation.

Ms Gravell: Quite often, in anti-racist bullying policies one has a strong rights-based approach which is absolutely correct, but one does not find that in the disability and special needs bullying codes where it seems to be far more to do with protecting victims and victims being trained in social skills so they do not get bullied. For some children that will not be possible anyway. Across the board we would like to see a unified idea of respect and rights for all school pupils and the bullies who become victims and the victims who became bullies will need just as much support. That is one of the reasons we are not in favour of very strong punitive approaches.

Dr Das: I think that there is a case to be made for the same policies to deal with prejudice-based bullying at the moment. The long-term aim needs to be to have a completely unified approach to bullying across the board. At this point because of the lack of

confidence of authorities in dealing in particular with prejudice-based bullying I think we need to cast a special eye on that field.

Q133 Mr Chaytor: What kind of special guidance do you envisage?

Dr Das: It has to be a package. One aspect of the policy has to be about sanctions and teachers, or whoever is dealing with it, thinking much more clearly about how to get across to the bully the significance of this kind of behaviour but also how we provide the specialist support that the victims of prejudice-based bullying need and which perhaps the victims of other kinds of bullying do not need. But the other aspect has to be about staff training and a rolling review which is not something that is done and finished; it does not finish quite that easily.

Q134 Mr Chaytor: Chris Gravell mentioned the section 60 provisions in the new Act. As to the question of withdrawing children, is it always better to withdraw children from school where bullying is so intense, or is there an advantage in keeping them in the school to help both victim and bully confront the issue? Where does the balance lie?

Ms Gravell: Are you talking about excluding bullies from school or withdrawing children who are bullied?

Q135 Mr Chaytor: I am referring to victims.

Ms Gravell: We are utterly against it. We often find that parents withdraw their children because it is the only thing they can do to keep them safe in their eyes. The child may be absolutely terrified of going to school and the parent cannot physically get the child out of the door. Obviously, that is not advisable because the child is missing out on education. We have also found that schools unlawfully exclude children for so-called health and safety reasons if they are victims of bullying.

Q136 Mr Chaytor: Schools exclude children who are the victims?

Ms Gravell: They exclude the victims for health and safety reasons. We have at least two cases in our case studies to which reference is made in our written evidence. They say that they cannot protect the child at lunch time or during the unstructured times of the day.

Q137 Mr Chaytor: The child then becomes a double victim?

Ms Gravell: Yes; that happens. If the school cannot for some reason do the job that it is meant to do, which is to keep the children safe, that is the sort of thing that happens. Obviously, that is wrong because the child is missing out on education. If the child remains in school it may be missing out anyway because it cannot attend or concentrate, and it is missing out on the social mix in the so-called unstructured times.

Q138 Mr Chaytor: The consensus seems to be that the concept of cyber bullying is on the increase whereas general levels of bullying are declining.

Does everyone agree with that? What can schools do to deal with this? Can schools have any responsibility for the way their pupils use mobile phones outside school hours, for example? Is there some really good practice on the part of schools in dealing with this new phenomenon?

Ms Day: Our research reveals very mixed views, with some young people saying that it is an issue and others saying it is not. We have not gone as far as look at how it can be tackled or what kind of good practice can come out of this. Unfortunately, I think that it is such a widely diverse area and so difficult to pin down with the nature of the task in hand that the young people with whom we work and our staff have not been able to target that yet. I suggest that it comes back to the situation within schools and the home and the values and ethos about treating people with respect.

Q139 Mr Chaytor: Is this too recent a phenomenon to have attracted any serious examination?

Mr Middleton: We try to provide guidance to parents who come to us. Unfortunately, it is all about the behaviour of the child and it is to do with ensuring that the child does not make his or her mobile phone number available to people and reporting examples of cyber bullying to internet service providers and chat room providers, but it is still quite early days. At the moment it is a defensive type of action.

Dr Das: We do not have very much experience of cyber bullying. The cases that we have had relate to adults.

Q140 Mr Chaytor: Does it all take place outside school hours, or are children using their mobiles during school hours between lesson times to harass and bully, in which case why let them keep their mobile phones with them when they enter school?

Ms Gravell: Sometimes they do it surreptitiously and the school is not necessarily aware that they have the mobile phones.

Q141 Mr Chaytor: But if they had to deposit their mobiles at the main office when they came to school would that not cut out a huge opportunity for cyber bullying during the hours of the school day?

Ms Gravell: We do not have a strong view on that, given that some children report the need for a phone to make them feel safe because they can call for help.

Chairman: That is a very good answer.

Q142 Fiona Mactaggart: We are also conducting an inquiry into citizenship education. In listening to what you said I was struck by a lack of clarity in schools about the rights of victims of all kinds of bullying. You contrasted the way in which victims as a result of disability were treated in comparison to those who were victims because of race, in that those dealing with them seemed more aware that rights came into play in race. Is it your view that schools which have a robust citizenship education model and recognise human rights as part of that can deal better with bullying than other schools? Does it make a difference?

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Ms Gravell: I think it does. There is recent evidence from the programme run under UNICEF about rights education in schools that it really does help. Anything that increases the reasons for mutual respect, as Sir Alan Steer called it, will help, and a rights-based citizenship programme will obviously be useful in that regard.

Dr Das: I agree. I think that where there is an ethos about promoting citizenship as a good thing for the future that is something that we see generally as a more consistent and firm approach to bullying. I think that in schools where that is a strong focus they are quite creative in terms of how they handle bullying. It is not a stick-based approach. They do things to keep pupils safe. To go back to a point made earlier, it is not about excluding victims to make them feel safer; it is about giving them techniques like red and yellow cards to flag for the future when they are feeling unsafe. There is an aspect where other pupils in the classroom are also encouraged to watch out for the safety of their colleagues. There is a better ethos where there is better citizenship education.

Q143 Fiona Mactaggart: Does it reach children with autism and other disorders?

Mr Middleton: I do not know specifically about the issue of citizenship studies, but certainly we would want to see approaches to bullying going beyond just a bullying policy—something flexed in such a way that the whole school deals with issues. When schools have been thinking about their duties under the disability equality legislation they need to think about how they reflect bullying within those policies but also perhaps how to work with whole classes in dealing with bullying, particularly in relation to autism. We have found that things like circles of friends where we get a group of people to think about how it might work with and support the child are very effective. I think that to broaden it beyond bullying and thinking about how the school approaches it right across the board, particularly in relation to disability but I am sure also in relation to other areas of discrimination, is absolutely critical.

Ms Day: When we were doing our research a lot of the young people asked for better use of citizenship or PSHE lessons. They felt that a lot of topics covered, especially those to do with sexuality or race, were always regarded as “the other”. It was never directed at them as a group; it was always an issue covered outside that classroom; it would always be somebody else who was gay and this might happen, but it was never brought down to the young people in that room. It brought about the feeling that it did not really happen there and was not something that they needed to worry about; it would always be an outside issue. They felt that particularly in relation to homophobia and sexuality the issues in schools were often tiptoed around quite a lot and schools needed to address them a bit more head on. People were not worried about that and they felt that it would not encourage more bullying behaviour. One young person said that teachers were scared because they thought it might make young people gay if they made them more aware of their options and it was

still choice rather than something in you from the start. They felt that if that could be brought out in schools and children could understand that the person sitting next to them was first and foremost their friend, not just somebody on the street who is gay or black or whatever, it would bring it home that much more. They also thought that in that way they could participate far more in it and wanted a greater role in what was being said in policies and within lessons. It was not just what they were being told; they wanted to look at it themselves, have their own groups, be able to address it and talk to each other and work out what is best for them rather than just have a policy that assumes what might be best for them.

Q144 Mr Carswell: Do you agree that children with special needs are quite often more vulnerable to bullying?

Mr Middleton: That is so specifically with autism because it is about the way someone interacts with others.

Q145 Mr Carswell: Do you say that children with special needs in mainstream schools are particularly vulnerable as compared with those who perhaps might be in special schools?

Mr Middleton: I do not think the research is clear on that. Clearly, bullying takes place in all environments. Our study showed a slightly lower level of bullying in special schools, but clearly bullying takes place in all environments.

Q146 Mr Carswell: What more can be done? We looked at a different report. Some parents quite rightly choose to put their children into mainstream schools. Do you think that this has created a specific challenge and if we are to have successful policies we need to do more?

Mr Middleton: I certainly do not think that that should be driven by bullying. If we talk about segregation on the grounds of race because of bullying people would be rightly horrified, but sometimes it is suggested as a response to disability bullying which highlights the distinctions that are made. We would very much take the point that it is the right school for every child, so you start with the child and the child’s needs. Some children will do much better if they are included or supported in mainstream schooling and some may be better off in special schools. It is about the best environment for the child. How do you support the child in that environment, whether it be dealing with bullying or any other barriers that the child might face in engaging in that educational setting.

Q147 Helen Jones: I am anxious we also recognise that among a lot of young people, certainly the ones that I meet, there is a far greater degree of tolerance in many areas than there is among adults. I do not think we should lose sight of that. My question is: how do you build on that? We talk about bullying in relation to school discipline policies in general. Have you come across any evidence, as opposed to a general feeling, that bullying is more widespread in

schools that do not have thorough discipline policies and a culture of respect, or is it simply hidden in some schools because they do not want to admit that they have it? In your experience is it also the case that if there is bullying it arises throughout the spectrum and there can be bullying of staff as well as children? All of us have a general feeling about it, but is there any concrete evidence?

Ms Gravell: In September the *Guardian* reported a survey of black teachers who faced bullying and racism in staff rooms. There is also an organisation called the UK National Workplace Bullying Helpline which says that teachers, lecturers and employees in education are the single largest group of callers. Obviously, it is going on.

Q148 Helen Jones: With the experience of the heads under whom I have worked I can well believe that.

Ms Gravell: We know that there are lots of cases of harassment and workplace bullying among the NUT membership that are brought to court. It is a problem throughout. I suppose that in a very enclosed environment these problems arise.

Q149 Helen Jones: All of us share that feeling. I am trying to see whether there are any hard statistics on the point.

Ms Gravell: Those are two examples of which I have experience. There are other reports of problems among staff as well as pupils in schools.

Q150 Stephen Williams: The first matter on which I want to focus is the definition of bullying. There appears to be some tension among the witnesses as to whether or not we need perhaps a statutory definition of bullying. Mr Middleton said he felt that bullying should just have a general definition and the school should deal with all types of bullying, whereas Dr Das felt that perhaps there needed to be specific policies for specific types of bullying. Do we need a statutory definition of bullying?

Mr Middleton: My point was not concerned so much with the definition of bullying as the guidance being offered to schools on how to deal with it and the fact that distinctions were made by schools in their response to bullying based on sexism, race and disability. Therefore, in terms of the definition I have no specific comment. My point was about the guidance rather than the definition.

Ms Day: When we talk about a definition it is important to make sure that young people and adults mean the same thing and that we have an understanding of language. One matter that we have noticed is that often young people mean very different things by what they say, explain things in different ways and have very different views on what bullying means to them. With it becoming quite a well used word in recent years, it is about defining what we are going to talk about as bullying. Language has evolved in a lot of areas and young people are very much aware of it. In particular, they use the word “gay” to mean “stupid” or “daft”—for example, “You wear gay trainers.” “Bullying” is everything from a bit of pushing and shoving in the playground or harmless teasing right up to the

extreme of physical and verbal violence. I think it is quite important to consult with young people so that they are on the same track as ourselves in understanding bullying to mean what we understand it to mean.

Q151 Stephen Williams: In the guidelines should there be strict definitions of different types of bullying, or how much should be left to the actual school to evolve its own policy on bullying?

Dr Das: We find that often schools do not struggle to identify an incident of bullying. That does not seem to be a problem. For us the problem is one of identifying incidents of racist bullying. They can see something as bullying easily enough but they do not want to put the stamp of prejudice on it because somehow they feel that it makes them look bad.

Q152 Stephen Williams: Is there not a statutory duty under the Race Relations Act to report a racist incident in a school?

Dr Das: Yes, but it does not happen. Schools are very hesitant to report it. They feel that they are black-listed for reporting racist incidents, so a lot of the work that we have done in the areas in which we have been engaged has been to say that it is good practice to report and that the purpose of reporting is to make sure that they get the support they need.

Q153 Stephen Williams: The Chairman mentioned that this was Anti-Bullying Week and the various groups within that coalition are focusing on bystanders. I suppose that “people who witness bullying” would be a better way to put it. All of us can remember witnessing bullying in school. We have the statistic that 85% of children have seen someone being bullied, but there seems to be a difference among the various organisations as to how many children then try to do something about it either by intervening directly or reporting it to a teacher. How can a school have a policy on what it might expect other children to do when they see bullying, or is it something on which one cannot really have a policy?

Ms Gravell: One certainly can have a policy on it. I think that a number of schools were aware of the report of the Children’s Commissioner published on Monday. That showed at least one school where there was a very well developed group of pupils which was like a bullying appeal group; that is, if other pupils had a problem as bystanders they could be backed up by others. They were not by any means anti-bullying police but they were very strong in supporting pupils who needed to do something about behaviour in those groups.

Dr Das: I am not sure that we can address the issue of bystanders by policies. I think that it has to be more about promoting a culture where people take responsibility for things that they see. I go back to the point I made earlier. A lot of children suffer bullying not just in school and in that regulated environment but also around the home.

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Encouragement should be given to young people to say that when they see something they have a responsibility and duty to intervene in some way. Talk them through personal safety issues because one does not want young people getting knifed for intervening in bullying. It must be that level of change which makes a significant difference.

Q154 Stephen Williams: What mechanisms do you think schools should have in place in order to encourage children to report bullying or to intervene in bullying cases?

Dr Das: Probably the solution is the one raised earlier by Fiona Mactaggart; that is, the promotion and highlighting of the citizenship education ethos.

Ms Gravell: I think there must be very flexible ways for children to do it, so there may be anonymised bully boxes, or perhaps they can talk to other pupils and report it via that route, but it is not just a question of going to a nominated teacher in a well-publicised way so that everybody can see you doing it. If one has a school that is good at involving pupils it may never need to get as far as teachers. It is dreadful but the research of the Children's Commissioner has shown that when reporting bullying and whether or not it is resolved pupils say that teachers are the most ineffective route to pursue, which is rather sad. If one can develop a culture among pupils whereby they help each other it is probably more effective than snitching to an adult.

Ms Day: Peer pressure is a huge factor in these situations. A lot of the young people with whom we have worked have said how difficult it is, either because one ends up siding with the bully because one is pulled into that group or because one is just too scared to do anything about it. Although they recognise that most bullying happens in school it is not just teachers and pupils who are there; there is a host of other support staff. The key people they mention are dinner ladies. Seeing that bullying often happens at break times and lunch times, they say support staff such as dinner ladies need to be on board to be aware of these policies, not to be prejudiced themselves, but to keep a second eye out be aware of what is going on and, if they think that something is happening, to act on it. It is a double-barrelled approach to it.

Dr Das: Some of the best examples that we have seen of the sustainable targeting of bullying and the elimination or reduction in the number of cases arise where schools have trained pupils in peer mediation. That is another area where pupils are encouraged to take responsibility and also have the skills to do that.

Mr Middleton: In the case of autism this often goes to the heart of how one deals with it. Often a child with autism will not appreciate that he or she is being bullied. Such a child will not know the social rules. That can be quite extreme and can range from a child who is told by another boy that he will be hit every day so he believes that that is the rule to much more subtle types of bullying where the child may be led into quite inappropriate behaviour. Encouraging

other children to report and support that process is absolutely critical particularly in the case of autism which is about social interaction.

Q155 Stephen Williams: I believe that yesterday the Secretary of State announced that there would be government money available for mentoring. We have not studied in depth what that means in practice. Do any of the witnesses have viewpoints about whether or not that may be effective? It seems to be encouraging people to have a greater role in tackling bullying.

Ms Day: Peer mentoring was mentioned frequently by young people whom we support. It is something that they feel they can turn to and it is a good half-way house between themselves and teachers. Some of the schools with which we work also have learning mentors; they can also keep an ear open all the time and are people to whom young people can report.

Stephen Williams: Mention was made of our inquiry into citizenship. The Committee visited a school in Somerset which had a fairly comprehensive programme of involvement by pupils and groups representing everything under the sun. Curiously, they did not have a group to deal with bullying. I asked several children about it and they said that because people were involved in so many things they did not believe that there was such a problem in the school. That was the viewpoint of the children and it might be an exception. Do you have any evidence about the effectiveness of school councils and people's involvement in tackling bullying?

Q156 Chairman: That really takes us into good practice which we cover in the third section. That is a very important point. Looking at the evidence the Committee has received, a lot of us visit schools. I certainly visit at least one school a week. Perhaps I go only to good ones, but those that I have visited have a clear, coherent anti-bullying policy which involves staff and so on. It seems to work extremely well. At the same time, the polls and research to which you allude suggest that there is a very real problem out there. There is almost a disjunction between what we have seen in a school. Perhaps the Select Committee visits only good schools and it should make random raids on them. A lot of the schools that you go to must have very good practice.

Ms Gravell: Unfortunately, we hear about poor practice mostly from the advice lines because we are dealing with parents who encounter problems. We are certainly aware of models of good practice out there and that it can be done. Our whole philosophy is that schools can make a difference and make things a lot fairer and safer for children. We would not be in this job if we did not think there was hope at the end of the tunnel.

Jeff Ennis: Before we go to good practice, I should like to go back to the type of bullying. Normally, when one thinks about bullying one thinks of it in a secondary rather than primary school setting. Is that still very much the case? Is most of the bullying still taking place in secondary schools, or is it becoming a greater issue in primary schools?

Q157 Chairman: All of the witnesses are nodding.

Mr Middleton: I do not have exact figures, but we are picking it up right across the school system. The problem is not confined to secondary schools. We are supporting parents and children who are being bullied at all ages.

Ms Day: We have evidence to show that sometimes young people feel it is worse in primary schools than in secondary schools, but they have also identified that the worst period is the transition between the two. Primary school can be quite a contained and secure environment. You have been there for a long time and you know all the people; you know your teacher very well. Moving into that much larger school where you are at the bottom of the pecking order, with all the different issues which go with that, is a real strain.

Q158 Jeff Ennis: Is there any difference in the main types of bullying in the primary as opposed to the secondary school setting, or are they very similar?

Dr Das: We see a difference. For us the split is generally half and half; it varies from year to year, but we see as much in primary as in secondary and it is across the age ranges in primary, so it is not clustered towards the top end. We find that a lot of the primary school bullying tends to take the form of isolation, for example, "We don't want to play with you because you're black", or verbal abuse, or mockery of culture. In secondary schools it tends to become a little more physical; there is more aggression and violence.

Q159 Jeff Ennis: Moving to good practice, who should decide what anti-bullying programmes are used? Should it be the DfES, the local authority or the school itself?

Mr Middleton: We are running a campaign at the moment called Make School Make Sense. We have asked people to nominate school heroes.

Q160 Jeff Ennis: I put down an Early Day Motion in relation to that.

Mr Middleton: A number of schools and individual teachers have been nominated for good practice, that is, where the school has acknowledged that disability and autism is an issue and it needs to think about how to respond to it that has made a huge difference. In answer to your question, I think that it is a combination of things. I believe that the DfES guidance needs to be strengthened so that schools have a clearer idea of what it is they need to do, and schools then need to think about whole school approaches. Individual teachers need to think about how they communicate with the parents and pupil to identify what that person needs. It is about what the individual child requires. If you like, it is at all three levels.

Q161 Jeff Ennis: As a supplementary, DfES guidance recognises the importance of monitoring anti-bullying work to see whether it is effective, but are schools also doing this as they should be?

Ms Gravell: I do not think that evidence is coming through necessarily. Sometimes the problem lies with the victim who reports bullying; or the number of complaints is so small, possibly because given the school culture in the playground that this should be going on is thought to be relatively normal. Therefore, that level of reporting, even if it gets into the school self-evaluation and possibly into Ofsted reports, may conceal a much bigger problem. The other matter is that where individuals have been bullied and have suffered they need to be treated in a much more individualised way rather like looked-after children and their outcomes need to be subject to individual attention, not mass monitoring. All our studies of serious cases show that the solutions for those children need to be different in each case. One can have total invisibility in management information of what are very serious underlying issues. I think that when Ofsted talked to the Committee in May it said that it did not have figures and did not believe that they were being collected. Therefore, there is lack of accountability in terms of schools knowing what it is they are reporting. Even if they are reporting it properly it is pretty weak at the moment in terms of accountability.

Q162 Chairman: You are the experts. You are not flagging up that there is good practice and systems that can be adopted in every school to drive a change in the system.

Ms Gravell: We said earlier that we thought there was excellent practice out there and excellent training and advice.

Q163 Chairman: But if we were taking evidence on teaching children to read we would have people bouncing in here to say that they had found the Holy Grail; they would say that if they were given Synthetic Phonetics, Jolly Phonics or whatever they would have the cure. You do not seem to be saying to us that this system adopted in schools in Avon produces real results and everyone should copy it. You all seem to be groping for the answer rather than knowing of any cure that is available.

Ms Gravell: I think that I would be prepared to go out on a limb and not grope and mention the kind of things that the Children's Commissioner has recommended: the CHIPS programme and the Sheffield programme. That is one of the few that has been fairly rigorously evaluated. The common theme is that they heavily involve pupils. Ofsted says that parents also need to be involved. There is a planned response. Under that programme the training of teachers in the techniques used and the training of schools does not take that long. Very often we find that it has not happened, or has not happened for a long time, and teachers do not have the confidence to tackle problems properly.

Dr Das: We have been hedging our bets a little bit, but if you try to break down what good practice looks like it is easy to identify some of its contours. For us, the key is communication. If there is good communication between the school, the community, parents and pupils a lot of the cases

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that we get will not come to us at all; the problem will be solved. I believe that communication barriers are a big problem and lead to bad practice. There are things like inter-agency and good partnership working, which is another key factor for us. There is ongoing training of staff. Another element is lack of complacency, as well as peer involvement in both the formulation and monitoring of policies. The problem is that we do not have any examples where all of these things happen in the same place.

Q164 Chairman: Caroline Day, is there any stunning good practice that can be rolled out?

Ms Day: From Barnardo's perspective, it does not usually work directly in schools. We have a lot of services and we may have support groups in schools and so it is difficult to give specific examples. One need that we detected was greater dissemination of good practice. From our perspective we have our own anti-bullying policy and ensure that that goes out across all our services so that all our staff are aware of that. We ensure that at organisational level we are doing the best we can to make sure that bullying of young people does not occur and it is challenged and tackled in an appropriate way. But I believe that there is some merit in having a mechanism to link up good practice so people talk about it more. As a voluntary organisation we often have pockets of practice that do not really get shared. Certainly, I think that that would be very useful given the difference between the voluntary and educational aspects.

Q165 Jeff Ennis: We have been led to believe that the DfES provides a very small pocket of money for anti-bullying programmes. I believe that it is £1.4 million which is very paltry. Do you feel that even that small amount of money is being spent in the most useful way at the present time? Should the Department not bother or increase the amount?

Mr Middleton: I do not know how the Department is spending it.

Q166 Jeff Ennis: Were you aware that the DfES was providing this amount of money? That tends to indicate that at the present time it is being wasted.

Dr Das: It has a phone helpline, so perhaps that is what takes up a big part of the resources.

Q167 Jeff Ennis: I think a helpline would cost more.

Ms Day: Its very useful TeacherNet website has examples of good practices.

Ms Gravell: There is a very good anti-bullying pack.

Helen Jones: Although we have criticised aspects of it, generally it is pretty good, is it not?

Jeff Ennis: Mr Middleton has criticised that quite extensively in his submission.

Q168 Fiona Mactaggart: Dr Das, I just want to pick up one matter that I thought you referred to earlier—perhaps I misheard you—about people feeling unwilling to report racist incidents and

bullying because they fear consequences for their own careers and so on. Can you tell me what evidence you have on that?

Dr Das: I was referring to schools being unwilling to report to what were called LAs but now various other bodies. Schools are reluctant to report upwards and, therefore, the problem is that no one ever gets a sense of the true picture or the scale of the problem. For instance, looking at the figures for Bristol last year in the LA reports there were about 670 racist incidents in schools. To say that that is the tip of the iceberg is an exaggeration; the problem is probably vastly greater than that. Schools have a good deal of fear in reporting to the LA because their reputation will be diminished and they will be seen as racist schools and somehow it shows them in a bad light. That is the thinking of a lot of teachers and head teachers. We do not hear of it. I think that pupils are reluctant to report for very different reasons. There is lack of confidence in the system because historically racist bullying has not been dealt with particularly well, so the school does not see very much point in reporting. Our big challenge is to improve reporting on both aspects from pupils and schools upwards.

Q169 Fiona Mactaggart: How do you do it?

Dr Das: For me, a big part of that answer is inter-agency working; it is about working with both the statutory and voluntary sectors in improving the understanding of school liaison officers. Police officers based in most if not all of the secondary schools have a huge lack of understanding of what racist incidents mean. Often police officers in schools will hear about racist incidents but never tell the school about it. All the parts of that puzzle need to be addressed individually.

Ms Day: There is also one small issue that we are beginning to notice. I do not know whether it has been around for a long time and is just emerging or whether it is quite new. I refer to the assumption of what racist bullying actually is. The assumption is that it is often between white and black cultures, or white and Asian cultures. At the moment we find that there is far more of an inter-BME culture of bullying and a growing issue to do with pockets of Eastern European economic migrants across the country. It is becoming more about one's nationality rather than just one's colour or race.

Q170 Chairman: Is there research to back the assertion that girls are as likely to bully as boys and they are becoming more physical in their bullying over time? Is that just a notion or is there research to back it up? Is there a difference between the genders?

Dr Das: Our work does not show a significant difference. It shows that there are more male perpetrators. In some cases there is more violence and aggression where boys are the perpetrators, but in general we have not seen any significant patterns, except that girls are bullied more than boys.

Q171 Chairman: Caroline Day, what is your view on this?

Ms Day: Young people very much identify that it is done by both sets of young people to both sets of young people. I believe that at the moment there is difficulty in media portrayal which often seems to put girls ahead of boys. There have been a lot more cases of girls doing extreme and very violent bullying. There have been recent cases involving stabbing and matters of that kind. I think that that brings it to people's minds a lot more and implies that girls are bullying more than boys. We have had very mixed views on that. I cannot definitely say either way.

Q172 Chairman: We are coming to the end of this session. Is there anything that you want to impart to the Committee before we finish? I do not want you to go away totally frustrated that you have not put everything before the Committee that you dearly want to put to us. Mr Middleton, is there anything that you want to add?

Mr Middleton: One subject on which I have not touched is that autistic children may display bullying behaviours themselves because of their misunderstanding of social rules. The issue is whether or not that really can be called bullying. That takes us back to the definition of bullying, because they genuinely will not understand why they should not behave in a certain way. We need to address that potentially through things like social skills training and to work with that person on what is and what is not acceptable behaviour. Often, it will be almost a logical reaction to what is going on around them, but as soon as they are shown that something is not appropriate behaviour they will change it. It is sometimes quite difficult for schools to recognise that they might need to take that approach with that sort of person.

Ms Gravell: We have talked about the effects on the child as a result of bullying and the potential for that child to lose out on education by being kept at home. We also have problems with parents being threatened with prosecution for non-attendance. Sometimes parents ring us about that and then we find out about the bullying problem underlying it. Another aspect that we encounter is that the child retaliates against a bully and is excluded for that response. We have dedicated exclusion help lines. In 5% of the calls parents say that the exclusion has been for that reason, so it is not an insignificant matter.

Dr Das: I should like to make three very brief points. One is about better resourcing for the voluntary sector in terms of helping the statutory sector to deal with bullying. I think that that needs to be looked at. The second matter is to do with the school's accountability. It takes us back to the point made by the Chairman. We have a problem where often the schools will do nothing, but when we approach the LA and CYPS they say that they cannot make them do anything. It is a real bind; it does not help to improve the situation. The third matter is to do with complaints procedures. They are very arduous and act as a deterrent for parents who use them. They are sent from pillar to post.

Ms Day: For us the aim would be to ensure that children participate in all of this, that we listen to them and use their language and work with them on what they see as bullying and the changes that they want to make, building on the whole school ethos but also instilling values in the community so that children have mutual respect and understanding for everybody. Through that we must make sure that they participate all the time.

Chairman: I thank our witnesses for their time. This has been a really interesting and valuable session for us. If when you have gone away you think of something that you should have said to us you know where we are.

Memorandum submitted by the National Union of Teachers (NUT)

SUMMARY

1. Bullying wrecks the lives of young people and staff. It wrecks the lives of young people and their future self confidence.
2. The NUT welcomes this Inquiry by the Education and Skills Select Committee.
3. Bullying not only affects young people personally but is a whole school issue. A culture of bullying undermines the overall achievement profile of schools. Ignoring bullying has serious consequences not only for the personal lives of young people but for the overall performance profile of the school.
4. The school which condones bullying of pupils will almost always have a similar culture amongst its staff. A bullying culture pervades a school ethos and colours the experiences of staff and pupils.
5. The NUT has supported the DfES anti-bullying initiative, and the accompanying DfES guidance *Don't Suffer in Silence*. The NUT endorsed the Anti-Bullying Charter which has been sent to schools and is participating in the reference group which the Department for Education and Skills has reconstituted to advise on the re-write of *Don't Suffer in Silence*.
6. The announcement of this Inquiry is timely. It provides an opportunity to evaluate the Government's anti-bullying initiative at a time when the DfES is to revise its anti-bullying guidance.
7. The NUT made a contribution earlier this year to ChildLine's appeal for funding to continue its 24 hour helpline. The NUT believes this helpline is essential and should receive funding from the Government, so that, in particular, the vital night time helpline is sustainable.

8. The NUT believes the following proposals would contribute to the reduction of bullying in schools.
- (i) Each school should appoint at least one school counsellor with the Direct Schools' Grant enlarged to cover the average cost.
 - (ii) School counsellors should be responsible for developing peer counselling under the oversight of each school's pastoral arrangements. Qualified teachers should remain at the heart of school pastoral structures.
 - (iii) Teachers need increased time and space for personal reflection, discussing with each other and with support staff colleagues incidents of bullying, sharing ideas and following up incidents of bullying.
 - (iv) The existing DfES guidance *Don't Suffer in Silence* should be promoted to schools through local authorities, lead behaviour specialists and through the national strategies. The DfES Anti Bullying Charter should also be promoted.
 - (v) The development of school councils should be encouraged further. The Union recognises the essential role of the student voice in ensuring a happy and positive school environment. The NUT welcomes the establishment of the role of the Children's Commissioner in England and in Wales.
 - (vi) The Government should commit further resources to continue the ring fenced funding for behaviour and education support teams.
 - (vii) Schools should be encouraged to carry out audits of pupil perceptions of their safety as part of their self evaluation arrangements. The views and perceptions of children and young people themselves should be sought in conjunction with all anti bullying strategies.
 - (viii) The DfES should provide a further year's earmarked funding for the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) Programme from the Primary Strategy Standards Fund so that SEAL can be properly embedded.
 - (ix) Citizenship and Personal, Social and Health Education are "Cinderella" subjects of the National Curriculum; a situation confirmed by Ofsted's recent evaluation of the introduction of citizenship in schools. Specific and sufficient funding should be provided through the National Strategies in order to provide a comprehensive professional development programme and cover arrangements for teachers taking part in professional development.
 - (x) The capacity of schools to reduce and challenge sexist, racist, disablist and homophobic bullying will only increase through proactive equal opportunities strategies to promote race, disability and gender equality across the whole and to promote positive images of LGBT young people, adults (including teachers) and same sex couples. Model examples of such strategies should be available to schools.
 - (xi) The Government's Personalisation Agenda will be undermined if it does not include specific strategies on bullying such as those above.

WHOLE SCHOOL BEHAVIOUR IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES

9. Reducing bullying and harassment of pupils and teachers goes hand in hand with improving behaviour and attendance generally. It is therefore necessary and vital to evaluate what has worked in schools in the area of improving behaviour more generally over recent years.

10. The DfES Behaviour Improvement Programme, which started as a series of projects in the mid 1990s which had the reduction of indiscipline and exclusion as their principle aim, has been successful. The BIP programme has recently been evaluated.¹⁴ The evaluation confirmed that BIP enabled some direct interventions to tackle absence and truancy (eg. use by schools of computer programmes to monitor attendance and the use of truancy sweeps).

11. The report, however, provides support for the view that positive pupil attendance and pupil interaction is best promoted by tackling the causes not the symptoms of poor behaviour. The report concluded that developing a range of alternative provision and curricula to re-engage disaffected pupils and having whole school policies to improve pupil behaviour are vital to better attendance and achievement. Such an approach to whole school strategies is key to reducing bullying.

12. The evaluation of the BIP programme highlighted the benefits of schools developing a more holistic approach to behaviour issues and better access to specialist services. The evidence suggests that the Behaviour and Education Support Teams (BESTs) set up with BIP funding have pioneered effective multi-agency ways of working.

¹⁴ Research and Evaluation of the Behaviour Improvement Programme, Institute of Education, University of London, Professor Susan Hallam, F Castle, L Rogers, A Creech, J Rhamie, D Khotsaki.

13. The NUT believes that local authorities and senior management teams in schools need to build on and disseminate these approaches as part of their work on anti-bullying within the *Every Child Matters* agenda. The funding for BESTs is to be continued until 2008. It is no longer ring-fenced, however, so planning at authority level is needed to ensure that these multi agency teams or their ways of working are continued for this in turn to lead to positive outcomes in terms of bullying and attainment.

14. Most schools in the BIP programme used some of their BIP funding to undertake behaviour audits and these have been valued and viewed as working well, although time consuming to complete.¹⁵ The audits provided information to stimulate self-analysis, in particular providing data to support the development of behaviour improvement plans, a baseline for monitoring progress and a means of making comparisons with other schools. Schools found that the audits helped them focus their resources.

15. The NUT has supported the development of “key workers”, such as Lead Behaviour Professionals, to co-ordinate support as part of the Behaviour Improvement Programme and behaviour and education support teams (BESTs) This role is viewed positively by schools and BIP co-ordinators.¹⁶

16. In the primary sector, LBPs are sometimes head teachers, or members of BESTs. The BIP evaluation report concluded that in secondary schools it is important that the LBP was a member of the senior management team and able to influence whole school policy. A lack of leadership by the LBP or their being overloaded was detrimental to successful implementation of BIP. The NUT believes that schools need Lead Behaviour Professionals who have the capacity to focus on arranging and co-ordinating whole school strategies to reduce bullying and support individual pupils or groups of pupils. They should be members of the senior management teams for the reasons found in the evaluation report.

17. The “key workers” within Behaviour and Education support teams were funded by the Children’s Fund. This funding is to be discontinued after 2008. Both schools and children’s services authorities will need further ring fenced funding on a continuing basis to maintain these lead behaviour professional posts. If lead professionals are based at school level there will need to be ring fenced additional resources at school level.

18. Such posts can provide capacity to introduce peer mentoring schemes, restorative justice programmes, counselling initiatives and other pastoral measures.

REPORT OF THE PRACTITIONERS’ GROUP ON SCHOOL BEHAVIOUR CHAIRED BY SIR ALAN STEER

19. The NUT was represented on this group, which came to be known as the Steer Group. The Government established this advisory group to seek advice on improving pupil behaviour.

20. The NUT provided evidence to the Steer Group in the form of a Charter.¹⁷ In this Charter, the NUT asserted the entitlement of children and young people to learn free from bullying and discrimination. The Charter highlighted also the responsibility of teachers to prevent all forms of bullying.

21. In its Charter, the Union argued that all members of the school community including teachers should be fully consulted on the behaviour policies of their schools. Government guidance emphasises the importance of such consultation. Behaviour and anti bullying policies should be linked to other school policies. Those that do not reflect the views of teaching staff and the wider school community are doomed to failure.

22. The NUT believes that teachers should be entitled also to a strong lead from head teachers and those with management responsibilities. Teachers have an entitlement to work in conditions that enable teaching to be at its most effective. Those conditions should include appropriate class and group sizes, with counselling and personalised tuition available to young people if they are being bullied.

23. The NUT endorses many of the recommendations contained in the Steer report. The NUT believes the Government should implement the following Steer recommendations in order to reduce levels of bullying of staff and pupils.

- All schools should make regular use of self evaluation tools for behaviour and bullying, such as those provided by the National Strategies.
- The DfES should provide a further year’s earmarked funding for the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) Programme from the Primary Strategy Standards Fund so that SEAL can be properly embedded.
- The DfES should work with the professional associations and other partners to promote the Anti Bullying Charter for Action, by promoting it at regional events and re-issuing it every two years.

24. The Union recognises the essential role of the student voice in ensuring a happy and positive school environment. The NUT welcomes the establishment of the role of the Children’s Commissioner in England and in Wales.

¹⁵ Ibid 1.

¹⁶ Ibid 1.

¹⁷ NUT Charter, Learning to Behave, 2005.

NEED FOR SYSTEM WIDE REFORM

25. The NUT believes that having an effective pastoral structure in each school, which is fully responsive to young people's personal and social needs, is vital to preventing bullying and to dealing with its effects.

26. The Elton Committee of Inquiry had no doubt that schools "should base pastoral systems on the strengths of the traditional integrated academic, welfare and disciplinary role of the teacher". It considered that "personal and social education should be a cross-curricular theme in the National Curriculum". The NUT is firmly committed to that view. Effective pastoral structures, which can prevent bullying, and practical personalised learning are integral to each other. Qualified teachers are essential to such an approach as is the support of trained support staff.

27. The school meals agreement remains important because it leaves the space for teachers to be able to have a mid-day break away from the responsibility of teaching. At the core of the personal and social element of the schools day, however, the NUT believes that there should be a space for teachers and support staff and pupils to sit down, to eat and to talk together. In this context, personal and social and health education needs to be at the centre of the curriculum.

SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

28. School self-evaluation has a role to play in preventing and reacting to bullying. Evaluation is at its most effective when school communities understand its purposes and relevance. Overwhelming evidence from research and practice demonstrates that evaluation by schools themselves must be at the centre of school inspection and support. To quote the Scottish HMCI "Unless schools know themselves, they cannot benefit from inspection."

29. The NUT believes that current statutory inspection arrangements fail to encourage teachers and school communities to "own" the processes of evaluation. Current arrangements do not place teachers at the centre of school improvement.

30. The NUT believes that schools should be encouraged to adopt and develop school self-evaluation criteria to meet their own needs and local context. Schools are effective in a variety of different ways, rather than simply at meeting narrow performance measures. A self-evaluative school is a school which knows itself.

31. The NUT has developed a framework for self-evaluation with John MacBeath and the University of Strathclyde.¹⁸

32. In developing this framework, the NUT worked with a number of schools. The most striking finding was the different standpoints different groups within these schools took: in other words, the school was a different place for different people.

33. Pupils put a great deal of emphasis on the material aspects of the school, such as the school buildings and resources and their use of and access to them. Most important to pupils, however, was how they were helped to learn, given feedback and encouraged by teachers and how their individual needs and abilities were recognised.¹⁹ The highest priority for young people is to be safe. The word "safety" should be interpreted literally for young people. "Safety" means that they can achieve a just solution to their grievances. It is vital, therefore, that teachers have the time and space to pursue and resolve perceived injustice.

34. Classroom climate, a safe pleasant and orderly environment, was also highly valued. Pupils' levels of awareness, ability to analyse situations and willingness to discuss in depth showed the value of listening to pupils and their potential as a rich resource for school self-evaluation. Clearly self-evaluation has a key role to play in enabling schools to develop cultures which do not tolerate or generate bullying. The NUT research on self-evaluation shows that the top priority for young people is the need to feel safe.

35. Another interesting finding from the NUT's work on self-evaluation was that parents tended to be more informed than school management or teachers about some aspects of school life, particularly the "underlife" of the school, such as bullying. Parents have a unique perspective on aspects of school life such as the quality of welcome to the school, its use of language and staff/pupil relationships.

36. As a result of this work, the NUT firmly believes that a school which takes time to think though its own priorities and values and which tests the fulfilment of these in practice will, as a consequence, be a better school in terms of reducing bullying and enabling staff and pupils to feel safe. This is only likely to happen, though, if there is alignment between this kind of bottom-up process and the way in which schools are evaluated by external agencies and valued in terms of national performance criteria.

37. Since the publication of John MacBeath's work, the NUT has consistently put forward constructive proposals to Ofsted and to the Government for alternative inspection arrangements, which would achieve a balance between external inspection and internal self-evaluation and which would restore ownership of the process of evaluation to teachers.

¹⁸ Schools speak for themselves, University of Strathclyde, J MacBeath, B Boyd, J Rand, S Bell.

¹⁹ Ibid 5.

38. Self-evaluation should be at the heart of school review, inspection, school development planning and the provision of external support. Successful external evaluation is contingent on successful self-evaluation. A positive consequence of self-evaluation is high motivation and, consequently, morale. Another is the ability to identify the existence of bullying and to create cultures of safety. School councils can play a vital role in helping schools “know themselves”. The NUT is convinced of the value of school councils developed and aided by guidance from organisations such as School Councils UK.

39. For teachers, self-evaluation reveals that support for teaching is particularly valued—things such as opportunities for collaboration, the feeling of being valued, adequate resourcing and access to professional development. Although their starting point was supporting teaching, their ultimate concern was with pupil learning and the relationship between the two. Teachers reaffirmed, sometimes apologetically, the importance of the “caring” school, but they also endorsed the achieving school, casting their definition more broadly than test or examination attainment. Teachers want to challenge bullying and develop caring schools.²⁰

MOBILE PHONES AND INTERNET

40. The NUT is aware that camera mobile phones and the Internet can be misused in schools. Both can become an instrument of bullying or harassment directed against pupils and teachers. The NUT advises that schools should amend or revise their behaviour policies to set out how schools will respond to incidents where a mobile phone or the Internet are being used to intimidate, threaten or bully staff or pupils.

PERSONALISED LEARNING

41. Effective personalised learning must include a social element; social spaces in schools need managing. School lunchtimes are often terrifying times for children and need re-conceptualising. Positive thought needs to be given to teaching children the value of cooking, eating and talking together.

42. The NUT believes that an outcome of personalised learning should be a guaranteed entitlement for all pupils to a range of experiences and activities outside school. These should include a minimum number of visits to museums, galleries, theatres, concerts and study in outdoor centres and visits abroad.

CITIZENSHIP AND PSHE

43. The recent Ofsted review of the introduction of citizenship in schools should come as no surprise. The Achilles heel of the review is that it fails to understand that the introduction of citizenship and PSHE was not accompanied by the necessary resources for professional development. Teachers do not automatically know or understand the nature of the constitution, Government or public services, for example. Neither should they be expected to bolt on these two new subjects to an already crowded curriculum.

44. Citizenship has the capacity alongside the development of school councils to reach the heart of a bullying culture; but only if teachers feel confident with and own the subject. The same possibilities apply to PSHE. The NUT believes that the funding for the National Strategies must be increased to include funding lines for citizenship and PSHE sufficient to meet the professional development needs of schools, including the funding of sufficient cover arrangements for teachers attending professional development programmes on citizenship.

THE EXTENT AND NATURE OF THE PROBLEM OF BULLYING IN SCHOOLS

45. The extent to which bullying is reported is still unknown. There are no firm national statistics of reported and proven cases of bullying in schools, largely due to the fact that definitions of bullying and perceptions of its severity vary among individuals and communities. As the Ofsted survey has shown, distinctions between degrees of oppressive behaviour are hard to fix. What some schools might categorise and record as simply aggressive or unpleasant behaviour, other schools would record as evidence of bullying.²¹

46. The NUT believes that it is imperative that all bullying is recorded and reported. Encouraging all pupils and staff to report bullying remains a challenge. The NUT welcomed the encouragement given in the DFES guidance, *Don't Suffer in Silence* to the need to come forward to report bullying. The emphasis on not suffering alone and in silence is an important one. Many schools have asked pupils to report bullying anonymously in various places around the school. There is a role for Lead Behaviour Professionals in schools to monitor whether bullying is being reported and recorded, and whether follow up action is visible.

47. The perpetrators of bullying and the bystanders are damaged by bullying.

²⁰ Ibid 5.

²¹ Ofsted, *Bullying: Effective Action in Secondary Schools*, London, (2003), p 5.

48. Schools which are inclusive in their approach and which welcome and support every one irrespective of race, gender, sexual orientation, religion or belief and disability are likely to witness and experience much less bullying than those which do not. It is essential that schools use celebratory events such as Black History Month, LGBT History Month and International Women's Day to challenge the invisibility of certain groups and the low levels of awareness of the discriminatory barriers that exist. Teachers are increasingly concerned by sexist messages in the press and media.

SEXIST BULLYING

49. Women teachers make up over 75% of the NUT's membership. Given that women predominate in the teaching workforce and form 69% of the teachers in the maintained sector, the fact that sexist bullying in schools occurs is often forgotten and ignored. Sexist bullying is frequently ignored and minimised. The NUT regrets that this inquiry makes explicit reference to racist and homophobic bullying but not to sexist bullying.

50. Preliminary findings of a recent survey conducted by the NUT suggest that young female teachers, in particular, are frequently confronted with sexist language and instances of sexual harassment in their workplace. The predominance does not protect women teachers from sexual harassment by pupils and staff and, in fact, many women teachers report isolation and frustration at how hard it is to challenge sexist language and bullying by pupils. Schools do not receive clear guidance from DfES or from local authorities as to how to challenge and reduce sexist bullying of pupils by each other or the sexist and sexual content of language and behaviour directed at staff.

51. The preliminary findings from a NUT survey of teachers' experiences of sexism, indicate that younger male and female teachers, in particular, "seem to be seen as 'fair game' to some pupils to touch, in some cases, and to make sexual innuendo towards". Furthermore, there appears to be a trend for sexist language, as a foundation for sexist bullying, to be entering the mainstream with girls and women beginning to accept sexist language as a norm. The NUT will submit the findings of the survey to the Select Committee when it has been completed.

52. Sexist language and bullying are often the foundation for violence against women and can not therefore be ignored in the classroom or in the playground. The NUT has published guidance²² on violence against women which was launched on International Women's Day 2005. Some local authorities have produced excellent resources to support PSHE and citizenship modules on violence against women, sexist peer bullying or date violence.

53. A recent Amnesty International survey on public perceptions and attitudes towards rape highlighted why schools need to explicitly challenge sexist attitudes and derogatory views about women. The survey found a very limited awareness among the public about the actual incidence of rape in the UK. It also revealed that one in three people thought that women who behave flirtatiously, failed to say "no" clearly, or were drunk were at least partially responsible if they are raped.²³

54. The NUT believes that instances of sexist bullying are consistently normalised and ignored in schools. The predominance of women within the teaching profession is not reflected in women's representation in senior management positions. Only 31% of secondary head teachers are female. Women teachers are expected to "put up with" a high degree of sexist behaviour and harassment. The DfES, however, provides no guidance or resources on its website, although it does provide comprehensive and lengthy guidance about racist bullying and homophobic bullying.

55. Research also shows that black women teachers in particular feel that they constantly need to prove themselves and work harder than their white peers to achieve the same degree of recognition. Only 4% of black teachers are head teachers or deputy heads, as a recent study commissioned by the Mayor of London has established.²⁴ Meanwhile, an NUT survey on Black and Minority Ethnic Teachers in Senior Management has shown that despite over two thirds of the respondents to this survey being female, only 58% of them applied for promotion as compared to 85% of all male respondents.²⁵

RACIST BULLYING

56. Racist bullying remains endemic in all aspects of education and is closely linked with widespread discrimination. Following the Mayor of London's report, the Evening Standard reports that trainee teachers are now to be given special coaching in racial awareness in a move to tackle racist bullying and discrimination.²⁶ The NUT believes not only that such measures are long overdue, but also that they must be complemented with relevant initiatives at school management and local authority level.

²² Silence is Not Always Golden, NUT guidelines on domestic violence, 2003.

²³ Amnesty International, *ICM Sexual Assault Research*, 12 October 2005.

²⁴ The Guardian, "Black Teachers Face Bullying and Racism", 8 September 2006.

²⁵ NUT, *Black and Minority Ethnic Teachers in Senior Management*, (2004).

²⁶ Evening Standard, "Extra Lessons for Trainee Teachers to Beat Racism", 9 September 2006.

57. Initial findings of a recent NUT survey of local authorities' data on the allocation of Teaching and Learning Responsibility Payments (TLRs) disaggregated by ethnic group indicate serious shortcomings of public bodies in meeting their duty under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. Under this duty, local authorities are inter alia required to conduct a race equality impact assessment of their policies and procedures, publish the results of any assessments, ensure public access to information and services, provide staff training, make provisions for ethnic monitoring, as well as to help and actively support schools in implementing the latter's race equality work. From the sample in the NUT's survey, it appears that a number of local authorities have been failing on all these accounts.

58. The NUT is also concerned over the increasing level of racism and racist bullying directed against Muslim pupils and staff. This trend is further encouraged by remarks and speeches by some of our politicians implying that Muslims in Britain are less committed than others to democracy and the rule of law, widespread and routine negative stereotypes of Muslims in the media, and the application of Government legislation curtailing civil liberties that disproportionately affect Muslims.

59. But it is not only Muslims who have increasingly suffered in the context of the ongoing instability in the Middle East and its repercussions on community cohesion in the UK. Whilst the number of anti-Semitic incidents perpetrated in Britain have been found to fluctuate in response to events in the Middle East, overall, attacks on Jewish people have increased by 260% over a period of only two years. According to the report of the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into anti-Semitism, the report of which was launched by the Prime Minister last week, the number of anti-Semitic incidents that took place in July, which came in the middle of escalating violence in the Middle East, was the third highest on record.

60. The NUT believes that attempts to determine the extent and nature of racist bullying, therefore, must be sensitive to the problem's diverse aspects, including any overlaps of different manifestations of oppressive behaviour on the basis of the bullies' perception of vulnerability and the "fault" of difference in others.

BULLYING OF DISABLED PUPILS

61. A survey commissioned by the Disability Rights Commission also shows that many young disabled pupils report that they were bullied at their school, and that they felt left out and isolated because of their impairments.²⁷ Without disabled teachers as role models within the education system, the NUT is concerned that disabled pupils will continue to experience bullying and feelings of isolation.

62. Without disabled teachers as role models within schools, disabled teachers will continue to experience bullying.

63. DfEE Circular 4/99 on fitness to teach sums up the importance of employing and retaining disabled teachers in schools.

"Disabled staff can make an important contribution to the overall school curriculum, both as effective employees and in raising the aspirations of disabled pupils and educating non-disabled people about the reality of disability."

64. A school that views its teachers as individuals with a range of strengths and unique needs, and does not make discriminatory assumptions about them because of their disabilities, is more likely to do the same for its pupils.

65. It is positive that legislative changes will soon require schools to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and to eliminate bullying and harassment.

66. Although the DfES website does address issues of disablist bullying, the strategies it recommends for tackling such bullying do not include the employment of disabled teachers and other staff members as role models to all pupils. Consultation with pupils will assist schools in reducing incidents of bullying; such whole school strategies should be led by the head teacher, senior staff and governing body.

67. A key factor in promoting an accessible school environment is putting into place appropriate and effective reasonable adjustments for staff and pupils who require such adjustments. If, for example, appropriate toileting facilities are in place for a pupil with a mobility impairment this will maintain dignity and reduce opportunities for bullying.

HOMOPHOBIC BULLYING AND TRANSPHOBIC BULLYING

68. Research shows that homophobic bullying is a significant element in anti-social behaviour in schools in England and Wales.²⁸ Stonewall estimates that there are 450,000 gay and lesbian pupils in schools and that up to 60,000 of these are the victims of homophobic bullying.²⁹

69. Homophobic bullying involves the targeting of individuals on the basis of their perceived or actual sexual orientation. Young people and teachers are singled out for abuse if they do not conform to a stereotypical masculine or feminine identity of if their perceived or actual sexual identity or sexual orientation does not conform to such images.

²⁷ The Disability Rights Commission commissioned an NOP survey that interviewed 305 disabled people aged 16–24 across England and Wales between October and November 2002.

²⁸ Cf. I Warwick et al., *Homophobia, Sexual Orientation and Schools—A Review and Implications for Action*, Institute of Education, London, (2004).

²⁹ The Independent, "Anti-Gay Bullying Forces Thousands of Pupils to Leave School after GCSEs", 30 January 2005.

70. Where people are and feel themselves to be “secure”, they have no need to attempt to feel better about themselves by belittling or otherwise bullying others. One way that those who are questioning their own sexuality (or gender identity) can seek to demonstrate that they are not LGB(T) is by bullying those who are perceived to be LGB(T). In this sense, homophobic and transphobic bullying has different features to racist or sexist bullying.

71. For that reason, establishing an atmosphere where those young people who choose to come out are supported in doing so, is likely to reduce the incidence of homophobic and transphobic bullying because those who bully are more likely to receive a robust response and fail in their aims.

72. The NUT believes that the most difficult aspect of tackling homophobic bullying consists in addressing the conspiracy of silence around LGBT issues. For example, there is a reluctance to report homophobic bullying, with teachers and young people who are LGB or who are assumed to be LGB preferring to suffer in silence by resigning or leaving school early with qualifications well below their abilities and academic potential. There is a perception that some LGB staff who have received promotion to senior posts and have chosen not to come out can feel threatened by the change that happens when more junior staff “come out”.

73. Lesbian, gay and bisexual teachers tend to fear being open about their sexuality, despite their legal right to do so, in order not to damage their personal and professional lives. Teachers who “come out” in schools are often met with prejudice and harassment. Although there is some evidence that being open about one’s sexuality could help raise the self-esteem and morale of young people in schools who are questioning their own sexual orientation, the experiences of LGB teachers confirm that being open or out can hinder teachers’ career prospects and threaten other teachers who were not open about their sexuality.³⁰

74. The NUT is concerned that head teachers and governing bodies have not yet assimilated and digested the implications of the Sexual Orientation Regulations 2003. This legislation protects LGB teachers, or teachers assumed to be LGB, from discrimination or harassment on the grounds of sexual orientation. Legally, therefore, teachers are permitted to be open to parents, pupils, colleagues and head teachers about their sexual orientation and should be protected from any adverse reaction, bullying or consequent victimisation. In reality, however, LGB staff who are “out” or who are “outed” by colleagues or pupils commonly experience negative consequences which can include severe forms of bullying and threats of dismissal.

75. It is essential, therefore, that the DfES uses the opportunity provided by its revised guidance on homophobic bullying to raise awareness among head teachers of their statutory duties. If LGBT teachers and parents are not treated with respect by colleagues and senior management, then it is impossible to challenge the homophobia and homophobic language experienced daily by pupils in schools. The DfES needs to make head teachers aware that they have responsibilities to parents, teachers and governors who may be LGBT as well as educate pupils against homophobia. It must be made clear that this legal protection covers faith schools.

76. The NUT welcomed the DfES publication *Stand Up For Us*. Few schools, however, are aware of the existence of this excellent resource on tackling homophobic bullying.

77. The NUT is also concerned about the right of parents to take their children out of sex education classes which have the potential, in many ways, to be an important initial forum to challenge homophobic attitudes and to counteract bigoted information pupils might receive from other sources. This is compounded by the fact that only 6% of schools refer explicitly to homophobic bullying in their anti-bullying policies.³¹ As a consequence, much of the abuse and intimidation of children and staff who are perceived to be or are lesbian, gay or bisexual is effectively overlooked. The failure to challenge homophobia perpetuates the common use of homophobic language and the homophobic targeting of staff who are or are rumoured to be LGB.

78. Research has not only shown that those who are perceived as weak or different in society are more prone to being bullied, it has also been suggested that the existence of homophobia is significantly linked to the culture of masculinity. Young men tend to develop homophobic attitudes as an integral part of their achieving a masculine identity.³² This is reflected in statistics recording much higher incidences of homophobic bullying in boys’ single-sex and co-educational schools than in girls’ single-sex schools.³³

79. Evidence of the restriction of the ability and potential of boys and girls through gender stereotyping can be found in the gender segregation of the workforce in Britain which is directly linked to the gender pay gap. Studies by the Equal Opportunities Commission have shown, for example, that only 1% of all employees in engineering are women, that 8% of all employees in construction are women, and that almost all nursery nurses and child minders are female.

³⁰ I. Warwick, *Homophobia, Sexual Orientation and Schools—A Review and Implications for Action*, Institute of Education, (2004).

³¹ The Guardian, “Lessons in Loneliness”, 1 October 2005.

³² Cf. J Norman, *A Survey of Teachers on Homophobic Bullying in Irish Second-Level Schools*, Dublin City University, (2004).

³³ Ibid.

80. Pay for apprentices in childcare, the only female-dominated sector, was generally half or less, of that in construction, engineering, plumbing or communications technology (ICT). Overall, women are still working predominantly in lower paid areas, such as cleaning, catering, caring, cashiering and clerical work, which is one of the reasons why their full-time pay on average remains 18% less per hour than that of full-time men, or 40% less if they work part-time.³⁴

PROMOTING EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES ACTIVELY

81. The NUT believes that the Government needs to develop a joined-up approach to tackling sexist, racist, homophobic and disablist bullying. At present, guidance for schools on different forms of bullying is still, where applicable, issued separately.

82. Where guidance on different forms of bullying is issued by the Government, the proposed strategies for tackling such bullying are not always comprehensive. In the case of disablist bullying, for example, the DfES does not include the employment of disabled teachers and other staff members as role models for all pupils as an effective strategy to tackle disablist bullying in schools.

83. The NUT believes that the Government should facilitate and ensure widespread awareness of current equality legislation and its implications for schools. Teachers should also be made aware of any grievance procedures as well as informal networks of support.

84. Schools are already covered by a duty to promote race equality and to eliminate racial harassment. From December 2006, schools will be covered by a similar duty in respect of disability, and from spring 2007, schools will be required to promote gender equality. These legal obligations should provide a trigger to encourage schools to consider ways to discourage racist, disablist, and sexist bullying.

85. The NUT further believes that the DfES should consider how equality can be made a priority within schools' self-evaluation forms. Support and advice provided to schools through behaviour advisory programmes such as BIP at local authority level should focus on the positive promotion of equality and respect in order to prevent bullying and discrimination.

86. The NUT advises that all school behaviour policies should make clear that racist, sexist, homophobic and transphobic incidents, and harassment against pupils or staff on the grounds of disability or religion or belief will not be tolerated. They should explicitly refer to strategies to prevent homophobic, transphobic, racist, sexist and disablist bullying, as well as bullying on the grounds of religion or belief, and to eliminate the homophobic and sexist content of commonly used terms of verbal abuse. The NUT further advises that school policies on equal opportunities and on harassment and bullying should state that the school will take action to protect all pupils and staff from all forms of harassment and bullying.

87. Schools should ensure that their behaviour and equal opportunities policies are internally consistent. Bullying and harassment may be triggered by hostility towards the faith; religious identity; real or perceived sexual orientation; or gender or gender identity of pupils or teachers. Schools should be aware of such causes.

88. The NUT also advises that schools should record and act on all incidents of bullying, including all racist, sexist, disablist, transphobic and homophobic incidents. Parents and governors should be informed of such incidents and the action taken to deal with them. Governing bodies should inform their local authority regularly of the pattern and frequency of any incidents and the strategies developed to reduce them. Teachers who experience racist, sexist, disablist or homophobic harassment, are entitled to support from their schools and may also exercise their right to involve the police.

89. Tackling various forms of bullying should also be supplemented with positive measures to celebrate the lives and achievements of people who are at the receiving end of this behaviour due to the "fault" of difference. For example, LGBT History Month, which is usually held in February, provides a real opportunity to start focusing on positive portrayal of LGBT individuals. Similarly, Black History Month, held in October, is a unique event in our calendar that could significantly contribute towards reducing and eliminating all aspects of racist bullying. It is unfortunate that, only two years after its inception, the DfES has recently decided to cease funding LGBT History Month.

90. The NUT believes that there should be a concerted effort by the Government to facilitate events and opportunities to celebrate the achievements and worth of women, disabled people and older people, combined with concerted efforts to raise awareness of our equality in diversity both legally, socially and economically.

91. A school that views its teachers as individuals with a range of strengths and attributes and does not make discriminatory assumptions about them, is likely to do the same for its pupils.³⁵

³⁴ EOC, *Free To Choose: Tackling Gender Barriers to Better Jobs*, final report, March (2005).

³⁵ National Bureau for Students with Disabilities, *Employing Disabled Teachers*, (1999).

CONCLUSION

92. Pastoral structures integrated with teaching and learning are vital. Pastoral structures need to be led by qualified teachers. These need to be complemented by the appointment of school counsellors for each school.

93. Teachers are not to blame for bullying. All the evidence received by the NUT suggests that teachers want to track down injustices felt by pupils but do not have time.

94. A study commissioned by the NUT³⁶ to assess the impact of government initiatives on the professional lives in secondary school teachers confirmed the frustration caused by this lack of time. One of the key themes which emerged from the interviews with teachers, head teachers and pupils was that the capacity of teachers to juggle their pastoral responsibilities was undermined by pressure of workload:

“Lack of time for reflection and lack of professional space for observing, talking with and learning from colleagues was a consequence of an over loaded and inappropriate curriculum together with a constant pressure to maintain control and keep abreast of new initiatives”.

October 2006

Memorandum submitted by Professor Peter K Smith, Goldsmith's University, London

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Professor Smith has written and researched widely on school bullying and violence, since 1989. He directed the Sheffield Project which resulted in the first edition of *Don't suffer in silence*; and is currently heading the research & advisory Group of the Anti-Bullying Alliance. His submission should be read in conjunction with the ABA response.

2. Some factual points are made about: the incidence of bullying and its probable decrease; the negative and long-term effects of being involved as a victim or bully; and the particular need to consider bully/victims, that is pupils involved both as bullies and victims.

3. A number of recommendations are put forward, including:

- DfES to issue guidance or a workbook on producing a good school anti-bullying policy; and/or running or commissioning a service that gives schools comments and feedback on their policy.
- Incorporate a substantial element into basic teacher training courses, covering the nature of bullying and school violence, methods of intervention, use of conflict mediation skills, assertiveness training, peer support schemes, etc.
- Teacher training and support issues should include the early years at school.
- Include cyberbullying explicitly in School policies; Anti-bullying materials; Teacher training materials for anti-bullying work; Guidance for parents; and Guidance for children and young people.
- Institute or strongly recommend regular surveys on a national basis for schools and local authorities.
- National action also needs to consider issues such as parenting skills; preventing abuse and severe physical chastisement in families; control of overly violent material in television programmes and media/computer games; encouraging non-violent ways of resolving conflicts in the community.

In addition a number of suggestions are made regarding future research needs and priorities.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Peter K Smith is Professor of Psychology and Head of the Unit for School and Family Studies at Goldsmiths College, University of London. He is co-author of *Understanding Children's Development* (Blackwells, 1988, 1991, 1998, 2002), and co-editor of *School Bullying: Insights and Perspectives* (Routledge, 1994), *Tackling Bullying in Your School: A Practical Handbook for Teachers* (Routledge, 1994), *The Nature of School Bullying* (Routledge, 1999), *The Family System Test* (Routledge, 2001) and the *Blackwell Handbook of Childhood Social Development* (Blackwell, 2002), editor of *Violence in Schools: The Response in Europe* (Routledge, 2002) and co-editor of *Bullying in Schools: How Successful can Interventions be?* (Cambridge University Press, 2004). He directed the DfEE Sheffield Anti-Bullying project from 1991–94, advised on the DfEE pack *Don't Suffer in Silence* (1994, 2nd edition 2000), and coordinated a European Commission funded project (1997–2001) on “The Nature and Prevention of

³⁶ A Life in Secondary Teaching: Finding Time for Learning, University of Cambridge, 2004, J MacBeath, M Galton.

Bullying” (www.gold.ac.uk/tmr) and another project (1999–2002) on “Violence in Schools” (www.gold.ac.uk/connect). He is currently heading the Research & Advisory Group for the anti-Bullying Alliance.

1.2 Professor Smith (via Goldsmiths College) is a member of the Anti-Bullying Alliance, a unique collaboration of organisations involved in anti-bullying work. Further information about the Anti-Bullying Alliance is available at www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk. This response should be read alongside the Anti-Bullying Alliance’s response.

2. FACTUAL INFORMATION

2.1 As my writings contributed substantially to the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) response, I will not duplicate material on the Extent and Nature of the problem, and Short and Long-term Effects, but just emphasise or add a few points.

2.2 It is clear that a substantial minority of pupils are seriously involved, as victims, bullies, or both (bully/victims). The actual percentages depend on how it is measured, what time period one is considering, and how serious the behaviour has to be to be counted. But a rough estimate would be around 10–20% as victims and 5–10% as bullies. Dan Olweus has written of “one in seven” pupils being involved one way or another (in Norway), and this is a reasonable estimate.

2.3 The incidence in English schools has probably been going down slowly over the last few years or perhaps the last decade. Several lines of evidence suggest this, although in the absence of large-scale funded longitudinal data the evidence is not conclusive (see ABA response; and Attachment 1: Smith, P.K. & Shu, S. (2000). What good schools can do about bullying: Findings from a survey in English schools after a decade of research and action. *Childhood*, 7, 193–212).³⁷ Despite periodic media alarm, it should not be surprising that the rate is declining, since government advice to schools and action by schools has been fairly sustained since the end of the Sheffield Project, the publication of the first edition of *Don’t Suffer in Silence* in 1994, and legal requirements on schools since 1998.

2.4 Any decline should not be an excuse for complacency. First, the decline is slow and many pupils are still being bullied. Second, some forms of bullying, notably cyberbullying, appear to have increased (as new technologies have penetrated the middle/secondary school age range). Rather, it should be taken as a positive indication that action can be effective; but that more needs to be done.

2.5 The negative effects of being bullied have been well documented. It correlates with anxiety and depression, low self-esteem, and psychosomatic symptoms; and in extreme cases can lead to suicide. There is an issue about cause and effect (eg does being bullied cause low self-esteem; or does low self-esteem make a pupil vulnerable to being bullied?), but a smaller number of studies suggest that even if some factors make pupils more at risk of being a victim, the experience of being bullied does indeed cause or at least exacerbate such factors.

2.6 The correlates of being a bully are less consistent across studies (eg regarding self-esteem). There are probably a variety of types of pupils who engage in bullying; perhaps some out of lack of empathy and desire for power or to humiliate others, some because such behaviour characterizes their family environment, and others because they have themselves been bullied, or for revenge, or to bolster fragile self-esteem.

2.7 Being a victim can have severe and long-lasting negative effects. One study which I co-ordinated (Attachment 2: Smith, P.K., Singer, M., Hoel, H. & Cooper, C.L. (2003).³⁸ Victimization in the school and the workplace: Are there any links? *British Journal of Psychology*, 94, 175–188) found small but significant links from being a school victim to being a victim of workplace bullying (this link being most substantial for bully/victims, see 2.9).

2.8 Taking part in bullying, if persistent, has been found to predict to later violent and anti-social behaviour in the family, workplace or community.

2.9 Those pupils involved as both victims and bullies, or bully/victims, are those most at risk (from a number of different studies; see also 2.7). Whereas many pupils who for a period are involved as bullies or victims can be tackled effectively by good school procedures, there will be a small number (especially severe “bully/victims” or aggressive victims) who will need specialist intervention and probably work with families was well.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 At present every school develops its own policy and framework for tackling bullying. The good feature of this is that they feel ownership of their policy, and it can be responsive to local conditions and issues. The bad side is that many policies can be poorly worded and inadequate (for example, omitting certain types of bullying such as homophobic bullying or cyberbullying; being unclear about liaison with

³⁷ Not printed.

³⁸ Not printed.

parents; being unclear about how incidents will be recorded; etc). A useful step would be for DfES to issue guidance or a workbook on producing a good school anti-bullying policy; and/or running or commissioning a service that gives schools comments and feedback on their policy.

3.2 The limited research available suggests that many teachers and trainee teachers lack a good knowledge base about bullying and how to tackle it—but would welcome such knowledge (eg Attachment 3: Nicolaidis, S., Toda, Y. & Smith, P.K. (2002). Knowledge and attitudes about school bullying in trainee teachers. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 72, 105–118).³⁹ Teacher training in this area relies on in-service courses when provided, and the possibility of some short lecture or two during basic training. A useful step would be to incorporate a substantial element into basic teacher training courses, covering the nature of bullying and school violence, methods of intervention, use of conflict mediation skills, assertiveness training, peer support schemes, etc.

3.3 Although the terminology of “bully” and “victim” may not apply so clearly in infant school, it is clear that (a) some children are already aggressive, and (b) that changes in behaviour are easier with younger children. Teacher training and support issues should include the early years at school.

3.4 Cyberbullying has only recently (last few years) become prominent, but it is increasing. There may also be something of a “generation gap” in awareness, at the present time. It is vital that we include cyberbullying explicitly in School policies; Anti-bullying materials; Teacher training materials for anti-bullying work; Guidance for parents; and Guidance for children and young people.

3.5 At present we lack regular, national statistics on school bullying (and school violence). This means we cannot make confident statements about the severity of the problem, whether it is improving, whether it is better or worse in certain areas or certain school or following certain interventions. The Children’s Commissioner has called for such information; and a variety of indicators are expressly mentioned in the Joint Area Reviews (deriving from the agenda set by *Every Child Matters*). It would be very useful for practice and for research if regular surveys on a national basis were instituted or strongly recommended for schools and local authorities.

3.6 It should not be forgotten that some of the roots of bullying lie with families; and with the wider society. Schools cannot do all the work alone. National action also needs to consider issues such as parenting skills; preventing abuse and severe physical chastisement in families; control of overly violent material in television programmes and media/computer games; encouraging non-violent ways of resolving conflicts in the community.

3.7 More research would be a great asset in providing a firm evidence base for future work in schools (and with families and communities). While research needs are many and varied, I would identify the following as particularly promising:

- (a) identifying the most effective types of peer support schemes. Peer support schemes are varied in type, and used in one form or another by perhaps one-half of schools in England. Informal evaluation is encouraging (Attachment 4: Smith, P.K. & Watson, D., Evaluation of the CHIPS (ChildLine in Partnership with Schools) programme. Research report RR570 to DfES, London, 2004).⁴⁰ But more in-depth study is needed to see which kinds work best, why, and whether they really impact on levels of bullying.
- (b) comparing the effectiveness of different approaches to sanctions. Approaches vary widely in schools, and opinions vary widely amongst researchers, both nationally and internationally. At one end are approaches that use direct negative sanctions as soon as there is evidence of bullying having taken place. At the other end are approaches such as Pikas method, and Support Group Method (formerly No Blame Approach) that seek to change the behaviour of bullying children without imposing sanctions. In between are Restorative Justice approaches (where the bully must acknowledge their wrongdoing, but the outcome is decided through discussion with all involved). The present government clearly does not favour No Blame type approaches; nevertheless they are used quite widely both nationally and internationally, and there is little firm evidence concerning them. An evidence based philosophy does require further research on what approach to sanctions works best, in particular circumstances (eg age of children, severity of incident, etc).
- (c) tackling cyberbullying. This could include the various forms of cyberbullying (which are still developing), and particularly ways of dealing with it that require more than the methods used for traditional forms of bullying (the new DfES task force on Cyberbullying will be a useful step forward here).
- (d) why some pupils become bullies and the different types of pupils involved. We know a lot about the causes or risk factors for being a victim, but much less about those doing the bullying. Yet preventing further bullying depends in large part on changing the behaviour of bullying children. Indeed the effectiveness of different sanctions approaches (see (b) above) may depend in part on the nature and type of bullying.

³⁹ Not printed.

⁴⁰ Not printed.

- (e) ways of empowering victims. We know that victims of bullying use a variety of coping strategies, which vary in effectiveness. Assertiveness training can help; but since the Sheffield Project (1991–94) there has been little study of how well this works.
- (f) identifying bully/victims early and helping them change. Bully/victims are generally the most disturbed pupils and the most difficult for teachers to work with. How early can they be identified? And what would be most effective in improving their behaviour?

October 2006

Memorandum submitted by the Anti-Bullying Alliance

1. INTRODUCTION: THE ANTI-BULLYING ALLIANCE (ABA)

1.1 The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) was established in 2002. It is a unique collaboration of over 65 organisations that come together to articulate a common voice in support of strong national and local anti-bullying policy and practice and to promote the safe and positive environments for all children and young people. Through its Regional Programme and network of Co-ordinators the Alliance engages with the public, the voluntary sector and a range of other organisations in Local Authorities throughout England.

1.2 The Anti-Bullying Alliance has three main functions:

- to raise the profile of bullying and the effect it has on children and young people’s emotional health and well-being, life chances and achievement;
- to create a climate in which everyone agrees that bullying is unacceptable and is committed to tackling it in order to improve outcomes for children and young people; and
- to ensure that teachers and other adults working with children and young people, and young people themselves, are equipped with the skills and knowledge to address bullying effectively.

1.3 This evidence has been compiled by drawing on the expertise of the Alliance members (Appendix 1). It provides an overview and should be read in conjunction with evidence submitted by members with specialist expertise in different areas. It also draws on the expertise of nine Regional Co-ordinators, who cover each government region. The Anti-Bullying Alliance regional programme is funded by the DfES and works within government policy on bullying.

1.4 The Anti-Bullying Alliance welcomes this inquiry and urges the committee to both congratulate the Government on the commitment to anti-bullying shown so far, and to reinforce the need for anti-bullying policy to be developed further and implemented in the context of *Every Child Matters* and *Youth Matters*. We particularly urge the Government to recognise that many children and young people who bully others are being hurt and abused themselves.

2. SUMMARY

2.1 Bullying damages children’s and young people’s physical and mental health, their ability to learn and to build and sustain relationships. It can also destroy self-esteem, with the effects sometimes lasting into adult life. In extreme cases it can lead to self-harm and suicide.

2.2 The Anti-Bullying Alliance believes that bullying is a serious issue, and that we should work to reduce and prevent it as part of our efforts to create safe, positive and stimulating environments for children. All local authorities and schools should audit how they are addressing bullying on a regular basis. Staff need to be confident and competent in addressing bullying incidents.

2.3 The Anti-Bullying Alliance believes that all children should grow up without the fear of being bullied. The view that bullying is a normal part of growing up, necessary to toughen up children and young people in preparation for the realities adult life should be challenged at every level.

2.4 Research has demonstrated that bystanders play a significant role in bullying. Proactive and preventative interventions implemented at individual, class, school, and community level have the potential to reduce bullying, alongside reactive strategies to deal with bullying incidents when they occur. Teachers and staff need to be competent, confident and consistent in dealing with actual bullying incidents. The challenge is to develop innovative strategies that create a safe and positive and healthy environment for learning and provide children, young people and adults with safe ways to take action that reduces the incidence of bullying and its harmful effects.

2.5 Effective anti-bullying strategies must be multi-faceted, with interventions designed to:

- prevent bullying;
- react effectively when it occurs; and
- provide longer term support to promote the self-esteem of those who have been bullied to reduce the likelihood of long-term damage and also to reduce the underlying vulnerability of children and young people who bully others.

2.6 There is no quick fix, “one size fits all” approach to bullying. There are a number of approaches to dealing with incidents of bullying and those working with children and young people need to select the most appropriate for circumstances of individual cases. More research is needed however, to help us assess what works best in preventing and changing bullying behaviour, supporting those being bullied and working across the wider community.

2.7 The Anti-Bullying Alliance believes that adults need to listen to children and young people and ensure they are given the opportunity to speak out and have their voices heard on their experiences of bullying and are actively encouraged to participate in identifying both the problems and solutions to bullying.

2.8 The Anti-Bullying Alliance seeks a co-ordinated response to bullying. It believes that local authorities and Children’s Trusts have a key role to play in challenging bullying, and has a leading role to play in the development of local strategic partnerships and in the provision of anti-bullying support services. Local partnerships need to involve a range of statutory services, voluntary and community agencies and schools. Most importantly they need to consult and involve those most affected by bullying: children and young people.

2.9 The Anti-Bullying Alliance believes that children and young people need education and modelling from adults to help them learn pro-social behaviours, develop empathy for others and the skills and confidence to live in a diverse, wide changing society. The skills and abilities to live and work collaboratively in schools cannot be left to chance they can and must be taught. More emphasis should be placed on developing positive relationships skills and teaching children about mutual respect and co-operation in primary and secondary schools. We recommend that this inquiry concludes by supporting the calls of a significant number of organisations for Personal, Social and Health Education to be a statutory foundation subject at Key Stages 1–4 (from ages 4–18 years).

3. THE NATURE OF BULLYING

Definition

3.1 The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) defines bullying as the intentional hurting of one person by another, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It is usually repetitive or persistent, although some one-off attacks can have a continuing harmful effect on the victim. This definition is consistent with accounts from children and young people, and with research.

3.2 Bullying takes many forms, face-to-face, or through third parties. The hurt can be either or both physical, and emotional.

Some bullying is physical:

- kicking, hitting, pushing; and
- taking and damaging belongings.

Some bullying is verbal:

- name-calling;
- taunting, mocking;
- making offensive comments; and
- making threats.

Some bullying is relational:

- excluding people from groups, deliberately ignoring; and
- gossiping, spreading rumours.

Some bullying uses modern technology such as mobile phones, or the Internet. This “cyberbullying” includes:

- text-message bullying;
- phone-call bullying;
- picture/video-clip bullying (via mobile phone cameras);
- mail bullying;
- chat-room bullying;
- bullying through instant messaging; and
- bullying via websites.

Risk and protective factors in bullying

3.3 A child or young person can be bullied for no particular reason. Sometimes personal characteristics (such as height, weight, or hair colour) are targeted. Children who are timid and unassertive are more vulnerable to being bullied, so assertiveness training can help some children. Having friends, especially friends you can trust, is an important protective factor against being bullied in the peer group. Some bullying is done because a child or young person belongs to a certain group.

3.4 This has been labelled “prejudice driven bullying”, and includes homophobic bullying, racist bullying, sexual or gender bullying, and bullying of pupils with learning or other disabilities. It is possible for many children to get involved in bullying, too, and it is important not to “pathologise” most cases of bullying. All bullying is unacceptable, and many children who are aggressive and lack empathy for others can be helped to understand the consequences of their actions and change their behaviour. The home background can be an important factor to take into account in addressing bullying behaviours, together with peer-group influence, which is especially significant in secondary school.

Roles in bullying

3.5 There are many roles in bullying: there may be a gang of bullies, with a ringleader and followers. Some pupils watch and reinforce the bullying actively, or stand by passively doing nothing to stop it. Other pupils may help the victim. These roles are not exclusive: at different times or in different contexts, children and young people can both bully and be bullied (Wolke and others 2000).

3.6 There is increasing focus on the social context in which bullying takes place and the group and peer pressures that are at play. The role of the “bystander”—a “person who does not become actively involved in a situation where someone else requires help” (Clarkson 1996) is being highlighted in Anti-Bullying Week this year (see section 9). Bystanding is not passive: witnesses to bullying play very different roles, some more active than others, and these contribute significantly to what takes place.

Research (Salmivalli 1999) has indicated that as well as those who are bullied and those who bully, there are usually other witnesses who, through adopting particular roles, influence and affect what happens. The following “participant roles” were identified:

- assistants who join in and assist the bully;
- reinforcers who do not actively attack the victim but give positive feedback to the bully, providing an audience by laughing and making other encouraging gestures;
- outsiders who stay away, not taking sides with anyone or becoming involved, but allowing the bullying to continue by their “silent approval”; and
- defenders who show anti-bullying behaviour, comforting the victim, taking sides with them and trying to stop the bullying.

A full summary of this research is included in supplementary materials sent as part of this submission.

4. THE EXTENT OF BULLYING

4.1 Most of our information on the extent of bullying comes from children and young people saying that they have been bullied, or have taken part in bullying others—this is called “self-report” data. This is a good source, as bullying is first and foremost a subjective experience. It is also important to take account of other perspectives, for example of witnesses or bystanders (pupils, teachers, parents).

4.2 Surveys provide information on the frequency of bullying, but the figures will be influenced by: the age of the children; their understanding of what bullying is; and how the questions have been asked, for example, what time period is being referred to and how serious or frequent the bullying has to be. Pupils may report being bullied, even if this was mildly only once or twice, if this information is not specified. Research for the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) published in 2003 (Oliver and Candappa) showed that half of all primary and more than a quarter of all secondary pupils said that they had been bullied in the last year. The same study showed that 51% of primary and 54% of secondary pupils felt that bullying was a “big problem” or “quite a big problem” in their school.

4.3 Other surveys usually produce figures that show bullying falls within the range of 10–20%. Over the last few years, data gathered from some 16,000 pupils in Leicestershire schools (Pupil Attitude Survey 2005–06) shows that the proportion who say they have been bullied in school this year more than once or twice was 16.3% in 2002–03, 14.9% in 2003–04, 14.4% in 2004–05, and 13.9% in 2005–06. Levels of severe bullying appear to be declining from around 13% in 1996 to 8% in 2006 (Katz, 2006). These slow but steady declines do suggest that anti-bullying work is having an effect, but also that much remains to be done.

4.4 Even if many forms of bullying are slowly decreasing, cyber bullying, as one particular form of bullying, is probably on the increase as new technologies spread more widely, including downwards to younger children. A study of more than 11,000 pupils from 2002 to 2005 asked them how often they had

received any nasty or threatening text messages or emails. The percentage answering “once in a while” or more often was 5.8% in 2002, 5.9% in 2003, 7.4% in 2004 and 7% in 2005 (Noret and Rivers 2006). An NCH survey in 2005 (NCH 2005) found that 20% of young people are bullied or threatened through text messages or online: 14% received bullying or threatening text messages, 5% were harassed in internet chat rooms, and 4% were harassed by email. A detailed report on 92 pupils (Smith and colleagues 2005) found that 7% had experienced some kind of cyberbullying in the last couple of months, with phone-call, text-message and email bullying the most common forms. Prevalence rates of cyberbullying were greater outside of school than inside. Other studies show that children report being bullied out of school, for example “on the bus”, “on the train”, “on my way to school”, “on the way home”, “out on the street”, “in the shop” and “down my local park” (Frew 2002).

Children in public care

4.5 Children in residential care are particularly vulnerable to bullying. The Social Exclusion Unit found 60% of looked after children report being bullied in school compared to 17% of all children (Social Exclusion Unit 2003). A report by Barter and others (2004) found that half of the young people interviewed in children’s homes had experienced direct physical assault as victims, perpetrators or witnesses, and nearly all experienced verbal abuse.

4.6 Young people in secure settings also report being bullied. A survey by the Youth Justice Board (Challen and Walton 2004) found that 10% of boys and 13% of girls were bullied during their first few days in custody. In Scotland, a questionnaire given to all young offenders in Young Offenders Institutions found that 26% said they had been bullied at their present institution during their present sentence; and 33% said they had been bullied by staff at some point during their stay in the institution (Dyson 2005).

Homophobic bullying

4.7 A survey of homophobia in schools for the DfES (Warwick, Chase and Aggleton 2004) reported that around 82% of secondary school teachers are aware of verbal homophobic bullying and 26% of physical homophobic bullying. Pupil reports suggest that between 30–50% of young people in secondary schools attracted to people of the same sex will have directly experienced homophobic bullying (compared to the 10–20% cent of young people who experience general bullying). A survey in 1997 found that only 6% of schools had anti-bullying policies that address homophobic bullying; in 2004 this had increased, but only to 13% (YWCA 2004).

Gender or sex bullying

4.8 Girls and boys can experience name-calling, inappropriate touching, and other forms of harassment based on gender (Duncan 1999). Young Voice (Katz, Buchanan and Bream 2001) reported that 19% of young people had been insulted because of their gender. Girls and boys who are not perceived to live up to gender stereotypes and expectations can often find themselves bullied and, whether they are gay or not, this bullying is often homophobic.

Bullying and racism

4.9 Research in mainly white schools in 2001–02 found that 25% of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds had experienced racist name-calling within the last week. A third reported hurtful name calling and verbal abuse either at school or during the school journey and, for more than 16% this was persistent (DfES 2002).

4.10 Research with Traveller pupils found that more than half of Year 6 pupils interviewed had been called racist names; 29 of the 38 pupils interviewed who transferred to secondary school said that they had encountered some kind of racial abuse, particularly in their first year of secondary school (Derrington and Kendall 2004).

Bullying and learning difficulties

4.11 Children and young people with learning or communication difficulties are especially vulnerable to bullying. They may not have the ability to be assertive because they lack confidence or are more sensitive. According to a report by Mencap (2000), nearly 90% of people with a learning disability experience bullying, with over 66% of them experiencing it on a regular basis. Nearly three quarters (73%) are bullied in a public place, including a quarter of them on buses.

5. EFFECTS OF BULLYING

5.1 Bullying is one of children and young people's main concerns. In 2004–05, ChildLine counselled 32,688 children about bullying—almost one in four of children counselled. Bullying accounted for 25% of the calls to ChildLine and was the most common reason why children call the helpline. The Children's Commissioner has said that bullying is the biggest concern that children and young people contact him about.

5.2 Bullying can destroy children and young people's enjoyment of school, family and social life, as well as their capacity to learn. One study found that primary school children who were bullied were more likely to report disturbed sleep, bed-wetting, feeling sad, headaches and stomach aches. The risk of these symptoms increased with the frequency of the bullying (Williams and others 1996). Children and young people who are bullied often truant from school. They can be more anxious and insecure than those who are not bullied, and suffer from low self-esteem and see themselves as failures. Bullying can lead to depression or, in the most serious cases, self-harm or attempted suicide (DfES 2006).

5.3 Bullying is intrinsically linked to emotional and mental health. Those who have poor emotional and mental health are more likely to be bullied and more likely to bully others themselves. It is therefore important that bullying behaviour is recognised in the context of emotional and mental health, to ensure effective education, support and interventions. Well-planned PSHE within the context of Healthy schools can promote social and emotional development.

6. TACKLING THE PROBLEM

Legislative and policy context

6.1 The agenda set by *Every Child Matters* (2004) and the Children Act (2004) has firmly established that schools and other organisations providing services for children have a responsibility to provide the necessary resources needed to ensure that the young people in their care can be safe, healthy, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being. National performance indicators for children's services are being developed and Joint Area Reviews will evaluate how well children's services are meeting these outcomes.

6.2 In England, the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 states that "Head teachers in state schools have a duty to encourage good behaviour and respect for others on the part of pupils and, in particular, prevent all forms of bullying among pupils" (Section 61(4)). Since September 1999, head teachers of maintained schools in England and Wales have been under a duty to draw up measures to prevent all forms of bullying among pupils (Schools Standards Framework Act 1998). The Education Act 2002 (Section 175) gives all schools, including independent schools, the duty to "safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils". The guidance issued by DfES to show how this duty applies refers specifically to bullying as an issue that needs to be considered as part of keeping children safe (DfES 2004).

6.3 A number of DfES initiatives, policy guidance and strategies also relate to bullying (Bullying: Effective action in Secondary Schools 2003; *Don't Suffer in Silence* 2000—currently under revision; National Healthy Schools, National Primary and Secondary strategies on Behaviour Improvement and Behaviour Attendance) and encourage local authorities to deliver an effective, coordinated response to bullying across schools and other organisations in their area. Ofsted also offer good practice guidance (Bullying: Effective Action in Secondary Schools 2003) and in their inspections look to assess the measures in place to respond to bullying and other forms of discriminatory behaviour.

6.4 There are many legislative and non-statutory guidance drivers that relate to bullying, and these include:

- Human Rights Act;
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act;
- Disability Discrimination Act; and
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Local Authorities and Schools

6.5 Local authorities have a key role to play in challenging bullying, and a leading role to play in the development of local strategic partnerships and anti-bullying strategy and support services. Local strategy development needs to involve a range of services including:

- LA Services (eg Education Welfare/Education Psychology) and Education Initiatives eg Behaviour and Attendance/Healthy Schools.
- Schools.
- Youth Organisations.
- Statutory Agencies eg Police; CAMHS.
- Voluntary Agencies eg NSPCC/ChildLine; Victim Support; Barnardo's.

A shared strategy will offer greater coherence and cohesion in challenging bullying and prepare for Joint Area Reviews now being undertaken by Ofsted. The incidence of bullying and how it is addressed at policy and practice level across the community will be inspected by Ofsted.

6.6 Schools in particular have become a key site for tackling issues associated with bullying and implementing effective preventative strategies. Schools are legally required to have an anti-bullying policy and to safeguard children and young people. The Anti-Bullying Alliance believes that effective anti-bullying strategies help pupils realise their academic potential and help schools reduce the frequency and impact of bullying incidents and assist them in managing incidents more effectively.

6.7 An effective anti-bullying strategy involves three elements:

- prevention;
- reacting and responding; and
- supporting and monitoring those who have been bullied and those doing the bullying.

Prevention

6.8 Strategies for preventing bullying need to be implemented using a whole-school approach. Schools need to create a culture where bullying is understood by all staff (teaching and non-teaching) and pupils to be unacceptable, and anti-bullying work is supported in PSHE and across the whole curriculum. Schools also need to ensure they have effective pastoral systems including peer support and school councils.

Reacting and responding

6.9 Responding effectively to bullying using reward and sanctions as outlined in the behaviour policy. The key tasks in responding effectively are:

- making sure the person being bullied is safe and feels safe;
- establishing what happened by listening to different perspectives, including those of the person bullied, the person doing the bullying and those that have witnessed the bullying (also called “bystanders”);
- making sure the person who is doing the bullying knows it is wrong to bully, takes responsibility for their behaviour and makes amends. Doing this in an emotionally intelligent way will require focusing on the unacceptable behaviours being displayed, and not reinforcing a sense of the individual being bad; and
- publicly signalling, where necessary and appropriate, to the whole school that the bullying is taken seriously and has been responded to well. This will often include talking to and with parents and carers.

Supporting and monitoring

6.10 This will include:

- identifying immediate and longer-term support needs of both the person being bullied and the person who has done the bullying. This may include friendship based group work, accessing support from external agencies including voluntary agencies and Child Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS);
- recording the bullying incident, including what happened and who was involved, including the bystanders;
- reflecting on the process to identify any lessons for the future and disseminating any learning to colleagues; and
- monitoring and following up with all parties concerned, including parents and carers to ensure that the bullying has stopped, and if it hasn't, taking appropriate steps.

6.11 The most effective strategies and interventions are sustained over the long term, and developed with staff, pupils, parents, carers and partners in the community. They are monitored and evaluated as circumstances change, and supported by a school ethos that inhibits bullying and promotes empathy and respect for diversity (Oliver and Candappa 2003).

6.12 The Anti-Bullying Alliance is in the process of producing an Anti-Bullying Audit Toolkit that will help local authorities and schools to provide the evidence they need to evaluate their policies, strategies and practices.

7. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION

7.1 The new inspection arrangements require that schools and all services for children consult children and young people to provide evidence for Self-Evaluation Forms and Joint Area Reviews. Young people can also participate actively in important decisions that concern their peer group, for example through engaging in school councils, youth parliaments or other democratic systems. Children and young people need to negotiate and own a strategy rather than have one simply imposed upon them. There are a range of activities and areas that children and young people can be involved in that relate to bullying:

- identifying where the bullying happens, who is doing it to whom, and what needs to be done;
- decisions about how to tackle bullying;
- identifying priority issues that need to be addressed, which will often include bullying;
- the development and delivery of the taught curriculum that can focus on aspects of bullying and discrimination;
- identifying new forms of bullying, such as text and email bullying;
- learning how to play an active participant role in challenging bullying; and
- peer support including mediation, listening, advocacy and mentoring for those experiencing or at risk of bullying or being bullied (Cowie and others 2002). Peer support systems have changed as the children and young people involved have become more creative and confident in developing the systems in which they have been trained to play a part, for example, by making changes in the logistics of peer support, and developing use of the internet and email support (Cartwright 2005; Cowie and Hutson 2005);
- reviewing, auditing and developing anti-bullying policy and practice and giving feedback to Ofsted; and
- volunteering and supporting others in the wider community to promote inclusion and reduce bullying, for example, those with learning disabilities.

7.2 You can involve children and young people in a number of ways to discuss their issues, concerns or experiences of bullying, such as through:

- Focus groups and face-to-face discussions with small groups of children and young people, particularly school councils.
- PSHE or citizenship curriculum where the class could address bullying as a class project.
- Interactive websites.
- Written questionnaires and feedback forms provide ideal opportunities to find out about children and young people's understanding and perceptions about bullying.
- Art, posters, drama and interactive exercises.
- Symbol mats for disabled young people.
- Puppets or dolls for very young children.
- Videos and audio tapes.
- Brainstorming sessions to explore issues of bullying.
- Children and young people representation on advisory boards.
- Graffiti boards.
- External reference/advisory groups provide children and young people with opportunities to influence policy and practice at local and regional levels.

Guidance produced by the South East Anti-Bullying Alliance—*Are You Talking to Me? Young People's Participation in anti-bullying*—is included in the supplementary materials sent with this submission. It provides a number of case studies highlighting effective and creative participation models.

7.3 The Anti-Bullying Alliance carried out a project on behalf of the Office of the Children's Commissioner (OCC) to capture the stories of young people and give a sense of the impact bullying can have on children and young people in our schools and communities. The children and young people involved offered the following ten top tips on how to deal with bullying:

1. Pick it up early and act before it spreads and becomes entrenched.
2. Train teachers and inspectors to ensure they do not collude with bullying.
3. Teach about diversity and equality.
4. Do not rely solely on the target to identify who is bullying them before intervening. Consider support groups, buddies or peer supporters or a bully box.
5. Use the experience of young people in peer support programmes.
6. Teach techniques for calming down and develop resilience.
7. There are risks for children in telling someone. Adults should handle this information with care.
8. Work with children and young people to change bullying behaviour.
9. Being part of a group outside school can help build confidence and friendships.
10. Involve children, young people and their parents in finding solutions and resolving bullying.

7.4 The Children's Commissioner also recommended that effective Anti-Bullying Strategies are put in place which will:

- Demonstrate a visible commitment to addressing bullying and adopting a whole school approach with strong leadership and a range of preventative measures, including building emotional resilience, empathy and self-esteem, as well as having clear procedures for identifying and managing bullying; this equally applies to settings other than schools such as youth clubs, early years and residential settings.
- Be based on clear, up-to-date knowledge of the local issues within the school and community, for example when, where and how bullying happens, and whether any peer groups are particularly responsible. This should include an annual survey of children and young people.
- Recognise the distinction between bullying and other types of conflict and aggressive behaviour.
- Ensure the active involvement of children and young people, their families and community partners and promote a culture of respect and valuing diversity.
- Identify vulnerable children and young people, and those critical moments and transitions when they may become vulnerable and provide additional support when needed.
- Support the ongoing development of empathy, emotional resilience and a sense of responsibility for behaviour from early years to adulthood and beyond.
- Apply clear and consistent rewards and sanctions policies that are understood by all members of the school community and are suitable for the age, maturity and understanding of the child or young person.
- Ensure all members of staff are trained and supported and model positive relationships with each other and pupils.

(Journeys—Children and Young People talking about Bullying, OCC).

8. KEY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Challenges

8.1 Bullying takes place anywhere and everywhere: in schools, in the home and within communities. It is a subjective experience which does not always fit into a neat category or tight definition. The variety and nature of bullying is also changing and evolving as technology develops. It is critical that all those working with children and young people have a shared understanding of what bullying is and how it differs from other types of conflicts and aggressive behaviour.

8.2 The view that bullying is a normal part of growing up, necessary to toughen up children and young people in preparation for the realities adult life is still held by many (public and professionals alike). This has a detrimental effect on those being bullied and those working to try to implement strategies to deal with it and prevent it.

8.3 There is still a culture of fear around dealing with bullying both at individual and institutional level, which can paralyse progress. Adult and children "bystanders" are often concerned for their own safety and self-preservation or don't always have the knowledge or skills to intervene effectively. Schools and other organisations can be in denial about the true extent of bullying taking place, and can be reluctant to actively consult with children and their parents in case by implication they are seen to be "admitting" to having a bullying problem.

8.4 There is no quick fix, “one size fits all” approach to bullying. There are a number of approaches to dealing with incidents of bullying (summarized in *Making Schools Safer; Using Effective Anti-bullying Strategies, ABA*) and those working with children and young people need to select the most appropriate for circumstances of individual cases. This requires dedicated time, confidence and a shared commitment across schools and communities that acts of bullying will not be tolerated and appropriate action will be taken. More research, however is still needed on what works best in preventing and changing bullying behaviour and supporting those being bullied.

8.5 Bullying cannot be dealt with in isolation, but needs to be dealt with in the wider context of developing and creating a culture based on care and respect for others. In schools, this means developing a culture that provides a safe, supportive and empowering learning environment. A well-coordinated PSHE curriculum and pastoral care support is crucial in achieving this.

8.6 There is real danger that schools and others see having an anti-bullying policy as the end of the process rather than the beginning. An anti-bullying policy is meaningless without regular monitoring, review and evaluation. Evidence of impact needs to be regularly sought.

8.7 Although considered good practice, there is currently no legal duty on schools to collect and provide data on bullying to local authorities. There is therefore a lack of clarity about what LAs can reasonably expect schools to provide so that they can both identify schools who need further support to address bullying and provide the relevant information for the Joint Area Reviews.

Opportunities

8.8 While it is acknowledged that bullying is a complex issue, there is an ever-growing body of good practice in local authorities and schools, where positive measures are being taken to prevent and tackle bullying. The approaches adopted—including peer-led schemes, pupils’ participation in decision making, positive management strategies, the provision of advice and support for both those being bullied and bullying—can have huge impact on the levels of bullying and the ability of children and young people to deal with it. More opportunities should be taken to identify, celebrate and publicise effective practice and send out positive messages to schools, children and young people, parents and the media that something can be done about it. A number of case studies from around the Regions have been included in the supplementary material sent with this submission. They illustrate how some schools and local authorities have approached and developed anti-bullying initiatives and strategies.

8.9 There are an increasing number of “tools” available to those working with children and young people to help and support those charged with the responsibility for anti-bullying strategies (a list of publications and toolkits produced by the Anti-Bullying Alliance is attached in Appendix 2).⁴¹ These should be widely publicised and disseminated.

8.10 The agenda set by *Every Child Matters* gives an impetus for identifying strategic responsibility for bullying. Local authorities and Children’s Trusts have a key role in developing local strategic partnerships and achieving a co-ordinated response to bullying which will be inspected by Ofsted as part of the Joint Area Reviews. Schools also have a number of key DfES strategies which offer support on bullying, including the National Healthy Schools Programme, the Behaviour and Attendance Strategy and Behaviour Improvement Programmes. Although schools have this excellent support, they may not choose to focus on bullying and may identify other priorities regarding attendance and behaviour. A supportive policy context, including looking at ways of encouraging schools to prioritise bullying, should be exploited in creating anti-bullying policies and practice.

8.11 There is a growing understanding of the need to engage children and young people in identifying and implementing solutions to bullying. This means being mindful of children and young people’s enormous (if given the right support) capacity to participate as well as providing supportive opportunities and structures for participation. This is crucial to the development of potentially acceptable and effective policies and interventions.

8.12 Schools and other organisations working with children and young people have the opportunity to develop external links (with counselling service, school nurse service and voluntary organisations) to ensure children and young people have a range of support structures and people they can turn to. The needs of parents should also be considered, so they understand the nature of bullying and feel more confident about how they can best support their children.

8.13 There should be a concerted effort to continually raise the profile of bullying and anti-bullying work. This can be done through events like Anti-Bullying Week (see below) but should be a continual process, educating and informing, and using the media constructively to create a culture of zero-tolerance around bullying.

⁴¹ Not printed.

9. ANTI-BULLYING WEEK

Anti-Bullying Week

9.1 National Anti-Bullying Week is an annual event held in the third week of November to raise awareness of bullying and the harm it can cause and to promote effective anti-bullying strategies. The theme for 2006 is the role of the bystander, with the campaign slogan “Bullying: See It. Get Help. Stop it”. This focuses on the importance of children and adults taking positive action to get help when they see bullying happening. Nationally the Anti-Bullying Alliance role is to provide background materials and stimulate regional and local activities within school and the community for Anti-Bullying Week. The last Friday of Anti-Bullying Week is nominated as Blue Friday—a non-uniform day—where children and young people are encouraged to wear blue to show their solidarity against bullying.

9.2 A range of Anti-Bullying Week materials have been produced including posters, designed by children and young people, a series of postcards to help children and young people communicate their concerns about bullying and an anti-bullying lanyard to attach to bags, phones and pencil cases. A CD Rom containing the facts on bullying, up to date research, ideas for Anti-Bullying week events and all the materials was sent to schools in September (pack enclosed for information).⁴²

9.3 Trutex (the school uniform provider) is the official sponsor of Anti-Bullying Week. It is also supported by Department for Education and Skills and Hope Education.

9.4 Children’s TV channel Nickelodeon has become the official broadcaster for Anti-Bullying Week 2006, and are running a parallel campaign See something, Say something, launched on 8 September 2006. The campaign will climax on-air in November with a special series of programming, including 30 short films featuring children and famous faces.

Further information about Anti-Bullying Week is available at www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

An Anti-Bullying Week Campaign Pack is included in the supplementary materials sent with this submission.⁴³

Other Projects and Publications

9.5 The Research and Evaluation Team of Anti-Bullying Alliance, based at the Unit for School and Family Studies, Goldsmith College, University of London, compile regular lists of abstracts of research relevant to school bullying and victimisation, and bullying in childhood in general. These can be accessed at www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

9.6 A list of current Anti-Bullying Alliance publications is provided in Appendix 2.⁴⁴

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Witnesses: **Mr Steve Sinnott**, General Secretary, National Union of Teachers (NUT), and **Professor Peter K Smith**, Head of the Unit for School and Family Studies, Goldsmith College, and Head of the Research and Advisory Group, Anti-Bullying Alliance, gave evidence.

Q173 Chairman: I welcome to our deliberations Professor Peter Smith and Steve Sinnott. You have had the benefit of listening to the previous set of witnesses. As a Select Committee we are here to learn. It is a privilege to have with us Prof Smith given his experience and range of research. We also have with us Steve Sinnott who represents the only teacher union that responded to our call for evidence. We hope that you can help us with our inquiry. I will give each of you three minutes to encapsulate what you want to tell the Committee and then we shall go to our questions. Let us start with Prof Smith.

Professor Smith: Earlier the Chairman said that he was a bit depressed about this matter. First, I think that there are two encouraging features. One is that internationally we can be fairly proud of our record in terms of what we have been doing about school bullying. Norway, Sweden, the UK and Australia are probably the countries that are doing the most in this area. I think that it is having an effect. Earlier someone said that in the main the incidence of bullying is going down, if only slowly. It is not certain because the evidence base is not perfect, but

there are a good many factors to indicate that rates of bullying have been going down. There is, however, still plenty to tackle. I take that as an optimistic sign that what we have been doing over the past 10 to 12 years has had some effect, and it would be very disappointing if that was not so. But we face new challenges. Cyber bullying is a new challenge and is probably going up. During the previous session someone mentioned the immigration of new peoples into communities which may also make some things more difficult. There is plenty to do. In the previous session the Committee suggested that perhaps people were not being sufficiently forward in saying what should be done, but in a way we do not yet have the evidence base for that. Reading was given as an example, but in the past mistakes were made by over-enthusiasm to pursue certain kinds of teaching reading methods without perhaps the right evidence base. On the whole, I think that we have been doing the right thing which is to use a broad variety of approaches to see how they work. As yet, we do not have a magic bullet or pill to solve it, but a lot of things help. We really need more research and

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a better evidence base, especially in deciding what kinds of sanctions work best and in what situations and what peer support schemes work best. Some of these matters I mention in my submission.

Q174 Chairman: Are you saying that the incidence of bullying is going down? I ask you the question again because I note that some members of the press corps have just come into the room.

Professor Smith: The press likes stories about how bullying is getting worse, but the evidence from repeated surveys of the same type in the same place—I have cited Leicestershire as the best example—is that over the past four or five years it has been going down slowly year by year.

Q175 Chairman: And we are doing better than a lot of other countries?

Professor Smith: We are doing better than many other countries, but obviously there is no room for complacency.

Q176 Chairman: I hope that I get brownie points from the press for that.

Mr Sinnott: The Chairman earns brownie points from me if he repeats his comments about the National Union of Teachers.

Q177 Chairman: I said that you are the only teacher union that responded. Head teachers responded.

Mr Sinnott: I look forward to the day when on behalf of teachers you receive only one such piece of evidence. I am ever the optimist in these matters. For us the first priority of any school is to ensure that it deals with the welfare of youngsters. From all of our own evidence and a search of the literature what youngsters want is a school in which they feel safe. What we do know is that in such an environment they will be protected and will always learn better. This is an educational issue as well as a matter to do with the welfare of youngsters. I believe that at the moment we have a real opportunity with the development of thinking around a personalisation agenda for youngsters to take forward that issue and contribute to the task of properly and effectively dealing with bullying. We are very supportive of that personalisation agenda. I hope that this is dealt with properly in Christine Gilbert's report. There may be evidence of a decline in bullying amongst youngsters. I heard Professor Smith's earlier comment. Just occasionally in the evidence in the previous session reference was made to the bullying of teaching staff. A few years ago I think we would have had no calls to us about the bullying and harassment of teachers within schools, but we now have such calls. Evidence has been submitted to the Select Committee from the Teacher Support Network on bullying among teachers. There is also some statistical evidence on that. We shall be producing a report on Friday, which we have already promised to send to the Select Committee, on sexist bullying in schools. That is a neglected area in relation to teachers. When we submit that evidence the Committee will see in very graphic terms some

terrible stories of harassment of teachers. In relation to the type of school environment that is conducive to dealing properly with any bullying that takes place, whether it is by head teachers of teachers or teachers against teachers, youngster against youngster or teachers behaving inappropriately with youngsters, the right setting is one in which there is a welcoming of all points of view within the school community. That includes the views of teachers, parents and the wider school community and a real student/pupil voice. There is clear evidence that in those circumstances one is better able to deal effectively with bullying.

Q178 Chairman: Professor Smith, when I listened to the previous witnesses I recalled that at one stage I was a social scientist, or tried to be. What research has been done on group behaviour and why bullying takes place? Most of us will remember the novel or film *Lord of the Flies* where a group of boys descends into terrible violence. Why is it sociologically that if one looks at a group of children that is a very common aspect? I refer not just to group behaviour but picking on a vulnerable member of that group, for whatever reason? Why does this happen? If we understand why it happens presumably we can do something about it.

Professor Smith: Bullying is often but not always a group phenomenon. Sometimes it is just one person picking on another, but we know that half the time, or perhaps more, it is done in a group in the sense that there may be several people doing the bullying and there will be an audience as well. Some people will be around who, even if they do not join in, may be laughing or encouraging it. There are some people around who may actually be what are called defenders and may try to stop the bullying by telling the bullies to stop, getting help or at least comforting the victim afterwards. I think that an important part of peer support schemes is to encourage people to be defenders, and that is what a good school ethos should be doing, that is, empowering people to challenge bullying. Why bullying happens is a big topic. We should not mythologise bullies. Bullying is an abuse of power. One is in a powerful situation because one is stronger; one has one's mates there against a single child, or something like that, or one feels psychologically more confident. The abuse of power can bring gains at least in the short term. The bully may extort money or belongings from someone, or it may be he seeks prestige within his peer group. He or she appears to be a tough person and has shown that he is more powerful than someone he can torment. In particular, if the victim is perhaps someone who is not strongly liked in the peer group that group may think that that is quite funny and approve it in the wrong climate. Therefore, there are temptations to bully. Why does one give in to those temptations? It could be because of the home background. Perhaps that kind of behaviour has been modelled at home in some way or maybe the bully has been bullied at home, or perhaps that is the kind of behaviour that he has experienced. In particular, in secondary

schools that is a way of getting status amongst one's peers, especially in adolescence. We have a lot of evidence that it is most difficult to work on attitudes to bullying and so on at about the 13, 14 or 15-year period—the mid-adolescence stage—when peer groups and status among peers are very important. One is a bit more distant from adults; one is in the phase of distancing oneself from adults, teachers and so on. That is when bullying children may earn the most kudos, as it were, from the peer group.

Q179 Chairman: Mr Sinnott, from your vantage point as general secretary of a very large teacher union, do you pick up on outstanding good practice that you think can be rolled out and provide an answer to the problem of bullying?

Mr Sinnott: I believe that there are very good examples of schools that deal effectively with this issue or are creating the circumstances in which bullying is least likely to rear its head. I think the examples are in schools in which people are properly involved. I am referring to schools which have effective and functioning policies which are not just policies on paper but properly identify the whole range of areas in which youngsters can suffer bullying because of issues of equality and correctly specify individually a whole range of equality issues, including disability, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues and issues to do with poverty. I am referring to all of those issues properly identified in policies which are monitored and schools which audit those matters. In those schools you find that there is least likelihood of a problem. Some really imaginative ideas have been stimulated by teachers or youngsters. Mr Ennis dealt with the issue of primary schools. Some of the measures, such as the creation in schools of buddies or areas where somebody who feels he needs a friend can go and other youngsters can go, are extremely effective in creating a particular culture for all youngsters.

Q180 Chairman: Do you trust schools to do it on their own? I drew the comparison with teaching children to read and having a system. I visited a school in Skipton on Friday. They had circles where on a Friday afternoon the last thing they do is pass a crystal ball and all the children talk about what they would do if they were bullied or knew that a friend would be bullied. I do not think that that system was invented in the school; it is well known and used. It seemed to be a very powerful tool especially for five to 11-year-olds because it prepares them for knowing that bullying is inappropriate behaviour.

Mr Sinnott: Circle time is a fantastic tool by which youngsters reveal a whole range of problems, worries or concerns. I believe that that is an effective contribution to teachers being able to understand what youngsters are doing. We believe that the creation in every school of a school counsellor is an important way to identify youngsters who need to relate to an adult some of their concerns; or there is scope for other

youngsters who witness bullying to report it to an adult. Sometimes a school counsellor is the appropriate person for youngsters to turn to. I think it is important for all schools to have the resources for a school counsellor. I think that your question had different levels to it. I believe that the Government should give a lead on these issues. It has done some great work on the anti-bullying charter and a whole range of issues to do with discipline in schools, because that is also linked with these issues. I believe that the Government has done some terrific work in that area. We need funding streams to assist in the proper professional development of schools and give teachers the skills and expertise they need to develop programmes with youngsters. I think that those measures would help. Within local authorities there should be teams that are able to deal with behaviour and promote good practice within their areas. I believe that local authorities have a key role to play. One then has the schools and their responsibility. It is an important, key priority for schools to tackle issues to do with behaviour but in a comprehensive way. Perhaps I may give another example of how this should be dealt with in a comprehensive way. I was interested in hearing the representative from the National Autistic Society. As to bullying in relation to disability, we believe that there is some evidence to show that if schools encourage the employment of teachers with disabilities there is less likelihood of that kind of bullying in those schools. Therefore, employment practices are also important in relation to dealing with this issue.

Q181 Mr Chaytor: I want to ask Professor Smith about one issue on which we have not really touched: the incidence of bullying among different social groups. In terms of both victims and bullies, are the numbers evenly distributed across social classes, or is there some skewing towards particular socio-economic groups?

Professor Smith: There is not a lot of evidence about that. My global response is that there is not a great deal of difference; you can find bullying in any kind of community and in any kind of school that has the wrong ethos and approach. In the Sheffield project we compared schools in different areas of socio-economic deprivation. There was a modest 10% effect; in the more deprived schools rates of bullying tended to be higher, but looking at the total the percentage is not very great.

Q182 Chairman: There was the traditional view—one remembers *Tom Brown's School Days* and *Flashman*—that the classic institution where bullying took place was the public school. Is that still the case?

Professor Smith: Public schools have changed a lot since *Tom Brown's School Days*. There is probably just as much bullying going on in public schools as in state schools, but we do not have much evidence on it because the DfES has not supported research in public schools, understandably.

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Q183 Chairman: Flashman lives!

Professor Smith: It may well be.

Mr Sinnott: There is some evidence from the National Consumer Council that youngsters from social groups D and E, I believe, fear bullying in relation to clothes and how they dress and they are more aware of logos and brands and how they look. The fear of being bullied can be greater in relation to one particular social class. As a result of that it steers youngsters into a particular type of behaviour.

Q184 Mr Chaytor: Professor Smith, in your submission you call for a substantial element of training on bullying to be introduced into ITT. What is a “substantial element”?

Professor Smith: Obviously, that is open to discussion, but basically at the moment there is nothing.

Q185 Mr Chaytor: It is absolutely zero?

Professor Smith: As far as I am aware, yes. It may well be that there is some in-service training, and there is quite a lot of such training going on but it is rather haphazard. It is really a matter of chance whether one’s school or local authority provides that. I believe that many trainee teachers and those in place feel that they would benefit from that sort of training. We now know a lot about bullying; we have 15 or 20 years’ research behind us. We know quite a lot about the backgrounds from which bullies come. You asked about the rationale for bullying. We know quite a lot about that and about the forms it takes. We know quite a lot about the ways to deal with it. None of them are perfect but a lot of them are helpful. There is a whole range of schemes, as in the *Don’t Suffer in Silence* pack and others, so it is useful for teachers to be inducted into ways of working with pupils, having peer support schemes and a whole range of things that could be introduced.

Q186 Mr Chaytor: Mr Sinnott, your submission does not mention ITT at all. Are you confident that the existing arrangements work well?

Mr Sinnott: We are less than perfect. We should perhaps have mentioned initial teacher training. I support what Professor Smith said. We did mention in-service training which I also regard as a very important area. In some respects it is more important because schools can deal with that type of training collectively. The best type of professional training and development is often that which is done collaboratively. We believe that this is a perfect area for collaborative training by teachers collectively within the whole scheme.

Q187 Mr Chaytor: To go back to initial teacher training, if the incidence of bullying is declining how can you justify an argument which says that the initial training on bullying should be increased?

Professor Smith: First, I think that many teacher trainees and teachers ask for it; second, the material is there to be provided; third, although bullying is declining it is a modest decline and there is still a

lot to do. Bullying is still going on and we face new challenges, for example cyberbullying where awareness-raising about the issue will be important to everyone, including teachers.

Q188 Mr Chaytor: Mr Sinnott, on the in-service side is there enough resource in the system to provide adequately for the needs of continuing professional development?

Mr Sinnott: I do not think there is. We find that access to professional development on the part of teachers in primary schools is declining in relation to the provision of PPA time in schools, so the opportunities for them to go outside for professional development is declining. We think that that is an important general issue. Specifically in relation to professional development and training of teachers in bullying, we believe that there needs to be separate and earmarked funding. If we say that the first priority is to have schools where youngsters feel safe then we think there should be a separate funding scheme for this.

Q189 Mr Chaytor: Given all the pressures on CPD time—at our previous inquiry into special needs the NUT argued for more time for special needs training—where would you place bullying in the list of priorities on a scale of one to 10?

Mr Sinnott: Very high; we say that it is the first priority.

Q190 Mr Chaytor: Higher than special needs?

Mr Sinnott: Sometimes they are connected, are they not? It is very high. It may be that different schools have different priorities. In some schools it may be that the priority is to deal separately with issues to do with bullying but in another school there is a need to deal with special education needs.

Q191 Mr Chaytor: In individual schools do you tend to find all teachers using the same approach to bullying? Is there a school model that all teachers are expected to follow, or is it normal to find individual teachers using their own particular approaches or picking from a range of different techniques according to circumstances?

Mr Sinnott: In dealing with it the best schools are the ones that follow a common approach, that is, the ones that have a policy and procedures to deal with it and undertake some in-service training maybe at school level. The schools that deal effectively with bullying are those where there is a consistent approach and youngsters understand what is acceptable behaviour and what is not.

Q192 Mr Chaytor: Are you confident that all NUT members can deal effectively with prejudice-based bullying?

Mr Sinnott: I think we do a considerable amount of work to raise those issues with NUT members. Are they all effective in dealing with it? The answer must be no. We still have more to do. The NUT has a responsibility to deal with these issues, but so does everybody else involved in the education system: government, local authorities, parents and

youngsters themselves. As part of any rights-based approach to these things we always say that there is an issue of responsibility here for all those actors but including the youngsters themselves.

Q193 Chairman: To follow that line of reasoning, recently Lord Adonis gave evidence to us on the question of citizenship. Evidence that we heard from others suggests that what every school really needs is someone who is fully trained pre-year in being the teacher in the school who leads on citizenship. He argued that five days of continuous professional development was not as good but it is pretty good stuff to substitute. As we talk about bullying what is your opinion? Is this not what should be imbedded in the whole citizenship agenda? Do you agree that if you do citizenship training well in the school bullying ought to be encapsulated in that?

Mr Sinnott: Yes, and we also say that in our submission. Again, I believe that there was an under-resourcing in the introduction of citizenship. I think there has been inadequate access to professional development to deal with citizenship, but citizenship within a school is not just something that goes on in a lesson. In order for youngsters to have a school that deals properly with citizenship it is about what they experience within it. If youngsters in a school know that their voice is valued and welcomed in lots of ways that is one of the best experiences of good citizenship. If youngsters are expected to intervene appropriately when they see bullying and are encouraged so to do that is a great example of a school dealing effectively with citizenship.

Q194 Chairman: Do you think that tackling bullying through citizenship is the best way? We went to a school in Wales which had as its model a sort of Athenian democracy—I will be criticised for this because the Athenians did not give voting rights to women or slaves—with a forum, a school council and real involvement by students. As Mr Sinnott mentioned earlier, it said to us in effect that it did not have a problem with bullying; it did not have an anti-bullying policy because it did not arise and it was dealt with through decision. Is that the best way to deal with it?

Professor Smith: I agree with my colleague. Citizenship is a good way to bring in the general issue of bullying, as long as it is not then forgotten and it is still mentioned explicitly. Whenever I hear phrases such as “no bullying goes on here” I greatly worry because we know that in any situation it can happen; it is part of human nature, as we discussed earlier. The issue then is: when it happens are there effective procedures in place to deal with it to stop it becoming too serious, and so on? I do not believe that citizenship should be seen in any way as an alternative to dealing with bullying but as a broader framework within which issues of bullying, human rights and the sorts of things we have talked about—disability, attitudes to minorities and so on—can be put in place. As to the role of students, discussion of the anti-bullying policy of the school

is a way of involving pupils. Ideally, it should be a policy developed through the school community. Ultimately, the head teacher must have the final say, but consultation is seen as a valuable part of that, as well as taking part in the school council, peer support schemes and so on. There are many ways of involving pupils directly.

Q195 Paul Holmes: Some people would ask whether we are making too much fuss about bullying because, as you say, it is part of human nature; it is an aspect of pack behaviour. One sees it in packs of wolves and groups of chimps in the jungle. There was bullying in the nineteenth century and in the good old days of the 1930s. There was bullying when I was in school in the sixties. Are we making too much fuss about it? What are the long-term effects that are more serious for both the bully and victim?

Professor Smith: I do not think that we are taking something seriously that we should not because it is a very serious issue. It is part of human nature; there is always a temptation to be a bully and abuse a powerful situation. If I can introspect, I can think of a time when I bullied someone and when I was bullied. Probably most of us can do that, but it is not desirable in a civilised society for that to be a prevalent kind of behaviour. It is horrible for the victim especially if it persists. We know of well-publicised suicides—that is the extreme—due to bullying. For every one person who commits suicide there must be hundreds who are having a really horrible time at school but have not gone to the extent of taking their lives. It can have very long-term effects. I have talked to people in their forties and fifties and also people with disabilities. For example, I did some work with people who stammered. Stammering is a disability. It is very difficult to cope with bullying if you stammer; it is difficult to respond. Immediately you start to respond you are made fun of. These people had vivid memories of being bullied 20 or 30 years ago sometimes, I am sorry to say, by teachers as well as pupils. Hopefully, that has changed a lot now.

Q196 Paul Holmes: In your written evidence to us you give specific statistics on adults with criminal convictions who have been identified as bullies way back when they were eight-years-old.

Professor Smith: Of course, the other side of it is: what happens to the people who are doing the bullying? There is evidence about what happens if that is not checked or changed. There is evidence from David Farrington’s work as a result of his longitudinal study of London’s working-class boys. They are more likely to have criminal convictions later on. Studies in Norway have also shown that. I also cite a study that we did with Cary Cooper in Manchester which found that children who are both bullies and victims are particularly at risk. That shows up later in the workplace.

Mr Sinnott: Nobody should go to school with the fear at the back of his mind that he will suffer harassment or violence as a result of gender, sexual orientation, disability or nationality. That has real

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consequences for the youngster's learning and self-image and the way in which he or she can make a contribution to the school, or it will have an impact throughout the individual's career and life. Therefore, there is a responsibility on us all to tackle those things. Why should we do it? All of the evidence shows that youngsters want us to make this a priority. All the evidence—I quote Professor John Macbeth—as a result of work that has been conducted indicates that youngsters want schools to be made safe for them. Sometimes it is the perpetrators who say those things as well. One of the reasons they are bullying is that they feel that that is a way of being tough and they are less likely to be bullied and they become perpetrators.

Q197 Paul Holmes: As you said earlier, there is bullying in the workplace as far as teachers are concerned, or it can be in the print room of a newspaper office. It happens everywhere and it should be dealt with everywhere.

Mr Sinnott: Perhaps I may say something about the nature of schools. I believe that there has been a change over the course of the past 15–20 years which is detrimental to dealing effectively with bullying. When I was a teacher and was asked what I taught I liked to give what I regarded as the smart aleck remark “Children”. What has changed now is that the job of teachers has shifted away from teaching children and teaching subjects; there is less focus on some of the social, pastoral and emotional needs of children. We need to tackle that. The best way to tackle it is to create space within the schools for teachers to be able to refocus their work to look at the wider needs of children.

Q198 Paul Holmes: I think that you are talking in part about the pressures of the curriculum, SATS, league tables and so on.

Mr Sinnott: Exactly.

Q199 Paul Holmes: You spoke earlier about the need for school counsellors and so on, but the teacher is the one who is in contact with the kids all the time and the pay structure has shifted in recent years so that we no longer pay people to be a head of year; we now reward only teacher learning outcomes, not the pastoral side of things, so some schools appoint other people to do that. Has the fact that schools have had to move away from that side of the job been a problem in recent years?

Mr Sinnott: We resisted that because we believed in the wider role of the teacher. There are other people out there who have a say in these matters and who are not supportive of our ideas in this area. We believe that that is detrimental to our education system. To some extent we have won, because in the shift from management allowances to teaching and learning responsibilities there were those who wanted to have that pastoral role undertaken by people who were not teachers. We think that that is very damaging. We strongly believe that the leader of pastoral issues within schools must be a teacher well supported by others. But the Committee has had an influence on some

of these related issues in the past. Your report on special education needs and your comments on SENCOs has had an impact and changed the view within the DFES on these issues. There a clear view that one did not need to be a teacher to be a SENCO. I think that the Committee shifted the feelings on that issue.

Q200 Chairman: Given your previous remarks, I am getting the feeling of dislocation to which I referred earlier. I go to schools and see teachers teaching. In good schools they do not say to me that they are so restricted by the curriculum that they cannot teach these matters. I see highly professional teachers teaching. There may be more pressure on teachers, but they are certainly teaching in that broader sense. Do you agree?

Mr Sinnott: You talk to teachers and I also talk to teachers. I have seen the evidence in the past. We have had too many exclusions.

Q201 Chairman: I think that there are fantastic teachers out there and you do not think so.

Mr Sinnott: I think that there are terrific teachers out there and I am very proud to represent them. I believe that there are environments within schools where we can support all the good qualities that teachers have, but my comment applies across the system. Across the system we need to ensure and be confident that there is enough space for teachers to be able to deal with the wider needs of children than I think they are currently able to do.

Q202 Paul Holmes: Is there a clear consensus on what is the best strategy for teachers to use? When I was teaching in the late 1990s teachers were told that they should not confront, blame or punish a bully but get the bully and victim together in a non-judgmental and non-blame environment and get them to talk over the issues, for example, “Why are you encouraging people to bully you by your behaviour?” That was a matter that I and other teachers found a fairly alarming thing to be told to do at that time. Is there a consensus among experts as to how schools should do this?

Mr Sinnott: First, what happens in a school should be done in accordance with the school's policy. In my view what is effective is to ensure that the way it is dealt with meets the circumstances of the particular situation. I think that in certain circumstances it is proper for the perpetrator of bullying to be permanently excluded but that in other circumstances that would be wrong. I think that in certain circumstances to bring the bullied and perpetrator together is appropriate. I do not think there is one way to deal with that. I think that you deal with it in terms of the circumstances and the context of the school's policy.

Professor Smith: I agree with that. Clearly, there is not universal agreement on the best way to deal with bullying. I think that the three things on which we would all agree are: any incident of bullying should be taken seriously; the victim should be supported; and we should do what we can to ensure that the bullying child does not persist in that

behaviour. It is the last point that is perhaps the most contentious. What are the best ways to ensure that a bully does not continue to bully? Is it some sort of direct punishment? Is it more a matter of talking to the bully and encouraging the bully to understand the feelings of the victim, or is it something in between? There is quite a lot of disagreement there. There is not a great deal of evidence to tell us in which circumstances which approach works best. I think that more research is required, but at the present time there is a range of approaches. You choose the approach that best matches the circumstances, depending on the age of the child, the severity of the incident and whether or not it is the first time or the tenth time it has happened.

Q203 Stephen Williams: You say that a school should have a range of policy options and match them to the particular bully in the circumstances rather than that the school should choose a policy to be applied in all the circumstances?

Professor Smith: That is my view.

Q204 Stephen Williams: I want to return to where we started and the declining incidence of bullying. You will have heard in the previous session the representative of Support Against Racist Incidents say that in her view schools did not report racist incidents sufficiently and so there is an under-reporting of racism in spite of the statutory duty on schools to do so, whereas in homophobic bullying there is no statutory duty to record such incidents or report them in any way. How can we be confident that bullying is going down because we do not even know the extent of certain types of bullying?

Professor Smith: We cannot really be confident because we do not have good enough data. If I may, I will expand on that in a moment. I just think that the indications at present, on the best evidence we have—not just the Leicestershire data but a number of other sources—are that it is going down slowly. We also know that interventions do help. The interventions in the Sheffield project helped, and the evaluations of other methods show that they have some effect. Given that we have been doing intervention work for 10–12 years one would expect there to be some impact, but we need a much better auditing base to find out what is happening both across different regions of the country and schools which try different approaches and over time, and for different types of bullying and harassment, including prejudice-based bullying. There is opportunity to do that under the *Every Child Matters* agenda and the Joint Area Reviews that take place. Unfortunately, there does not seem to be very clear guidance coming from the Government as to how much schools or local authorities should be reporting on the various indicators in the requirements of the Joint Area Reviews and also from Ofsted. If most schools and education authorities annually did an audit of a lot of these indicators it could satisfy Ofsted and Joint

Area Reviews and it would also be a very useful resource for us to answer the sort of questions that you are asking.

Q205 Stephen Williams: Mr Sinnott, your submission recommends that each school should have a trained counsellor. It sounds as if you would prefer that individual to be a teacher. I just want to explore the sort of skills that that individual would need. Quite a good deal of empathy would be required to deal with somebody who has suffered racist or homophobic abuse. Do you believe that one trained counsellor in a school is enough?

Mr Sinnott: We are probably saying that there should be at least one. In some of the very large comprehensive schools one might need more than one counsellor, but I believe that the skills needed to deal with prejudice-based bullying, for example if somebody is bullied because of race, or disability or sexual orientation are similar. I believe that that person can have generic skills in order to deal effectively with those matters. They are good skills for a counsellor. The counsellor should also be in a position to lead the school on a whole range of anti-bullying techniques and policies. I think that schools can do a lot of effective work if they have school counsellors.

Q206 Stephen Williams: One of the reasons I am asking that is that, as we know from previous sessions, particularly for gay children it is quite different because they probably do not have a peer group, whereas all the other groups of children who may be bullied have some emotional support from their families or friends in similar circumstances, so if a counsellor is to deal with homophobic bullying he needs particularly strong skills.

Mr Sinnott: They do, and we would want the school counsellor to have those skills. At the same time, I refer to paragraph 74 of our evidence which deals exactly with homophobic bullying and some of the changes in the legal situation. I think that we can do a lot of work in raising the awareness of head teachers to some of the changes in the legislation.

Q207 Stephen Williams: In several submissions one finds the phrase “a whole school issue”; it is not just how to deal with particular incidents of bullying. There should be a message throughout the school that certain types of bullying are completely unacceptable, in particular racism and homophobia, and that also feeds through into the citizenship agenda. Presumably, that is something which both of you advocate.

Mr Sinnott: Absolutely.

Professor Smith: Yes. The question of the whole school policy still needs more attention and support. It has been pointed out, and is fairly well known, that about 6% of school policies mention homophobic bullying. That is rather old data. We are currently looking at 140 school policies and the position is much the same. Although there are some very good policies, every one of them could be

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improved. A lot of them are quite deficient in some respects. For example, a good policy should give advice on what sort of sanctions the school will use. We have talked about this before. We agree that a school should have a unified approach; whatever its philosophy, there should be consensus within the school as to what it will do and the range of sanctions available, when they will be used, how parents will be involved and so on. Policies are not always clear about that. There are lots of things that should be in policies and sometimes they are and sometimes not. A good school policy will cover not just pupil-pupil bullying but pupil-teacher, teacher-pupil or possibly teacher-teacher bullying. It should be a whole school policy, not just pupil-pupil bullying. Schools may need some support in maximising the potential of their policies.

Q208 Helen Jones: We have heard a little about the problem of teachers being bullied. Does Mr Sinnott have any evidence to give us based on his experience as to how widespread that is? Is it a minor or major problem? Is there an increase in bullying of teachers by pupils, or is that one of these urban myths that we hear?

Mr Sinnott: It is being raised with the National Union of Teachers by teachers in ways that it was never raised before. If I go to a meeting somebody wants to talk about an issue about which he feels bullied by other teachers within the school and feels that that is often in relation to his or her job. As a result of some of the high stakes programmes run within our schools we are creating an environment in which everybody feels under stress. Sometimes it is the stressed head teacher or head of department who takes particular action against a teacher who then feels that he or she has been bullied or harassed. Sometimes that has found an outlet in remarks that are made by a teacher in relation to another teacher that are entirely inappropriate. For example, it was an item that was raised at our conference this year. It surprised many of us that that was one of the key concerns of teachers. If you look at the evidence produced by the Teacher Support Network and the number of phone calls that it receives, this is a new area for many of us. We have to give particular advice to tackle these issues. It is a very important issue in the teaching of teachers.

Q209 Helen Jones: You are talking about teachers bullying other teachers, if I understand you correctly. Do you believe that that is a new phenomenon, or is it just that people are more willing to report it than they were?

Mr Sinnott: What goes on in schools is more pressurised than it was in the past. I believe that it has increased as a result of those pressures in schools.

Q210 Helen Jones: I am trying to find out if this is a real problem or just a good story. Do you come across many instances of teachers being bullied by pupils; and, if so, do you think they are adequately trained to deal with it?

Mr Sinnott: There are two ways of looking at it. There are good examples of schools being able to tackle the issue. There are lots of examples of schools behaving entirely properly where a teacher has been assaulted or bullied by a youngster or group of youngsters. I can also give you examples of ways in which schools have behaved inappropriately in protecting teachers. A teacher out on a Saturday evening sees a group of youngsters and ends up being abused and called a lesbian in front of people in the street. The school did not want to deal in a very robust way with those youngsters whom we believed should have been permanently excluded. We have to represent that teacher and say that we want a more robust response in relation to those youngsters. I can give you example after example of that type of incident.

Q211 Fiona Mactaggart: You told us about some of the characteristics of good anti-bullying work in schools, but I have not really understood whether in your view the priority should be creating a culture where bullying is diminished and is not acceptable or dealing with incidents. I have not understood what the balance should be.

Mr Sinnott: I do not believe that there is a contradiction between the two. You have to deal with both. You try to create the culture but if incidents arise you deal with them appropriately and properly. I do not see there is a contradiction in terms of how a school should react. The school has to create that culture and if an incident arises it must be tackled.

Q212 Fiona Mactaggart: Do all the teachers in a school know how to do that?

Mr Sinnott: In the best examples, yes. There are some examples where the policy is a paper one. We want to ensure that schools undertake various procedures to ensure that everybody knows what the policy is, that periodically everybody is involved in reviewing it and that the youngsters in the school are heavily involved in auditing whether or not the policy is working. Sometimes it is the auditing that identifies the problem. You think it is an effective school but the audit identifies youngsters who say that there is an undercurrent that you have not detected. One can then take some action.

Professor Smith: I agree that you need both proactive and reactive aspects to your work on anti-bullying. The proactive will be general preventive work—citizenship education and all these things—but you also need to know how to respond to particular incidents and have an agreed schedule within your school policy about how to do that, so it is not a contradiction; you need both.

Q213 Fiona Mactaggart: I suspect that all of us have been struck by your claim that the ethos of education and focus on the social and emotional life of children has diminished. In a way, I thought that that contrasted with other evidence the

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Committee has received from the Children's Commissioner that "using SEAL [social and emotional aspects of learning] material seems to have been positive in terms of its ability to generate empathic, pro-social attitudes and to prevent bullying." In addition, we have a government that is focusing on the ethos of schools, faith schools and things like that—the sort of matters that you say are being missed out. Do you say that the Government's policy is not working?

Mr Sinnott: I think that in certain areas the Government's policies have not worked, and indeed some of them have been detrimental to the proper understanding of the wider range of youngsters' needs. But what I also say—I wanted to start my evidence on a positive note—is that in my view a personalised learning agenda creates an opportunity to reflect what has gone on and the way we can identify within a school how teachers relate to youngsters and ways in which we can properly tackle these things. I believe that we are turning the corner. We will start to see ways in which the nature of what goes on in a school is less dominated by tests and league tables. I believe that there is a growing consensus that we have to move away from that culture in schools and look at the wider range of educational and welfare issues in schools, and that youngsters will benefit from a fresh approach to that.

Q214 Fiona Mactaggart: Do you think the most important thing is that children are happy, not that they get qualifications?

Mr Sinnott: I think that youngsters will be in a better position to get good qualifications if they feel happy and safe within a school.

Q215 Fiona Mactaggart: Professor Smith, you have talked about research or the lack of it. What would be the most useful piece of research to give us the information that we need to improve our work on the issue of bullying?

Professor Smith: Obviously, I must give a personal answer to that. Other people would have different views. I believe that the most useful research would be detailed case studies of particular schools looking at the kinds and range of sanctions they use and in which circumstances they are used, trying to pin down in which circumstances certain kinds of approach work best, or do not work. That is an area where there is a lot of controversy. It is very important to know what a school's reactive approach should be when it happens, and we need to know more about that. I pick that out as my first priority, but there are more down the line that I could also mention.

Q216 Fiona Mactaggart: We have talked a lot about prejudice-based bullying, but we have not talked much about bullying that is utterly unpredictable which seems to be unconnected to anything. We have heard a lot about workplace bullying. I am wondering whether somehow the

focus on prejudice-based bullying may imply that there is some reason for bullying and it does not equip people sufficiently and effectively to deal with random bullying, if you like. Is this a phenomenon? I have heard about it occurring in the workplace but not much in schools. What is your view on that?

Professor Smith: I think it is good that there has been emphasis on prejudice-based bullying in the sense of bringing those particular groups into full awareness, because in the past there was insufficient awareness of, say, the difficulties experienced by gay people in school. It is absolutely right that that should be fully brought into awareness; similarly for people with disabilities and the other kinds of prejudice-based bullying. We should not neglect the mainstream types of bullying which may simply arise because somebody behaves a bit differently, or because someone takes a dislike to somebody else, or because someone is a bit timid, a bit of a swot or whatever it is. One important component of anti-bullying work is assertiveness training which helps everyone, but it could be potential victims, to know how to cope when they are provoked or attacked in some way. We all have that experience sometimes. Someone annoys us or it looks as if he or she will take advantage of us and we have ways of coping. We get some friends with us; we are assertive back to them and say we do not like what that individual is doing, and so on. For some young people that is difficult to do. These things can help. We cannot rely on that; we must also have the other kinds of actions as well: peer support and working with the bullying children. But one component is to help young people to be assertive.

Mr Sinnott: Schools are workplaces, too, for teachers and support staff. All of those people will be in positions where we have had reports of bullying and harassment. I think that it has been wholly beneficial for us properly to recognise prejudice-based bullying which includes sexist bullying. Sexism within schools is the theme of a report that we shall be publishing on Friday. The vast majority of the people who work within schools are women. I can give some tremendously high statistics relating to the experiences of women who work within schools. But it is wholly beneficial for us now to be properly aware with regard to adults and youngsters within schools that it is inappropriate to use language, whether or not in a bullying context, that is thought to be smart but which may be interpreted as damaging to people, or remarks to do with issues about race or disability as happened in the past. That is wholly beneficial in order to create an environment in schools in which everybody feels welcome.

Q217 Fiona Mactaggart: You talked about schools as being workplaces. I have encountered schools where my sense is that there is quite a bullying culture about the way that disciplinary policies are operated. That is sometimes reflected in bullying

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among staff which creates a sense of bullying within the school. Is that something you have encountered? How can the public, the local authority or whatever, intervene in something which is pretty seamless and is not talked about or does not manifest itself very often? Ofsted might uncover it.

Professor Smith: I think you are right that the general ethos of the school is very important. I think that it is a matter of raising general awareness about the issue, empowering people in any position, whether it is pupils, parents, ordinary teachers or whatever, to speak out if they feel in any sense that they are being bullied, and probably other things like Ofsted inspections may also be helpful.

Mr Sinnott: The way in which in the past some male teachers in particular believed it appropriate to have discipline within the class or school worked against proper discipline across the school. A macho approach to dealing with discipline might be something that a particular male teacher could use to deal with discipline in his class, but it created a culture in which those who did not have particular characteristics were able to operate properly across the school. Some women felt intimidated by somebody saying, “I don’t have any problems in my classroom”, but that individual had particular characteristics which enabled him to deal with it. Effective discipline policies in schools now say that that is not the way in which they should be operating; they should be dealing with discipline in a different way. That is now old hat and there is a

modern approach to dealing with discipline which is more about creating proper environments and good relationships within schools.

Q218 Jeff Ennis: Earlier we focused on the fact that if there was a well developed citizenship education curriculum in the school and a good anti-bullying policy and well run school councils in operation that would set the climate for a good anti-bullying ethos in the school. Given that scenario, do you think that the Government ought to say as a matter of policy that every school should have its own school council? I asked that question of the Children’s Minister the other day and she seemed very reticent in saying that every school should have its own school council. Do you think it should be compulsory?

Mr Sinnott: I think that every school should have it and we should ensure that we encourage it so to do. You might be interested in making a comparison between England and Wales in these issues because there is a different approach. Some great work has been done by School Councils UK on effective school councils and the way they operate, but I emphasise the word “effective”. To make it compulsory is probably not the right approach. The best approach is to ensure that we convince people of the effectiveness of the school councils and that they are developing the structures that meet the needs of their individual schools.

Professor Smith: I have nothing to add to that.

Chairman: Thank you very much for this valuable session. It has been a pleasure to have you in front of the Committee.

Supplementary memorandum submitted by the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA)

BULLYING AND HOW IT AFFECTS CHILDREN WITH SEN

1. There is evidence from children that bullying occurs both in Special Schools and in Mainstream, which suggests that they are not safe simply because they are in a Special School. There is apparently a hierarchy of difficulties and those who are more able and articulate can bully weaker ones. The major difficulty children report is coping with those who have behavioural and emotional difficulties. On the other hand they found it easier to help and understand those with physical disabilities.

2. We have a report on this evidence with SEN children and their siblings containing their views on what they’d like to see and what works or doesn’t.

3. They insist that sometimes the support worker can over protect the person who should try and join the dinner queue and other similar situations—they get respected more.

EXCLUSION

This is seen by young people as a poor response.

1. They have told me many times that the excluded perpetrator “gets a holiday” while I have to go to school.

2. The perpetrator may be at home with the difficult family problems that are causing the bullying in the first place. (“Bullying in Britain” by Katz, A. Buchanan, A. and Bream, V. Young Voice, shows links with violence and harsh punitive parenting styles).

3. It does not work with the bully to change their behaviour.

4. Bullies have been known to lie in wait for the victim after school or go to their home and trash laundry or damage windows.

5. The whole class is not learning something as a result and no reparation is being made to the victim.
6. There is no evidence that the victim is in fact safer. Retaliation may follow out of sight of the school.
7. If used it should be coupled with other steps to change the behaviour and protect the victim.

LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF BULLYING

1. There are a very few people who triumph over it and say they are stronger as a result.
2. A larger group become depressed and withdrawn. They may leave school earlier than planned (especially common among those bullied for being thought to be Gay). They may feel their school years were blighted and take part in fewer activities as a result. Their right to education may be compromised. There are demonstrable links with bullying and suicidal thoughts and actions.
3. Others may become belligerent in turn as a defence. They can bully others as they've learned that this is the way to power and to avoid being the victim ever again. They may internalise this behaviour and learn from parents who are very bullying that this is how to behave.
4. There are well-known links with bullying and offending. (Olweus first demonstrated a link in his longitudinal studies and others have since shown this repeatedly. I have looked at a sample of prisoners and asked about bullying—the rate of response is extremely high.)

Long-term effects of Bullying—a brief review of the evidence

OVERALL SUMMARY

Three sources of evidence for longer-term effects of victimisation at school, are reviewed. Some studies have examined school pupils over a period of a year or so, at school. Most of the evidence supports a two-way or transactional model: some pupils are more at risk of being victims (for example having less confidence, self-esteem, or social skills); but the experience of being a victim makes this worse. Regarding much longer-term effects, into adulthood, most studies have been retrospective in nature. From such self-reports, it is clear that experiences of being bullied can be remembered vividly, and can be felt to lead to later problems in self-esteem and confidence in relationships. These longer-term effects are more marked in at-risk groups, or persons experiencing chronic school victimisation. It is also the case that many former victims can recover from the experience, and the risk of workplace victimisation appears to be only slightly increased as a result of school victimisation. A set of longitudinal data from Sweden supports this general conclusion for long-term effects of victims; it also finds former school bullies to be at significantly higher risk of being involved in several criminal offences, as young adults.

Review of the evidence

There is a great deal of evidence that the experience of being bullied has many negative immediate or short-term effects. But what about the longer-term effects? Here there is less evidence, but still enough to draw some conclusions. There are three main sources of evidence:

1. short-term longitudinal studies that typically look at effects of being bullied over one or two years at school;
2. retrospective studies with adults, looking back on their experiences at school and reflecting on the effects of being bullied;
3. longitudinal studies from childhood, through to adult life.

Each of these will be considered in turn.

1. SHORT-TERM LONGITUDINAL STUDIES THAT TYPICALLY LOOK AT EFFECTS OF BEING BULLIED OVER ONE OR TWO YEARS AT SCHOOL

These have usually been conducted to try and disentangle cause-and-effect relationships in being a victim. For example, are you more likely to be a victim because you have low self-esteem, or, does being a victim bring about low self-esteem; or perhaps both factors are at work (a transactional model)? This cannot be decided from concurrent data, and longitudinal study is needed.

Kochenderfer and Ladd (1996) published the first attempt at this, assessing self-reports of peer victimisation, school maladjustment (school liking and avoidance) and loneliness from fall to spring in US kindergartens; however the use of self-reports for most measures (all, except academic achievement) produces problems of shared method variance. Kochenderfer-Ladd and Wardrop (2001) followed 388 US preschoolers from kindergarten to third grade, documenting relationships to loneliness and social

satisfaction. Their results supported the causal role of victimisation, and not vice versa. In addition persistent victimisation had more negative effects than more transient victimisation.

Also working with young children of five to seven years, but with a twin sample in the UK, Arsenault *et al.* (2006) found that victims and bully/victims at age seven had concurrent behaviour and school adjustment problems, that they had pre-existing problems at age five, and that victimization did contribute to the later problems independent of difficulties at age five. Here, mother and teacher reports were used for all measures. This supported a two-way or transactional model.

Egan and Perry (1998) found a longitudinal reciprocal relationship between victimisation and perceived social competence in US 3rd to 7th grade children (mean age 11 years). However global self-worth failed to emerge as an antecedent or consequence of victimisation.

Rigby (1999) examined changes in health and in victimisation status over three years, in an Australian secondary school. Being victimised frequently in the first two years at school, predicted high levels of psychological distress in the third year; the link was stronger for girls.

Salmivalli and Isaacs (2005), in a longitudinal study of 11–13 year old Finnish pupils over one year, also found some support for a transactional model. Negative self-perception did predict peer-nominated victim status; and victim status in turn predicted more negative perceptions of peers (how peers thought about them), although not more negative self-perceptions.

Summary

In general, these short-term studies suggest both that victims may already show some differences from non-victims (eg poorer social competence or self-esteem), and that being a victim exacerbates or worsens this.

2. RETROSPECTIVE STUDIES WITH ADULTS, LOOKING BACK ON THEIR EXPERIENCES AT SCHOOL AND REFLECTING ON THE EFFECTS OF BEING BULLIED

The main source of evidence for longer-term effects of victimisation comes from retrospective interviews with adults who have experienced severe bullying.

A few studies have reported on particular groups. Hugh-Jones and Smith (1999) surveyed 276 adults with a stammer, finding that most had experienced considerable victimization at school, with a substantial proportion reporting long-term effects, particularly on confidence with others and social relationships.

Rivers (2000, 2001) has reported on deleterious consequences of victimization for gay/lesbian young persons. LGB men and woman who were bullied at school are significantly more likely to develop depressive disorders in adult life when compared to LGB adults who had not been bullied at school; 53% said they had contemplated self harm as a result of their bullying experience. LGB adults who absented from school in order to avoid victimisation were more likely to self harm in later life than LGB adults who had been bullied but not absented.

Possible effects of victimization on close relationships are suggested in a study by Gilmartin (1987) on “love-shy” men in the USA; many of these men, who reported difficulties in heterosexual relationships, said that they had experienced being bullied at school. Dietz (1994) found similar results for both sexes, in an Australian sample.

Some studies have been carried out with university students. A brief report from Japan by Matsui, Tzuzuki, Kakuyama and Onglatgo (1996) was solely on male university students, and only reported outcomes for self-esteem. They did find that victimization at school was related to low self-esteem as an adult; but only for those who reported low self esteem and high depression prior to victimisation; since the experience of victimisation makes these effects worse, these authors characterised the process as a “vicious cycle”. Tritt and Duncan (1997) surveyed 206 undergraduates in the USA and found that those who had been victimised at school, were significantly more lonely as adults.

Schäfer *et al.* (2004) gave a specially designed Retrospective Questionnaire to 884 adults (35% male) from two occupations (teacher, student) and three countries (Spain, Germany, United Kingdom). The questionnaire included questions about suicidal ideation, intrusive memories, and victimization experiences in adulthood. Current relationship quality was assessed in terms of self-esteem, attachment style and friendship quality. Former victims at school and especially “stable victims” (victims in both primary and secondary school) scored lower on all current aspects of self-esteem, except social isolation. They were more often fearfully attached and reported more difficulties in maintaining friendships. The data revealed some differences by gender, occupation and country level, but these did not interact with victim status. The study indicated a general association between victimization in school and quality of later life, largely robust to variations in gender, occupation and country.

In a large-scale general survey, Smith, Singer, Hoel and Cooper (2003) gave a questionnaire to 5,288 adults from various workplace venues. A significant relationship was found between retrospectively reported roles in school bullying, and recent experience of workplace victimisation. The highest risk of workplace victimisation was for those who were both bullies and victims at school (bully/victims), followed by those who were only victims. However associations were modest, reaching significance through the large sample size. No other outcomes of school bullying were assessed.

Summary

Three conclusions can probably be drawn from the retrospective studies so far. First, some adults have very deep and poignant memories of being bullied at school, by peers and sometimes by teachers (Smith, 1991). Besides vivid and persistent memories, many of these adults feel that the experience had long-term effects on them. Second, the effects have been rather consistently found for lower self-esteem, and difficulties in relationships such as lack of trust. These would be consistent with the nature of much victimisation, and the well-known short-term effects (Hawker & Boulton, 2000). Third, it is likely that these severe long-term effects may be most marked for those with other risk factors (eg having a stammer; being lesbian or gay at school; being victimised both in primary and secondary school); the one large-scale general survey (Smith *et al.*, 2003), while finding links to victimisation as an adult, suggested that the links were small—that is, many adults escaped the effects of victimisation. (However this last study did not assess self-esteem or general trust in relationships.)

Critical comment

These retrospective studies rely on the self-reports of former victims, and cannot objectively establish a causal relationship. Nevertheless they do provide a unique account of how adults view both the whole of their school experience, and what they themselves perceive the consequences to be. Research has established some degree of reliability and validity to retrospective research. Examining retrospective reports in general, Brewin, Andrews, and Gotlib (1993) found that when reporting facts from childhood, most adults are reasonably accurate and stable in their recollections. Reports were especially likely to be reliable for highly salient and emotionally charged events, such as experiences of victimization could be expected to be. Looking specifically at reports of school victimization by adults (in this case, gay/lesbian adults), Rivers (2001b) established quite reasonable degrees of test-retest reliability, especially for placing important events chronologically as well as recalling specific types of bullying occurring in specific locations; although recollections of subsequent outcomes were less accurate.

3. LONGITUDINAL STUDIES FROM CHILDHOOD, THROUGH TO ADULT LIFE

Due to the inevitable time-consuming nature of longitudinal studies from childhood to adulthood, there is much less data of this kind.

Olweus (1993a), in a Swedish study, found that boys who were victims at school between 13 and 16 years were, at age 23, 'normalised' in many respects. The chances of their being victimised at work were not above chance level. But, they continued to have poor self-esteem. They were also more likely than those who had not been victimised at school, to show depressive tendencies; this appeared to be mediated by feelings of inadequacy and maladjustment

Olweus (1993b) also reported on long-term effects for chronic bullies—those characterised as bullies between 13 and 16 years based on teacher ratings and peer nominations. Some 60% of these chronic bullies had been convicted of a criminal offence by age 24; and 35–40% had been convicted of three or more offences, compared to only 10% of control boys (neither bullies nor victims; former victims were also average or below average in criminality).

Summary

The findings for long-term effects on victims are consistent with the generalisation that most former victims 'recover' in major areas and are not necessarily victimised later as adults; but that there can be persistent effects in feelings of self-worth. The long-term findings for bullies are in fact stronger than for victims, and indicate a pathway of continuing antisocial behaviour in many cases.

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- An edited version of this paper will feature in a forthcoming issue of *Spotlight Magazine* entirely dedicated to bullying; due to be published April/May 2007.

SPOTLIGHT BRIEFING

BULLYING AND DISABILITY

Children and young people with disabilities are often the victims of bullying simply because they are seen to be “different” from other young people, and as a result are forced to live with the constant threat of being bullied wherever they go. The experience or anticipation of being bullied can shape a disabled child and young person's sense of self and social relationships and can have a damaging effect on their self-esteem, mental health, social skills and progress at school. This briefing reviews the evidence of the increased vulnerability of disabled children and young people to bullying and the contributing risk factors. It also gives accounts of the impact of bullying on disabled children and young people and suggests what further action is needed to ensure schools and those working with disabled children and young people are providing inclusive, safe and positive environments, free from disability driven bullying.

 EVIDENCE THAT DISABLED CHILDREN ARE MORE VULNERABLE TO BULLYING

- From the 1990s, studies have demonstrated the increased likelihood of disabled children being bullied, compared to non-disabled peers (eg Nabuzoka & Smith 1993; Dawkins 1996). Recently the Children's Commissioner for England reported that children with ill health, disability or visible medical conditions can be twice as likely as their peer to become targets for bullying behaviour (Bullying Today, A Report by the Office of the Children's Commissioner, 2006).
- More recent research has tended to focus upon individual disabilities, but has further confirmed that disabled children stand a greater risk of being victimised. A recent review of research findings (Smith & Tippett, 2006) suggests that vulnerability to bullying cuts across all different types of disabilities.
- Children with learning difficulties are significantly more at risk of being bullied, as well as at greater risk of being socially rejected (Martlew & Hodson, 1991; Nabuzoka & Smith, 1993; Thompson, Whitney & Smith, 1994; Greenham, 1999; Nabuzoka, 2000; Norwich & Kelly, 2004).
- Children with linguistic difficulties and impairments have been found to be more at risk of being teased and bullied (Sweeting & West 2001); and children with a stutter are often then targeted by bullies at school (Hugh-Jones & Smith 1999).
- Children on the autistic spectrum have been shown to be vulnerable, with two in every five autistic children having experienced school bullying (National Autistic Society, 2006).
- Children with sensory disabilities have been found to be subject to stigmatisation from peer groups and are more open to the risk of bullying (Nunes, Pretzlik & Olsson, 2001; Dixon, Smith & Jenks 2004; Sweeting & West 2001).
- A study of bullying among children with a physical disability found students with cerebral palsy or other conditions which affected their appearance, gait or mobility were twice as likely to be bullied than disabled children with no visible abnormalities (Dawkins, 1996).
- Children with hemiplegia have been found to be more rejected and less popular than their peers, have fewer friends and be at risk of victimisation (Yude, Goodman & McConachie, 1997; Yude & Goodman, 1999).

WHY DISABLED CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ARE MORE LIKELY TO EXPERIENCE BULLYING

Bullying is never acceptable, but there are some common factors which seem to make some children and young people more vulnerable to bullying. Many of these are likely to be found in children with disabilities, and include the following:

- *Physical Appearance:* One study found almost a third of children that suffer health concerns as a result of bullying have a physical disability (Leff, 1999) and a number of other studies have suggested a link between the likelihood of being bullied and having unusual personal characteristics, although this link has not gone unchallenged (Olweus, 1993).
- *Lack of social skills:* Being able to interact competently with peers can help prevent possible victimisation. Fox and Boulton (2005), using self, peer and teacher reports, found victims of bullying to be significantly lacking in a variety of social skills. This included displaying social vulnerabilities, being non-assertive, rewarding the bully through behaviours such as crying, being withdrawn and isolated, and acting provocatively, therefore encouraging the bully. This shows a strong correlation with students who have learning difficulties (Nabuzoka, 2000).
- *Number and quality of friends:* Both having friends, and also friends that you can trust and who will stand by you, are well documented protective factors against victimisation (Hodges, Boivin, Vitaro, & Bukowski, 1999). A multinational study found children left alone at playtime were at much greater risk of being either victims or bully-victims (Eslea *et al.*, 2002). Many studies have found that children with disabilities have fewer friends than those without disabilities (Nabuzoka, 2000)
- *Being socially rejected:* Social rejection refers to generally being disliked or not being popular in the peer group. It is conceptually distinct from having friends, though often related; and appears to be an additional risk factor for victimisation (Hodges, Malone & Perry, 1997). Social rejection is common in children with disabilities (Nabuzoka & Smith, 1993; Dixon *et al.*, 2004). Greenham (1999) found that between 25–30% of children with learning difficulties were socially rejected by their peers, compared to between 8 and 16% of children without learning difficulties.
- *Absences from school:* Children with disabilities may be more absent from school, if they are receiving treatment or special lessons; and this can affect their social standing and friendships (Graetz & Shute 1995; Storch *et al.* 2004).

 THE IMPACT OF BULLYING ON DISABLED CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

James is nine-years-old, and has a learning disability and a physical facial deformity. He describes his experiences at school:

“I get bullied everyday. The kids don’t play with me. It’s because I’m dumb. They say no one wants to play with the dumb kid! They say I’m stupid because I don’t understand, they call me Quasimodo. They normally call me names, or they pretend I’m not there and they can’t hear me. They pass notes and just leave me out. They barge me when we’re lining up, they say stuff like “we didn’t see you there Quasi”.

“They tease me because I have my own helper who helps me with my work . . . she’s nice, she keeps telling me I’m just having a bad day and that I shouldn’t let them get to me. She is trying to make me feel better. I try to ignore it but I can’t. Everyday is a bad day for me.”

Mona is an eight-year-old girl and has a condition (genu varum) which makes the bones in her legs grow differently; because of this she often walks and runs much slower than her classmates. Her classmates often pretend to let her play and join in with them at playtime, then run off and claim it’s part of the game and continue playing in a further area of the playground. When she finally catches up with them they run off again. Mona eventually gets fed up and just sits in one place on her own. This routine happens most lunch and break times.

For many disabled children and young people, bullying can become a relentless pressure which can dominate their lives, leaving them feeling depressed and withdrawn. This is particularly true if the bullying is not dealt with promptly and is allowed to continue. For many disabled children and young people, the bullying does continue for a substantial period of time. There are various reasons why this can happen:

- (i) Some children, particularly those with a learning disability, are unaware of what bullying is. Therefore for these children they think that being hurt every day, is part of their everyday life and do not do anything about it.
- (ii) For others they know they are being bullied but do not let an adult know. This could be because they are too scared to, or because they have communication difficulties, which make it more difficult for them to let an adult know.

“When I was bullied I kept it secret but I wished somebody knew and helped me” (Kamal, 13)

- (iii) Adults do not know how to spot when a child with a disability is being bullied. Quite often if a child with a learning disability is being bullied, their behaviour may alter. Many adults will see this change of behaviour as part of the child’s disability, rather than thinking that there may be another reason such as bullying, which has led to this change.

“They always say tell a teacher if you are being bullied and when I do nothing happens . . . because they don’t see what happens. They should look harder” (James, 9)

- (iv) When children with a disability have told an adult, the adult often does not do enough to help and the bullying does not stop. This may be because the adult may not see the incident as bullying, despite the fact that the child does and may tell the child to “grow up”. It may also be because adults are not aware or trained on how to deal with bullying on the basis of disability.

Sara, a 12-year-old girl with learning difficulties was being physically bullied for over three months before any action was taken, despite telling parents and teachers at the start:

“He would push me, swear at me, say mean things and walk up and slap me . . .”

Omir, a 11-year-old boy with a learning disability experienced physical bullying and intimidation from a fellow pupil for over five months before any action was taken to stop it:

“I went to the toilets and said hello, he just started to punch and kick me. Now I don’t go to the toilet unless I know he is in the classroom or if my friend comes with me.”

The children featured in this briefing were clear about what message they would send to bullies about how their bullying behaviour impacts on their lives:

“I would like them to know that when we go home we’re scared, we don’t like coming to school and we can’t enjoy ourselves, we’re always scared and it’s no fun always being scared, we end up missing out on things because we are scared. I hate being scared, and I hate that I have to be scared of someone who wants to always scare me” (Omir, 11)

“I would like them to know that when I go home I think about the next day and have bad dreams. I don’t like it. I cry all the time and wonder why someone would hate me so much? What have I done to deserve the name calling and pushing? (Janet,16)

"I want them to know that they depress people, they make everything no fun. Everything is grey and sad. I pretend to be sick just to stay away. They are mean people and nobody likes a bully so they should stop" (Kamal, 13)

Bullying can blight the lives of many young disabled children. Bullying and the threat of bullying can have a substantial knock on effect on all aspects of the child's life. Disabled children are often frightened that they will be bullied and this makes them scared to go places and try new things. This results in children being scared to go to school and joining in clubs, which ultimately prevents them from feeling safe and enjoying and achieving in life.

LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

Disabled children and young people have the right to the same support as their non-disabled peers. Duties placed on schools have introduced important anti-bullying safeguards for all children. The School Standards and Framework Act (1998) and the Education Act (2002) place a legal obligation on schools promote and safeguard the welfare of children and to prevent bullying. *Every Child Matters* and the Children Act (2003–04) also require schools to help children achieve five key outcomes, including staying safe and making a positive contribution.

In relation to disability, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001) makes it unlawful for a school to discriminate against a disabled person; and the Disability Discrimination Act (2005) provides new protection to children with disabilities by requiring schools to promote disability equality and eliminate disability-related harassment.

Guidance to schools on how to tackle bullying has been provided through the resource pack "Don't Suffer in Silence" (DfES, 2002, currently under revision), which has a small section on pupils with SEN or disabilities. Many of the strategies suggested in this section to reduce levels of bullying focus too narrowly on improving the social skills of the pupils with the disability rather than altering the culture of the school. Additional specialist guidance has also been provided on bullying motivated by race, religion and culture. Bullying relating to disability has not been highlighted and addressed in the same way as these other forms of prejudiced-driven bullying.

ANTI-BULLYING POLICIES AND PREVENTION

All schools must have an anti-bullying policy in place, which needs to be explicit in terms of the steps that will be taken by the school when incidents of bullying are reported or identified by staff, parents and children. However, in a recent survey by the National Autistic Society (2006) almost one in four parents didn't know if such a policy was in place in their child's school, even though schools are required to publish their policy. Of those parents whose children had been bullied 44% say no action was taken by the school. For young people over the age of 16, nearly two-thirds of parents said that action was not taken to stop bullying. Some parents felt that schools ignored the bullying, even blaming it on the children themselves.

Given this lack of awareness about school policies it is critical that everyone in the school community is involved in developing, owning and reviewing the anti-bullying policy. A whole school approach—involving pupils, teachers, support staff, governors, parents and carers—is the most effective way to prevent bullying and address the behaviour of bullies (NCB, 2004). It is based on developing a framework or policy that promotes shared values, beliefs and attitudes that inhibit bullying and gives guidance on how to manage and record bullying incidents.

Healthy Schools, PSHE and Citizenship programmes in schools also provide opportunities for schools to explore the issues of equality, valuing diversity and disability generally and specifically in relation to bullying. Raising awareness of disability among other children can help them understand why someone may act or be different and can encourage them to support their disabled peers and discourage bullying. Approaches such as peer mentoring, befriending and buddying schemes, structured play activities during breaks and circles of friends can offer effective ways of supporting children with disabilities (NAS, 2006).

MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS VERSUS SPECIALIST SCHOOLING

The question of whether disabled children benefit more from attending mainstream or special schools is a key issue. Many parents prefer their child with a disability to go to mainstream schools on the premise that the increased opportunity to partake in a wider range of social interactions will be beneficial. Some parents may feel that a special school can provide a more sheltered and protective environment (Young Minds Magazine, Issue 84). A review of research on this issue suggests that both types of school exhibit

positive and negative aspects concerning the disabled child's vulnerability to bullying, and the implications for their social and emotional development. However, with the appropriate support of staff, parent and peers, both mainstream and special schools should be feasible options for disabled children (Smith & Tippett, 2006)

ACTION REQUIRED TO TACKLE BULLYING ON THE BASIS OF DISABILITY

Disabled children and young people have a right to feel safe and enjoy and achieve in life and be able to grow up without the fear of being bullied. The new Disability Equality Duty provides schools with an opportunity to provide a positive, supportive environment for children with disabilities and to eliminate disability-related harassment and discrimination and promote positive attitudes towards disabled children and young people. But concerted action is also required in the following areas:

Children

- Children and young people with a disability need to know their rights to keep safe from bullying. They need to know what bullying is and what to do if adults do not do enough to stop the bullying.
- Children and young people with a disability need to be asked about bullying when schools are planning their disability equality scheme and need to be involved in anti-bullying policies.
- All children and young people need to know what to do to help stop a child or young person with a disability being bullied. This needs to be done through the curriculum and supportive staff.

Adults

- Adults need to listen to children and young people and act to help children and young people with a disability who are being bullied.
- Adults need to be trained on how to spot when a child or young person with a disability is being bullied and what to do to stop it.

Schools

- All schools need to act to stop the bullying of children and young people with a disability, and ensure they adopt a whole school approach to tackling and eliminating bullying.
- All staff who work in schools need to be trained on how to spot when a child or young person with a disability is being bullied and what to do to stop it.
- Schools must include bullying in their disability equality scheme.
- Schools should make sure their anti-bullying policies are responsive to the views of disabled children and young people and specifically address disability and bullying.

This briefing was prepared with contributions from Anti-Bullying Alliance Members, Professor Peter Smith and Neil Tippett (Goldsmith's College) and Esmee Russell (Mencap). Ida Pottin (on secondment to ABA from the Department of Health) provided the quotes from interviews conducted with young disabled children in schools in London.

Further Information & Resources

ANTI-BULLYING ALLIANCE

The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) was founded by NSPCC and National Children's Bureau in 2002. It is hosted and supported by NCB. The Alliance brings together 65 organisations into one network with the aim of reducing bullying and creating safer environments in which children and young people can live, grow, play and learn.

Resources to help teachers and others plan and deliver anti-bullying lessons, and address the issue of bullying within schools can be found at www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

COUNCIL FOR DISABLED CHILDREN

The Council for Disabled Children provides a national forum for the discussion, development and dissemination of a wide range of policy and practice issues relating to service provision and support for children and young people with disabilities and special educational needs.

MENCAP

Mencap is the UK's leading learning disability charity working with people with a learning disability and their families and carers. www.mencap.org.uk

KIDSCAPE

Kidscape works UK-wide to provide individuals and organisations with practical skills and resources necessary to keep children safe from harm. The Kidscape staff equips vulnerable children with practical non-threatening knowledge and skills in how to keep themselves safe and reduce the likelihood of future harm.

Kidscape works with children and young people under the age of 16, their parents/carers, and those who work with them.

Kidscape offers:

- A Helpline offering support and advice to parents of bullied children.
- Booklets, Literature, Posters, Training Guides, Educational Videos on bullying, child protection, and parenting.
- National Comprehensive Training Programme on child safety & behaviour management issues.
- Advice and Research.
- *Confidence Building Sessions* for children who are bullied www.kidscape.org.uk

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS (DFES)

The Department for Education and Skills provides advice and guidance for schools about their responsibilities in relation to bullying prevention and management www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying

THE NATIONAL AUTISTIC SOCIETY

The National Autistic Society exists to champion the rights and interests of all people with autism and to ensure that they and their families receive quality services appropriate to their needs. The website includes information about autism and Asperger syndrome, the NAS and its services and activities. www.nas.org.uk

YOUNG MINDS

Young Minds is a national charity committed to improving the mental health of all babies, children and young people. It offers information and advice on mental health issues, provides a national helpline for parents and training and support for all those working with children. www.youngminds.org.uk

YOUNG VOICE

Young Voice is a registered charity undertaking research with children and young people. It works in partnership with young people to bring you their views, experiences and concerns. It also offers research, evaluations, training and consultation. www.young-voice.org

CHILDLINE

ChildLine is the UK's free, 24-hour helpline for children in distress or danger. Trained volunteer counsellors comfort, advise and protect children and young people who may feel they have nowhere else to turn. It offers online help and advice for children and young people on bullying and provides a range of resources on bullying for schools. www.childline.org.uk

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Wednesday 24 January 2007

Members present:

Mr Barry Sheerman, in the Chair

Mr Douglas Carswell
Mr David Chaytor
Jeff Ennis
Helen Jones

Fiona Mactaggart
Mr Gordon Marsden
Mr Andrew Pelling
Stephen Williams

Memorandum submitted by the Department for Education and Skills

INTRODUCTION

Since 1999 the Government has regarded bullying in schools as a key priority, making it clear that all forms of bullying, including those motivated by prejudice, must not be tolerated and should be punished. No-one should suffer the pain and indignity which bullying can cause.

The DfES is aware that providing safe and happy learning environments is integral to achieving the wider objectives of school improvement, raising achievement and attendance, promoting equality and diversity as well as ensuring the welfare of all members of the school community.

This Government has sent a strong message to all that bullying is not acceptable in our schools and has been the first to put in place substantial mechanisms for tackling bullying. It is important that schools and parents set clear boundaries of acceptable behaviour for our children and young people, and that they understand the consequences of crossing the line.

This Government has worked hard to create a culture of respect in our schools, in which every pupil is celebrated and valued. Schools have a vital role in teaching children the value of positive relationships and the skills and strategies necessary to develop them. Through developing the core skills of resilience and empathy in our young people, we can increase their understanding of the impact of their own actions on other people, and encourage positive behaviour.

BUDGET

The Department provides around £1.4 million per year for anti-bullying programmes: this covers the costs of grants to external organisations, as well as all anti-bullying resources, the publication of guidance and advice for local authorities and schools and external events.

Ring-fenced funding for anti-bullying campaigns is not made available on a local authority or a school by school basis. Rather it is a matter for schools and local authorities to decide how much of their budget they devote to this important work.

The figures for the funding of the anti-bullying strand of the DfES's Improving Behaviour and Attendance Programme over the past five years are given below:

2002–03	£184,000
2003–04	£1,054,000
2004–05	£1,613,000
2005–06	£1,145,000
2006–07	£1,400,000

Figures for earlier years are not available because anti-bullying work was not disaggregated from the Department's other work on behaviour.

1. HOW BULLYING SHOULD BE DEFINED

The Government defines bullying as:

- Repetitive, wilful or persistent behaviour intended to cause harm, although one-off incidents can in some circumstances also be defined as bullying;
- intentionally harmful behaviour, carried out by an individual or a group;
- an imbalance of power leaving the person being bullied feeling defenceless.

Bullying is emotionally or physically harmful behaviour and includes: name-calling; taunting; mocking; making offensive comments; kicking; hitting; pushing; taking belongings; inappropriate text messaging and emailing; sending offensive or degrading images by phone or via the internet; gossiping; excluding people from groups; and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours. Although sometimes occurring between two individuals in isolation, it can also take place in the presence of others.

This definition is consistent with accounts from children and young people, with research, and with the definitions provided by the Anti-Bullying Alliance and Ofsted.

The DfES advises that the definition above informs a school's understanding of what constitutes bullying. The Department also encourages schools to consult with the entire school community in agreeing a definition of bullying appropriate to the individual school. This is an important part of developing an effective strategy to deal with bullying.

2. THE EXTENT AND NATURE OF THE PROBLEM OF BULLYING IN SCHOOLS

Schools and local authorities are not required to record incidents of bullying and the DfES has not collected data on bullying centrally. However, the DfES' *Longitudinal Study of Young People in Education (LSYPE)* asks young people whether they have experienced bullying in its various forms. Furthermore, schools and local authorities are now required to record all racist incidents. The Department also collects data on exclusions as a result of bullying (see below).

Schools play a central role in helping children to achieve the five *Every Child Matters* outcomes. There are targets related to bullying in respect of two of these outcomes. These are:

- “Stay Safe” theme: the percentage of 11–15-years-olds who state they have been bullied in the last 12 months. This target is jointly held between DWP and DfES (annual *Family and Children Study*).
- “Make a positive contribution” theme: the percentage of 10–19-year-olds admitting to
 - (a) bullying another pupil in the last 12 months;
 - (b) attacking, threatening or being rude due to skin colour, race or religion.

This target is monitored by the Home Office (part of biennial *Home Office Citizenship Survey*).

Bullying cases appear to be reported more frequently by children and young people than ever before. In the period from 1 September 2005 to 31 July 2006, the DfES dealt with over 900 phone calls about bullying and over 550 pieces of correspondence. This compares with figures of 1,500 phone calls and over 430 pieces of correspondence for the same period in 2004–05. However, we have no concrete evidence to suggest that bullying is either increasing or affecting more children. Indeed, it could be the case that as children and young people feel more confident to speak out against bullying, the number of cases reported will rise.

Bullying is a matter of great concern for many young people. The DfES is aware that bullying takes place in school, off site and in alternative schools. A report based on a survey of 1,153 children and young people published by ChildLine recorded that 51% of primary school children and 54% of secondary school children thought that bullying was a “big problem” or “quite a big problem” in their school (*Tackling Bullying: Listening to the Views of Children and Young People*, (Thomas Coram Research Institute, 2003). Research carried out by the children's charity ChildLine in 2003 revealed that half of all primary school children surveyed and more than one in four secondary school children said they had been bullied in the last year. In the year to March 2004, ChildLine answered 31,000 calls from children concerned about bullying, an increase of 10,000 calls over the previous year. Bullying accounts for one-quarter of the calls to ChildLine and is the most common reason why children call the helpline.

Research carried out by a number of independent bodies has suggested that between 10–20% of school pupils have bullied another pupil. Data gathered from some 16,000 pupils attending schools in Leicestershire (Pupil Attitude Survey 2005–06) showed that 16.3% of pupils were bullied at least once in 2002–03. In 2003–04 this figure declined slightly to 14.9%. In 2004–05 this figure further decreased to 13.9%. The results of a more limited survey conducted by the mental health charity, Young Voice, suggest that levels of severe bullying in schools appear to have declined, from around 13% in 1996 to 8% in 2006 (Katz, 2006). These slow but steady declines suggest that anti-bullying work is having an effect, but also that much remains to be done.

Although the majority of schools have effective anti-bullying policies in place, a number of schools have experienced problems addressing this issue. The exclusion statistics for 2004–05 published by the DfES in June 2006 provide a rough guide to the challenges faced by some schools. In 2004–05 there were 9,440 permanent exclusions.

In 2004–05 130 pupils were permanently excluded for bullying, 20 fewer than in 2003–04. There were a further 7,680 pupils fixed period exclusions for bullying in 2004–05, a rise of 930 over 2003–04. Rather than pointing to a necessary increase in the overall incidence of bullying, the rise in exclusions as a result of bullying might be explained by the greater use by head teachers of powers made available to them to clamp down on bullying.

Pupils were also excluded for a number of other offences, for example assaults, which may have been related to bullying incidents. In 2004–05 there were 1,780 permanent exclusions for physical assault against another pupil, against 1,720 permanent exclusions for the same act in 2003–04. In 2004–05 there were 80,700 fixed period exclusions for a physical assault against another pupil, a rise of 11,680 fixed period exclusions over 2003–04. There were 450 permanent exclusions for verbal abuse/threatening another pupil in 2004–05, 40 more than in the preceding year. A further 15,550 fixed period exclusions were given for verbal abuse/threatening another pupil in 2004–05, 2,510 more than in 2003–04.

Verbal bullying is common amongst both boys and girls. Boys are more likely to experience physical violence and threats than girls, although physical attacks on girls by other girls have become more frequent (Parentline Plus, 2006). Girls tend to use indirect forms of bullying which can be more difficult to detect. The number of reported cases of common assault, actual bodily harm or wounding in schools resulting from bullying is very small. Ofsted inspections have recorded that the number of such serious cases of bullying under active consideration by schools is also very small (*Bullying: Effective Action in Secondary Schools*, Ofsted, 2003). The DfES is aware that some schools have conducted surveys into bullying and have been disappointed by the results, with a substantial proportion of pupils claiming either they have been bullied and/or have participated, either actively or passively, in bullying at some level.

Certain young people in particular are likely to be bullied. The Social Exclusion Unit found 60% of looked after children had reported being bullied in school compared to 17% of all children (Social Exclusion Unit 2003—sample size 2,000). A report by Barter et al (2004) found that half of the young people interviewed in children's homes had experienced direct physical assault as victims, perpetrators or witnesses, and nearly all experienced verbal abuse.

Children and young people with learning or communication difficulties are especially vulnerable to bullying since they may not have the ability to be assertive because they lack confidence or are more sensitive. According to a report by Mencap (2000), nearly 90% of young people with a learning disability had experienced bullying, with over 66% of them experiencing it on a regular basis (*Living in Fear: The need to combat bullying of people with learning difficulties*, sample size 902).

New forms of bullying have also emerged. Cyberbullying involves the use of mobile phones and other electronic media to bully others. Research conducted by Goldsmiths' College has shed some light on the extent of this prevalent form of bullying. The Goldsmiths' research, based on 92 returns across 14 London schools, found that 22% of children had been cyberbullied.

The Goldsmiths' report identified seven main forms of cyberbullying.

- Picture/Video Clip bullying (via mobile phone cameras).
- Phone call bullying (via mobile phone).
- Email bullying.
- Chat-room bullying.
- Bullying through instant messaging.
- Bullying via websites.

Previous research conducted by the National Children's Home (NCH) found that between 20–25% of pupils aged 11–19 had been cyber-bullied. A more detailed NCH study based interviews with 770 young people. *Putting U in the picture—mobile phone bullying survey* in 2005 reported that 20% of young people had been bullied or threatened through some form of digital bullying: 14% had been bullied or threatened through text messages; 5% through chat rooms; and, 4% through emails. A further study conducted by the Schools Health Education Unit, based on questionnaires completed by 40,439 young people aged between 10 and 15, reported that only 1% of respondents had been bullied through their mobile phone. However, only one question related directly to cyberbullying.

Both the Goldsmiths' and NCH research found that girls were more likely to be both bullied and cyberbullied in schools than boys. Gender differences were particularly pronounced for phone call bullying, both inside and outside of school; and for text message bullying outside of school.

3. THE EXTENT OF HOMOPHOBIC AND RACIST BULLYING

Homophobic Bullying

Most lesbian gay bisexual and transgender (LGBT) organisations suggest that a homophobic bullying incident should be defined as any incident which is perceived to be homophobic by either the victim or another person. It can be directed both against homosexual and heterosexual people who are perceived to be lesbian or gay and can include verbal harassment, ignoring others, criminal damage, theft, and physical violence.

Research conducted on behalf of the DfES found that only 6% of schools surveyed had anti-bullying policies that addressed homophobic bullying (DfES, 2002, sample size 300). The Department commissioned the Thomas Coram Research Unit at the Institute of Education, University of London, to review the research evidence relating to homophobia in schools. The Department published their work in its Research

Report series in November 2004, (No 594), *Homophobia, Sexual Orientation and Schools: A Review and Implications for Action* (Warwick, Chase and Aggleton, based on consultation with 28 organisations). The report stated that many homophobic incidents are unlikely to be recorded by schools, possibly because of staff and student sensitivities surrounding the subject matter.

Around 82% of secondary school teachers in England and Wales are aware of verbal homophobic bullying and 26% of physical homophobic bullying. A study conducted by Rivers and Duncan (2002) found that that between 30–50% of young people in secondary schools attracted to people of the same sex will have directly experienced homophobic bullying (compared to the 10–20% of young people who experience general bullying).

In 2004 the DfES and the Department of Health jointly published guidance on challenging homophobia in schools (*Stand up for us*). Research conducted for *Stand up for us* revealed that name-calling and public ridicule are the most common forms of homophobic bullying, and that this abuse often takes place within the classroom and school corridors (see tables below).

<i>Experienced</i>	<i>Male (%)</i>	<i>Female (%)</i>
Name-calling	85	69
Public ridicule	75	54
Hitting/kicking	68	31
Rumour-mongering	57	67
Teasing	58	56
Frightened by look/stare	54	44
Belongings taken	47	31
Social isolation	24	41
Sexual assault	13	5

<i>Type of bullying</i>	<i>Corridors</i>	<i>Classrooms</i>	<i>School Grounds</i>	<i>Changing rooms</i>	<i>On the way home</i>	<i>Other</i>
Called names	XXX	XXX		X		X
Teased				X		
Hit/kicked			XX		XX	
Frightened by look/stare	X	XX		XX	XX	X
Rumour-mongering	XX			X		
Public ridicule	XX	XXX	XX	X	X	
Sexual assault				X		
Belongings taken			X	X		

XXX = frequently, XX = regularly, X = sometimes.

* Rivers, I (2000) Social exclusion, absenteeism and sexual minority youth. Support for learning 15 (1): 13–17.

Racist Bullying

Schools are legally required to record all racist incidents. The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry report (HMSO, 1999) recommended that a racist incident should be defined as follows:

“A racist incident is any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person.”

Ofsted reported in November 2005 that this definition is widely used throughout the education system in England. Ofsted also noted that LAs demonstrating good practice will undertake:

“[. . .] liaison with other partners, such as the police, to ensure that each agency in the local authority’s area has a settled, common definition of what represents a race-related incident”.
(Ofsted: *Race Equality in Education*, (November 2005)).

Racist bullying can be more widely defined as a range of hurtful behaviour, both physical and psychological, that makes a person feel unwelcome, marginalised, excluded, powerless or worthless because of their colour, ethnicity, culture, faith community, national origin or national status. Anti-Muslim, antisemitic and anti-refugee insults and abuse as well as bullying directed at Gypsy and Traveller communities all fall within this definition. It is a popular misconception that racist bullying is perpetrated only by a white majority. The DfES is aware of incidents of racist bullying perpetrated by members of all ethnic, religious or cultural groups. The report of the Committee into Education of Ethnic Minority Children, *Education for All*, (HMSO, 1985) made reference to attacks on pupils of Indian sub-continent origin by young people of African-Caribbean origin.

Although the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report cited above described all instances of racist bullying in schools as racist incidents, not all racist incidents are necessarily instances of racist bullying. Researchers have found that racist bullying is unfortunately commonplace in some schools. Research conducted in mainly white schools in 2001–02 found that 25% of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds had experienced racist name-calling within the last week. A third reported hurtful name-calling and verbal abuse either at school or during the school journey, and for more than 1% this was persistent (*Minority Ethnic Pupils in Mainly White Schools*, DfES research report 365, 2002, sample size 34,000).

Research on Gypsy and Traveller pupils found that more than half of Year 6 pupils interviewed had been called racist names; and 29 of the 38 pupils interviewed who transferred to secondary school said that they had encountered some kind of racial abuse, particularly in their first year of secondary school (Derrington and Kendall 2004).

4. WHY SOME PEOPLE BECOME BULLIES AND WHY SOME PEOPLE ARE BULLIED

Any child can be bullied. However, certain factors can make bullying more likely: lacking close friends in school, being shy, behaving inappropriately, possessing (and, indeed, not possessing) expensive accessories such as mobile phones or computer games. Others are bullied because of personal characteristics (such as height, weight, or hair colour). A substantial number of young people are bullied because of their race, gender or sexuality, or because they have Special Educational Needs or a disability. Most children are bullied because of a perceived weakness that makes them somehow different.

Both boys and girls bully others. Usually, boys are bullied by other boys. However, girls are bullied by both girls and boys. Research published by ChildLine in March 2006 revealed that over a three-month period in 2005, the ChildLine helpline received over 700 phone calls from girls about physical bullying and almost 1,000 calls from girls about verbal bullying by other girls.

Children who bully others can come from any kind of family, regardless of social class or cultural background. There are many roles in bullying: there may be a gang of bullies, with a ringleader and followers. Some pupils may watch and reinforce the bullying actively, or passively by doing nothing to stop it. Other pupils—defenders—may help the victim. These roles are not exclusive: at different times or in different contexts, children and young people can both bully and be bullied (Wolke et al, 2000).

Children and young people may bully to show they have power over others, or to have control over one aspect of their lives when the rest seems out of control. They may bully because that is what they see and have learned at home, at school or in the community. Many young people who bully often have low self-esteem and feel insecure. Bullying and aggressive behaviour might also be an expression of pain or fear. Some children and young people are unaware that their behaviour is bullying.

Those who bully often depend on the isolation of the person being bullied to continue to bully. Currently, only around 25% of those who are bystanders intervene to stop the bullying which they are observing (Craig and Pepler, 1997; O’Connell et al, 1999). Many bystanders fear that they will be bullied if they do something to stop it, or even if they do not collude with the bullying. Support in managing the risks for the bystander and making it acceptable to report bullying and not to go along with it because of fear, requires a cultural shift for many schools.

5. THE EFFECT OF BULLYING ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT, PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH, AND SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

Bullying can harm all those involved. Research conducted by William et al in 1996 concluded that primary school children who were bullied were more likely to report disturbed sleep, bed-wetting, feeling sad, headaches and stomach aches. The risk of these symptoms increased with the frequency of the bullying.

Studies of adolescent mental health, have noted that bullying has had the following effects on older children:

- anxiety and depression that can lead to intermittent and long-term absence from school, physical illness or psychosomatic complaints;
- poor self-esteem which inhibits pupils from forming positive relationships; which can lead to feelings of worthlessness and betrayal, and cause some young people to lower their expectations and standards of work;
- withdrawal, which may lead to low participation in school and other activities, isolation or self-harm.

Research published by the DfES has also identified bullying as a possible factor in the development of a social behaviour in children and young people (*Support from the Start: Working with young children and their families to reduce the risks of crime and anti-social behaviour*, (DfES 2004)).

Children and young people who are bullied often truant from school and this impacts negatively on their school attainment and future life chances. Rivers 2001 recorded that young lesbian, gay, bisexual or transsexual (LGBT) children disproportionately truant to avoid being bullied in school and were less likely than other young people to continue in education post-16.

6. WHETHER AND HOW THE EFFECTS OF BEING BULLIED PERSIST INTO ADULT LIFE

Not all children and young people who are bullied are affected by it in later life. However, bullying can continue to affect the individual long after the bullying has actually stopped. In some cases anxiety, insecurity, lack of trust and feelings of unhappiness persist long in to adult life. A study by Rivers (2001) reported that LGBT young people who have been bullied are more likely to contemplate or attempt suicide than those who have not been bullied. Similarly, more than half of all teenage runaways are LGBT, many of whom were also bullied.

In an earlier study into the long-term effects of homophobic bullying based on returns from 190 adults, 53% of adult lesbians and gay men who had been bullied at school reported contemplating self-harm as a result, while 40% had gone on to harm themselves (Rivers, 2000). A further study showed that more than 20% had attempted suicide (Mullen, 1999).

7. THE EFFECT OF BULLYING ON THOSE WHO BULLY

Guidance issued by the DfES previously has stated that bullying behaviour learnt as a child can continue into adult life, particularly if such behaviour was not challenged during childhood or was an everyday part of the child's upbringing. Aggressive, anti-social behaviour can continue into the work-place and the home. Adults who bullied other children during childhood can behave similarly towards other adults and children, particularly those in their immediate circle. This view is supported by most anti-bullying organisations.

Aggressive bullying behaviour has also been linked to anti- and asocial behaviour in adults. Some adults who bullied during childhood can find it difficult to form functioning adult relationships. Others might see violence and aggressive behaviour as an acceptable part of adult life. Ensuring that young people are aware of boundaries and are able to empathise with others has ramifications for the success of the Respect agenda. Socially able young people stand a better chance of becoming socially competent adults.

8. THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY ON BULLYING

The Government regards bullying within schools as a key priority and has been clear that all forms of bullying, including those motivated by prejudice, must not be tolerated and should be punished. The appropriate and proportionate use of punishment is important in:

- impressing on the child who bullied that their actions are unacceptable;
- deterring the child who bullied from repeating such behaviour; and
- demonstrating to other pupils that the behaviour is unacceptable and deterring them from behaving similarly.

This message was clearly re-iterated in the White Paper, *Higher Standards, Better Schools for All*, (DfES, 2005)—see annex B.

Through campaigning work from 1999 onwards the message that no child deserves to suffer the pain and indignity which bullying can cause has been clearly communicated to schools. More recently the focus of government policy has shifted from campaigning to embedding work to ensure that schools have robust anti-bullying policies in place.

The Every Child Matters: Change for Children programme has set work in train to help all children and young people to achieve the five outcomes identified in consultation as crucial to their well being in childhood and adult life: being healthy; staying safe; enjoying and achieving; making a positive contribution to society; and achieving economic well being. Bullying in schools can prevent children and young people from accomplishing these outcomes, which are central to realising the Government's wider objectives of school improvement, raising achievement and attendance, promoting equality and diversity and ensuring the safety and welfare of all members of the school community.

The Government has put in place initiatives to assist schools, local authorities, parents and children in preventing and responding to bullying, as well as providing support both for bullies and those being bullied.

Legislation

- Subject to the successful passage of the Education and Inspections Bill (2006) through Parliament, we will enact legislation which will provide all teachers and school staff in legal control or charge of pupils with a clear and unambiguous power to discipline pupils. The Education and Inspections Bill will also re-enact the legal duty on head teachers to establish measures to deal with bullying (currently clause 82—see section 9) and introduce a new power for teachers and school staff to impose disciplinary penalties on children for misbehaviour, including bullying.

Guidance and Curriculum

- All schools and LAs have received the Anti-Bullying Charter for Action, a voluntary commitment which schools sign to show they will not tolerate bullying. The Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners states that we will expect every school to subscribe to our Charter and to have clear rules and codes of conduct. We are working with schools with a view to ensuring that they either sign, implement and return the Charter, or use the principles of the Charter to draw up their own anti-bullying policy.

- The DfES has provided schools with comprehensive guidance on tackling bullying through the popular resource pack *Don't Suffer in Silence* and specialist guidance on bullying motivated by race, religion and culture. Over the coming year guidance on cyberbullying, countering homophobic bullying, and revised guidance for schools on how to practically prevent and respond to bullying incidents, will be prepared. A full discussion about the Government's resources in this area can be found in section 11.
- The Social and Emotional Aspect of Learning (SEAL) resource was made available to all primary schools in June 2005. It is a cross-curriculum framework for developing children's social, emotional and behavioural skills and is relevant to work to reduce bullying.
- The DfES and Home Office published guidance on Safer School Partnerships (SSPs) in March 2006 to establish a framework for police officers to be able to work in partnership with schools. This guidance builds on the experiences of pilot SSP projects. The declared purpose of SSPs is to enable:
 - Schools to be a safe and secure environment for staff, pupils, parents and visitors;
 - All pupils to feel positive about going to school, without feeling threatened or intimidated; and
 - The building of trust and relationships with young people, who recognise their responsibilities and develop a respect for their peers and the wider community.
- The Department has produced a wide-range of DVD's, leaflets, postcards and posters on tackling bullying.

Partnership working

- Through work with the Anti-Bullying Alliance, the Primary and Secondary National Strategies and the National Healthy Schools Programme we provide schools with support and effective practice on tackling bullying (See section 11 for further detail). These channels also allow us to offer additional support to those schools which have been identified as being weak in tackling bullying.
- Through grants to external bodies including ChildLine in Partnership with Schools, Parentline Plus and the Diana Awards we provide support and recognition to children and young people and their families. (See section 12 for further detail).

Inspections and Evaluations

- The Children's Act 2004 introduced Joint Area Reviews of children's services. The reviews will seek to ensure that all children's services implement and monitor policies on combating bullying, and that services take action to challenge and reduce discrimination.
- Since October 2005, schools have been required to assess their effectiveness in keeping their pupils safe and adopting safe practices (and this includes keeping them safe from bullying) through the school self-evaluation form, their responses to which are then considered during Ofsted inspections (see section 9). In addition, the Education Act 2005 requires schools to publish an annual profile which addresses the question How do we make sure our pupils are healthy, safe and well-supported?

Training

- Initial Teacher Training (ITT) providers have been afforded with new and additional resources such as the behaviour4learning web-based learning resource to help them improve their management of classroom behaviour, including bullying.

Parents and Schools

- Through parenting contracts and parenting orders we have put in place additional tools to tackle poor behaviour, including bullying, in schools by enabling schools and local authorities to engage with parents effectively, whether on a voluntary or compulsory basis.
- Home School Agreements (HSAs) make clear to parents what they can expect from their child's school—particularly when they join a new school—and set out the parents' own responsibilities in supporting the school. HSAs can be used by schools as a useful tool in their approach to combating bullying. The White Paper *Higher Standards, Better Schools for All* announced plans to strengthen guidance to schools on HSAs, to ensure schools fully exploit their potential in engaging parents.
- The Government is currently piloting use of Parent Support Advisors in 20 authorities across England. One focus of the Parent Support Advisor pilot is to work with parents to help reduce exclusions, and doubtless many Parent Support Advisors will be well-placed to spot bullying early and raise it with other staff before it becomes a problem.
- Extended schools will be expected to offer transition point information sessions to parents of children starting primary and secondary school. The sessions will include information on bullying, with separate factsheets for parents of primary and secondary school children.

Additional help for Schools

- We have put more adults than ever in our schools—teachers, classroom assistants, learning mentors, Connexions personal advisers, Behaviour and Education Support Teams and police officers—so that a wide range of people are available to help prevent and tackle bullying. Many of these professionals work in a co-ordinated way in multi-agency teams liaising with schools as well as children and their families.

9. HOW SCHOOLS DEAL WITH BULLYING

The Government has put in place a wide range of initiatives to help schools prevent and respond to bullying incidents, as well as enabling them to provide support both to bullies and those being bullied. These are discussed further in section 12.

We have provided schools with a wide range of strategies for use in tackling bullying and have issued clear guidance on how to draw up an effective anti-bullying policy. Through the Anti-Bullying Alliance, the National Strategies, Ofsted and the Diana Awards we are increasingly aware of the innovative practices many schools employ in this area. We are also aware that some schools require additional practical support and have put measures in place to provide this (see section 11 on National Strategies Toolkit).

Anti-bullying Policies

The Education and Inspections Bill will re-enact the current legal duty on head teachers to determine measures to prevent all forms of bullying. The Bill provides:

86 Determination by head teacher of behaviour policy

- (1) The head teacher of a relevant school must determine measures to be taken with a view to:
 - (a) promoting, among pupils, self-discipline and proper regard for authority,
 - (b) encouraging good behaviour and respect for others on the part of pupils and, in particular, preventing all forms of bullying among pupils,
 - (c) securing that the standard of behaviour of pupils is acceptable,
 - (d) securing that pupils complete any tasks reasonably assigned to them in connection with their education, and
 - (e) otherwise regulating the conduct of pupils.
- (2) The head teacher must in determining such measures:
 - (a) act in accordance with the current statement made by the governing body under section 85(2)(a), and
 - (b) have regard to any notification or guidance given to him under section 85(2)(b).
- (3) The standard of behaviour which is to be regarded as acceptable must be determined by the head teacher, so far as it is not determined by the governing body.
- (4) The measures which the head teacher determines under subsection (1) must include the making of rules and provision for disciplinary penalties (as defined by section 87).
- (5) The measures which the head teacher determines under subsection (1) may, to such extent as is reasonable, include measures to be taken with a view to regulating the conduct of pupils at a time when they are not on the premises of the school and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of the staff of the school.
- (6) The measures determined by the head teacher under subsection (1) must be publicised by him in the form of a written document as follows:
 - (a) he must make the measures generally known within the school and to parents of registered pupils at the school; and
 - (b) he must in particular, at least once in every school year, take steps to bring them to the attention of all such pupils and parents and all persons who work at the school (whether or not for payment).

Schools must have an anti-bullying policy linked to their overall school behaviour policy. This document should detail the range of sanctions which may be applied should bullying occur. These might include:

- removal from the group (in class);
- withdrawal of break and lunchtime privileges;
- detention;
- withholding participation in any school trip or sports events that are not an essential part of the curriculum; or
- fixed period exclusion;
- and in particularly extreme cases, permanent exclusion.

The most recent government guidance on bullying, *Don't Suffer in Silence*, advises that the entire school community is engaged in the process of formulating an anti-bullying policy to ensure whole school support.

The Practitioners' Group on School Behaviour and Discipline, established to advise the Government on how effective school discipline reaches every classroom, re-iterated the importance of clear effective policies for improving behaviour in schools:

“The key to being able to articulate the values a school stands for should be contained in coherent, clear and well communicated policies that are supported by effective practice.”

The report recommended that schools should review their behaviour, learning and teaching policies and undertake an audit of pupil behaviour.

The Practitioner's Group report made the following recommendations with regard to bullying which were supported by the White Paper:

1. *Recommendation 3.1.5*: the DfES should work with the professional associations and other partners to promote the Anti-Bullying Charter for Action, by reissuing it to schools every two years and promoting it at regional events.
2. *Recommendation 3.1.6*: the DfES should issue further advice on tackling bullying motivated by prejudice. This includes homophobia, racism and persecution in all its various manifestations.

Self Evaluation and School inspections

Since October 2005, schools have been required to undertake their own self-evaluation which then forms the basis of school Ofsted inspections. As part of school inspections, schools are required to evaluate the extent to which learners feel safe and adopt safe practices and as part of this are prompted to consider whether learners feel safe from bullying and racist incidents, and the extent to which learners feel confident to talk to staff and others when they feel at risk (see annex C).

Inspectors will routinely seek views from pupils about their experiences, including whether they feel free from bullying and harassment. Inspectors also ask parents what they think about the school's approach to bullying.

A Whole School Approach

PSHE and citizenship offer excellent opportunities for work on anti-bullying and emotional and social development (see also a description of SEAL/Secondary SEAL material in section 12). Government guidance further recommends that schools identify other areas of the curriculum where bullying, and the issues surrounding it, can be discussed, for example, tutorial time and assemblies at secondary school; literacy and circle time in primary school. The SEAL programme provides primary schools with a whole-curriculum framework for delivering this work (see section 11). In wider discussions about empathy and life skills, schools are well placed to inform their pupils how to resist negative influences, to build their confidence when faced with such things, and to motivate them to act to help others who are being bullied.

Ofsted Best Practice

In its report *Bullying: Effective Action in Secondary Schools*, (Ofsted, 2003), Ofsted found that the sample schools it examined held anti-bullying policies which varied in coverage and depth, although all were generally good. Those which were particularly effective were based on the commitment of head teachers and staff to keeping the level of attention to the issue high and to making policies which had day-to-day relevance. Those schools with the most successful approaches to bullying canvassed and took full account of pupils' views and dedicated curriculum and tutorial time to discussing bullying and related issues.

Other features of good practice within the sample schools included the efficient checking of the school site, setting up safe play areas or quiet rooms, and close supervision at the start and finish of the school day. Successful schools also had sound procedures for reporting and investigating alleged bullying incidents and were able to use these figures to inform policy and practice. Most of the schools visited made good use of the guidance and training provided to raise staff awareness, revisit their policies and strengthen their procedures. Where used, “circle of friends”, peer counselling, learning mentors and outside agencies often proved effective in supporting victims, in modifying the behaviour of bullies and affecting the culture of the school.

Ofsted Recommendations

The key recommendations of *Bullying: Effective Action in Secondary Schools* continue to inform DfES policy, for example in the preparation of the revised version of *Don't Suffer in Silence*.

These recommendations were thus:

- To improve the way in which bullying is tackled, schools, supported by LAs, should:
 - maintain the momentum on action against bullying through initiatives to improve attitudes and behaviour in schools generally;
 - regularly collect and analyse information on the incidence of bullying, taking full account of pupils' views;
 - arrange systematic training for staff on managing behaviour, counselling pupils and working with parents in difficult situations;
 - ensure that training to help teachers identify and deal with bullying tackles cases where bullying focuses on race and sexuality;
 - check that follow-up action on confirmed allegations of bullying is appropriate in its range and is sustained;
 - consider the use of positive peer pressure, the involvement of pupils in befriending and mentoring schemes, and the support of outside agencies; and
 - use other professionals to work alongside teachers, pupils and parents in overcoming the extreme effects of bullying.

10. HOW PARENTS CAN HELP IF THEIR CHILDREN ARE BEING BULLIED OR ARE BULLYING OTHERS

Parental support is often key to the success of a school's anti-bullying policy. The majority of parents support anti-bullying measures and are keen to help tackle bullying in schools. Importantly, many parents are likely to find out that their child is being bullied before teachers; older pupils are less likely to tell at all. In *Bullying: Effective Action in Schools*, Ofsted found that those schools which tackled bullying most successfully involved parents when bullying occurred. Importantly, such schools also demonstrated an awareness of the difficulties of engaging with parents to tackle bullying. In almost all of the schools considered bullying was given a high profile in all information provided to parents. Parents can help to create a school ethos in which positive behaviour is encouraged, and bullying is considered unacceptable.

The Department is aware that some parents hold unhelpful attitudes about bullying, regarding it as an inevitable part of growing-up and encouraging young people who are being bullied to retaliate rather than to seek help. This undermines the aim of most anti-bullying initiatives which encourage children to tell staff about bullying rather than trying to fight back. Other parents might regard children who have been bullied as deserving of their fate.

Schools need to work effectively with parents. Failure to involve parents fully when dealing with bullying can lead to a breakdown in confidence and communication between the parent and the school. Parents expect schools to take their concerns seriously and failure to do so can result in the parent making a formal complaint to the governing body or the local authority. Local authorities are not obliged to consider complaints about bullying although many do so as a matter of good practice.

Strong links between parents and the school are particularly important when a child has been investigated for bullying another pupil. The parents of bullies often find it difficult to accept that their child might have bullied another child. It is, therefore, important that discussions are based on well-documented evidence. Certain parents need additional help to help improve the behaviour of children who bully. In February 2004 powers were introduced to allow schools and local authorities to agree parenting contracts with parents and for local authorities to apply for parenting orders following exclusion. Schools and LAs have started to use parenting contracts in increasing numbers to support parents in taking the necessary steps to improve their child's behaviour, including bullying. In the 2006 spring term, 795 such contracts were agreed with parents. For the small minority of parents that will not engage with such voluntary measures, local authorities can apply for compulsory parenting orders to ensure that the parent attends a parenting programme and complies with any other requirements set out in the order. Building on the recommendations in the Practitioners' Group on School Behaviour and Discipline report, the Education and Inspections Bill will allow parenting contracts for behaviour, including bullying, to be used as an earlier intervention, before a pupil has been excluded, in order to counter behavioural problems including bullying at the earliest opportunity, and to enable schools to apply for court-imposed parenting orders.

11. (I) WHAT SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE DOES THE DFES PROVIDE TO SCHOOLS AND TO THOSE AFFECTED BY BULLYING, AND HOW EFFECTIVE THEY ARE?

A. *Training*

Initial Teacher Training

In 2003 the Teacher Development Agency (TDA) commissioned a number of experts to produce training resources, exemplification materials and a website dedicated to supporting ITT providers and their trainees. The ITT Professional Resource Network (IPRN) has produced an extensive web-based resource of materials on its website www.behaviour4learning.ac.uk. This is intended to support providers of ITT in the design of training to reflect the emphasis placed upon behaviour and discipline in the Standards for Newly Qualified teachers and Induction.

Resources for both the primary and secondary sectors have already been published, with accompanying CD-ROMs of school-based film clips to exemplify the tutor materials. Much of this material is presently being transformed into a DVD and will be circulated to all ITT students entering training programmes in 2006–07. As a result of the IPRN's work, trainers and trainees now have access to nearly 600 web-based ITT resources on Behaviour & Attendance.

In addition to the publication of materials, the IPRN has established networks of experts and stakeholders in the government regions who meet regularly in order to consider and disseminate effective practices. It organised a very successful national conference on behaviour management for the ITT sector, and has worked with teachers' TV to contribute to relevant broadcasts. The TDA is commissioning contractors to extend this work.

Links are made in training to the DfES and the National Strategies materials intended for existing classroom teachers. However resources have to be tailor-made for initial teacher training. Between 2003 and 2006, the TDA invested £1.5 million on training resources for ITT much of which was spent on the behaviour IPRN. The TDA is currently re-tendering for the continuation of this work for a further two years.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and National Programme for Specialist Leaders of Behaviour and Attendance

CPD plays a significant role in ensuring that teachers continue to develop their skills and expertise in encouraging positive behaviour for learning. The National Strategies help promote a supportive whole school ethos within which teachers can develop effective approaches to teaching and learning as well as curriculum innovation to achieve positive behaviour. Targeted support is offered to schools identified by Ofsted as having unsatisfactory behaviour. This can include problems tackling bullying.

Many secondary schools with unsatisfactory standards of behaviour and problems with bullying have an unsystematic approach to staff professional development, particularly the promotion of positive behaviour for learning, (including the development of staff and pupils' social, emotional and behavioural skills). The National Strategies are encouraging all secondary schools to appoint behaviour leaders (sometimes called lead behaviour professionals or LBP's) to tackle poor behaviour and bring about a consistent whole school approach to continuing professional development. The National Programme for Specialist Leaders of Behaviour and Attendance, now part of the National Strategies, offers suitable specialist training for LBPs.

The National Programme for Specialist Leaders of Behaviour and Attendance, now part of the National Strategies. For example study material titles include:

- Leading professional development in social, emotional and behavioural skills.
- Behaviour and attendance self-review and action plans.

In April 2006 the TDA gave advice to the Secretary of State on the revised framework of standards for classroom teachers. These preserve the current emphasis on a strong grounding in behaviour management for learning which has positive ramifications for preventing and tackling bullying in the classroom.

B. *Curriculum*

Primary and Secondary National Strategy Behaviour and Attendance Strand

The National Strategy Primary and Secondary Behaviour and Attendance Strands emphasise the importance of raising standards through engendering positive behaviour. As part of the Secondary strand of this strategy, the Department has produced an audit to help schools recognise their good practice and build on it, as well as focus on those areas which warrant further attention. The Anti-bullying Toolkit is specifically designed to support schools following an in-depth audit where they identify bullying as a priority. This differentiated resource is for senior leaders to use with staff, parents/carers and pupils in addressing those specific areas identified in the audit. It has three separate sections on reviewing a whole-school anti-bullying policy and including parents and carers and pupils. Local Behaviour and Attendance

Consultants funded by the National Strategies and employed by each authority are available to offer support to secondary schools in this work, as well as provide mediation and individual support for those schools with particular needs.

SEAL and Secondary SEAL

Every primary school is entitled to the SEAL pack and approximately one third of primary schools now use this resource. It is a structured, whole-curriculum framework and resource for teaching social, emotional and behavioural skills from Foundation Stage to Year 6 and an important part of the Department's long-term policy to promote positive behaviour and attendance. As well as work targeted at each year group, the resource includes a specific section on bullying.

The Department is building on the successful work of the SEAL programme in primary schools by piloting the Secondary SEAL programme in 50 schools across six LAs. The pilot focuses on staff development as well as pupil progress. The aim is to develop social, emotional and behavioural skills through CPD using whole school approaches, learning and teaching materials and guidance, and by providing guidance on focus group work.

National Healthy Schools Programme

The National Healthy Schools Programme, a Department of Health and Department of Education initiative aims to:

- support children and young people in developing healthy behaviours;
- help to raise pupil achievement;
- help to reduce health inequalities; and
- help promote social inclusion.

A healthy school supports the development of positive identities and self-confidence, making children and young people less vulnerable to bullying and giving them the confidence to seek help when they need it.

It is recognised that children who display bullying behaviours are often lacking in self-esteem and thus seek to diminish others to empower themselves. Building the empathy of those who bully can give them alternative behaviours which make them feel important and valued.

In seeking to achieve a climate where bullying is not a problem, a healthy school:

- identifies vulnerable individuals and groups and establishes appropriate strategies to support them and their families;
- provides clear leadership to create and manage a positive environment which enhances emotional health and wellbeing in school—including the management of the behaviour and rewards policies;
- has clear, planned curriculum opportunities for emotional and social development where they can understand and explore feelings—including difficult or uncomfortable feelings—and work collaboratively using appropriate learning and teaching styles;
- has a confidential pastoral support system in place for pupils and staff to access advice—especially at times of bereavement and other major life changes—and this system actively works to combat stigma and discrimination;
- has explicit values underpinning positive emotional health which are reflected in practice and work to combat stigma and discrimination;
- has a clear policy on bullying, which is owned, understood and implemented by the whole school community;
- provides appropriate professional training for those in a pastoral role;
- provides opportunities for pupils to participate in school activities and responsibilities to build their confidence and self-esteem; and
- has a clear confidentiality policy.

C. Guidance

Don't Suffer in Silence

The *Bullying: Don't Suffer in Silence* pack has been provided to schools by the Department as a practical guide to tackling bullying in schools. It was originally launched in 1994 and has proved very popular. It was up-dated in 2000 and 2002. Its key message is for children to report bullying to someone they trust and not to suffer in silence. The Department is currently consulting stakeholders and partner organisations on the content and structure of new and revised guidance to replace *Don't Suffer in Silence*. This will be published in Spring Term 2007.

Bullying around Racism, Religion and Culture

Further to commitments outlined in both the Practitioner's Group on School Behaviour and Discipline Report and in the White Paper *Higher Standards, Better Schools for All*, the DfES Online *Guidance for Schools on Bullying around Racism, Religion and Culture* was published in March 2006. The Department worked closely with the main professional associations, as well as a wide range of other interested stakeholders, in the production of this advice and was pleased to add endorsements from the main teaching Unions to the finalised material.

The guidance, with its questions for whole school review, and sections on continuing professional development, and on curriculum and in-class resources, is designed to support schools in preventing and responding to this kind of bullying. It offers discussion topics and activities to stimulate debate and spark activity involving everyone in the school community. The format closely links to the new cycle of self evaluation for schools and it can be used, alongside behaviour audits and pupil surveys, to identify key strengths and areas for development.

Homophobic bullying

Homophobic bullying is an area that schools find particularly difficult to deal with and very few refer to it in their anti-bullying policies. To respond to this need, both the *Learning Behaviour Report* and the White Paper *Higher Standards, Better Schools for All* made clear that we would issue further advice on tackling bullying motivated by prejudice, including homophobia. During the debate on the Education and Inspections Bill, Lord Adonis gave a commitment that this would be published in early 2007.

Cyberbullying

We are aware that schools and parents find cyberbullying a particularly challenging area to address. Having produced brief guidelines for schools and parents on this topic in July 2006, DfES is setting up a taskforce including the key Internet Service Providers (ISP's), mobile phone companies to advise us on best practice and to come up with practical solutions on how to deal with this problem. The Group will report their findings and recommendations early next year and we will consider how best to move forward in light of this.

Violence Reduction in Schools

The most extreme forms of bullying can lead to violence in schools so we think it is important to look at these areas in an overarching, coherent way. DfES advice on violence reduction in schools provides additional guidance for schools in developing anti-bullying strategies under two broad themes—creating an ethos for non violence and learning from incidents to prevent recurrence.

Websites

The Department has also developed anti-bullying guidance for a variety of audiences including parents, governors, teachers and LA's through its various websites *Teachernet*, *Governornet*, *need2know* and the DfES web-pages.

D. Campaigning work with external partners

Together with the Anti-bullying Alliance and other stakeholders (see Section 12), the DfES is engaged in a number of projects intended to raise awareness of bullying and embed effective practice in schools:

The Anti-Bullying Charter for Action

The Charter is a voluntary commitment to creating a school community where bullying is not tolerated, and is signed by the head teacher, chair of governors and a pupils' representative. During Anti-Bullying Week 2005 we re-issued the Anti-Bullying Charter for Action which, following its original launch in November 2003, has been signed and sent to the ABA by over 4,000 schools. We believe that other schools have adopted the Charter but not returned it to the ABA, while still more have used the principles in the Charter for developing their own anti-bullying policies.

In line with the Practitioners' Group recommendation 3.1.5 and the subsequent commitment in the White Paper, *Higher Standards, Better Schools for All*, we will continue to re-issue the Charter every two years in order to sustain this momentum.

Anti-Bullying Week

Launched in 2004, Anti-Bullying Week was intended to raise the national profile of bullying in our schools, providing a stimulus for schools, teachers and pupils to examine bullying. It has been a particularly successful event. In November 2005 a large number of schools took part in activities through a wide variety of national and local events. Last year's event received considerable positive press coverage, and over 325,000 blue anti-bullying wristbands were distributed. The blue wristband was intended to enable pupils to make a visible commitment that they were not prepared to tolerate bullying. This year's event will be held between 20–24 November and will focus on the role bystanders can play in tackling bullying. A large number of events, conferences and competitions will take place.

Make the Difference Conferences

The Make the Difference conferences were held between November 2003 and June 2004, with over 5,000 heads, Chief Executive Officers and staff attending to hear advice on tackling bullying and to share examples of good practice. Overall the events were very well-received and provided a good training opportunity.

Anti-bullying films and posters

Since 1999 the DfES has produced four anti-bullying films. The two anti-bullying public information films (*Tell Someone*, 2003, and *I am*, 2004) are the two most broadcast public information films created by the Department. The Department has also produced a number of posters and postcards for use in schools.

11. (ii) IMPACT AND EFFECTIVENESS

We have assessed our anti-bullying strategies in the following ways:

A. Training

The TDA conducts an annual survey of newly qualified teachers' views on their training. In 2006, 68% of Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) said that their training in behaviour management in the classroom was good or very good. Only 6% of NQTs felt that such training had been poor.

Take up of resources has been strong and the materials have already been reprinted owing to overwhelming demand. Between June 2004 and August 2005 nearly 200,000 *behaviour4learning* resources were downloaded from the *behaviour4learning* website by trainees and their tutors.

B. Guidance

Ofsted has reported that most of the schools visited within its 2003 survey made good use of DfES anti-bullying guidance and training and used the materials to raise staff awareness, revisit anti-bullying policies and strengthen their procedures ("Bullying: Effective action in secondary schools" HMI 465 2003–06 LAs examined, plus 15 school visits of two days).

Don't Suffer in Silence

Our guidance to schools on tackling bullying, *Don't Suffer in Silence*, has been externally evaluated by researchers at Goldsmith's College, University of London. The results, though based on a fairly low response rate from schools, show that the schools found that the pack met their expectations and helped in drawing up their anti-bullying policies. This evaluation included research into the perceived success of anti-bullying strategies and interventions recommended in the guidance. Schools generally reported a high level of satisfaction with the interventions they had used. Between December 2002 and April 2006 some 23,073 hard-copies were sent out to schools (with many additional downloads via the website) and we currently have a large number of pre-orders for the revised pack (available 2007).

Bullying around Racism, Religion and Culture

Evaluation forms received from our 2006 dissemination events on Bullying around Racism, Religion and Culture were overwhelmingly positive with 95% of the delegates who completed a questionnaire stating they found the seminars helpful. In addition over 10,200 leaflets and 1,000 postcards have been sent out, and the web-pages have received in excess of 9,000 hits.

C. Campaigning work

The Anti-Bullying Charter for Action

The Anti-Bullying Charter for Action has been signed and returned to the ABA by over 4,100 schools. We believe that other schools have adopted the Charter, but have not returned it to the ABA, and that more still have used it as the basis for developing their school anti-bullying policies. This is supported by data from the National Strategies which suggests that around 60% of schools have used the Charter in some way when formulating their own policies. Over the coming months the DfES will be working further with the National Strategies to investigate cases of best practice and to determine what barriers there have been to schools signing the Charter.

Anti-Bullying Week

In 2004, over one million children signed up to our Beat Bullying campaign as part of Anti-Bullying Week. The original 100,000 wristbands earmarked for the three month campaign ran out in the first 36 hours after they were available.

Last year's Anti-Bullying Week was also very well supported with a large number of different events taking place across the country. A considerable amount of positive press coverage was received, and a further 325,000 wristbands were distributed.

Make the difference

The Department's 2003–04 Make the Difference conference series was heavily over-subscribed with over 5,000 attendees. Delegates told us that they left feeling inspired and motivated. The overall evaluations for the London conference were 100% positive, and for the series overall 97% positive.

Anti-bullying films and posters

The Department has distributed several hundred copies of its DVD resources and posters to schools and other educational establishments will undertake an independent, external evaluation of the ABA and the funding will be made available early next year.

External contracts 2006–07

As part of the awarded grants for the 2006–07 period we have asked external organisations to provide information on how they will evaluate their work for us to ensure they meet all agreed outcomes. This data will allow us to monitor the effectiveness of our relationships with external partners.

12. THE ROLE OF OTHER ORGANISATIONS, SUCH AS NON-GOVERNMENTAL GROUPS, IN PROVIDING SUPPORT

Anti-Bullying Alliance

The Anti-Bullying Alliance is an umbrella organisation which brings together 65 anti-bullying organisations in one network with the aim of reducing bullying and creating safer environments, in which children and young people can live, grow, play and learn. The organisation is hosted by the National Children's Bureau (NCB).

The DfES provides the ABA with an annual grant of around £600,000 to undertake a specific programme intended to embed effective anti-bullying practice at school and LA level in England. Hitherto this money has funded 9 part-time regional co-ordinators and a national co-ordinator to work with 95% of local authorities.

The work of the ABA is intended to:

- (A) Maintain a nationally managed regional network through 9 Regional Coordinators who organise training in schools, monitor Charter implementation, trouble-shoot for local authorities, organise local events, report to DfES on innovative local practice and local barriers, promote best practice locally, attend regular meetings with the Steering Group, liaise with the National Strategies, and produce regular reports on their work;
- (B) Develop and implementing an effective communications strategy including developing case-study materials and disseminating Spotlight magazine;
- (C) Ensure a national framework exists for gaining the views and experiences of children and young people on bullying and related issues;
- (D) Host Anti-Bullying Week including the production of promotional materials, organising events, providing a map of all regional activities, co-ordinating a press strategy, monitoring and evaluating impact of the week; and

- (E) Make available a dissemination and enquiry service for LAs and schools via phone, email and the web.

In 2004–05 DfES funding to the ABA provided the following:

Schools where the ABA has given in-depth support	175
Schools supported through training, conferences and information packs	5,826
Schools in receipt of information packs for Anti-Bullying Week	24,500
LAs to which the ABA has given direct support and advice	109
Individual cases of bullying dealt with directly	71
Parents supported directly	60

The work of the ABA will be subject to an independent, external evaluation due to report early in 2007.

Parentline Plus

The Department has recently committed funding of £200,000 for 2006–07 to Parentline Plus, a telephone advice line for parents offering guidance on a range of subjects.

Their work programme is intended:

- To continue to support parents worried about their child’s bullying by offering informed and appropriate information and help on bullying issues.
- To build up parents’ confidence, communication and negotiating skills which in turn will enable them to support their child and improve communications with schools and teachers.
- To continue to raise awareness amongst parents and carers, stakeholders, schools and professionals about the impact of bullying on the whole family.
- To lay the foundation for a more enduring and positive relationship between school and parent which will include parents having realistic expectations of what a school can do when it comes to a child being bullied/about the bully.
- Inform and influence schools’ methods of working with parents by giving them the tools to deliver Be Someone to Tell sessions with parents, directing parents who need extra help to appropriate specialist agencies.
- To contribute to the Government’s initiatives and outcomes—in particular *Every Child Matters*, the Respect Action Plan and the extended schools core offer.

CALLS TO THE PARENTLINE PLUS HELPLINE ANNUAL REPORT APRIL 2005–JUNE 2006

<i>Bullying type:</i>	<i>April 2005 – March 2006</i>		<i>April 2004 – March 2005</i>	
	<i>Total No of Calls</i>	<i>Percentage of total calls</i>	<i>Total No of Calls</i>	<i>Percentage of total calls</i>
Physical	2,841	6%	2,930	7%
Verbal	4,106	9%	4,128	9%
Perpetrator	1,045	2%	976	2%
Racial	142	0%	155	0%
Extortion	83	0%	76	0%
New to school	139	0%	175	0%
Other	513	1%	522	1%

BULLYING INFORMATION LEAFLETS SENT OUT BY PARENTLINE PLUS TO PARENTS BETWEEN APRIL–JUNE 2006 (Interim Report)

<i>Leaflet</i>	<i>Distribution No</i>
PLP Talks Bullying	168
Bullying—don’t suffer in silence (DfES)	160
Tackling Bullying (ACE)	169

NUMBERS OF VISITS TO THE PARENTLINE PLUS WEBSITE PAGE ON BULLYING BETWEEN APRIL–JUNE 2006 (Interim Report)

<i>April</i>	<i>May</i>	<i>June</i>
1,686	1,842	1,909

NUMBERS OF BULLYING INFORMATION DOWNLOADS FROM THE PARENTLINE PLUS WEBSITE BETWEEN APRIL–JUNE 2006 (Interim Report)

<i>April</i>	<i>May</i>	<i>June</i>
129	80	47

Information materials on bullying (April 2005—March 2006 Annual Report)

During 2005–06 Parentline Plus has continued to support parents and professionals working with parents through the distribution of information materials on bullying.

The number of leaflets sent out:

- 2,336 – Parentline Plus talks bullying.
- 1,343 – Bullying don't suffer in silence.
- 1,004 – Tackling bullying Advisory Centre for Education (ACE).

The Department also partially funds the ACE phone line which parents can ring for further advice if their child is being bullied.

Diana Awards

The Diana Memorial Award for anti-bullying was launched in 2004 and highlights the achievements of young people trying to tackle bullying in their school or community. Over 3,000 children and young people have received this award for their anti bullying work. In 2006–07 the DFES will provide a further grant of £50,000 towards the scheme.

In the Award's first year, 197 nominations were received from schools. The total number of children and young people who gained a Diana, Princess of Wales, Anti-Bullying Award for the year August 2004–July 2005 was 2,254. This year, 334 nominations have already been awarded. Nominations have already exceeded last academic year with nominations for the summer term still to be included.

Schools have informed the Department that the Award is prestigious as it is external, Government-sponsored and carries the branding of the Diana Award. The Award endorses and acknowledges good practice and provides strong evidence for Award-winning schools that demonstrates to parents and communities that bullying behaviour is being effectively tackled.

CHIPS

The DfES contributes funding of £200,000 a year to CHIPS (ChildLine in Partnership with Schools). The CHIPS scheme encourages young people to set up programmes, with the help of ChildLine and their teachers, to support their peers and to create safe environments in which to learn. This is done in a variety of ways: presentations, workshops, conferences, consultation, resources, work experience placements and school visits to ChildLine bases.

Main objectives of CHIPS

One of ChildLine's aims is to enable children and young people to reach their full potential. Within this, CHIPS aims to enable young people to develop the skills and strategies to keep safe and play an active role in issues that affect their lives. The objectives of our CHIPS programme are:

- To enable as many children and young people as possible to have a safe childhood in school, at home and in the wider community through the development of interpersonal and social skills to enable them to fulfil their potential.
- To develop and expand the CHIPS programme to reach more children and young people within existing resources.
- To empower young people to actively participate in schools and other settings in order to create a safe and inclusive environment.
- To develop effective working partnerships with appropriate statutory, voluntary and private sectors.
- To be aware of and respond appropriately in line with ChildLine's underlying principles to specific government initiatives such as citizenship, PSHE, Healthy Schools, SEAL and Secondary SEAL.
- To offer advice, support and training to schools and young people's organisations involved with young people.
- To provide a consistent and professional CHIPS programme throughout the UK working within agreed practices.

CHIPS' achievements in 2005–06 in England

In 2005–06 the CHIPS programme in England worked with 48,597 children and young people and 9,931 adults in:

- 291 primary schools;
- 274 secondary schools;
- 19 special schools; and
- 13 other settings (such as youth groups).

The CHIPS teams in England have delivered peer support training, and conferences around bullying and other training events for school staff and pupils. A full breakdown of outputs and the number of children and adults these activities reached, is as follows:

<i>Outputs in 2005–06</i>	<i>No of young people these activities reached</i>	<i>No of adults these activities reached</i>
187 presentations	28,951	3,420
261 Listening skills/peer support training	6,277	770
355 workshops	9,021	1,175
117 other training events	2,299	1,350
311 meetings/conferences	587	2,206
CHIPS conferences	1,451	1,010
Work experience placements	11	0
Total:	48,597	9,931

The Teacher Development Agency

The Learning Behaviour Report reported the perception that new teachers might not be trained adequately in behaviour management. However, this was based upon the evidence of a very small-scale survey. The TDA's survey of newly qualified teachers (NQTs) elicited over 13,000 responses (over 50% of all NQTs in post). Evidence provided from the TDA survey and from Ofsted indicates that the great majority of NQTs think that their initial training has equipped them to manage pupil behaviour. But there seems to be a feeling in schools that NQTs do not feel that they have been well trained in this area. This suggests that schools see the need for further training suited to their specific circumstances, whilst student teachers are increasingly confident in their knowledge and skills they have acquired.

Learning to manage behaviour in Initial Teacher Training

The current standards

Training to manage pupil behaviour figures prominently in programmes of initial teacher training. The relevant Standards for Qualified Teacher Status, published in 2002 in *Qualifying to teach (Qtt)*, require that trainees should demonstrate that:

S1.8 They are aware of, and work within, the statutory frameworks relating to teachers' responsibilities.

S2.7 They know a range of strategies to promote good behaviour and establish a purposeful learning environment.

S3.3.9 They set high expectations for pupils' behaviour and establish a clear framework for classroom discipline to anticipate and manage pupils' behaviour constructively, and promote self-control and independence.

S3.3.14 They recognise and respond effectively to equal opportunities issues as they arise in the classroom, including by challenging stereotyped views, and by challenging bullying or harassment, following relevant policies and procedures.

The statutory framework for initial teacher training: Ofsted inspection of ITT and its outcomes

These standards are underpinned by statute and are rigorously inspected by Ofsted. The TDA has a statutory obligation to link accreditation and allocations of training places to the quality of provision. Any provider of ITT who fails to offer programmes designed to give trainee teachers the opportunity to meet all of these standards will lose their accreditation. Between 2002–05, 17 providers have come under scrutiny for actual or potential non-compliance. None of these cases related to failure to give adequate training in behaviour management. This gives clear evidence that the view of the inspectorate is that beginner teachers are being adequately prepared for their future role in relation to behaviour management.

Ofsted has recently reported that in both primary and secondary phases, greater attention is being given to training in behaviour management and the training by providers is generally good (*Framework for the Inspection of Initial Teacher Training*, (Ofsted, 2005)). In support of this, a recent Ofsted briefing paper on training in behaviour management notes that:

“Providers have responded well to the Standards in ‘Qualifying to teach’ by introducing more taught sessions aimed at equipping all trainees with a range of strategies for managing pupils’ behaviour [. . .] in primary training, inspectors feel that trainees are, in general, well prepared for classroom management and see very few lessons where discipline is a problem.”

The Children’s Commissioner

The DfES has worked closely with the Children’s Commissioner and has supported his investigations into bullying. The Commissioner is independent but works alongside the DfES, talking directly to children and young people about this issue.

The Commissioner’s anti-bullying work:

- (a) To work together with key stakeholders in the voluntary sector and in government and to have further engagement with children and young people.
- (b) To disseminate “The Journeys” booklet (a short booklet featuring bullying case-studies and advice on how to respond) to school staff.
- (c) To produce a children’s and young people’s version of “The Journeys” booklet with specific advice which they can use.
- (d) To prepare a policy briefing with recommendations to the Government.
- (e) To call for further research into bullying to fill the gaps in the existing evidence base.
- (f) To complete a report on proposals for a parental complaints procedure for those whose child has been bullied in school (working alongside the Children’s Legal Centre).

13. TO WHAT EXTENT ARE SUPPORT SERVICES JOINED UP ACROSS DIFFERENT GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

The DfES has recently begun working with the Home Office Task Force for Child Protection on the Internet, and with BECTA, (British Educational Communications and Technology Agency) (see section 11).

We shall also seek to engage with the Department for Communities and Local Government Equalities Unit and the Women and Equalities Unit in our upcoming work on countering homophobic bullying.

The guidance on Safer Schools Partnerships (April 2006) has been developed by the DfES and the Home Office with the Association of Chief Police Officers to promote schools settings where bullying cannot flourish. The guidance suggests explicit bullying related success measures for SSPs within the context of the Every Child Matters Outcomes.

Youth Justice Board (YJB) data demonstrates that young people who become engaged in crime and anti social behaviour frequently have experience of bullying in school and community. A DfES research report states:

“Positive correlations have been identified which connect educational progress, improvements in achievement and lower levels of truancy and anti-social behaviour, to:

- High quality teaching and organization;
- Dynamism, energy and commitment; and
- ‘Whole school’ approaches to problems of bullying, truancy and anti-social behaviour”.

(*Preventing Children’s Involvement in Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour: A literature Review*, (DfES, 2005))

YJB funds prevention programmes working with schools which divert young people from anti social behaviour and which confront their anti social behaviours including bullying. These programmes may include work as part of the extended schools programme, SSP and restorative approaches in schools.

The use of Restorative Justice approaches in schools has been promoted in a pilot scheme by the Youth Justice Board. DfES Minister, Ivan Lewis, supported the pilot in 2004 saying that:

“Restorative Justice can be applied to all sorts of conflicts within schools, from name-calling to bullying and general misbehaviour. The use of the Youth Justice Board’s project in some schools has significantly reduced levels of exclusions and truancy, and improved discipline in the classroom and playground. Schools across England and Wales should be encouraged to use this as an important part of their behaviour policies”.

The Department also continues to be an active member of both the OECD and Five Nations Anti-Bullying Forum, liaising closely with colleagues within the regional assemblies to ensure that policy information is shared and new developments in bullying are collectively explored.

14. TO WHAT EXTENT CAN SCHOOLS BE RESPONSIBLE FOR BULLYING THAT TAKES PLACE OFF THEIR PREMISES AND HOW CAN THEY DEAL WITH IT?

Bullying by pupils which takes place outside a school but on school business—for example, on school trips or away school sports fixtures—is subject to the school’s behaviour policy and should be dealt with as if it had taken place in school.

However, often the most frightening and severe bullying incidents can take place outside a schools jurisdiction, particularly in the case of cyberbullying. For behaviour outside school, DfES Guidance on Exclusions states:

“[. . .] a head teacher may exclude a pupil if there is a clear link between that behaviour and maintaining good behaviour and discipline among the pupil body as a whole. This will be a matter of judgment for the head teacher. Pupils’ behaviour in the immediate vicinity of the school or on a journey to or from school can, for example, be grounds for exclusion”.

(Improving Behaviour and Attendance: Guidance on Exclusion from Schools and Pupil Referral Units, (DfES, 2004))

Provisions in the current Education and Inspections Bill will extend the power to discipline to include behaviour outside the school, giving the head discretion to determine when and where it will apply:

“The measures which a head teacher determines under subsection (1) may, to such extent as is reasonable, include measures to be taken with a view to regulating the conduct of pupils at time when they are not on the premises of the school and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of the school staff”.

(Clause 86 (5), Education and Inspections Bill 2006)

The guidance which the Department will produce to accompany the Bill will include a specific section on the provision of arrangements for discipline outside a school premises.

As the bullying which occurs is likely to be between children who attend the same school it is sensible for the school to offer support to those who need it and to clearly re-affirm to the perpetrator that the school will not tolerate bullying.

Departmental guidance further advises schools to:

- talk to the local police about problems on local streets;
- talk to the transport company about bullying on buses or trains;
- talk to the head of another school whose pupils are bullying off the premises;
- map safe routes to school, and tell pupils about them; and
- talk to pupils about how to avoid or handle bullying outside the school premises.

(Don’t Suffer in Silence)

15. DO PARTICULAR STRATEGIES NEED TO BE USED TO TACKLE HOMOPHOBIC AND RACIST BULLYING?

Schools have a legal duty to ensure the safety of pupils as well as a duty to promote equality of opportunity for all children and young people, regardless of their gender, age, sexual orientation, race, religion, SEN or disability. Equality of opportunity positively affects all pupils and the promotion of equality should be enshrined in all school policies. As such it is essential that prejudice driven bullying, alongside all other forms of bullying, should be tackled.

The law of the land recognises the seriousness of racist and homophobic attacks by requiring that courts should impose higher sentences when an offence is aggravated on these grounds. Discrimination by schools on racial grounds is already unlawful, and the Government is committed to bring forward regulations which will outlaw discrimination by schools on grounds of sexual orientation. While this does not apply directly to anything done by one pupil to another, a school which does not deal with incidents of racist or homophobic bullying as firmly as any other kind of bullying could be at risk of a claim of discrimination on these grounds.

The distinctive feature of prejudice-driven bullying is that a person is attacked not only as an individual, as in most other offences, but also as the representative of a family, community or group. As such other members of the same group, family or community can be made to feel threatened and intimidated. Acts of prejudice-driven bullying are committed not only against a community but also on behalf of a community since offenders see themselves as representative of, and supported by, their peer group. Moreover, this kind of bullying has wider social implications, extending beyond the school setting and schools, therefore, are in a significant position to limit the negative consequences this bullying can have on wider society. Consequently, Departmental guidance advises that anti-bullying policies make specific reference to racist, homophobic and sexual bullying and harassment and all incidents should be recorded.

Ofsted has told us that schools find tackling racist bullying an especially “sensitive and challenging area” (*Race Equality in Education*), whilst organisations like EACH and Stonewall inform us that homophobic bullying causes similar obstacles for school staff, particularly with regard to the use of derogatory language. Furthermore, it is increasingly common for words such as “gay” or “queer” to mean that something is inferior/unpopular and as such many staff are unclear how to address this usage.

Given the sensitive issues involved a large number of school staff often feel that they lack the confidence and skills to deal with this kind of bullying. Strong leadership and an inclusive school ethos which recognises and values diversity are key to preventing and challenging bullying of this nature. An important part of this is exploring and challenging staff’s own preconceptions so that they are able to address those of their students. As such the DfES has recognised that a need exists to issue specialist guidance on bullying around racism, religion and culture, to be followed by guidance on countering homophobic bullying.

Continuing the DfES suite of guidance on prejudice driven bullying: Future work plans

The Government is clear that there is no hierarchy of bullying and that it should be tackled in all its forms with equal amounts of vigour and commitment. As part of ongoing work on prejudice-driven bullying the Department will seek to provide specialist advice in other areas, potentially including the bullying of Looked After Children, and those with SEN or disabilities. According to a report by Mencap (2000), nearly 90% of young people with a learning disability had experienced bullying, with over 66% of them experiencing it on a regular basis (*Living in Fear: The need to combat bullying of people with learning difficulties*, sample size 902). Although the increase in number of children and young people with SEN and disabilities in mainstream schools can promote positive friendships and understanding, it can also leave these children and young people feeling vulnerable.

A report by Barter et al (2004) found that half of the young people interviewed in children’s homes had experienced direct physical assault as victims, perpetrators or witnesses, and nearly all experienced verbal abuse. Looked After Children require particular support in instances of bullying since they often lack a clear support network and schools might therefore require specialist guidance on providing such further assistance. In order to prevent pupils with SEN, disabilities and those living in care from being bullied, the Department will consider producing specialist materials to assist schools in these areas. In addition Schools will need to have policies, procedures and effective practices in place to ensure that they do not put these children at a disadvantage.

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October 2006

Witnesses: **Jim Knight**, a Member of the House, Minister of State for Schools and 14–19 Learners, and **Mr Parmjit Dhanda**, a Member of the House, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children, Young People and Families, Department for Education and Skills, gave evidence.

Chairman: I am going to ask Stephen to lead on anti-bullying policy.

bullying is something that we are actively considering because of the burden that it would place on schools.

Q219 Stephen Williams: I want to start off by looking at identity-related bullying or prejudice-driven bullying. There is at the moment an anomaly between reporting racist incidents and homophobic incidents of bullying in schools. There is a specific statutory duty, which I think comes from the race relations laws rather than education policy, for schools to report racist incidents, but there is no corresponding duty on schools to report, record or deal with homophobic incidents. Do you think that is an anomaly that needs to be corrected?

Jim Knight: We recommend in our guidance that schools should report all incidents of bullying. We do not make it a requirement, as you say, except in racist incidents, principally because of the burden that it places on schools but also because there are some real difficulties around definition and getting some consistency. We have some concerns around that in terms of the reporting of racist bullying: that some schools might be reluctant to report incidents because they do not want to get a reputation as a school for having a racist problem. We are working on guidance in respect of homophobic bullying at the moment, because it is a very difficult issue. From the feedback that we have had from schools, it is a very difficult issue for them to be consistent about and in any behaviour policy consistency is crucial. Things like the use of the word “gay” as a derogative term to describe people is in fairly common usage amongst young people in this country.

Q220 Stephen Williams: The BBC thinks that is fine.

Jim Knight: There was that debate on Radio 1, was there not? Issues like that are really quite difficult, and that is why we are working on guidance. We have got Stonewall and others working with us on that, and we will be issuing that shortly, but I do not think a requirement to report homophobic

Q221 Stephen Williams: When we had Support Against Racist Incidents before the Committee (SARI), which happens to be based in my constituency, they said, despite this statutory duty on schools to report racist bullying, they felt it was a problem that was grossly under-reported and echoed what you have just said about schools being reluctant to admit that they have a problem with racism. Is this not something that needs to be urgently tackled by the Department and by local authorities, and if misery is going on within schools, whether through racism, homophobic bullying or any other forms of bullying, it does need to be openly talked about.

Jim Knight: Yes. We are very clear that schools should have a policy. They have a statutory duty to have a policy on bullying as part of their behaviour policy and that should be communicated to pupils on an annual basis. As part of that, we say that their policy on bullying should ensure that there are consequences for bullies, that you punish bullies and you are clear that bullying is wrong, all forms of bullying in all settings, be it homophobic bullying, be it any other form of prejudiced-base bullying, and that we try and create a culture which addresses that on those terms. We saw last week with the whole business to do with Celebrity Big Brother that one person’s version of what is racist bullying is not another person’s version of racist bullying. Culturally, within society as a whole, we have got to address that.

Q222 Stephen Williams: Does not the Department then have a role to play in helping schools define what is racist bullying? Do we need to have some sort of national definition of what is racist bullying, what is homophobic bullying, so there are no opt-outs within individual schools?

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Jim Knight: We are refreshing our guidance on bullying at the moment, and we will publish that this year and we will produce a package of guidance on prejudice-related bullying which I hope will help define things, but we have also got the publication tomorrow of Keith Ajegbo's review on citizenship and there are aspects of what we do in the curriculum and a culture of respect that we look to engender in schools that respects everybody's difference in terms of faith, in terms of race, in terms of sexuality and that they are not used as the target for bullying, and that is absolutely fundamental and the culture that we want to see engendered in our schools.

Q223 Stephen Williams: The Department has commissioned reports from Stonewall on homophobic bullying and Beatbullying specifically on religious faith-based bullying. What is the timescale for those two organisations to report back to you?

Jim Knight: They will be reporting fairly soon and we want to be able to publish guidance informed by that this year.

Q224 Stephen Williams: "This year"—being?

Jim Knight: This year, 2007. Is that where we are now!

Q225 Stephen Williams: Which part of the year, I was meaning.

Jim Knight: I cannot give you a definite response on that, because obviously we have yet to receive their piece of work. We then have to consider it. Without knowing what it is saying, it is difficult for us to anticipate how long it will take us to consider it and then put it into guidance.

Q226 Stephen Williams: This Committee will also be producing a report, and I am sure you will take due notice of it.

Jim Knight: We will, as ever, be informed by your wisdom.

Q227 Stephen Williams: What feedback have you had from schools themselves about how they could be helped by the Department to deal with racist bullying, homophobic bullying or bullying in general?

Jim Knight: There are a number of areas. As I said earlier, in terms of any management of behaviour of children it is important to be consistent and to be clear about what the boundaries are and what the consequences are of crossing those boundaries. Some of these areas around prejudice in particular, as I have said, schools are saying to us that they do find some of them difficult—they find it difficult to have a clear definition. Normally you would look for a common sense view on what is reasonable. In some of these areas people take radically different views on what is common sense and what is reasonable, and we need to offer some consistency, and that is what we will seek to do with guidance. They also are looking for help with things like pupil mentoring, and that is why we

have announced the expansion of funding to CHIPS, the ChildLine-based organisation. Currently we have been funding them £200,000 a year, I think it is, to be able to develop pupil mentoring in this area for, I think, 20,000 individuals,¹ and we are expanding that to 480,000 from April—so that will hit 60,000—with very much a view on training so that we are building the capacity within pupils themselves to be able to develop that. The only other area—and it is not something I have talked about before—where we are looking to develop some assistance for schools is in gang-related bullying, which is a relatively small problem. We have only got four places where we think there are problems of criminal gangs infiltrating schools—those would be Nottingham, Manchester, Birmingham and London—but it is particularly a London problem. As we have said, it is important to be really open about problems in this area so that we can tackle them. We have had some good practice in London from Haringey and Southwark in this area and we want to be able to talk about the problem and extend that, so we are doing a little bit of work on gang-related bullying so that we can extend that best practice to those areas that have a big problem in that area.

Q228 Stephen Williams: One last question on this section. We have all seen on the news in the last 24 hours in particular a collection of cardinals, archbishops and bishops all saying why they think the Catholic Church should be exempted from the Goods and Services Regulations particularly to do with adoption. This Committee had one of those characters, Archbishop Nichols of Birmingham, in front of our Committee on citizenship, and I asked him about homophobic bullying then and he said that he did not feel, in his role as the head of the Catholic Education Service, that schools needed specific policies on bullying because they would cover the wall with paper if that was the case and he did not think it was necessary. When the Department does take note of all reports that are coming your way and you do come up with your guidance, can you give us an assurance that there will be no exemptions for faith schools that are state funded from carrying out what should be a child welfare policy rather than a disagreement over theology?

Jim Knight: I think from what I have said to you, you would be able to read (I think I said) whatever the setting, so whatever the ethos, whoever the external partner to a school might be, if they have got one, be it the Catholic Church or anybody else. We should not tolerate bullying in any form, we should not tolerate people not respecting the differences that people have and I think that applies to homophobic bullying, it applies to faith-based bullying, it applies to all forms of bullying in all settings.

¹ *Note by witness:* Previous number of children and young people reached by CHIPS when funding was based on £200,000 grant was over 40,000.

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Jeff Ennis: A supplementary question to the line of questioning that Stephen has been pursuing with the Minister. Minister, in one of your remarks you referred to the racist incident on Big Brother which happened recently. It is not a programme that appeals to me.

Chairman: Did you say racist or allegedly racist?

Q229 Jeff Ennis: I said racist, Chairman. The only time I would watch a programme like that is if someone like the Chairman was in the house!

Jim Knight: An interesting prospect.

Q230 Jeff Ennis: With Rula Lenska, or something like that! The reason I asked is because programmes like that do not appeal to middle-aged people such as myself, they tend to appeal to young people, and a lot of these young people are still at school. Can I direct this question towards Parmjit. What sort of impact or influence does a racist incident like that on television, which is openly allowed to carry on, have on our students?

Mr Dhanda: I think more as a kind of commentary than an opinion, we can all see the number of calls that went into Big Brother during the course of the debate and discussion. I must confess to the Committee, I do actually watch Big Brother and I used to watch it prior to the alleged incident as well. I am afraid that is on the record now. Does that answer the question?

Jim Knight: I would just add to that that I think we can draw something positive out of last week. The fact that, whatever it was, 85% of those who wanted to give Endemol money by phoning in and voting voted to get rid of Jade Goody. I think it is also positive that she herself has said she thinks it is racist, that she herself is saying that it is something she needs to address—I gather from *The Sun* she is going to India—but we have got a debate going amongst young people about whether their language, intentionally or unintentionally, is racist and I hope that is being discussed in schools up and down the country because it is a good way into discussing what is a really important issue around community cohesion in this country.

Chairman: Does it not obscure the racist aspect and whether it was racism or just ignorance in an ill-educated person? One can discuss whether it was racist, but it was bullying and it was classic bullying. Of course, in the next question we are going to ask you, interestingly enough that bullying led to exclusion, and we will come back to that in a moment.

Q231 Jeff Ennis: Changing the subject slightly, how far does the responsibility of the school go in terms of trying to prevent anti-bullying? Does it extend beyond the school gates?

Jim Knight: Yes. We have changed the law in the Education and Inspections Act last year to allow schools to extend their behaviour policy beyond the school gates, where it is reasonable to do so, where you can reasonably associate behaviour with the school, for example, and I would hope that that would extend to bullying. If someone is on home

school transport and is bullying another pupil or bullying a pupil from another school, I would hope that the school would do something about that.

Q232 Jeff Ennis: What about cyber bullying?

Jim Knight: Cyber bullying is an area we have been very active on, and we have convened a group from industry to help us look at how the technology is being abused. I do not think it is going to be possible to shut down technology that is being abused. It is a bit like teaching young people to cross the road safely. We need to teach them how to use the technology safely and responsibly, but there are measures that we can use and that we can take and we are discussing those with industry. Again, it is an area where we are looking to advise schools later on this year.

Q233 Jeff Ennis: Who else needs to be engaged other than schools to ensure that anti-bullying work is effective? Do we need to involve the wider community?

Jim Knight: I think we do. I think we need to certainly involve parents and ensure that parents have a good understanding of what the signs are that either their child is being bullied or is bullying. It is often quite difficult for a parent to accept that their child might be bullying, but we need them to be able to deal with that if it arises, but the wider community as well so that those places, be they the Chamber of the House of Commons or the Big Brother house, where bullying might take place, we can try and tackle that in the wider community and make sure we are not giving a bad example to young people.

Q234 Jeff Ennis: My final question is directed towards Parmjit because he has got responsibility for *Every Child Matters*. Obviously the *Every Child Matters* agenda is very important to the future of education in this country. Once the ECM agenda is up and running all over the country extensively, what sort of influence will that be able to have on future anti-bullying strategies?

Mr Dhanda: I think it will only help that we have got 150 change programmes on the ground all over the country. We are working with local safeguarding children's boards and I think the whole principles behind *Every Child Matters* and making sure that it is child focused and that we are repeating that good practice in every locality in every area of the country will make a lot of difference.

Jim Knight: It is crucial that we start with safe—the first one of those outcomes. We cannot do anything on standards in schools unless children feel safe and are ready to learn because they are safe from each other as well as being safe from adults.

Q235 Chairman: We are now moving to practice in schools. We are particularly concerned about this because some of us who in anti-bullying week last year visited schools know that it is all very well having standards and structures around this at a

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national level, but it is how you train young people in a school to behave on bullying against bullying, and there is some very good practice out there. Would you not agree, Minister?

Jim Knight: I would certainly agree. That is why we have expanded the funding to CHIPS, which I referred to earlier, to develop the pupil mentoring schemes. I too have seen good practice in a number of different schools, as I recall, in Dewsbury, in my own constituency, and up and down the country, but we need to develop that, because it is not only good for particularly younger secondary school pupils coming in to have an older pupil that they can look to for support, to disclose things that they might be reluctant to disclose to teachers, but it is also good for those older pupils as well; it builds their self-esteem, their confidence and their communications skills and they are skills that they will be able to apply in the workforce in the rest of their lives. It is a very strong, sustainable scheme.

Q236 Mr Marsden: Minister, I would like to pursue the issue that the Chairman has raised of bullying in relation to issues to do with exclusion and truancy. You referred earlier to your involvement with Beatbullying in the Department. We have seen recent research by them that suggests that something like 55,000 young people a day may be absent from school because they are being bullied. Do you find that a shocking figure? Is it one that surprises you?

Jim Knight: That would be a shocking figure. I would say to the Committee that I think, partly through the problems to do with definition that I talked about with Stephen, we have some nervousness around some of this data. Our own data goes back to 2004. It is getting out of date, so I have asked that we should refresh that through the sampling and surveying that we do of pupils as part of the joint area review process. There is something called Tellus II, which is something we are working on with Ofsted and MORI to complement that so that we can get more up-to-date data for ourselves. There is the danger, and I do not necessarily refer to bullying in this, but some of the data that we have seen reported in the media have been self-selecting samples, so they have been collected on an anti-bullying website where it is probably only likely to be people who are suffering from bullying or who are worried about bullying who visit that website, and they respond to the survey and the results are then skewed.

Q237 Mr Marsden: I would fully accept the discussion about Big Brother. It illustrates how subjective people's views of what bullying is can be, but that raises the question of the way in which bullying leads to absenteeism and exclusion. What information do you as a Department keep on exclusions and the reasons given for them?

Jim Knight: We collect data on exclusion, we collect quite a lot of data on it, and we publish data on absence as well, authorised and unauthorised absence, and we are looking much more closely at that data individualised down to schools so that we

are now able to identify those schools that have a significant problem in respect of unauthorised absence,² in particular, so that we can target our interventions from the National Strategies Team, and we have increased the resource that we are spending through national strategies on intervention on absence. Similarly, we can do the same with exclusion. You will always have this definition or problem around here. I have got a figure in front of me that 130,000 pupils were permanently excluded for bullying in 2004–05. One head teacher's definition of a bullying incident worthy of permanent exclusion might be different from another's.

Q238 Mr Marsden: I accept that. One of the other issues is the effect of bullying on particular groups. I want to talk specifically here about children with special educational needs. We know as a fact that children with special educational needs are far more likely, for whatever reason, to be excluded. We also know that certain types of children with special educational needs, not least those with Asperger syndrome and autism, are particularly vulnerable to bullying. What I would like to know is what is the Department's view on the problems involving children with special educational needs and bullying, what research have you commissioned on it and how does that fit into your overall anti-bullying policies?

Jim Knight: It is a difficult and sensitive area, certainly, and it is one where we have to be mindful of the Disability Discrimination Act and the ability of parents to appeal to SENDIST in respect of exclusions where they feel there has been discrimination on the grounds of the disability that a child has. What the school needs to be able to do is to apply its discipline code, its behaviour policy, to children with special educational needs along with everybody else. The fact that a child has special educational needs does not mean that they are exempt from any behaviour policy and any sanction against them from misbehaviour, but the school has to demonstrate it has taken proper account of the child's disability and that the teachers and the people who are administering the discipline code and the behaviour policy properly understand and have had proper training to be able to appreciate what is deliberate poor behaviour that should be punished as proposed to disruptive behaviour that is just a function of their disability.

Mr Dhanda: I am sure it was Jeff that launched the "make school make sense" campaign. We are working very closely with the National Autistic Society and the Autism Working Group to help people understand better autistic spectrum disorders, because if staff are aware that there are children with ASDs and the consequences of that, hopefully we can reduce the rates of exclusions in the first place.

Note by witness: As well as the information which the Department has previously collected on unauthorised absence, we are now using School Census data to identify schools with high persistent absence.

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Q239 Mr Marsden: A quick final question on that point if I may, Parmjit. That is all good news. What, however, we have heard, both from the NUT and from Professor Peter Smith, is that they are very concerned that there is a lack of training for teachers in how to prevent bullying; and from my own experience and from discussions with your colleague Andrew Adonis, I know that is an issue, particularly in terms of teachers identifying children with special educational needs. Do teachers receive enough training? If not, what are you going to do about it?

Mr Dhanda: It is a part of initial teacher training, but we are actually putting in place a £1.1 million programme to further that, including getting teachers on that initial teacher training course.

Q240 Mr Marsden: That is a pilot scheme, is it not, the £1.1 million, I think?

Mr Dhanda: No, I do not think so. I will write to you.³

Q241 Mr Marsden: If you could.

Mr Dhanda: As I understand it, it is a scheme that is encouraging more training of teachers to have placements as well in special schools to ensure that a greater proportion has greater knowledge if they are to go into that field.

Jim Knight: In terms of initial teacher training, 90% of those who have been through the training, when surveyed, say that they think that the training was good. I will put it the other way round. Only 10% thought it was inadequate for their needs in respect of behaviour in schools. There is a slight mismatch then in terms of a school's belief that newly qualified teachers have had sufficient training or that the teaching workforce as a whole has had sufficient training to deal with behaviour, and that then becomes a CPD issue that we would look to TDA and the new performance management arrangements to be able to address.

³ Ev 115–116

Q242 Mr Carswell: Would you agree that the forcible closure of some special schools, such as The Leas School in Clacton, and the removal of children with special needs from a special school settling into mainstream has in some instances resulted in increased bullying of children with special needs?

Mr Dhanda: I think we could have a three-hour chat about this, in fact I think we did just before Christmas.

Q243 Mr Carswell: We did not get much of an answer though.

Mr Dhanda: I think you did actually. What you have got to understand is that local authorities are making decisions at a local level. The rate of closures has actually reduced since 1997 compared to the period just before that, but I think it is also worth scratching the surface and looking at some of the detail, because what we are seeing is a greater proportion of new schools being built and co-location as well. I know that some have been talking about a moratorium on closures. If you had a moratorium you would not have the brand spanking new facility they have just created in Leicester, and there are very many others like that as well.

Jim Knight: One in Weymouth that I am looking forward to opening soon.

Mr Dhanda: So I think we have to look at this in the round. These are local decisions being made by local authorities but in very many cases we are actually seeing more co-location and new opportunities.

Q244 Chairman: There was a sobering comment from a mother who was also an educational psychologist. She said, "The trouble with bullying is identifying it and dealing with it, because when a five-year-old goes to school and two other little girls say, 'We are not going to play with you', that is a form of bullying." It is a very sad step towards an escalation. Ministers, we have been delighted by your presence, we have been intrigued by your answers and we will be seeing you again next week.

Jim Knight: I look forward to it, obviously.

Supplementary memorandum submitted by the Department for Education and Skills

Q219 Mr Marsden: A quick final question on that point if I may, Parmjit. That is all good news. What, however, we have heard, both from the NUT and from Professor Peter Smith, is that they are very concerned that there is a lack of training for teachers in how to prevent bullying; and from my own experience and from discussions with your colleague Andrew Adonis, I know that is an issue, particularly in terms of teachers identifying children with special educational needs. Do teachers receive enough training? If not, what are you going to do about it?

Mr Dhanda: It is a part of initial teacher training, but we are actually putting in place a £1.1 million programme to further that, including getting teachers on that initial teacher training course.

Q219 Mr Marsden: That is a pilot scheme, is it not, the 1.1 million, I think?

Mr Dhanda: No, I do not think so. I will write to you.

RESPONSE

With regard to addressing special educational needs (SEN), all student teachers are required, as part of their initial training, to demonstrate that they:

- understand their responsibilities under the *SEN Code of Practice*, know how to identify children with SEN and where to seek advice from specialists on less common types of special educational needs;
- can identify and support children working below age-related expectations, those who are failing to achieve their potential in learning, and those who experience behavioural, emotional and social difficulties;
- are able to differentiate their teaching to meet the needs of all children, including those with special educational needs.

These standards are currently under review, but we expect the new standards to recognise the importance of trainee teachers being able to demonstrate a clear understanding of the statutory requirements in relation to SEN and disability and the knowledge and skills required to vary their approach to meet the needs of children with SEN and/or disabilities.

Standards are important, but much depends on how they are achieved in practice. Ofsted have an important regulatory function in this regard. We have asked Ofsted to carry out a thematic review of the journey the intending teacher takes through initial teacher training and induction where the acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding relating to SEN and disability are concerned, including awareness of disability discrimination legislation and the new duty to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people.

The £1.1 million programme I referred to is a series of projects which we have commissioned the Training and Development Agency for Schools to take forward. The component elements are designed to improve and strengthen the confidence of trainees, newly qualified and experienced teachers in relation to SEN and disability. This programme began in 2005 and will continue until 2008.

I think the pilot component you had in mind relates to new specialist SEN and disability units for the longer three or four year initial teacher training courses in ten higher education institutions. These modules will be evaluated in February and July 2007 and we will want to review how the units have operated and student reaction to them. The evaluation will consider whether it would be feasible for such units to be built into the shorter PGCE courses and into the employment-based routes. Whilst these initiatives in themselves are not designed or intended to specifically address the issue of bullying, they will help teachers to be alert to the particular needs of children and to be sensitive to issues troubling them.

The Government expects every school to consider what action they must take in relation to continuing professional development for staff in meeting the needs of children with SEN and disabilities. Head Teachers should maintain appropriate expertise within their school at all times, taking into account staff changes and changes in the population of children that attend the school. The substantial funds given to schools in the School Development Grant provide resources for this. We will bolster the guidance offered to School Improvement Partners to encourage them to discuss with schools whether SEN and disability are given the appropriate priority in relation to CPD.

February 2007

Written evidence

Memorandum submitted by Schools OUT

1. Schools OUT is the 32-year-old national LGBT equality organisation in education.
2. Equality does not come through legislation and regulation alone nor does bullying disappear because it is recorded and responded to after it happens. It also requires a change of culture—the culture of our society and, more particularly, the culture and curriculum of our schools and colleges.
3. The “Five Outcomes” is defined in the aims and outcomes of *Every Child Matters: The Government’s aim is for every child, whatever their background or their circumstances, to have the support they need to:*
 - be healthy;
 - stay safe;
 - enjoy and achieve;
 - make a positive contribution; and
 - achieve economic well-being.
4. They must apply equally to those who are LGBT as all other children. Such aims seem to us to make such cultural change imperative if we are to meet the requirements of the new guidelines. Schools OUT seeks to address issues of equality and the challenging of bullying, prejudice and discrimination through both the legislative/regulative and cultural routes as they mutually reinforce each other.
5. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people have been routinely excluded from school and college curricula. Our lives and achievements are either ignored or distorted into a false image of who we were/are. From this comes the ignorance that allows for the stereotyping on which prejudice and negative discrimination depend.
6. Homophobic bullying is a direct consequence of this carefully engineered ignorance.
7. All young people believe they “know” some things about LGBT people. This “truth” is mainly derived from the stereotyping that abounds in our society and that is fed by our imposed silence. For those young people who have to relate to the reality of LGBT people’s lives—those that are LGBT, are questioning their sexuality/gender identity, are presumed by others to be LGBT or have LGBT family or friends—such stereotyping and distortion is particularly harmful and may have dire consequences. However this ignorance diminishes the knowledge and therefore the understanding of ALL students.
8. We therefore seek:
 - government guidance for the creation of inclusive curricula appropriate to age and ability of students and both within and outside the National Curriculum;
 - training for all teachers and student teachers in initial teacher training, GTP and other routes to qualified teacher status on the issues and how to explore these issues through the curriculum and training for all support staff;
 - school and college inspection to include proper consideration of the inclusivity of the delivered curriculum as based upon above guidance;
 - public support for LGBT staff, students, parents and governors, as it is frequently from them that good practice is initiated and developed, and recognition of the positive role played by those of us who choose to be open about their LGBT status;
 - training on the Employment Regs (Sexual Orientation) and their full implications for staff, schools, colleges and local authorities;
 - support for schools, colleges and their staff in developing effective equal opportunity and anti-bullying policy and practice;
 - support for the celebration within schools, colleges and universities of LGBT History Month which was instigated by Schools OUT www.lgbthistorymonth.org.uk and
 - require schools to respond positively and monitor the development of their work under the Skills and Learning Act 2000 and the Sex and Relationship Guide 2000 which make it incumbent on teachers to:
 - (a) challenge the stigmatisation of lesbian and gay families in lessons about families, marriage and stable relationships;
 - (b) give positive information on lesbians, gays and bisexuals to enable pupils to challenge derogatory stereotypes and prejudice;
 - (c) include lesbian, gay and bi sexuality in lessons on sex education;
 - (d) record and challenge all forms of homophobic bullying.

9. We also insist that Ofsted inspectors include as a meaningful and integral part of their school inspection all the above and that they are provided with the training to do it effectively.

10. The recent research by ChildLine and Wallace of “The Metro”—both on the Schools OUT website—highlight the importance of the effective and immediate addressing of these issues by all pupils, parents, teachers, governors, schools, education authorities and National Government. Each has a vital role to play. Without work to progress these issues, homophobia and other forms of prejudice and discriminatory practice will continue to abound and homophobic bullying will continue from strength to strength.

11. Schools OUT has a wide range of experience and knowledge in this field that we wish to see utilised to eradicate homophobic and all other forms of bullying.

12. We seek to give oral evidence to your Committee.

Schools OUT will continue to campaign, educate and lobby on these issues and provide support to LGBT teachers and any one else who needs it, in eradicating homophobia and institutional heterosexism.

September 2006

Memorandum submitted by Norfolk Governors Network

In the early 90’s the DfES recognised the prevalence of bullying in schools. In 1994, an anti-bullying pack was issued to schools and schools were required to have some form of anti-bullying policy. An evaluation of the initiative (RBX06-03) was carried out in 2003 which found that:

- Most schools found the pack helpful in devising a policy.
- In primary schools the pack was usually located in the staff room while in secondaries it was the Head’s office.
- Few teachers had actually seen the pack (and even fewer had seen the accompanying video).
- The most highly rated intervention at both primary and secondary levels was “circle time”.

Independent research, also in 2003 and commissioned by Childline, by the Thomas Coram Unit of London University, confirmed that bullying is widespread but some schools are particularly effective in preventing it becoming endemic. Their conclusions were that:

- Use of mobile phones for bullying is emerging.
- The three most effective responses were friendship network support, pursuing an avoidance strategy and learning to “to stand up for yourself”.
- Teachers and parents could not protect children from retaliation and “whole-school involvement” was often a more effective antidote.

The recommendations of the London University research, though now three years old, were informed by the practical experience of Esther Rantzen’ childline and should be considered as by the Committee as still very relevant. In addition, Committee members might also give thought to environmental encouragement of bullying behaviour inherent in:

- Schools built without sufficient classrooms for teachers to come to the pupils rather than each lesson change leading to a free-for-all melee in the corridors and staircases.
- Schools obliged to realise assets and dispose of playing fields (no longer in use for team games) leading to ant-heap-like overcrowding in breaks.

September 2006

Memorandum submitted by the General Teaching Council (GTC)

SUMMARY

In spring 2006, researchers from the University of Sunderland worked in partnership with the GTC to explore the issue of homophobia in schools. The following key themes were identified:

- (a) The invisibility of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender parents, despite the likelihood of their presence in the community, and despite the impact of the Civil Partnership Act.
- (b) The emotional energy expended by lesbian and gay teachers in concealing their sexual orientation through fear of adverse reactions, and the concomitant effects on their wellbeing and teaching.
- (c) The lack of representation, for children in families with same-sex parents (or other relatives) of their everyday life experiences within and beyond the school curriculum.

- (d) The tendency of teachers (whether heterosexual or non-heterosexual) to take a reactive rather than a proactive approach to addressing sexualities equality, where it is addressed at all.
- (e) The underestimation by teachers of the significance of homophobic bullying in primary schools.

INTRODUCTION

1. The General Teaching Council for England (GTC) is the independent professional body for the teaching profession. Its main duties are to regulate the teaching profession and to advise the Secretary of State on a range of issues that concern teaching and learning. The Council acts in the public interest to contribute to raising the standards of teaching and learning.

2. This memorandum provides evidence on one particular aspect of the Select Committee's inquiry—the issue of homophobia in schools. This evidence is taken from work that researchers from the University of Sunderland carried out in partnership with the GTC, exploring the issue of homophobia in primary schools. The Council supports Stonewall and its partners to highlight and challenge homophobic bullying in schools, which can blight the lives of teachers and pupils.

EVIDENCE OF HOMOPHOBIA IN SCHOOLS

3. The urgency of addressing this issue is demonstrated by evidence—examined by Elizabeth Atkinson and Renée DePalma of the University of Sunderland—showing the continued prevalence of homophobia in schools,¹ and evidence that heteronormativity (the normalisation of heterosexuality to the exclusion of any other identities) is maintained in schools through both active and passive means.²

4. School homophobia has been recognised and addressed in a range of international contexts. In the US, the National Mental Health Association asserts that while four out of five young LGBT people surveyed could not identify a single supportive adult in their schools, those that did identify adult support tended to report that they felt a sense of belonging in the school.³

5. An Australian study linked the heteronormative environment in schools with depression, self-harm, and dropping out for LGBT pupils.⁴ Research in Canada found that 40% of homeless youth identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual, and that the vast majority of those interviewed remembered their school experience in strongly negative terms.⁵

6. Research in Sweden suggests that violence against perceived homosexuals is enacted as a means of gender construction and is simultaneously a developmental, communicative, and social act.⁶ This implies that reducing homophobic violence is more likely to occur through systemic social change than through simply preventing or reducing particular acts of violence. Such a change requires an interrogation of the assumptions underpinning heteronormativity, not only in terms of what is said and done, but also in terms of what is left out of the official discourse.

CHALLENGING HOMOPHOBIA: DOES EVERY CHILD MATTER?

7. The GTC web forum Challenging homophobia: Does every child matter? was designed by Elizabeth Atkinson and Renée DePalma as part of a broader research project investigating homophobia in primary schools in the UK. The forum was hosted by the GTC for three months, from 30 January until 30 April 2006. As a research project with an equity agenda, the forum had the following goals:

- to learn more about teachers' perspectives and the challenges they face in challenging homophobia in schools;
- to use results from the forum to highlight policy implications for Government;
- to use the results to feed into Atkinson and DePalma's 28-month research project into teachers' best practice in promoting sexuality equality; and
- to contribute to the Education for All campaign led by Stonewall, which aims to challenge homophobia in schools.

8. The GTC forum was part of a broader research project that began in 2004 and will conclude in 2008. Along with the results from the other phases of the research, the results from the forum research will help inform the next phase of the research project, a university-teacher collaborative action research project (see para 22).

¹ Mason and Palmer, 1996; Douglas, *et al*, 1997; Malcolm *et al*, 2003; Warwick *et al*, 2004; Macgillivray, 2004.

² Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Epstein and Johnson, 1998; Epstein *et al*, 2003.

³ National Mental Health Association, 2005.

⁴ Dyson *et al*, 2003.

⁵ de Castell and Jensen, 2002.

⁶ Knutagard, 2005.

KEY THEMES ARISING FROM THE RESEARCH

9. The researchers were primarily interested in the narratives teachers brought to the discussion, the ways in which they interacted with each other, and the ideas they shared and challenged. Several key themes emerged from the forum, and these appear to be congruent with the themes emerging from the wider research programme. The themes include:

- (a) The invisibility of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender parents, despite the likelihood of their presence in the community, and despite the impact of the Civil Partnership Act, brought into force in December 2005.

10. The research found that posters made reference to (apparently) heterosexual parents who might be offended or angry if teachers addressed sexualities equality in the classroom. Nevertheless, there was no mention of gay and lesbian parents who might be angry about their own lack of representation. These two concurrent themes, fear of parent reprisal for addressing LGBT issues and the complete invisibility of similarly threatening parental pressure for diverse representation, suggest a troubling balance of parental power.

- (b) The emotional energy expended by lesbian and gay teachers in concealing their sexual orientation through fear of adverse reactions, and the concomitant effects on their wellbeing and teaching.

11. For example, when one poster suggested that it was important for gay and lesbian teachers to “take a stance” on gay and lesbian rights in schools, another poster related the experience of a gay headteacher:

“Who’s going to do that? I know a gay Head and I don’t think he has ever been comfortable to stand up for gay kids, teachers, etc. I think it’s a lot to expect of somebody in that position, especially if it’s personal and it could reflect on them and affect their career.”

12. Another poster, who identified as an out secondary teacher, argued it might be even more difficult for LGBT teachers than for heterosexual teachers to take a stance:

“It is here that schools can fall into the trap of assuming that only their gay and lesbian staff are best equipped to deliver PSD lessons on homosexuality or tackle issues of homophobic bullying. It is sometimes these teachers who find it the most difficult talking openly about homosexuality, if perhaps for fear of being ‘outed’ or facing recrimination from pupils and staff alike.”

13. In fact, overall, the researchers were surprised to find that so few teachers were openly gay in their primary classrooms. Even this poster, one of the few out gay teachers we encountered, sees staff and pupil recrimination to be a significant threat.

- (c) The lack of representation, for children in families with same-sex parents (or other relatives) of their everyday life experiences within and beyond the school curriculum.

14. One trainee teacher reported:

“[. . .] lots of books make their primary aim to address LGBT issues (which is fine) but few books simply include LGBT characters without making an issue out of it. Then if you get hold of something relevant to the curriculum you’re teaching, there’s the difficulty of actually getting colleagues to accept the reading of stories with LGBT characters/themes. Whilst teaching a topic on fairy tales, I wanted to read *King and King*—a fairy tale about two princes falling in love—to my placement class. The class teacher I was working with said that it wasn’t appropriate despite the fact that we were looking at how fairy tales have been adapted and our work earlier in the topic had dealt very explicitly with heterosexual love between characters.”

15. This posting addresses not only a lack of resources but is also a clear example of how heteronormativity works in schools. As she points out, heterosexual love was explicitly “promoted” in this lesson, but a story depicting love between two men was excluded for being “inappropriate”.

- (d) The tendency of teachers (whether heterosexual or non-heterosexual) to take a reactive rather than a proactive approach to addressing sexualities equality, where it is addressed at all.

16. One poster, for example, argued that addressing sexualities equality might cause children to start thinking about sex too early:

“Since ‘school age’ children are up to the age of 16, and given that the law as it stands says it is illegal to have sex under 16, any adults who encourage children to give themselves a sexual label or to become sexually active, are actually doing the child a great dis-service and causing confusion. A child should not be encouraged to think of themselves as gay.”

17. Atkinson and DePalma's wider research has suggested that this implicit association with sex is one of the strongest deterrents for approaching LGBT rights as a diversity and equality, rather than sex education, issue. Some posters maintained that this is why school and government support is so important. One argued that while he felt supported by government to proactively address other diversity and equality issues, there were no mandates or guidelines for proactively addressing sexualities equality:

“The NC [National Curriculum] does go some way in promoting the teaching of non-discriminatory practices, but there is no visible outline for the delivery of sexuality as opposed to racial, ethnic or religious diversity. In the Key Stage 3 and 4 (KS3/4) NC Personal Social Health Education (PSHE) Strategy there is still no mention of the words ‘lesbian/gay/bisexual’ or ‘homosexuality’ in relation to diversity, relationships or sex.”

(e) The underestimation by teachers of the significance of homophobic bullying in primary schools

18. Many teachers referred to the invisibility of not only homophobia, but LGBT people. This invisibility ran as a strong theme across postings, and frequent references were made to invisibility and silence around homophobia.

19. These silences and invisibilities described by many of the participants suggest that teachers in general are unable to identify homophobia as a problem, much less consider solutions. This coincides with the literature stating that heteronormativity and homophobia function to silence victims and critics as well as to normalise the practices that undermine diversity.⁷ On a more positive note, one poster reported that a conference about homophobia had led teachers to recognise it in ways they had not previously considered:

“It made uncomfortable listening for the teachers and headteachers who were present. The evaluations from the conference were amazing—people said it was the most moving and thought-provoking conference they had ever been to and were inspired to go back into school to tackle this issue.”

CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS FOR THIS RESEARCH

20. The themes described above have general implications for the education community. They add to the evidence base that suggests that more needs to be done to challenge homophobia and heteronormativity in schools, and propose specific areas to be tackled. The strong presence on the forum of posters who clearly supported an LGBT-rights perspective provided an encouraging sign that many teachers are committed to promoting LGBT rights and equality in schools. Their presence provides a strong base to support the Education for All campaign.

21. Following this research, Elizabeth Atkinson and Renée DePalma, in collaboration with colleagues from the University of Exeter and the Institute of Education, University of London, have now been funded by the Economic and Social Research Council to carry out a 28-month project in primary schools. In this project, entitled “No Outsiders”, teachers will develop ideas and resources to address lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender equality in primary schools and their communities. The outcomes will be disseminated via the Teacher Training Resource Bank, a documentary film and an edited book of teaching ideas.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

22. The full report is available from the Equalities section of the GTC website: www.gtce.org.uk/equalities/homophobia. The full online discussion can be viewed at the GTC forums archive: www.gtce.org.uk/forums—home/ArchiveForums

October 2006

Memorandum submitted by Parentline Plus

PARENTLINE PLUS

Parentline Plus is a national charity that works for, and with, parents. We are the biggest independent provider of parenting support in the country. We encourage parents to see that asking for help is a sign of strength, and work with them to offer practical solutions and to suggest ways to manage their particular situations and difficulties. We deliver this support through an innovative range of free, flexible, responsive services—shaped by parents for parents. Our flagship service is our free, confidential line for parents—Parentline. Our integrated face to face services are delivered in our area offices located in: London, Essex, East Midlands, North East, North West, Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire, Bristol and North Somerset, Hampshire and Hertfordshire.

⁷ Epstein *et al*, Telford, 2003.

Parentline Plus has a long-term commitment to supporting parents who are worried about bullying and to enable them to tackle the problem, often in partnership with their child's school. Many of the parents who contact our free confidential line for parents—Parentline—or access other face to face services delivered by the charity, are concerned about their child's bullying. Nearly a quarter of calls to our helpline in the last year were from parents worried about bullying.

In response to these concerns, Parentline Plus has produced a range of information materials, in partnership with the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), developed a special section on our website (Parentlineplus.org.uk/bullying) and continues to offer a listening ear to parents needing to talk about bullying. In the summer of 2006 we launched an awareness-raising campaign called Be Someone to Tell which uses the media and information material to give guidance to parents who are worried that their child is bullied or may be bullying.

During the last two years, we have produced a number of briefing papers on parents and bullying and the evidence contained in them is reflected in this paper.

We have also included quotations from parents to illustrate points made in this submission.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper focuses on the issues raised by parents who contact Parentline Plus concerned about their child and bullying. We also consult parents on a regular basis via focus groups, mailings and website surveys about bullying.

The following recommendations have been drawn up as a result of Parentline Plus' work with parents whose children are bullied or are bullies themselves.

Recommendations

1. Anti-bullying policies and work should be based on a whole family approach, should involve and engage with parents of those bullied as well as parents of bullies, and the policies need to ensure that all these parents are supported and enabled to talk through the issues with their children and get further help and support for themselves and their children if needed.

2. As a preventive measure, schools need to work in partnership with appropriate independent organisations to equip parents with strategies aimed at identifying and tackling bullying. The core offer in extended schools is a welcome opportunity to deliver this information and advice for families.

3. Children and young people need to be fully conversant with the outcomes of bullying. They need to be informed within school and community settings about the necessity for an inclusive and accepting attitude to others and to understand the implications of racism, sexism and homophobia.

4. When bullying becomes an issue, the lines of communication between parent/child and school or community need to be improved. This would enable parents to trust and want to share their concerns with headteachers, teachers and other professionals. Ideally, good links between school, parents and community should be established as a matter of course, so that these can be built upon if problems such as bullying arise.

5. Head teachers, teachers and other school support staff should be trained as a matter of course and have the relevant information to signpost vulnerable families to other sources of specialist help for their family problems.

6. Where the lines of communication between parent and school have broken down, the family must have appropriate advocacy or mediation-based support from independent organisations, to which the school is able to signpost and refer.

7. There should be good links between school and community services to ensure that all children have the right to a safe environment—at school or in the wider community.

8. Anti-bullying policies and programmes must reflect gender differences around bullying. Currently there is a tendency to focus on boys and their more overt bullying behaviour.

9. Those working with young people, particularly with girls, need more training on how to spot the symptoms of bullying and be more aware of how girls tend to internalise their feelings, and to have strategies to break down this barrier.

10. Schools need to be more proactive in making children and young people aware that bullying is not merely a physical activity, but also consists of excluding people, teasing or spreading rumours.

11. Because of the interconnected and cyclical nature of bullying by girls, work to prevent bullying should include addressing children's difficulties outside the confines of school—looking at circumstances within the home, and in the community.

12. Schools must build good home school communications apart from any difficulties of bullying, so that parents are able to trust the school, and communicate openly.

13. There needs to be much more work done on raising awareness of definitions of bullying and what is being done to tackle bullying in schools and in the wider community. Parents feel that work on what to look out for and where to go is key.

1. EXTENT AND NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

1.1 *Parentline call data*

The following data is the result of Parentline Plus looking at 25,000 calls to Parentline to ascertain patterns and concerns. This has shown:

- Verbal bullying is the most common: over 11,000 parents talked about verbal bullying.
- The age group of children being verbally bullied are: 4–8: 2,210, 9–12: 4,368, 13–15: 4,452, 16–19: 1,408.
- 11,000 calls mentioned school as the key location although a worrying 3,750 talked about bullying in the home.
- Nearly 3,000 calls were from parents of bullies.

1.2 *Definition*

Parentline Plus uses the following definition of bullying when talking to and with parents and we included this definition on all our materials about bullying:

“Bullying is when someone is deliberately hurtful to others over a period of time. The person being bullied usually finds it difficult to defend themselves.”

There are different types of bullying:

- Physical: hitting, kicking, taking belongings.
- Verbal: name calling, insulting, making offensive remarks.
- Indirect: spreading nasty stories about someone; not including them in social groups.

From the evidence we have gathered, we can define the types of bullying in relation to gender:

Boys

- Taunting, name calling, rumour spreading.
- Threats/intimidation.
- Extortion (money).
- Taking possessions.
- Flicking, throwing, shoving.
- Hitting, fighting.

Girls

- Taunting, name calling, rumour spreading.
- Graffiti in toilets and other areas.
- Blanking (“skanking”), exclusion, alienation of friends.
- Use of SMS, email, Instant Messaging, defamatory websites, phone calls.
- Taking possessions.
- Extortion (money).
- Threats/intimidation.
- Hair pulling, pushing.
- Fighting or other physical aggression.

1.3 *Reasons for bullying*

Parents are very clear about why their children are bullied—the vast majority put it down to “difference”. The role of the peer group is key here.

“She is ‘different’, she possibly has ASD or dyspraxia and isn’t skilled in how to be around people. She is very loving and trusting and this makes her vulnerable. Other children see they can torment her. She doesn’t complain—in fact she goes back for more because she is desperate to make friends. Other children think this is funny. I have tried to teach her not to trust so easily, tried to build up her self-esteem, but it isn’t easy when she is treated this way.”

1.4 *Why children are bullied as defined by parents*

Child factors

- “Difference” from peers, such as being of a different ethnic group, looking different, disability, shyness or being new to a school can cause children to be isolated and a target for bullying.
- Reputation: a child may overcome the initial causes of peer problems, but research shows that peer attitudes can remain negative across school yearsⁱ.
- Sexuality—early puberty, looks and image can trigger bullying.

Family factors

- Problems at home can lead to difficulties with peers. For example, divorce and separation can lead to emotional and behavioural problems,ⁱⁱ and children may be unwilling to invite friends home where there is domestic violence or substance abuse.

Race

Relatively little is known about gender differences in racist bullying, with more research needed in this area. However this form of bullying is widespread. In a study of bullying in England in 2003, a fifth of pupils in Year 5 reported that they had been called racist names.ⁱⁱⁱ A study by the NSPCC suggests that children from ethnic minorities are more likely to experience bullying than their white counterparts.^{iv}

The common characteristic is that racist bullying was likely to hurt not only the victim but also other pupils from the same ethnic minority group who perceived that a particular child was being bullied who had similar characteristics to themselves.

The most common expression of racism is through racist name-calling, which is often viewed by adults as trivial, although its impact on children can be profound, and that racial bullying frequently involves the use of violence.

Racist bullying is not only white on minority ethnic but, as Eslea and Mukhtar note (2000),^v it is at least as likely to be by other minority ethnic children of a different ethnic group as by white children. It is likely to relate to some religious or cultural difference such as the animal forms of some Hindu Gods, the clothing worn by Indian Muslims or the language spoken by Pakistanis. Bullying between members of the same ethnic group was found to be comparatively rare, although a number of Hindu children reported insults relating to the caste system.

Cyclical causes

- Being bullied can hamper the development of friendships, which makes the child more vulnerable to further bullying.

2. SHORT AND LONG-TERM EFFECTS

2.1 *Long-term effects*

Parents are convinced that bullying has long term effects. A recent poll on the Parentline Plus website asking parents whether they believed that the effects of bullying persisted into adult life resulted in 97.6% of parents who responded agreeing.

Victims of bullying experience various forms of distress and disruption to their lives. The effects on mental health of being bullied are serious—young people who are bullied more are more likely to be depressed. Popular concepts of bullied children are that they are anxious, scared and have low self-esteem. However, meta-analysis shows that the largest effect on children is depression, and the smallest is anxiety.^{vi}

“She would often hide around a corner of the playground or go to where the younger children played. She became very distressed at home and changed from being a bright bubbly girl to being quiet, intolerant and verbally aggressive sometimes. She didn’t want to go to school most mornings. It was not only distressing for our daughter but for us as parents too as we watched her change from a very mature well-balanced, funny and confident individual to a quivering wreck in front of our eyes in a matter of weeks. We sought help eventually from the school psychology department.”

Children who are depressed may become part of a negative reinforcing cycle. Young people who are more introverted, less assertive and over-involved with their families are particularly vulnerable to bullies.^{vii} Or, because a young person is depressed, he/she may also attract more negative attention from their peers. Victims of bullying are likely to be lonely. Bullied children have lower self-esteem, and a more negative view of their social competence. All these negative consequences occur amongst both boys and girls, in all age groups and as a result of all kinds of bullying.

Parents fears for the future demonstrate the complexity of the issue:

- Some parents were understandably concerned that their children would themselves turn into bullies.
- Their more immediate worry was about how their children would be affected by the bullying, not just in terms of self-esteem and confidence but also retaliation.
- Some children had clearly “snapped” as the bullying continued, to the point where they became “the villain”.

2.2 Bullies

The number of parents ringing Parentline because they are aware that the child is a bully, is relatively small, but the picture painted is one of dysfunction, conflict and anger.^{viii} The statistics, when compared with the average levels of all calls, show families losing control, with their child demonstrating a range of antisocial behaviours. Violence within the home was reported on a number of occasions, including fighting between siblings and between child and parent.

“I am beside myself with stress and weeping. My son is bullying me for money and we are locked in a vicious circle. I don’t feel as if there are any avenues open to me but am more afraid my husband will not take much more abuse and will thump him shortly.”

We analysed nearly 900 calls from parents over a one year period—April 2003–March 2004. In over 80% of these calls parents talk about the levels of conflict between parent and child, whilst 69% mention their child’s levels of anger. 77% of these parents talk about problems at school as against the average of 28% of all calls. Over half as many, when compared with the average, talked about their children being excluded or truanting.

72% of parents who call to talk about bullies express anxiety about the situation they are in, with 78% reporting they are stressed.

Key findings from calls about bullies

- Most of the calls are about sons (62%) and the most quoted age group is 13–15-year-olds, although there is a worrying level of 9–12-years-olds cited as bullies.
- 77% of parents talk about problems at school as against the average of 28% of all calls. Over half as many, when compared with the average, talked about their children being excluded or truanting.
- 43% record conflict in the home between siblings—the average percentage of calls about this issue stands at only 11%.
- Parents report their child as lying—three times as many parents mention this than the average, whilst well over half as many parents—when compared with the average—mention stealing, smoking and drug abuse.
- There is a much higher level of concern about conflict with peers 18% as against 4% whilst 20% talk about their child being in with a bad crowd—well over twice as many as the average.
- A quarter of calls are from lone parents and nearly a third raise issues about lack of contact—perhaps showing how worried a non-resident parent is about their child’s antisocial behaviour.
- Over half as many calls as the average say that divorce and separation has impacted adversely on their child’s behaviour.
- Children and parents registered much high levels of involvement with other services—such as GP’s, police and of course, schools.

3. TACKLING THE PROBLEM

3.1 Government policy

We welcome the Government’s determination, and the work being undertaken by the Department for Education and Skills, to stamp out bullying but are concerned that the emphasis remains focused on the school and on enhancing anti-bullying policies and actions.

Parents are increasingly concerned about bullying that takes place outside the confines of school, especially when talking about “cyber bullying”. The findings from our study on girls and bullying showed that girls were suffering from sophisticated and increasingly cruel bullying via text, instant messaging, email and so forth. Parents did not know who to turn to when they found out and where the bully was not at the same school. If a child is set upon physically, parents can report such actions to the police. But when the bullying is delivered via texts—where can a parent turn to?

We are also concerned that there are plans whereby parents of bullies may be penalised if their child continues to bully. All our findings on families of bullies demonstrates a high level of family dysfunction and fragmentation.^{ix} Resources would be better spent on ensuring early preventive work with these families and would reap better results than punishment.

3.2 *How schools deal with bullying—from the point of view of parents*

Parents consulted by Parentline Plus felt very strongly about the role of the school. Most of those consulted had gone to the school and those who did not go did so because they felt the bullying was not related to the school environment. Many said that where the school was involved, and especially where it worked in partnership with parents, bullying could be resolved more quickly and satisfactorily.^x Where the schools took a partnership approach, parents believed that the school had tackled the problem well. This usually meant that the school did what it could to separate children and monitor behaviour, while parents were asked to talk to the children and communicate back.

“They rang me to say it was settling down and it was really good to hear that.”

Parents who took this view felt it was important to establish direct lines of communication with the school—ideally not via their child. They wanted the school to keep them informed of progress and to be contacted once the problem was resolved.

“The school have been fantastic and they have all talked about what should be done. Of course the other children denied the threats etc and are now verbally abusing her for going to see the teacher. But the school are helping in any way they can.”

However there are a significant number of parents who feel the school has not handled the problem effectively. The greatest sense of frustration and disappointment occurred where parents thought the school was refusing to acknowledge there was a problem.

Parents thought that whatever they might or might not be able to achieve at home, they had absolutely no control over the environment in which the bullying occurred. Some clearly believed that the behavioural problem resided largely at school, where their child had the security of the group and the ability to intimidate others.

Where schools didn't acknowledge the problem, despite evidence to the contrary, parents felt they had no “official” recognition that the problem existed, which made their task so much harder. Worse than being unsupported, these parents felt actively undermined. Some had been blamed by the school for their children's behaviour whilst others felt they were being patronised. Not surprisingly, they were extremely cynical about school bullying policies and the school's real agenda.

Another cause for concern amongst parents related to gender issues around bullying. Research indicates that anti-bullying support services and policies which aim to prevent exclusion and stop antisocial behaviour within the school, tend to be dominated by boys. This not only makes girls less willing to take up help, but also means that schools and support services are less likely to refer girls in the first place. Even when girls' behaviour problems were recognised by schools, they were often overshadowed by the difficulties of managing greater numbers of boys with challenging behaviour.

Parents of bullies and their relationship with schools is a highly complex and difficult problem. Not only are parents of bullies telling us that they are losing control, but the statistics demonstrate the very high levels of conflict both within the family, the school and the community. It is essential that when schools and communities develop policies to cut down on bullying and to ensure community safety, the families of bullies are recognised as needing responsive and appropriate help with their family life and are not further isolated.

Parentline Plus has recently been developing and delivering face to face support for parents through our 14 local offices. Such support involves individual and group work and contact was made with local schools to encourage them to allow us to offer events to parents. It is of concern that a number of schools were reluctant to do this, stating that there was no bullying in their school. We therefore recommend that all schools should be instructed to run events for parents around bullying and to nurture the partnership approach which more than anything else can stamp out bullying.

3.3 *The role of parents*

Parentline Plus has developed a range of strategies for parents and the material produced for the Be Someone to Tell campaign promote these via a wider audience. Feedback from parents indicate that these strategies help them support their child and to work better with the school to tackle the specific problem.

We would welcome Members of the Education and Skills Committee recommending that these strategies are referred to by any of those working with parents within the context of bullying. Specific training for the staff who come into contact with parents over bullying would facilitate a positive partnership.

We would also recommend that each local authority or school appoints a single point of contact for parents who can work with the parents and where necessary are able to defuse situations where communication has broken down between parent and school.

The strategies Parentline Plus recommends to parents:

“What to do if you think your child is being bullied or is bullying

- Listen and talk to them. They may feel out of control and ashamed—whether they are being bullied or bullying. Let them know you love them and want to help.
- Be clear that it is important for the bullying to stop and that the school will need to be involved.
- If your child is bullying others, think about what might be behind it—are they trying to get attention or fit in with the crowd, or are they unaware of how they are hurting others?
- Talk to the school as soon as possible. Try to stay calm when you talk to the teachers—it helps to write down what you know and what the school says to you about what they are going to do.
- If you think things are not getting better, ask to see the school’s anti-bullying policy and make an appointment to see the head teacher.
- Take care of yourself. Coping with your child’s bullying may be very stressful—especially if it brings back memories of your own experiences. Try to take time for yourself or talk over what you feel with friends or family.”

3.4 *The role of other organisations*

Where parents are involved, organisations such as ourselves and our partners—especially the Advisory Centre for Education—have a key role in offering non-judgemental, responsive information, advice and support. It is vital that these sources of support are promoted to parents via schools and via local communities.

Such organisations can take an independent approach, or mentor, and work with the parent to defuse potential antagonism between parent and school. They can also deliver high quality accredited training for teachers on successful approaches in involving parents and communities in anti-bullying initiatives. Independent organisations can also contribute appropriate and targeted signposting.

In this, the role of other organisations is pivotal. Over and above any work being done with the school, family support services need to be involved and to reach out to these vulnerable families to offer support, particularly if the bullying is now involving violence within the home. Without such targeted support, the lives of those bullied will continue to unravel and the families of those doing the bullying will not be in any position to prevent this destruction.

Independent organisations can also be the key point for parents whose children are being bullied outside the confine of schools. Currently there is little done by schools to tackle this element of bullying, especially if it involves children or young people who are not attending their school. The support given by a free, confidential line such as Parentline, and other sources of support, should be actively promoted as the place to go for support with this issue in the same way as a child can ring ChildLine.

Recommendations to the Education and Skills Committee

The following recommendations have been drawn up as a result of Parentline Plus’ work with parents whose children are bullied or are bullies themselves.

1. Anti-bullying policies and work should be based on a whole family approach, should involve and engage with parents of those bullied as well as parents of bullies, and the policies need to ensure that all these parents are supported and enabled to talk through the issues with their children and get further help and support if needed.
2. As a preventive measure, schools need to work in partnership with appropriate independent organisations to equip parents with strategies aimed at identifying and tackling bullying. The core offer in extended schools is a welcome opportunity to deliver this information and advice for families.
3. Children and young people need to be fully conversant with the outcomes of bullying. They need to be informed within school and community settings about the necessity for an inclusive and accepting attitude to others and to understand the implications of racism, sexism and homophobia.
4. When bullying becomes an issue, the lines of communication between parent/child and school or community need to be improved. This would enable parents to trust and want to share their concerns with headteachers, teachers and other professionals.
5. Head teachers, teachers and other school support staff should be trained as a matter of course and have the relevant information to signpost vulnerable families to other sources of specialist help for their family problems.
6. Where the lines of communication between parent and school have broken down, the family must have appropriate advocacy or mediation-based support.
7. There should be good links between school and community services to ensure that all children have the right to a safe environment whether at school or in the wider community.

8. Anti-bullying policies and programmes must reflect gender differences around bullying. Currently there is a tendency to focus on boys and their more overt bullying behaviour.

9. Those working with young people, particularly girls, need more training on how to spot the symptoms of bullying and be more aware of how girls tend to internalise their feelings, and to have strategies to break down this barrier.

10. Schools need to be more proactive in making children and young people aware that bullying is not merely a physical activity, but also consists of excluding people, teasing or spreading rumours.

11. Because of the interconnected and cyclical nature of bullying by girls, work to prevent bullying should include addressing children's difficulties outside the confines of school—looking at circumstances within the home, and in the community.

12. Schools must build good home school communications outside any difficulties of bullying or behaviour, so that parents are able to trust the school, and communicate openly about their worries for their child with head teachers, teachers and other professionals.

13. There needs to be much more work done on raising awareness of definitions of bullying and what is being done to tackle bullying in schools and in the wider community. Parents feel that work on what to look out for and where to go is key.

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September 2006

Memorandum submitted by Bully Free Zone

Bully Free Zone is a member of the Anti-Bullying Alliance, a unique collaboration of organisations involved in anti-bullying work.

Further information about the Anti-Bullying Alliance is available at www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

This response should be read alongside the Anti-Bullying Alliance's response.

1. Bully Free Zone is a specialist anti-bullying organisation, established in February 1996 in response to an identified need for children and young people to have a specific service to support them to deal with disputes and conflicts. It is the North West's leading organisation in this field. It works to provide support to children who are being bullied or who are bullying others, and their families, and to educate people about bullying and its harmful effects. Over the past 10 years it has worked with thousands of children, young people, parents and professionals.

2. Bully Free Zone provides a range of services to achieve its aims. These include:

- Bullying Awareness Workshops and training for children and young people.
- Group work with young people who exhibit bullying behaviour.
- Support for young people to establish Peer Support schemes (Buddying/Listening/Mediation) in their own School, offering other young people the opportunity to access the help and support they may need.
- Working with Schools to review and develop their anti-bullying policies and practices.

- Training for other Professionals involved in working with young people, E.g. School Governors, Youth Workers, etc.
- A telephone helpline and a Family Support Project, offering intensive support for children who are being bullied, and their family. This gives them the opportunity to access the individual help and support they need.
- Support groups for young people who have been bullied, teaching coping strategies and helping to raise their self-esteem.
- Creative projects, allowing young people to express their feelings about bullying, eg through arts, drama, and video-making.

3. In April 2005 Bully Free Zone was commissioned by Bolton Pastoral Network to undertake research around perceptions and experiences of bullying within Bolton's Secondary Schools. 1,714 young people, from 14 of Bolton's Secondary Schools initially took part in the research. These young people ranged in age, ethnicity and background. The full results can be seen on our website, www.bullyfreezone.co.uk however some of them are detailed in this submission.

4. Only 9% of respondents said that they had not seen any bullying take place in their school within the last 12 months. 29.1% of respondents noted that they had seen bullying take place at least once a week.

5. Respondents were asked about the type of bullying they had seen or heard about in the past 12 months. Most reported physical abuse, name-calling, teasing, etc. However 25% said that they had seen or heard of incidents where a weapon had been used to bully someone; 41.2% had seen/heard of incidents of homophobia whilst just under 67% had seen/heard of racist incidents.

6. When it came to young people's actual experiences of bullying, 45.9% of respondents noted that they had been bullied at least once in the past 12 months. 14.1% had been bullied in the past week.

7. 784 pupils answered questions about their own experiences of being bullied. Again, it was mostly name-calling and teasing, however 36.5% had been physically bullied and 7.5% (59 respondents) had been threatened or attacked by someone with a weapon during the past 12 months.

8. When it came to reporting bullying or seeking help, age appeared to be a key factor. 81.4% of Year 7 pupils stated that if they were being bullied they would talk to someone, whilst only 53.2% of Year 11 pupils felt the same. However, when it came to those young people who actually had been bullied, only 64.7% said that they had told someone. Furthermore, most of these respondents were female, suggesting that males are even less likely to tell someone.

9. Of those respondents who had been bullied and told someone, only 39.1% had actually told a teacher with many more choosing to tell a parent or a friend. More than half of the respondents felt that it was not very easy or not at all easy to talk to a staff member if they were being bullied. Our own experience in delivering training is that young people know that they should tell someone if they are being bullied, yet despite this and despite the Government's "Tell Someone" campaign, along with our own awareness raising in this area, it appears that when it actually comes down to it, many young people don't feel able to tell someone. The most common reason we have heard for this is because they fear that the bullying will just get worse.

10. Perhaps the most telling results from the research though, were around the effects of bullying. More than half of respondents who had been bullied, stated that they had considered stopping off school in last 12 months because of the bullying they had endured. 22.2% said they had actually stayed off school. In calculating the information they gave, it amounted to a minimum of 674 days of pupil absence within the last 12 months.

11. Most of the results of this research came as little surprise. However key issues were identified around the number of incidents that now seemed to involve weapons, and the number of school days lost due to bullying.

12. Research suggests that bullying can impact upon school attendance and also school attainment. The evidence around lost school days (above) would concur with the suggested impact upon attendance. This, in turn, would impact on attainment as the less time that young people spend at school the more impact it will have on their learning.

13. Bully Free Zone has historically offered a Peer Support Training Service for schools. We have worked with many schools in Bolton delivering training to pupils to enable them to run their own Peer Support (Buddying/Listening/Mediation) scheme in Schools (Primary and Secondary).

14. Peer Support has worked very well as a means of offering young people an empowering way of resolving their issues and problems themselves, helping to raise their self-esteem. Many schools in our local area will come back to us year after year to update the training and to train up a new group of pupils to carry on their support schemes. However, issues arise around staff and management support and involvement, as well as around the quality or level of training that may be provided (particularly when schools deliver the training in-house, as staff then have to suddenly become "experts" in anti-bullying and peer support training as well as doing their usual job role).

15. 10 years ago many schools would not entertain the idea of Peer Support, assuming that it would suggest that they had “a problem with bullying”. Now it is seen as the “in” thing to have, but that poses problems in that often Schools will claim to have a Peer Mediation scheme when they don’t even understand what it means. The scheme will offer little or no mediation and the volunteers will have received minimal, if any, training.

16. Schools need to give appropriate value to the methods they adopt. If they choose to have a Peer Mediation scheme they should ensure that (i) this is what the pupils want, (ii) those involved receive adequate training, (iii) there are staff members who are given appropriate responsibility and training for managing the scheme, and (iv) the Senior Management Team are fully on board and embrace the idea and see it is an integral part of the School.

17. Peer Support also needs to be one option in a range of anti-bullying methods, yet often Schools seem to think that they are doing enough purely by having an anti-bullying policy and by having a Peer Support scheme.

18. A whole-school approach is needed to tackle bullying. Involvement in developing anti-bullying measures should come from all stakeholders in the school. However, in our experience this is often not the case. Taking the example of Anti-Bullying Policies, many Schools will automatically adopt the Local Authority’s standard policy, which will then be placed in a file on a shelf somewhere. This benefits no-one. Staff do not know what the policy says and so don’t know how to respond to incidents, and pupils and parents don’t know what their rights are—what the school should be doing.

19. Furthermore, in our experience, when we advise parents whose children are being bullied to contact school to request a copy of the Anti-Bullying Policy, their request is often refused. Schools often become defensive and see the situation as “them and us”, rather than being open and adopting an approach of everyone working together to resolve issues and to find solutions that are in the child’s best interests.

20. Schools should adopt a whole-school approach to developing their anti-bullying policy. This should involve stakeholder consultation at all levels, followed by focus groups (involving representatives from all stakeholder groups) who actually work together to develop the policy. The policy should then be promoted to all interested parties. Pupils could even work together to develop a jargon-free version of the key points of the policy. This could form a Code of Conduct that can be displayed around school so that all pupils can clearly understand what is expected of them and what they can expect in return. By working in this way, pupils can take responsibility for their behaviour.

21. In our experience, the understanding of, and attitude to, bullying can vary greatly amongst teaching staff. This not only confuses pupils (as they can never be sure of the response that they will get if they report an incident,) but it also leads to many staff lacking the confidence or the knowledge to deal with bullying issues effectively (as staff may also be confused if they see colleagues responding to bullying in different ways).

22. Particularly in Primary Schools, some Head Teachers appear to lack the skills or understanding to deal effectively with bullying. We have heard of several examples where parents of children who have been bullied are then told by the Head Teacher that if they are not happy with the School “maybe you should consider taking your son/daughter somewhere else”. These Head Teachers appear to be just trying to “pass the buck” rather than dealing effectively with the issues. This often also gives the message that it is the child who is being bullied who has the problem, rather than a behaviour problem with the child who is bullying.

23. However, again some schools are beginning to acknowledge that those who bully may benefit from some additional training and support. Over the past couple of years we have worked with several schools to provide “Perpetrator’s workshops”, supporting young people to examine their behaviour, identify the impact it can have on others and to consider ways to change their behaviour. This type of training has been very successful, however schools must be open to such methods and must be willing to allocate appropriate time and resources to it.

24. Much work, research and training is now offered around bullying in Schools, however it is important to realise that the impact of bullying is much more far-reaching and that it does not stop at 3.30 pm when a young person walks through the School gates.

25. Bully Free Zone has always received telephone calls from concerned parents, worried about their children who were being bullied. In 2003, in direct response to requests from our service-users, we established a Family Support Project, offering intensive support to children and their families. This project offers a range of support measures: One-to-one discussions, family discussions, groupwork, courses aimed at raising self-esteem, a young people’s group (supported by young people who are Millennium Volunteers), creative arts and drama projects aimed at helping young people express themselves, support for families in dealing with schools and other agencies, including attending meetings to help represent their views.

26. Each young person who we speak to experiences and interprets bullying in a different way. It is for this reason that no one anti-bullying measure will meet everyone’s needs. We adopt a whole range of measures (see paragraph 2) for working in and out of school and we tailor each service we provide according to the specific identified needs of the individual.

27. Many young people who are referred to us (usually by a concerned parent) are already severely emotionally affected by the bullying. The effects vary but include lack of confidence, low self-esteem, depression, eating disorders, self-harm, running away from home, refusing to go to school, and even suicide attempts.

One young girl who came to us was so frightened that, not only was she refusing to go to school, she wouldn't even leave her house. She essentially became a prisoner in her own home due to bullying.

28. Parents, too, suffer from the effects of bullying. Parents who contact us often feel responsible, or feel like they should be doing something more to help their child. Often they too need the reassurance and support. If parents are aware of the problems their child is facing then it can also have an impact on the whole family.

29. Many parents who contact us feel uneasy in liaising with their child's school. They usually voice concerns that their fears are not taken seriously. From the school's point of view, parents can become angry and upset, laying blame, which leads to the meeting being counterproductive. Bully Free Zone offers parents the opportunity of having a worker who will attend meetings with them. Parents find this service invaluable as they ensure they are able to express their point of view. However this service also helps school as the worker will make recommendations of how everyone can work together in the best interests of the child.

30. Bully Free Zone have just begun to evaluate this project as we feel that it could be a model of good practice that could be replicated in other areas. Initial research would suggest that there is a distinct lack of this type of out-of-school support for children and young people and their parents around bullying.

31. Over the past 10 years we have delivered training to hundreds of professionals who work with children and young people—Teachers, Support Staff, Governors, Youth Workers, Voluntary Sector etc.

32. Again many organisations contact us as they have decided that they need some training because bullying is an issue, yet they have not given full consideration to their organisation's individual issues and needs and they have not looked at it as part of an overall plan.

33. External organisations and Local Authorities in particular need to give Voluntary Sector organisations the recognition they deserve. Some Local Authorities refuse to acknowledge that there may be local specialist anti-bullying organisations who have the skills and experience to offer a quality service. Instead, they establish new training (but often not at the same level as the staff who deliver this service often do so on top of their existing job role).

34. As a registered charity that has provided anti-bullying services for 10 years we are well aware of the needs of the communities that we service. Unfortunately funding becomes a major issue and dramatically limits the services we can offer. Grant funders no longer want to fund projects that they know will work, instead they all want new, innovative projects. This leads to serious issues when it comes to trying to get funding to continue and develop our much-needed service.

35. As a result, we are now in a position whereby we must charge schools and other organisations for our training. In our local area this is a problem, particularly in Primary Schools as falling roll numbers has led to reduced budgets, and often other initiatives take priority. Schools often expect that charities will provide services for free, without recognising that we need the funding to be able to continue.

RECOMMENDATIONS

36. Schools need to have a whole-school approach to tackling bullying. This means that the Senior Management Team must ensure that anti-bullying is given full consideration in their school.

Examples of this would include: whole stake-holder (pupils, staff, parents, community) involvement in developing an anti-bullying policy which would include proactive as well as reactive measures to tackling bullying; anti-bullying included in various areas of the curriculum; staff undertake anti-bullying training; bullying incidents are recorded and monitored, etc.

37. School staff (including support staff) need to have regular updated training around dealing with bullying and behaviour issues so that everyone feels confident in dealing with it.

38. Schools should consider having an Anti-bullying Co-ordinator—someone who has leadership responsibility for overseeing how bullying incidents are dealt with as well as developing anti-bullying policy and practice. This does not necessarily have to be a member of school staff, for example, some schools in our local area are currently considering joining together to commission Bully Free Zone to provide this type of service for their cluster.

39. Schools should develop an Anti-Bullying Strategy Team in the same way that many schools now have School Councils or Healthy Schools Teams. Anti-Bullying should not just be discussed during National Anti-Bullying Week, but events and promotion should be developed year-round to continue to raise awareness.

40. Schools need to link in and utilise the services of organisations such as ourselves so that if they identify a child who is being bullied, they can ensure that ongoing support is available for them outside of school as well as in school.

41. Local Authorities should create much better links with specialist organisations in the voluntary sector. Under best value they should consider whether it is most appropriate to develop an additional Local Authority service around bullying or whether to use the skills and experience that already available (and well-regarded) within the voluntary sector.

October 2006

Memorandum submitted by The Support Group Method

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 This written evidence focuses on a particular strategy to tackle the problem of bullying in schools and calls into question the Government's present policy on this matter. It does not seek to define the extent and nature of bullying as a problem, nor to consider the short and long-term effects. It is felt that many other individuals and organisations will be providing the Committee with this information.

1.2 This report does present the committee with the experience and research evidence for a non-punitive response to bullying amongst young people and in particular, highlights the significance of one particular strategy—the Support Group Method (SGM), previously known as the “No Blame Approach”.

1.3 Barbara Maines and George Robinson started to work together in 1984 when George was the head of a special school in Bristol and Barbara was the educational psychologist to the school. Their shared belief in the importance of self-esteem and their rejection of traditional methods of behaviour management inspired them to develop new and challenging initiatives—one of them has been the SGM.

1.4 The report explains:

- the significant elements of the SGM process;
- how the Government has viewed SGM over the past decade;
- the evidence base for the Method's success;
- the importance of new research conducted in the summer of 2006; and
- provides some participant statements on DVD.

1.5 There has been opposition to SGM, primarily led by Michelle Elliot of the anti-bullying charity, Kidscape. It is noted that in her oral evidence given to the Committee in July, she chooses to refer to SGM as a “discredited” approach. The very recent research (August 2006) outlined in this document certainly does not support this statement. In fact, the research positively endorses SGM as a successful method to be used among the full range of possible strategies to tackling bullying in schools.

1.6 This submission also outlines the change in DfES policy which has led to attempts to discredit the method since November 2005. It was previously featured positively in publications and on the website.

1.7 RECOMMENDATIONS

Bullying remains a very serious problem in most schools yet many practitioners are not sufficiently aware or have not had the training needed to use many of the strategies available to combat the problem.

There is currently very little research in the field which would endorse the use of any particular strategy or range of strategies, yet debate and criticism has been forthcoming about SGM. In reality, what research there is, is very supportive of the SGM, when it is used appropriately and correctly. Despite this positive research, the UK Government refuses to take an evidence-based approach to informing its policy in this area.

Recommendation One

Detailed and comprehensive research is needed into all anti-bullying strategies to ascertain how and when they are used in schools and which strategy is most effective in a range of situations.

In independent research conducted over the summer, one Local Authority commented:

“The lack of a firm evidence base to establish what the effectiveness of punitive and non-punitive interventions actually is, has obscured and hampered the discussion about resolving bullying for too long and this, of course, does not serve well the young people who are involved in bullying. This kind of research is long overdue and may present us finally with some greater degree of certainty in our direction on interventions”.

[LA7, *A Survey of Use of the Support Group Method [or “No Blame” Approach] in England, and some evaluation from users.* August 2006]

Recommendation Two

The results of this research need to inform DfES policy on bullying in schools with the outcome that appropriate guidance and training is given to all who deal with these situations across the UK.

Recommendation Three

A simple and user-friendly system should be devised to help teachers record the frequency of bullying incidents and to evaluate the effectiveness of how they are or are not resolved.

2. OVERVIEW: THE SUPPORT GROUP METHOD IN PRACTICE

2.1 All schools are likely to have some problem with bullying at one time or another and are of course required by law to have an anti-bullying policy, and to use it to reduce and prevent bullying.

The Support Group Method (SGM) originally known as “The No Blame Approach” was devised and first used by Barbara Maines and George Robinson in 1991. By the end of the year it was available as a published training video and featured in the media on programmes including “That’s Life—BBC1 February 1993” and the BBC2 Anti-bullying series of Documentaries 1997.

2.2 *What is the SGM and how does it work?*

The method is a highly structured 7-step process in which:

1. The target is given an opportunity to talk privately to an adult who will act as an advocate.
2. A group of peers is convened to include bullies, colluders, observers, friends (potential rescuers).
3. The advocate explains to the group members her worries about the target and describes his distress.
4. She makes it clear that the group members have been invited to help. No accusations are made and there is no threat of punishment.
5. The members are invited to empathise and plan actions to “make things better”.
6. The members are praised and thanked for their cooperation and a follow up meeting is arranged.
7. At the follow up meeting, the group members are seen individually and given an opportunity to report back but also to discuss any other concerns or worries.

2.3 From the very beginning the work was publicly criticised, particularly by Kidscape, a children’s anti-bullying charity. This criticism is largely attributable to:

- A poor choice of name. “The No Blame Approach” does imply that the bully will suffer no consequences to his actions. This is correct only in so far as no punishment is given directly to the bully by the advocate, but does not highlight the “self-inflicted punishment” which the bully often endures. For example, if SGM is used properly, the shame and horror that bullies often experience is intense when they fully appreciate the pain they have inflicted on the target.

With hindsight, it is easy to see that a title that explained what the approach does achieve would have been far better. During 2006, the name of the approach has been changed to the Support Group Method.

- Non-punitive methodology is counter-intuitive in UK culture where restorative practice is not well known or embraced, particularly by the media.
- A misunderstanding of the method, often seen as any non-punitive response and particularly as a confrontation between “bully” and “victim”.

2.4 The spread of the usage was significantly established through Inset training courses provided, mainly in response to invitation. During the one day course participants experience a carefully planned and thorough description of, and rationale for the procedure.

2.5 As the method was adopted increasingly by individual schools, by whole local authorities and in several overseas countries (Switzerland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Ireland), enthusiasm and confidence grew. This was further endorsed by a significant piece of research carried out in Hull, which is discussed further in section four: “the evidence base”.

3. UK POLICY: THE GOVERNMENT VIEW 1999–2006

3.1 The UK Government view until very recently has been moderately supportive of the Support Group Method.

In May 1999, the then Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Education and Employment, Charles Clarke, said:

“Our (the DfEE’s) role is to offer schools advice on tackling bullying. As their circumstances differ, we have no plans to recommend one single strategy for all schools; they need to decide which ones best meet their own pupils’ needs and circumstances.

I am aware of the benefits of the Support Group method in cases where bullying has occurred. In some circumstances, this strategy may be the answer to combating bullying, but in others a different approach may well be necessary and more effective. As you know, it is described in the Department’s anti-bullying pack and we have no plans to change this at present.”

DfES publications

2nd Edition of the Department for Education and Skills (DfES)—“Don’t suffer in Silence”—Anti-Bullying Pack”.

3.2 This DfES support pack for schools in England was published in 1999 and evaluated in April 2003.

The Approach was nearly not included in this second edition but at the insistence of Professor Peter Smith, Goldsmiths College, University of London, it was incorporated as the “Support Group” Approach NOT as it had been known—the No Blame Approach. The then Minister for Education, David Blunkett had vetoed any mention of “No Blame”.

3.3 An evaluation of the Pack by Professor Smith found that:

- Schools were using a range of strategies to tackle bullying and to encourage pro-social behaviour. The most highly rated strategies were: circle time; active listening/counselling approaches; working with parents; improving the school grounds and cooperative group work (a good example of the Support Group Method).
- Schools generally felt that the problem of bullying had slightly decreased since getting the pack.
- The Support Group Method gained a relatively high rating (5-point scale and a rating of 3.5). It was used more in secondary schools than in Infant and Primary Schools.

3.4 Until 2005 the Support Group Method was represented in government publications, on the DfES website and referred to in the SEAL materials. Barbara Maines and George Robinson were founder members of the Anti-bullying Alliance and employed as regional coordinators in the South West. A sudden change in government policy led to the removal of previous support for our work and termination of our contracts with the Anti-bullying Alliance. A press release was issued in February 2006 expressing significant concern. [See Appendix Two: Blair Bullies Anti-Bullying Alliance: 6 February 2006.]⁸

3.5 *More Recent Political Debate*

Acceptance of the Support Group Method appears to have started to change during the summer of 2005. The Education Secretary at the time, Ruth Kelly said in an interview with *The Independent* newspaper on 19 June 2005:

“We want a zero-tolerance approach to disruptive behaviour, from the low-level back chat and mobile phone texting in the classroom, to bullying or violence. Schools must have clear and consistent boundaries for what is acceptable behaviour. Pupils need to know where the limits are and what the consequences will be.”

This continued with a parliamentary question in the House of Commons on 23 November 2005:

Dan Norris (Wansdyke)/Hansard source:

“This Friday, as part of anti-bullying week, Lib-Dem controlled Bristol city council will call on its teachers not to punish or blame pupils who bully other pupils. What message does the Prime Minister have for those who adopt a no-blame approach, which, in my view, is dangerous and reckless, does nothing for the victims and does nothing to make bullies change their behaviour?”

Tony Blair (Prime Minister)/Hansard source:

“If what my hon. Friend says is correct about the Liberal Democrats, then it is an extraordinary thing for even them to do and I am shocked by it. [Interruption.] To describe oneself as shocked by the Liberal Democrats is perhaps an oxymoron.

I profoundly disagree with the position taken by the council. Bullying should be punished. Children who bully must be made to understand the harm that they have been doing. New sanctions are available. I am pleased that in the Schools White Paper we are giving teachers an unambiguous right to discipline. It is absolutely necessary, and I pay tribute to my hon. Friend’s work on that serious problem.”

⁸ Not printed.

A written question was tabled on 29 November:

Dan Norris (Wansdyke)/Hansard source:

To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills

(1) what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of different approaches to tackling bullying in schools; and if she will make a statement;

(2) what assessment her Department has made of the effectiveness of the no blame approach to tackling school bullying; and if she will make a statement.

Jacqui Smith (Minister of State (Schools and 14–19 Learners), Department for Education and Skills)/Hansard source:

Our guidance to schools on tackling bullying *Don't Suffer in Silence* has been externally evaluated by researchers at Goldsmith's college, University of London. The results, though based on a fairly low response rate from schools, show that the schools found that the pack met their expectations and helped in drawing up their anti-bullying policies.

This evaluation included research into the perceived success of the anti-bullying strategies and interventions recommended in the guidance. Schools generally reported a high level of satisfaction with the interventions they had used. I have placed a copy of the research brief for this project in the Library.

The key feature of the "No Blame" approach, is that it adopts an explicit stance of discouraging punishment as a response to bullying. The Department does not support this stance and neither does the Anti-Bullying Alliance. Our guidance is clear that support and mediation strategies to change behaviour can, and should, be used in tandem with sanctions where appropriate. We are reviewing the guidance to make this even more explicit.

As we do not promote the "No Blame" approach for use in schools, we have not undertaken any assessment of its effectiveness.

4. THE EVIDENCE BASE FOR THE METHOD'S SUCCESS

4.1 In 1998, Sue Young published her work on an independent evaluation about the SGM.

S. Young (1998)

The (No Blame) Support Group Method to bullying in schools,
Educational Psychology in Practice, 14, 32–39.

This was an independent evaluation carried out in the Kingston upon Hull Special Educational Needs Support Service (SENS). Over a two-year period, in 80% of primary school cases treated through the modified No Blame Approach there was an immediate success.

In 14% of cases there was a delay, but after three to five weekly reviews, the bullying stopped or the victims reported that they no longer needed the support group.

In only 6% of cases did the victim report that the bullying continued, or that he/she was bullied by different pupils. There was a similar outcome in secondary school referrals.

4.2 Sue Young's evidence is strongly supportive of the approach but there is surprisingly little more formal evidence. During the many years which SGM has operated there are however some powerful, personal endorsements of its success.

There have been far too many to list but some are highlighted at Appendix Three: Personal Endorsements of the SGM's Success.

4.3 New research conducted in July/August 2006

In an attempt to understand better the use and success (or otherwise) of SGM, independent research was conducted over the summer of 2006. This was carried out by a highly respected professional, Professor Peter Smith who heads the Unit for School and Family Studies at Goldsmiths College, University of London. Professor Smith has worked for many years in the bullying field, is a member of the Anti-Bullying Alliance and has worked in the past for DfEE on evaluating the DfES anti-bullying packs sent to schools.

This new research has not yet been published but it is clearly both recent, timely and informs greatly the current status.

Key points of the research include:

- Researchers had considerable difficulty in conducting the research due to the political sensitivity surrounding SGM over the last year. When attempting to build the research sample, Professor Smith planned to contact the Anti-Bullying Alliance regional co-ordinators to get feedback on questionnaires and to collect contact details.

"There was fortuitously, an ABA meeting in June 2006 in London. However, the DfES representative there objected to any ABA involvement in this research [. . .]

- All 150 Local Authorities were approached [. . .] The speed and progress of collecting data from local authorities (LAs) was varied. Some refused to do the questionnaire at all, citing workload. The political sensitivity of this anti-bullying strategy at this time was a considerable hindrance in collecting data.”
- Only 11% of LA’s had an awareness of how many primary and secondary schools used SGM— 89% indicated that they did not know. Yet over 60% of LAs supported the use of this approach (29% were neutral and 7% did not encourage the SGM.) NO LAs discouraged its use.
- The time span that the SGM has been used by schools ranged from 1 year to its innovation in 1991. The majority of schools started using SGM in the last five years (69%). 97% of the schools who replied also indicated that they continue to use it, with 75% using it across the whole school.
- When schools were asked to provide evidence for the overall effectiveness of the approach in dealing with bullying, 53% indicated that they did have enough evidence to give an informed opinion.
- 56% gave a very satisfactory or satisfactory rating; 32% did not give a rating; 12% were neutral and no schools gave either a rather or very unsatisfactory rating.

Professor Smith’s final comments summarise the state of play in 2006:

“This survey is a useful step forward, with a broader and more detailed evidence base from LAs and schools than has previously been available. The findings are clearly limited by the sample; in particular the response rate for schools was very low. In addition, data has only come from LA and school representatives: we have not heard the direct voices of pupils or parents (even though schools often cited them as evidence).”

“In summary, what evidence there is, is supportive of the Support Group Method—but, there is definitely a need for more research, carried out independently and targeting a wide range of schools that are using the approach. This survey is a first step in this direction. It should only be a beginning to more focused and dedicated study of the effectiveness of the Support Group Method and indeed of all other anti-bullying interventions.”

September 2006

Memorandum submitted by Mencap

1. INTRODUCTION

Mencap is happy to help this committee find out more about the bullying of children with a learning disability.

Mencap works with people with a learning disability, their parents and carers. We want to make sure that people with a learning disability have the same choices and opportunities as anyone else.

Mencap is a member of the Anti-Bullying Alliance. A group of organisations who work together to stop bullying.

Mencap would like to come and talk to the Committee.

2. *What is the problem?*

Bullying is a big problem for children with a learning disability. In England there are about 346,000 children with a learning disability. Most of them will be bullied.

Bullying happens everywhere, such as at school, on the street or at the park.

Some children with a learning disability do not know that what is happening to them is bullying. They think that being hurt every day is part of life.

Others know they are being bullied, but they are too scared to tell an adult. The bullying carries on because adults don’t know how to spot when a child with a learning disability is being bullied.

When children have told an adult, the adult often does not do enough to help and the bullying does not stop.

3. *Why are children with a learning disability more likely to be bullied?*

Children with a learning disability are more likely to be bullied than other children, because:

- they are seen as different;
- they sometimes find it harder to make friends;
- they may be seen as easy to pick on;

- they may not know that they are being bullied and so will not tell anyone; and
- they may find it difficult to let someone know they are being bullied.

4. *How does bullying make children with a learning disability feel?*

Bullying can make children with a learning disability feel:

- sad;
- lonely;
- scared;
- angry; and
- upset.

This is not good for their health or wellbeing.

5. *What is the impact of bullying on children with a learning disability?*

Bullying and being scared of bullies stops children with a learning disability from going to school or joining in sports clubs. This stops children with a learning disability from doing well at school and having fun and enjoying life.

For many children with a learning disability they will also be bullied when they are an adult. Mencap has found out that nine out of 10 adults with a learning disability are bullied.

This means that many people with a learning disability are bullied all their life. It stops them getting jobs and being part of the community.

6. *What needs to be done to stop the bullying of children with a learning disability?*

Children

Children with a learning disability need to know their rights about bullying. They need to know what bullying is and what to do if adults do not do enough to stop the bullying.

Children with a learning disability need to be asked about bullying when schools are planning their disability equality scheme.

All children need to know what to do to help stop a child with a learning disability being bullied. This needs to be done through the curriculum and supportive staff.

Adults

Adults need to act to help children with a learning disability who are being bullied.

Adults need to be trained on how to spot when a child with a learning disability is being bullied and what to do to stop it.

Government

Government needs to recognise that bullying is a big problem for children with a learning disability.

The Government needs to make sure that it deals with bullying on the grounds of disability.

Schools

All schools need to act to stop the bullying of children with a learning disability.

Staff who work in schools need to be trained on how to spot when a child with a learning disability is being bullied and what to do to stop it.

Schools must include bullying in their disability equality scheme.

Schools should make sure their anti-bullying policies talk about disability and bullying.

October 2006

Memorandum submitted by Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Regional developments

The information contained within this memorandum highlights that much work is being done to address bullying in Northern Ireland. Various strategies are working towards addressing thematic issues such as racial, homophobic and sectarian bullying and best practice initiatives such as increasing the participation of children and young people are frequently being disseminated. Recognition that collaborative working is the most positive way to address the issue of bullying is in place and the Review of Public Administration (RPA) will further support this by creating a clearer structure within government departments.

NIABF has a critical role to play in coordinating the success of anti-bullying in Northern Ireland and it is committed to ensure a whole community approach is addressed throughout all of its work.

Some areas identified for future action include:

- Ensuring the changes within the education structure as proposed by RPA include and address a consistent method to address anti-bullying as an issue.
- Making the link between “bullying” and safeguarding and explore partnership working with the newly proposed Regional Safeguarding Board.

Recommendations for Government action

The recording of bullying incidents in a consistent manner across all schools proves more challenging to resolve. The office of the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young people (NICCY, 2006) has highlighted the inconsistent methods and tools for recording such incidents within a school environment. Various developments to date in England have included the use of private commercial companies supplying electronic databases to individual schools, or local authorities (LA).

Whilst this is one avenue that can currently be developed there needs to be legislation and guidance from Government in relation to the following to ensure maximum safeguarding:

- Legislation requiring schools to provide statistics to their local authority/Education and Library Board (similar to the requirement of racial incidents) on a periodic basis.
- Allocation of appropriate funds to accommodate schools purchasing databases including the maintenance of and training to use such tools.
- Guidance highlighting appropriate suppliers of databases and information sharing protocols.

With key bodies such as the Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum and Anti-Bullying Alliance assisting the joined up approach to tackling bullying, it is also recommended these recording databases are accessible to accommodate the following:

- Monitoring of geographical areas and incidents of bullying.
- Monitoring of types/trends of bullying.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF) is an interagency body comprising regional statutory and non-statutory organisations involved in the reduction of bullying and creating a safe environment for children and young people. The forum was set up in 2004, at the request of the Department of Education Northern Ireland, and is chaired by Save the Children. A three-year strategy was launched in November 2005 (please see appendix 1) and progress to date has included securing three year funding to recruit a Regional Anti-Bullying Coordinator. The Coordinator took up post in July 2006 and is based at Save the Children

1.2 Membership currently includes the following partners:

Barnardos; ChildLine; Contact Youth; Department of Education Northern Ireland (DENI); 5 Regional Education & Library Boards; The Fostering Network; Mencap; National Children’s Homes (NCH); National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC); NIPPA, the Early Years Organisation; Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE); Parents’ Advice Centre (PAC); Rainbow; Save the Children

1.3 This memorandum, presented by Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF), aims to highlight key findings relating to bullying of children and young people from recent research; identify key strategies and associated action plans which are in progress to tackle the issue (either directly or indirectly); and recommend future action areas requiring attention by Government.

2. NORTHERN IRELAND RESEARCH, POLICY AND STRATEGIES

2.1 *Adamson, McElearney, Bunting, Shevlin, Tracey & Williams (2006) Independent Schools Counselling—does it work? Belfast, NSPCC*

The primary aim of this evaluation was to investigate the effectiveness/impact of engaging with NSPCC's one-to-one independent schools counselling service on the emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people.

202 pupils participated in the evaluation who had accessed the counselling service, with the age of participating pupils ranging from 7–17.

- Research has highlighted that children plighted with issues such as bullying are reluctant to access professional support, but also the lack of accessible and practical support services available to children and young people.
- Research also highlighted that children/young people's struggle to cope with issues such as bullying can manifest and present itself as behaviour problems, contributing to poor engagement and academic achievement within a school environment.
- Independent schools counselling is particularly effective for children and young people who present with bullying as their primary issue.
- DENI currently has a tender out to with a view to providing counselling services worth £1.8 million across schools in Northern Ireland.

2.2 *Department of Education, Northern Ireland (2002) Bullying in Schools: A Northern Ireland Study. Bangor: Department of Education, Statistics and Research Branch*

A Northern Ireland study was undertaken for the Department of Education in 2002, which aimed to provide baseline information on bullying in schools. 120 schools (60 primary and 60 post-primary) were selected using a stratified sampling approach. 1,079 primary pupils (Year 6) and 1,353 post-primary pupils (Year 9) completed the Olweus Bullying Questionnaire. A questionnaire was also distributed to staff (both teaching and non-teaching) with a return rate of 73% in primary schools and 92% in post-primary schools.

- 40% of primary pupils and 30% of post-primary pupils stated they had recently been bullied.
- 25% of primary pupils and 28% of post-primary pupils stated they had bullied another pupil.
- Name calling was the most common form of bullying in both primary and post-primary schools.
- Bullying happened most often in the playground across both primary and post-primary schools.
- Girls were usually bullied by a female classmate and boys by boys across primary and post-primary schools.
- Staff perceived being threatened as the form of behaviour most frequently to constitute bullying.
- 74% of primary school staff and 90% of post-primary school staff reported having an anti-bullying policy.
- 75% of primary school staff and 77% of post-primary staff requested further training.
- Staff in both primary and post-primary reported feeling more confident about dealing with bullying than preventing it.

2.3 *Department of Education, Northern Ireland (2003) Department of Education Statement on Bullying 17 November 2003*

In the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003, which came into operation on 1 April 2003, legislation was introduced which required all grant-aided schools to include within their discipline policy, measures to prevent all forms of bullying among pupils. Additionally, any changes which school authorities make to their current discipline policies, must be the subject of consultation with registered pupils and their parents. The quality of pastoral care in schools is assessed as part of the general school inspection process.

2.4 *Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (2006) Mainstreaming Equality of Opportunity for Travellers in Education: Towards a Strategy. Belfast, ECNI*

This consultation paper on Traveller Education identifies issues currently relating to equal access to education by Travellers.

- There are approximately 677 Traveller pupils recorded as attending schools in NI, however it is suggested this figure is underestimated due to fears of bullying if ethnicity is disclosed.
- Attendance levels for Traveller children in education have been consistently low for a number of reasons, which include fear of being bullied.

2.5 *Jarman, N & Monaghan, R (2004) Racist Harassment in Northern Ireland. Belfast, Office of the First Minister/Deputy First Minister*

This report reviews the scale and nature of racist harassment in Northern Ireland as evidenced by a review and analysis of all racist incidents recorded by the police between 1996 and 2001. The report draws on material in the 2001 Census in relation to the size of the minority ethnic communities in Northern Ireland. Children under the age of 18 make up one third of the minority ethnic communities in Northern Ireland.

- 181 reported cases of racial harassment involved children and young people.
- In at least 76 of the 181 recorded incidents there is mention of previous incidents of a similar nature.
- School based harassment is largely absent from police figures and so only a small number of reported racist incidents have been reported as occurring within school.
- DE commissioned a study which highlighted 12% of primary and 8% of post-primary pupils from minority ethnic communities claimed to have been bullied.
- A young people's survey in 2002 was completed by Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission in 2002, which stated young people wanted the right to be protected from racist, homophobic and sectarian bullying.

2.6 *Lisburn Catalyst Peer Research (2006) So you tell me. Lisburn, Lisburn Catalyst Partnership*

The Catalyst Peer Research Project empowered six young people by implementing a research model, which enabled them to identify and explore issues affecting them and their peers. They developed a questionnaire that was completed by 120 mostly post-primary pupils from two co-educational schools (one Catholic Maintained and the other a Controlled post-primary school). 56 males and 64 females participated, with 43.3% of these reporting themselves as Catholic, 53.3% as Protestant and 3.3% as other. The mean age of the participants was 14.8 years.

- 41% of the participants reported having been bullied.
- 39% reported being bullied due to religion, with 89% of these participants being members of the Catholic community.
- 14% of participants reported being bullied due to having a disability and 10% reporting being bullied due to skin colour.
- Boys report dealing with bullying in less constructive ways than girls, in that more of them respond by being violent or doing nothing, while girls speak to parents or adults in authority in school.
- 60% of participants felt they had received education on the issue of bullying, although they stated they might benefit from knowing more.

2.7 *Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF) (2005) Strategy 2005–08*

<http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/scuk—cache/scuk/cache/cmsattach/3806—NIABF—Bully.pdf>

Includes an action plan increasing consistency and awareness of best anti-bullying practice, addressing key stakeholders' (whole community approach) anti-bullying needs, and promoting a collaborative multi-agency approach to anti-bullying strategies.

2.8 *Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (2005) A Shared Future: Policy and Strategic Framework for Good Relations in Northern Ireland*

<http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/policy-strategic-framework-good-relations.pdf>

Document highlighting how practical steps can be coordinated across government and throughout society to ensure an effective and coherent response to sectarian and racial intimidation. Shared education states (p 24): “All schools should ensure through their policies, structures and curriculae, that pupils are consciously prepared for life in a diverse and inter-cultural society and world.”

- A recent review of the curriculum has resulted in the following key elements which should support the above, such as more emphasis on developing childrens' thinking skills, and their ability to solve problems and handle information; making personal social and health education a legal requirement; adding education about citizenship and employability to the curriculum.

2.9 *Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (2006) A Shared Future: First Triennial Action Plan 2006–2009*

<http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/finalversion020506.pdf>

Particular reference to bullying was included within the priority outcome “Increased sharing in education” (p 115), with the key indicator being the percentage of children bullied due to race or colour, religion or disability. This action plan does however aim to address the issue of positive community relations and so many priority outcomes, if successful, could potentially impact on individual's displaying bullying behaviours.

- DENI has revisited its research topic “Bullying in Schools”, and in November 2006 is to release the up to date findings.

2.10 *Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (2005) A Racial Equality Strategy for Northern Ireland 2005–2010*

<http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/race-equality-strategy.pdf>

The strategy complements “A Shared Future” and sets out a framework for Government and all sections of civil society in Northern Ireland for the creation of a community where racism, in any of its forms, is not tolerated and where all people enjoy equality of opportunity and equal protection. Many drivers for change within the strategy’s six shared aims could impact in a more coordinated multi-agency approach to reducing bullying behaviour either directly or indirectly. For example, the PSNI will address racist bullying in schools through its Citizen and Safety Education Programme.

2.11 *Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (2006) A Racial Equality Strategy for Northern Ireland 2005–2010: First Annual Implementation Action Plan—2006*

<http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/race-implementation-action-plan.pdf>

- Reference to the inclusion of “Local and Global Citizenship” strand to the curriculum is given by DENI, with a view to tackling the elimination of racial inequality.
- NICCY’s research “Being part and parcel of the school” is listed by DENI, with a view to tackling equal protection.
- Reference is made to two pieces of research commissioned by DENI highlighting the findings related to bullying in NI schools (revisited) and an audit of schools’ discipline/anti-bullying policies, with a view to tackling equal protection.
- Anti-racist staff training is listed by DENI, with a view to addressing equality of service provision.
- The development of a “Community Relations Policy” and the increased participation of BME communities in the proposed Careers Guidance Stakeholders Forum is listed by DENI, with a view to addressing the differing needs of various faith/cultural groups, including newly arrived.
- The development of a policy for children whose first language is not English, and the continuation of Promoting Social Inclusion working group’s progressing recommendations contained within the Travellers Report (2000) is listed by DENI, with a view to tackling capacity building.

2.12 *Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (2006) Our Children and Young People—Our Pledge: A ten year strategy for children and young people in Northern Ireland 2006–2016*

<http://www.allchildrenni.gov.uk/tenyearstrategychildren1-2.pdf>

This strategy aims to ensure that by 2016 all children and young people in Northern Ireland are fulfilling their potential. Partnership working, whole-child approaches, children’s rights, and gradually moving from responsive to preventative intervention are integral to the overall aim of Government delivering a shared vision. Incorporated within the strategy’s vision are a six outcomes framework, namely Healthy; Enjoy, learning and achieving; Living in safety and with stability; Experiencing economic and environmental well being; Contributing positively to community and society; and Living in a society which respects their rights.

- Within the Outcome Framework “Living in safety and with stability” (p 70), bullying is referenced with drivers for change including NIABF providing information in an accessible format to all schools, in relation to best anti-bullying practice. Many drivers for change however could benefit from a more coordinated multi-agency approach to reducing bullying behaviour either directly or indirectly, eg the establishment of a dedicated, full-time safeguarding support service for schools.

2.13 *Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (2006) Consultation on Sexual Orientation Strategy and Proposed Action Plan*

<http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/sexualorientationstrategy.pdf>

This draft strategy and action plan (currently out for consultation) aims to provide a policy framework guided by a set of principles and objectives to tackle specific inequalities and promote equality of opportunity for lesbian, gay and bisexual people across government’s major policy areas. The strategy aims to complement the statutory duty set out in section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 which places on public authorities a duty to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between people within nine different categories. Proposed action relating to children and young people are as follows:

- DE carry forward issues identified in Shout (2003) research.
- DE to carry out a quality assurance exercise on schools’ discipline and anti-bullying policies.

- DHSSPS to develop a regional educational resource for the promotion of pupils' mental health and emotional well being, including anti-bullying approaches for use in schools.
- NIABF are going to respond to the consultation on this strategy and action plan.

2.14 *Review of Public Administration (2006) Better Government for Northern Ireland: Final Decision of the Review of Public Administration*

<http://www.archive.rpani.gov.uk/bettergovernment.pdf>

The Review was launched by the Northern Ireland Executive in June 2002 and, since the suspension of devolution in the autumn of that year, was progressed by direct rule ministers taking account of the views of the local political parties and others. This document highlights the local government reforms and department restructuring to occur including:

- The establishment of a new Education and Skills Authority which will focus on the operational delivery of educational services.
- The Authority will bring together all the direct support functions currently undertaken by the Education and Library Boards, CCEA and the Regional Training Unit.

2.15 *Safer School Travel Partnership Forum (Ballymena)*

This multi-agency partnership was formed in response to severe behavioural issues occurring on school transport, one incident of which resulted in the suicide of a young male. NICCY also completed research with children and young people, which identified bullying as one of the major concerns for children and young people travelling on buses to and from school.

Actions taken in Ballymena so far include:

- Bus company altering schedule to accommodate picking children up directly from school, rather than at the bus station.
- Increased school staff supervision of pupils boarding the buses.
- One day anti-bullying seminar being delivered to all mainstream post-primary schools in the area.

2.16 *Save the Children/Barnardos (2002) Fair Play: talking with children about prejudice and discrimination. London, Save the Children*

This booklet, written for parents and guardians of children in Northern Ireland, aims to increase understanding of prejudice and discrimination, whilst offering practical advice and guidance.

- 27% of all 12–17-year-olds in Northern Ireland have been threatened or verbally abused because of their religion.
- 66% of minority ethnic children have experienced racial harassment.
- Children are capable of recognising differences and holding sectarian prejudices from the age of three, whilst by the age of 10 and 11 many have developed deeply engrained sectarian attitudes.

2.17 *Schubotz, D & Sinclair, R (2006) Being part and parcel of the school; The views and experiences of children and young people in relation to the development of bullying policies in schools. Belfast, NICCY*

Research undertaken for the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People in 2006, highlighting pupils' views and experiences in developing anti-bullying policies, was carried out in 14 schools across NI. Methods of research included a pupil short survey questionnaire; one-to-one interviews with pupils'; talkshops delivering group work activities; and interviews with senior management staff.

- All schools did have anti-bullying policies (either stand alone documents or incorporated into overall school's pastoral care policy).
- Involvement of pupils in school policy making was limited, with less than half of the schools operating a school council.
- Every-day reiterations of anti-bullying messages were present and achieved through assemblies, lesson plans (curriculum), posters, pledges etc.
- Schools with a range of age appropriate strategies were found to be best equipped to respond appropriately to bullying incidents.
- Mainstream schools did not single out homophobic, xenophobic or gender related bullying, with all bullying incidents being treated the same regardless of nature.
- Schools have different methods of recording bullying incidents.
- NICCY are soon to launch and disseminate guidance in relation to children and young people's participation in policy making.

2.18 *Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, Northern Ireland (2006) Suicide Prevention Strategy*

<http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/>

This strategy holds an objective in relation to children and young people which states: “Promote the development of policies which enhance the positive mental health and wellbeing of children and young people, and which also protects them from bullying”.

2.19 *Young Life & Times (2005) Northern Ireland Young Life and Times Survey*
www.ark.ac.uk/ylt

In 2005 Young Life & Times surveyed 819 young people aged 16 from all parts of Northern Ireland. The survey requested information on the participant’s experiences of school and views on politics, sectarianism and other social issues. 42% were male and 58% female. 50% were Catholic, 41% identified themselves as Protestant, with 9% belonging to other faiths or more.

- 80% of respondents have witnessed bullying in schools with 30% reporting having been bullied themselves.
- Of the participants who identified as having been bullied, there was no clear difference in incident levels for gender or religion (eg. 27% Catholic; 29% Protestant).
- 7% of participants reported they had taken part in bullying other students.
- 67% of respondents said their school had staff whose job it was to deal with bullying, however only 16% of respondents said they would go to talk to these members of staff.
- 54% of participants felt in general the school provided real help to those who got bullied.

2.20 *Youthnet Northern Ireland (2003) Shout: The needs of young people in Northern Ireland who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender*
www.youthnetni.org.uk/youthnet

A study completed by Shout in 2003 and commissioned by the Department of Education researched the needs of young people in Northern Ireland who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender (LGBT). 362 young people who identified as LGBT under the age of 25, completed an anonymous questionnaire either online or on paper.

- 44% of respondents indicated that they had been bullied at school directly because of their sexual orientation.
- Of the 44% of respondents who stated having been bullied, 69% also said they left school earlier than they would have preferred and 65% believed they had achieved lower results.
- Participants raised concerns and gave examples about being ‘outed’ to their parents if they report a bullying incident as advised by the anti-bullying policy, or about teachers not challenging homophobic bullying within a classroom.
- Participants stated that they did not see their lives or their feelings reflected in the curriculum.

3. REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

3.1 The above documents highlight that much work is being done to address bullying in Northern Ireland. Various strategies are working towards addressing thematic issues such as racial, homophobic and sectarian bullying, and best practice initiatives such as increasing the participation of children and young people are frequently being disseminated. Recognition that collaborative working is the most positive way to address the issue of bullying is in place and the Review of Public Administration (RPA) will further support this by creating a clearer structure within government departments.

NIABF has a critical role to play in coordinating the success of anti-bullying in Northern Ireland and it is committed to ensure a whole community approach is addressed throughout all of its work.

3.2 Some areas identified for future action include:

- Ensuring the changes within the education structure as proposed by RPA include and address a consistent method to address anti-bullying as an issue.
- Making the link between “bullying” and safeguarding and explore partnership working with the newly proposed Regional Safeguarding Board.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GOVERNMENT ACTION

4.1 The recording of bullying incidents in a consistent manner across all schools proves more challenging to resolve. Currently within Northern Ireland research by NICCY (2006) has highlighted the inconsistent methods and tools for recording such incidents within a school environment. Various developments to date in England have included the use of private commercial companies supplying electronic databases to individual schools, or local authorities (LA).

4.1.1 Whilst this is one avenue that can currently be developed there needs to be legislation and guidance from Government in relation to the following to ensure maximum safeguarding:

- Legislation requiring schools to provide statistics to their local authority/Education and Library Board (similar to the requirement of racial incidents) on a periodic basis.
- Allocation of appropriate funds to accommodate schools purchasing databases including the maintenance of and training to use such tools.
- Guidance highlighting appropriate suppliers of databases and Information sharing protocols.

4.1.2 With key bodies such as the Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum and Anti-Bullying Alliance assisting the joined up approach to tackling bullying, it is also recommended these recording databases are accessible to accommodate the following:

- Monitoring of geographical areas and incidents of bullying.
- Monitoring of types/trends of bullying.

October 2006

Memorandum submitted by Sian Laing

Bullying is doing or saying something to another person that makes them feel or act different, such as being worried, scared or threatened. I think bullying is a very big problem, especially in schools as people have to deal with the bullies' everyday, and this is why some kids start skipping school. In our school, there are just a few people who think they are more special than everyone else, and if anybody is different from them in anyway or they are secretly jealous of this person, they start doing things to them. I have witnessed bullying, anything from people making nasty comments occasionally to people being battered everyday. Some people because of bullying have even started to smoke and things like that to "fit in" with the bullies. Other people I know have even started bullying other people themselves because apparently they think it's unfair that it always happens to them and nobody else. I think people are bullied just simply because they are different than other people, I also think that everybody bullies somebody else to a certain extent without realising it, like just saying something about another person to your friend that you wouldn't say to their face because you know it's nasty. Racist bullying happens quite a lot really, because if someone is a different colour than you, they sometimes get pushed out of groups and get called names. Other people become bullies because they are insecure about their home lives, and use bullying as an excuse to take their anger out on other people.

Bullying can affect schoolwork because people try to stop doing as good at their schoolwork, in case they get singled out and picked on for it. I think the victims mental state changes straight away because they begin to think to themselves that they have to change to stop their problems. I also think that they stop becoming as social and become very lonely, because many people take the bullies' side because they are scared of getting bullied themselves, so bullying effects the witnesses as well. Bullying would probably stop when they reach adult life, and people would gain their confidence and friends back. I also think that people who were bullied as a child are more likely to understand what children feel like and are going through. Bullies have no real friends because they usually hang around in gangs, but they are only there because the gang/friends feel that they are going to be bullied if they don't stay friends with the bully.

Our school, when they know bullying goes on sits down with the bully and try to explain how the other person must be feeling. If it continues or the bullying was very bad, they would be excluded. But I think there are too many schools, which are unaware of bullying, because children are too frightened to speak up! Parents can help deal with bullying by telling children what to do if they are being bullied or punishing children who are the bullies. I think other services you can use, such as child line are good, because you can ring them anonymously and tell them your problems, and they would give you advise on how to deal with it, without being in fear of bullies finding out that you have told someone.

Schools can be responsible for bullying, because that is where bullying takes place and that's the only place where you can't walk away from them, because the bullies are in school with you, also things that start in school can lead to more trouble out of school. Like one person gets his "gang of mates (outside school)" to help him bully people and eventually situations get out of hand when lots of people get involved and rumours start, and there become several different versions of the original story. I also think that a lot of bullying happens outside school, but not many people are aware of this because there aren't as many

witnesses to see and tell what is going on, unlike school. Even though racist bullying is counted as being very bad, I think any form of bullying, racist or not, is bad and all of it should be stopped and it should all be treated seriously, even if it was only 1 comment that upset someone, because it may continue. And I think people should persuade others to speak out about what is happening, even if it is just telling a close friend who might be able to help you.

October 2006

Memorandum submitted by National Association of Head Teachers

The National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Education & Skills Select Committee Inquiry on “the extent and nature of the problem of bullying in schools”; its effects on those involved and how it can best be tackled. With some 28,000 active members, heads, deputy heads and assistant heads in mainstream and special schools, across England, Wales and Northern Ireland, including non-maintained and independent special schools, as well as in the maintained sector, the Association is well placed to comment on aspects of bullying experienced in schools.

We have addressed our response to each of the headings outlined in the terms of reference for the inquiry:

EXTENT AND NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is wilful, or persistent, offensive, abusive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour; intentionally harmful, carried out by an individual or a group; an imbalance of power leaving the individual being bullied feeling defenceless. This definition of bullying can be extended to include cyber-bullying (see below).

Bullying could be:

- Physical: extraction of property, pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching, any form of violence, or threatened violence.
- Verbal: insulting, name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing.
- Racist: racial taunts, graffiti, gestures.
- Sexual: unwanted physical contact, abusive comments.

Cyber-bullying can be defined as an aggressive, intentional act, carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly and over time against a victim who can not easily defend him/herself. Cyber-bullying is a form of bullying which has in recent years become more apparent, as the use of electronic devices such as computers and mobile phones by young people has increased. This can include bullying through text message, picture/video clip (via mobile phone cameras), phone call, email, chat-room, through instant messaging, bullying via websites.

Definition of Harassment

Harassment can be defined as a malicious act of annoying and threatening an individual through various means, ie via text messages, emails, phone-calls, letters, notes with personal motives and reasons. Harassment is usually carried out by an individual who is close to the victim, but it could be an individual that is unknown to the victim. Harassment refers to a wide spectrum of offensive behaviour. It refers to behaviours that are found threatening, or disturbing and beyond those that are sanctioned by society. Only the more repetitive, persistent and untruthful types of speech qualify legally as harassment.

Extent and nature of the problem of bullying in schools

A recent report published by Parentline Plus gave statistical evidence of calls to their helpline. Listed below is a snapshot extracted from their report detailing calls about bullying, made to the helpline between October and December 2005. The report details the type of bullying, the number of calls and percentage of the total calls:

— Physical:	689 (6%);
— Verbal:	971 (9%);
— Perpetrator:	266 (3%);
— Racial:	41 (0.4%);
— Extortion:	19 (0.2%);
— New School:	46 (0.4%);
— Other:	104 (1%).

The extent of homophobic and racist bullying

The DfES survey (2002) illustrated that 82% of those teachers surveyed said they were aware of verbal incidents and 26% said they were aware of physical incidents of homophobic bullying.

As an Association, we recognise the difficulties that schools face when attempting to tackle this area. However, it is essential that it is addressed within the primary and secondary sectors so that changes in society and its norms and expectations are reflected in the pupils' educational experiences. For example some children in our schools have same sex partners that have parental responsibility. Communities and schools are experiencing a cultural change. Schools need support and advice; guidance specific to homophobic bullying should be led by government proposals. This will then lead to a more universal approach throughout the various agencies working with children.

School leaders may experience difficulties with some religious groups (within certain faith schools) and with some parental attitudes towards same sex relationships etc. It requires not only specific guidance but may mean a change in the school's approach to the issue of providing advice and training for their staff. This will include considerations regarding training on how to deal with sensitive issues and on how staff should address parents and children. Homophobic bullying can have a very serious impact on the child whether due to their own sexual orientation or that of parents and carers. The children concerned are frequently isolated; often they cannot talk to their parents/carers about the feelings they are experiencing, therefore, a teacher's reaction to their situation is crucial. This dictates a requirement for training, which can lead to resource issues for schools because of the existing excessive workload of the school leadership team and teaching staff.

The extent of racist bullying:

Schools are mindful of the need to reduce bullying in schools as evidenced by research, for example, that commissioned by the DfES in England in 2002. Amongst the disturbing findings, it was reported that, in the sample of schools, 25% of the pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds attending predominantly white schools had experienced racist name-calling within the previous seven days. The research indicated recurrent influencing themes which indicated issues needing to be addressed.

Other similar studies have indicated the level of bullying in schools, for example, a substantial study which was undertaken in Hampshire in 2005, involving a sample of more than 34,000 pupils. Our own members have also reported incidents of racist bullying. One interesting phenomenon is the use of racist language within bullying without the child concerned understanding the meaning of the words concerned—a direct reflection of society conditioning?

Incidence of Cyber-bullying

An investigation into cyber-bullying was carried out by Unit for School and Family Studies, Goldsmith College, University of London. (Research Brief July 2006—questionnaire returned by 92 students aged between 11–16 years from 14 different London schools June/July 2005.) 20 students (22%) had been victims of cyber-bullying at least once, and 5 (6.6%) had experienced being cyber-bullied more frequently over the previous two months. Phone call, text messages and email were the most common forms, both inside and outside of school, while chat room bullying was least common. Prevalence rates of cyber-bullying were greater outside of school than inside.

Schools endeavour to take action when matters of cyber-bullying are raised. Concerns over their child's safety have led many parents to sanction and provide mobile phones to their children, leading to a huge increase in pupils carrying mobile phones. Ironically, this concern over safety has led to problems for other pupils who now have to deal with a corresponding increase in cyber-bullying.

Age and gender

The research referred to above indicated that there were no significant differences with regard to cyber-bullying related simply to age. Girls were significantly more likely to be cyber-bullied, especially by text messages and phone calls, more than boys. A significant interaction between age and gender was found in relation to the effects of email bullying and the use of instant messaging which showed contrasting opinions between boys of different age groups. How schools and others address this difference needs to be given detailed consideration.

The nature of cyber-bullying

Most cyber-bullying is reported as coming from one or a few students, in the same class or year group and, in general, lasts only a week or so. Some lasts much longer, especially phone call bullying. However, even over a short time span, bullying can have devastating effects and the victims need support. One of the difficulties schools encounter in providing such support is that a substantial minority (around one-third) of victims have told nobody about it.

Views on school banning mobile phones or private internet use

Most pupils consulted as part of the research thought that banning mobile phones would result in pupils using them secretly and also that restricting private internet use in school could not prevent such forms of cyber-bullying outside schools. Given that parental concerns re safety has undoubtedly led to the provision of mobile phones, schools are unlikely to get parental support in banning mobile phones. It is also true that the practicalities of restricting personal internet use in school are difficult—e-communication is accepted and encouraged practice to assist with learning. To “police” such access and attempt to prevent its abuse has resource as well as practical implications for schools.

Why some pupils become bullies and why some pupils are bullied

It should not be forgotten that it is not the school, but society and the disposition of pupils that creates the bully. Schools are the agents that try to tackle the issues which cause children to become bullies. In general, schools are moral institutions which encourage pupils to understand both their rights and responsibilities within society. Schools do not set out to encourage bullying!

The research evidences that it is more often children with behavioural problems who are likely to bully others. Various studies have indicated that the incidence of bullying is higher among pupils with emotional behavioural or learning difficulties. Of course, schools are, quite rightly, constrained by the Disability Discrimination Act (1995 and 2005). As such, they are required to make reasonable adjustments in the implementation of sanctions detailed in their discipline policies, where it is a symptom of the child’s disability. This can bring its own difficulties as parents of pupils who are victims of such bullying rarely comprehend that the bullying may be a symptom of the perpetrator’s needs. All that they see, understandably, is that their child is being bullied. Handling such matters sensitively, requires great skill on the part of the school leader.

Family factors also seem to be of major significance in the development of the personality of children who are bullies or victims of bullying. However, statistics vary, for example, Mitchel and O’Moore found that 70% of the bullies they studied had problematic family backgrounds, while Stephenson and Smith research stated that just one third of those involved in bullying, both victims and bullies, had difficult family backgrounds.

The Association would wish to emphasise that it is often the bullying attitude of parents towards school staff that not only projects a role model for their children, but such attitudes also perpetrate an ongoing cycle of unacceptable behaviour. It is also the case that parents will not acknowledge that their child is involved in or directly bullying another pupil and, by taking this oppositional stance, the parents empower their children to continue their aggression.

The evidence suggests that some children do have a more positive attitude to the use of aggression and the following factors have been isolated as being significant in bullying behaviour:

- A negative attitude between parent and child, especially mother and son.
- Over-punitive physical discipline, or inconsistent and lax control.
- The use of physical aggression where this is seen as socially acceptable.
- The temperament of the child.

Research has also evidenced that generally aggression occurs as a reaction to aggression, but there is a tendency among the human species to practise aggression where there is no fear of retaliation. (Mosher, Mortimer and Brebel).

When schools implement an exclusion (as a sanction and to protect and provide respite for the victim) where bullying is evidenced, it is often the case that the school is taken to task by both local authority officers and the bully’s parents. It needs to be recognised that these tensions exist. The emphasis is on avoiding exclusion to ensure continuity of education within the school, regardless of the bully’s unacceptable behaviour towards the victim and the victim’s ongoing anxiety and feelings of being unsafe when within proximity of the bully.

Included below are descriptors from research of both victims and bullies:

- Passive victims (ineffectual in the face of attack).
- A significant number have coordination problems.
- Provocative victims (intentionally provoke the antagonism).
- Some children take the role of victim to gain acceptance (colluding).
- Children bullied at home often bully at school.
- Anxious bullies appear to have difficulties (home or education failure).
- The traditional bully: described as having a positive attitude toward aggression and enjoying conflict.
- Victims are often over-protected by parents.
- Bullies frequently have aggressive dominant parents.

Physical characteristics can act as a trigger for victimisation; this can include disability, difference of race, culture, sex and sexual orientation.

THE SHORT AND LONG-TERM EFFECTS (CONTRIBUTING FACTORS)

It is the society and the direct environment in which children develop that influences and determines the extent of bullying within schools and society in general. This includes the problems that children experience; sometimes inappropriate parenting, or lack of time to parent, perhaps because of more “one parent families”—that one parent has to cope with the demands of a family and of working full-time. School leaders are concerned that the lack of good parenting skills and lack of parental time has serious implications for some children. The dichotomy that exists whereby parents are encouraged to return to work much earlier (additional childcare arrangements, financial pressures etc) yet need to be offered parenting skills classes is one which cannot be ignored.

Some children now attend “breakfast clubs”, cope with a full school day and follow this with an “after school club”. Unfortunately, they see very little of their parents—a structured day does not necessarily replace “quality parental time”. There are also those children that lack a loving, caring home environment.

Sometimes problems manifest in children when they cannot cope with the demands of the curriculum. They may feel that they have failed and, consequently, lose their self-esteem, becoming angry and aggressive. Teachers need the training and the time to develop a diverse curriculum and extend the personalised learning agenda. This needs to be tackled in other ways, so that a child can fulfil his/her potential to contribute, enabling him/her to succeed. The Association sees the move towards the agenda expressed in the *Every Child Matters* White Paper as a very positive move in this regard.

School leaders are very aware that they need to tackle bullying. Indeed, it is statutory for all schools to have anti-bullying policies and there has been an ongoing drive by the DfES and the Anti-Bullying Alliance to raise the profile. Schools need to ensure that their policies are reviewed and amended through the contribution of pupils, families and school staff. Many are trying to ensure effective involvement of parents and carers in the development of school policies so that there is a fuller understanding of the school’s aims and ethos. This in turn should lead to deeper involvement and understanding across the school community.

Bullying is an insidious social problem. The role of the school leader is to ensure that structures and procedures are embedded in the school’s policies and that the school ethos is aimed at limiting the amount of bullying that occurs within the school and local community. It is unrealistic to say that there will ever be a time that bullying within schools has been eradicated until and unless it is eradicated throughout society.

From the pupil’s view, bullying impacts on their self-esteem when ridiculed and persecuted by others, and at the extreme end, can lead to self-harm and even suicide attempts. Research confirms the destructive effect of bullying on young people’s lives. It can lead to serious or prolonged distress and long-term damage to their social and emotional development. At a far more mundane level, it also has a significant impact on a school’s exam results, attendance figures and truancy rates.

TACKLING THE PROBLEM

School discipline is paramount because behaviour and discipline are linked; pupils need to know that if they breach school rules sanctions will follow. Children should initially be taught what the school’s expectations are—that pupils must support the ethos of the school and to learn to respect each other.

Anti-bullying policies are working documents and policies need to be reviewed with the contribution of the whole school because it helps to raise continually the profile and to re-emphasize that the schools will continue to address any incidents of bullying.

Intervention Strategies include:

- The moralistic approach (conforms to values of the school: write an apology and speak to the parents).
- The legalistic approach (the sanctions that will be implemented).
- The humanistic approach (inviting the bully to cooperate in bringing about mutually desired change).

Schools tend to use a mixture of all three approaches when developing and enacting their policies.

Good practice dictates the need to engage a student, who bullies in order to identify the skills a student may need to be motivated to stop bullying. It is essential to find new ways of influencing pupils to encourage them to change their ways, to acknowledge the harm that bullying causes to other more vulnerable children; to seek an activity that sustains their interest and one that helps to channel their aggression.

Inducing concern and responsibility:

What influences the bully to continue bullying is often a lack of concerns for others. Some interesting research was undertaken in South Australia by Alan Jenkins (1990). He was engaged in the treatment of violent offenders to whom he offered “an invitation to responsibility”. He asks them to appreciate how these people, the victims, must feel when they are abused. Approaches to bullying in school have much in common with the “Jenkins’ invitation”. Barbara Maines and George Robinson in England have developed a “No Blame Approach” and Anatol Pikas in Sweden proposed his “Method of Shared Concern”, though it needs to be stated that there are advocates both for and against these approaches.

Involving and Empowering Pupils:

Good practice dictates that peer involvement in prevention and response to bullying, and the drive for involving children, forms a natural part of a school in which children are invited to contribute to decisions at a variety of levels including teaching and learning issues and policy formulation. However, ultimately responsibility rests with staff because pupils can only become active participants in supporting anti-bullying policies if they are allowed to do so. They are therefore reliant on adults for training, monitoring and most likely their success or otherwise.

Most school leaders believe that preventing bullying in school is about whole school and classroom culture to celebrate individuality, difference and the unusual, in order to avoid those that are vulnerable being singled out.

Suggestions for Good Practice:

Schools have found that the following suggestions have helped in combating bullying:

- Act early—this prevents a single action turning into a relationship based on bullying;
- Make sure that all know the anti-bullying policy is reviewed regularly;
- Keep written records of observations, meetings and actions taken in line with national and local authority advice;
- Take bullying seriously as it is about the climate in which all learn;
- Hold awareness-raising assemblies and lessons within the school community and feeder schools;
- Become familiar with variety of processes, strategies, skills and the philosophy that underpins them;
- Explore alternatives to punishment because it can be counter-productive for those regularly punished;
- Get away from the bully-victim model;
- Powerful forces for change are the “bystanders” since they provide the audience
- Gather information through research (get pupils to do it); and
- Systems of rewards as well as punishments to encourage children in order to recognise that they are doing their best in contributing to the life and ethos of the school.

It is worth recording that there is already a lot of good practice going on in schools. Many schools support and participate in the annual Anti-Bullying weeks held during November, but the work that the school does, led by school leaders, is always ongoing as cohorts and society continues to change.

Schools may wish to record and monitor bullying incidents by category; this would be informative for the school and would support school self-evaluation to analyse, to identify any trends and to adapt policies to address local need. This would then feed into the school’s Ofsted inspection information and its development planning. Of course, efficient and effective monitoring will add to the workload of school staff. However, such statistics could ultimately contribute to providing clear evidence of how endemic bullying is within schools, in answer to any future inquiry. Consideration will need to be given to school resources, staff workload and guidance.

CONTRIBUTING TO THE INQUIRY

As stakeholders, the NAHT welcomes the opportunity to submit evidence to the House of Commons Education and Skills Select Committee Inquiry on bullying. We are members of the Anti-bullying Alliance; we also participate in working with various DfES steering groups, addressing the issues around bullying in schools. The Association endorsed the DfES Anti-bullying Charter and the latest DfES guidance on Preventing Racist Bullying.

We have also recently been asked to support the work of EACH and Stonewall, contributing to the new DFES guidance on preventing Homophobic Bullying; this has involved attending the reference group meeting and ongoing consultation meetings. We look forward to having early sight of the draft guidance so that we can provide our formal endorsement to the guidance when it is finally launched. We can then disseminate this information to our members. The Association and its members are truly focused on reducing bullying in schools and addressing anti-social behaviour within local communities.

We would be happy to further contribute to the work of the Select Committee in their investigative inquiry and would appreciate the opportunity to discuss further the issues raised in this submission.

3 October 2006

Memorandum submitted by Maura McHale

I am very pleased that you are taking this seriously and looking into it.

I am a mother and teacher in a primary school and have witnessed bullying.

Firstly, as identified in *Every Child Matters* and numerous other enquiries into how a child can be tortured to death with apparently no adult being able to prevent it—the key issue is exchange of information amongst adults. I was very disappointed that you did not canvass all schools when looking into this problem—preferably a secret/anonymous form for children to complete.

In my experience bullying occurs when the adults employed to take responsibility for children let themselves off this responsibility by saying (1) children have got to learn to stand up for themselves, (2) it happened to them when they were at school—and never did them any harm (3) it is impossible to stop.

It is completely unacceptable that children spend their young lives in fear and many kill themselves because adults can't put themselves in children's shoes.

I would like to see compulsory home/school agreements with the behaviour policy of the school given to every pupil and parent. There should also be a member of staff responsible for setting up and policing either a school council, peer mediation etc and this should be something which Ofsted and/or the Governors of private and state schools are obliged to set up and police. Circle time at the moment is often taught by reluctant staff with no empathy for the subject. Some form of emotional literacy should be part of the curriculum, but taught by people from outside the school.

I think that a definition is difficult and we probably need something to describe behaviour which is niggling but needs to be monitored before it erupts into bullying.

I very much hope that you produce something which will make a real impact on this problem.

3 October 2006

Memorandum submitted by The British Psychological Society

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- More sensitive definitions of bullying may be needed to ensure that indirect aggression or relational bullying are reported, particularly in the light of an increase in cyber-bullying.
- Schools should be encouraged to use systematic assessment procedures, including peer and self reports, to collect more accurate figures for the incidence of bullying.
- Being a victim of bullying is associated with poor physical and mental health and many adults report long term effects. Children who bully are also at an increased risk of depression and may be at a high risk of later criminal convictions.
- Research evidence suggests that children from ethnic minority groups and young people attracted to others of the same sex are at higher risk of bullying than others.
- Procedures to tackle bullying need to be implemented thoroughly and consistently throughout the school community. Parents should be involved in policy formulation and review and should be given information about the school's anti-bullying policy.
- Schools need to have clearly defined and articulated procedures and policies for dealing with racism and homophobia embedded within bullying policies.
- Where there are unresolved issues relating to bullying, we would support the development of a personalised anti-bullying plans with clear review procedures.
- Educational psychologists are well placed to provide an understanding of the impact of bullying and lead developments in local authorities.

SUBMISSION

1.1 The British Psychological Society welcomes the opportunity to submit information to the Committee's inquiry into Bullying. The British Psychological Society is the learned and professional body, incorporated by Royal Charter, for psychologists in the United Kingdom. The Society has a total membership of over 42,000 and is a registered charity.

1.2 The key Charter object of the Society is "to promote the advancement and diffusion of the knowledge of psychology pure and applied and especially to promote the efficiency and usefulness of members by setting up a high standard of professional education and knowledge".

1.3 The Society is authorised under its Royal Charter to maintain the Register of Chartered Psychologists. It has a code of conduct and investigatory and disciplinary systems in place to consider complaints of professional misconduct relating to its members. The Society is an examining body granting certificates and diplomas in specialist areas of professional applied psychology. It also has in place quality assurance programmes for accrediting both undergraduate and postgraduate university degree courses.

1.4 This submission is based upon evidence provided by the Division of Educational and Child Psychology (DECP). Educational and child psychologists work with children from 0–19 across all areas of disability. They are concerned with the application of psychological research and theory to the enhancement of children's learning, psychological well-being and development. They have skills in psychological and educational assessment, intervention techniques and methods for helping children and young people who are experiencing difficulties in learning or social adjustment.

1.5 Educational psychologists collaborate with other key professionals in the early identification of difficulties a child or young person may be experiencing and through psychological assessment and intervention. In particular, Educational Psychologists work closely with other colleagues in education (for example educational welfare officers and behaviour support and pupil development staff), as well as other professionals in agencies like social services and the health service.

1.6 Uniquely, educational psychologists are trained and have responsibilities and involvement in every phase of education, including early years work, thus allowing them to see the long-term impact of government decisions relating to bullying. Educational psychologists also inform social and educational policy within local authorities in relation to children's well-being, learning and development and centre their work around multi-agency assessments and interventions. Their professional knowledge base is founded upon day-to-day practices, a clearly articulated working knowledge of psychological theory and research, and a strategic perspective which illuminates both strengths and weakness of the past and current policies and practices relating to children's social and emotional development and responses to bullying.

1.7 Bullying has been an issue of widespread concern worldwide for many decades. A vast number of studies contribute towards outlining the nature of bullying and the problems it causes (Rigby, 2002; Thompson *et al.*, 2002; Smith, 2004). Bullying is a social phenomenon which results in a person being psychologically harmed. Usually, the act of harming is deliberate and results in a person's personal identity being eroded and diminished. Unfortunately, the psychological impact of bullying is often underestimated.

EXTENT AND NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

How bullying should be defined

2.1 Many studies outline the nature of bullying, yet there is no universal agreed definition of bullying or methods to assess it (see Arora, 1996; Smith, Cowie, Olafsson, & Liefoghe, 2002 for a review). Thus, the rate of prevalence reported in studies of victimization and bullying behaviour is in part dependent on the type of definition used. Early work on bullying focused on physical bullying referring to group violence or direct verbal taunting (Olweus, 1978). Subsequent studies have distinguished between direct and indirect aggression. For example, a study done in Finland by Björkqvist, Lagerspetz, & Kaukiainen (1992) distinguished between direct physical aggression (such as punching), direct verbal aggression (including name calling), and indirect aggression. Indirect aggression is of a covert nature where there may be use of third parties in order, for example, to spread nasty rumours to socially exclude individuals. This has also been termed relational bullying where the bully deliberately targets the victim's relationships and attempts to exclude them from membership of a social group (Crick, Casas, & Mosher, 1997; Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; 1996; Rivers & Smith, 1994). Relational bullying has been defined by Crick and Grotpeter (1995) as the hurtful manipulation of peer relationships/friendships that inflicts harm on others through behaviours such as "social exclusion" and "malicious rumour spreading". If not specifically prompted to consider other types of bullying children are more likely to restrict their interpretations to incidences of direct bullying (Naylor, Cowie, and Cossin, 2006).

2.2 Nevertheless the most widely used definition of bullying is that developed by Olweus (1989, 1993, 1999) and slightly extended by Whitney and Smith (1993, p 7).

"We say a child or young person is being bullied, or picked on when another child or young person, or a group of children or young people, say nasty and unpleasant things to him or her. It is also bullying when a child or a young person is hit, kicked, threatened, locked inside a room, sent nasty notes, when no-one ever talks to them and things like that. These things can happen frequently

and it is difficult for the child or the young person being bullied to defend himself or herself. It is also bullying when a child or young person is teased repeatedly in a nasty way. But it is not bullying when two children or young people of about the same strength have the odd fight or quarrel”.

2.3 Definitions such as that used by Olweus (1999) strongly emphasise direct bullying and aggressive actions. Research reports looking at interactions between gender and forms of bullying suggest that more sensitive definitions maybe required for children to reports on female forms of bullying or more indirect forms of bullying (Owen, Slee, & Shute, 2001). This may be of particular importance in the light of an increase in cyber-bullying eg using emails and mobile phones to socially isolate children (Smith, Mahdavi, Carvalho & Tippett, 2006). For instance, Charlton (2002) found that nearly half of her sample of 351 primary school children had mobile phones and of those 11% admitted to receiving either a rude message or a threat. Oliver and Canappa (2002) report that 4% of Year 8 pupils received nasty text messages and 2% nasty e-mail messages.

The extent and nature of the problem of bullying in schools

3.1 Prevalence rates vary according to the method used to assess bullying and victimisation. Five methods are commonly used: 1) children’s self-reports (or adult retrospective reports), 2) teacher reports, 3) observational studies, 4) parental interviews/reports, and 5) peer nominations. The most commonly used method of assessing victimisation is from self-report (eg, Wolke, Woods, Bloomfield, & Karstadt, 2000). These are most frequently based on questionnaires but may involve interviews. Self-report measures ask youngsters themselves to report whether they have been victimized or bully others. Using self report measures the prevalence of both physical and verbal victimization combined, in primary schools has been estimated to range from 8% to 46% (Smith & Shu, 2000; Wolke & Stanford, 1999; Wolke, Woods, Stanford & Schulz, 2001). In the UK, Whitney, Rivers, Smith and Sharp (1994) found that lower proportions of pupils were self-reporting victimization in secondary schools than in primary schools (20% as opposed to 46%). Slightly lower rates of self reported victimization and bullying were also found in Norway at secondary school level (Solberg & Olweus, 2003). Recent research indicates that a proportion of victims are also bullies at other times, ranging from 1% to 19% in primary and secondary schools (see Eslea, Menesini, Morita, O’Moore, Mora-Merchan, Pereira & Smith, 2003 for a review).

3.2 Self-reports tend to result in higher estimates of victimization than peer ratings (eg, see Graham & Juvonen, 1998; Osterman *et al.*, 1994) and there is a suggestion that self-report maybe overestimated due to “paranoid” reports of victimization (Graham & Junoven, 1998). More recent studies have used peer nomination procedures where children name classmates who fit behavioural descriptions of victimization (eg, Alsaker & Valkanover, 2001; Boulton & Smith, 1994; Egan & Perry, 1998; Graham & Juvonen, 1998; Perry *et al.*, 1988; Ladd & Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2002). Peer assessments can be administered quickly to a whole class group, increasing reliability through the increased number of opinions received on any one child, even when a single item-scale is used (Naylor, Cowie & Del Rey, 2001; Salmivalli, 1998). The advantages associated with peer reports have meant that they have become an increasingly commonly used method of investigation in research studies.

3.3 When spontaneous self reporting of bullying, as opposed to self report through use of assessment instruments other factors may influence whether a student reports being bullied. For example, Unnever & Connell (2004) report when surveying 2, 437 students in USA middle schools that 25% of victims said that they had not told anyone that they were being bullied and 40% had not told an adult. The chances of reporting were increased as chronicity of victimization increased, if the child was female and if they were younger. Reporting was less likely when the child perceived the school climate as tolerant of bullying and the home environment as using coercive discipline.

3.4 When surveys distinguish between bullying that has been short term (for a few months) and long-term (more than one year), it is found that the incidence of the latter in secondary schools is between 4–8%; in large schools this adds up to a large number of children (Thompson *et al.*, 2002). It is likely that relying on figures from schools on the number of pupils who seek help for bullying from staff members, or on teacher estimates of bullying are likely to underestimate prevalence. Schools should be encouraged to use systematic assessment procedures, particularly those involving peers as well as self report, on a whole school basis annually. Pellegrini and Bartini (2000) recommend that ideally multiple informants should be used so that peer, self and teacher are involved and parent views sought.

3.5 The main problem in asking pupils whether they have been bullied is that their definition of bullying may vary, so accurate figures are difficult to obtain. In order to address this, Arora (1999) devised a Bullying Index based on pupils’ definitions, which has been widely used in British schools and abroad. The prime use of the “Life in School” checklist is self-monitoring by schools over successive years of the effectiveness of their anti-bullying policies. One Junior school has consistently used this method for their annual survey of bullying over a period of 12 years and has managed to reduce bullying in their school as a result of this monitoring.

The Extent of homophobic and racist bullying

4.1 Globally there has been very little research looking at ethnic variables in the context of bullying or victimization risks. There is evidence that children from ethnic minority groups are at a much higher risk of being bullied than others. Testimonies from 7,066 teenagers who had taken part in media-based surveys suggested that 12 to 13% had experienced severe bullying, but this rose to 25% for children from ethnic minority groups (Katz *et al.*, 2001). Racial bullying generally takes the form of placing an individual in a category and then insulting them. The insult then is not only directed at them, but at all those with whom they share similar characteristics, which generally includes their family and friends. Most incidents of racial bullying take place within an institution for example a school, hospital, or a place of work. The context is important, because in many respects it becomes the barrier to identifying and addressing the problem. In part, difficulties arise because of the reluctance of many institutions to accept that this behaviour is occurring within their portals. Thus many institutions fail to recognise that there is a clear relationship between individualised racial bullying and institutional racial bullying. Small-scale studies undertaken by teachers in the central region in the mid 1990's highlighted that racial bullying began at quite an early stage and in Primary Schools a "Them and us" culture had already been established (Gillborn, 1995).

4.2 Similarly, very little research has been conducted into homophobic bullying in schools. Homophobic bullying is often not what it appears to be, in schools at least. The word "gay" is often used as a general epithet meaning "weak" and not confirming to the usual "macho" standards of behaviour expected from adolescent boys. Used like this, it does not suggest that the victim has any homosexual tendencies in the real sense (Duncan, 1999). However there is evidence that young people who see themselves as "gay" suffer from bullying more frequently than those who identify themselves with the heterosexual majority (Rivers, 2000c). A review by Warwick *et al.* (2004) found estimates of 30 to 50% of young people attracted to others of the same sex in secondary schools having experienced homophobic bullying; 82% of teachers were aware of verbal homophobic bullying and 26% of physical homophobic incidents. Ellis and High (2004) reported that about 31% of respondents indicated teasing, 37% had been verbally abused and 15% had been physically assaulted. The results of studies in the UK, focusing on the experiences of a sample of lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) people who were victimized by their peers at school because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation has identified some of the long lasting problems associated with bullying (Rivers 1995a, b; 1996; 2000a,b; 2001). The results suggested that participants' experiences of victimization at school were both long-term (mean duration of five years), and systematic, and were perpetrated by groups of peers rather than by individuals. Significant gender differences were also found with lesbian and bisexual women reporting far more incidents of indirect and relational aggression when compared to gay and bisexual men. Data would suggest that in the intervening twenty years, homophobic bullying has increased rather than decreased.

4.3 A UK study by Clarke, Kitzinger, & Potter (2004) interviewed gay parents on children's experiences of bullying. A particularly prominent concern of parents was a fear of reporting bullying to schools or authorities due to raising issues of bad parenting or accountability.

Why some people become bullies and why some people are bullied

5.1 There is considerable debate about the reasons why some people are more likely to be bullied or at greater risk of victimization than others. It has been found in some studies that victims have significantly greater social skills problems compared to non-victims, whether rated by peers or by teachers (Fox & Boulton, 2005). Egan and Perry (1998) investigated poor social skills as a mediator for reduced self-concept in victims at primary school age and found a child's self-perceived social competence was significantly linked to self-regard both of which mediated a greater risk of victimization in these children (Egan & Perry, 1998).

5.2 Higher levels of bullying and victimization of pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) are increasingly being reported. This is the case whether victimization is assessed through pupil self report, peer report or teacher report (Nabuzoka & Smith, 1993; Whitney, Smith, & Thompson, 1994). Whitney *et al.* (1994) found that the proportions of pupils with SEN that self-reported victimization were similar for both primary and secondary school age (59% in secondary and 63% in primary). In contrast, non-SEN children showed a decline in victimization with age. Furthermore De Monchy *et al.* (2004) report data from peers and teachers which suggest that primary school teachers substantially underestimate the extent to which pupils with SEN are victimized in school. Thompson, Whitney, and Smith (1994) identified two possible reasons for the higher incidence of victimization among pupils who have SEN: these pupils are different from others in noticeable ways that may provide a focus for teasing and bullying and/or they have fewer friends and so are less well integrated and protected.

5.3 Friendship and social status have been another area where evidence suggests both a protective factor and a risk factor. Victims are often at greater "social risk" as they lack supportive friends at school and tend to be more rejected by their peers (Hodges, Malone & Perry, 1997; Ladd, Kochenderfer & Coleman, 1997). However, profiling of secondary pupils has shown that children that continue to be victimized, irrespective of gender, also became more likely to be involved in bullying others (Smith, Talamelli, Cowie, Naylor, & Chauhan, 2004). It has also been traditionally argued that bullies are socially unskilled (Hazler, 1996; Randall, 1997). However, more recent studies challenge this assumption. Kaukiainen *et al.*, (2002) found

that 11–12-year-old bullies tended to fall into two groups; socially skilled and socially unskilled. Similar findings had also been reported some years previously in 7–10-year-old children (Sutton, Smith & Swettenham, 1999).

5.4 Bullies may also share certain personality characteristics such as being generally more aggressive. They may come from home backgrounds with generally less affection, more violence and low parental monitoring and where they are exposed to models of parenting that generally encourage aggression and bullying as a means to achieving power (Olweus, 1999). The literature suggests that there are various individual characteristics commonly found in bullies such as a tendency to perceive behavior as provocative (when non-bullies would place a neutral interpretation on it), a need to appear tough in the peer group, a fear of being bullied, little awareness of other's feelings (Boulton & Underwood, 1992) and possibly low levels of anxiety or guilt (Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Smith & Sharp, 1994).

SHORT AND LONG-TERM EFFECTS

The effect of bullying on academic achievement, physical and mental health, and social and emotional wellbeing

6.1 Links between poor attainment outcomes at school and persistent self-reported victimization by peers have been found in western countries at primary school age (Juvonen, Nishina, & Graham, 2000; Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996), and secondary school age level (Sharp, 1995). Rigby (1999) examined the relationship between peer victimisation and physical and mental health levels in children at secondary school using a longitudinal study. It was found that the degree of reported victimisation in early years of secondary schooling predicted poor physical health of children (both boys and girls) 2 years later, and poor mental health for girls.

6.2 Being bullied has been linked with low self-esteem, anxiety, impaired concentration, truancy, depression and suicidal thoughts. Hawker and Boulton (2000) carried out a meta-analysis of all cross-sectional studies published between 1987 and 1997 and found that victims of bullying experience more negative feelings, and thoughts about themselves than their non-bullied peers. This was the case for both sexes, in all age groups and from diverse population.

6.3 Reid (1989) investigated reasons for truancy and found that 15% of persistent truants said they had stayed away from school initially because of being bullied and 19% continued to stay away from school because of this.

Whether and how the effects of being bullied persist into adult life

7.1 Hugh-Jones & Smith (1999) used retrospective studies from adults that suffered stuttering at school age to determine long-term effects. The majority of these adults reported being victimized as children. The majority reported immediate negative effects from being victimised with also 46% reporting long-term effects of being bullied. More detailed analysis showed that long term effects were predicted by severity of bullying and the protective effects of factors such as friendship making.

The effect of bullying on those who bully

8.1 Not many studies have appeared on the effects of bullying on those who bully. A large study in Finland of more than 16,000 teenagers found that children who bully are at an increased risk of depression, to the same extent as victims of bullying. Suicidal thoughts, moreover, occurred more amongst those who bully (Kaltiala-Heino *et al.* 1999). Children who bully may be at a high risk of criminal convictions in later life: 25% of adults identified by peers at age 8 as "bullies" had criminal records, as opposed to 5% who had not been identified as such (Olweus, 1993).

TACKLING THE PROBLEM

How schools deal with bullying

9.1 Studies may target the victimized child (eg by trying to improve aspects such as assertiveness), attempt to change in the bullies behaviour or work with the peer group to reduce bystander and supporter behaviour that create a permissive attitude towards bullying (Cowie & Sharp, 1994; Pepler *et al.*, 1994; Salmivalli, 1999; Salmivalli *et al.*, 1996; Stevens, Van Oost, & De Bourdeaudhuij, 2000; Sutton & Smith, 1999). Other studies have focused on school policy issues. For example, Adams, Cox & Dunstan (2004) reported that out of 19 schools surveyed in the UK none of them specifically mentioned sexual orientation in the anti-bullying policies. Adams *et al.*, suggest that raising awareness of homophobic bullying and informing whole-school development on such issues is needed.

9.2 School based bullying intervention programmes have been carried out in various countries worldwide, with mixed findings. The first large-scale Norwegian intervention project, in Bergen (Olweus, 1991), was the most successful with reductions in victimization and bullying rates of 50% or more and in other measures of antisocial behaviour, and an increase in children reporting feeling more satisfied at school.

Despite the success of the original Norwegian study only one intervention programme (Ortega & Lera, 2000), carried out in Seville, Spain, has reported comparable declines in bullying behaviour (a change of 57%). Most studies that have used the school based approach have reported more moderate effects. For instance, Whitney *et al.*, (1994) reported that victimization decreased by 14% in primary schools with a 7% reduction in secondary schools. In addition to these more modest intervention effects there are some studies that report few positive outcomes (eg, Pepler *et al.*, 1994) and others that report possible negative effects (eg Munthe, 1989; Whitaker, Rosenbluth, Valle & Sanchez, 2004). More longitudinal designs with follow-up evaluation are required to further identify long-term as well as short-term effects of such programmes (Pepler, Smith, Rigby, 2004).

9.3 Successful programmes in schools are characterised by high involvement by both staff and pupils, by an emphasis on addressing the problem at an individual, group and whole school level, by a system of sanctions as well as encouragement of prosocial behaviour and by an emphasis on trusting and respectful relationships both between pupils and between pupils and staff (Olweus 1993, Arora, 1994). One difficulty for schools is that having an anti-bullying policy is just one of a continuous series of initiatives that need their involvement and attention. Even when a school has put an anti-bullying policy in place, regular reviews soon cease to be a priority and often disappear altogether (Thompson, 2004).

9.4 One type of initiative that has had positive impact is when LAs (now Children's Services) have been the prime movers in trying to reduce bullying in their schools. An example of this is Derbyshire's ABC Scheme, which involves more than 200 schools who work towards a series of indicators leading to awards. An evaluation of this suggested that the scheme helped to create a safe environment in which pupils would "tell" and that bullying had been reduced in a large number of schools (Gibson, 2003).

How parents can help if their children are being bullied or are bullying others

10.1 Parents can help their own children to develop social skills and confidence, by encouraging their children to express their own needs appropriately without hurting others with whom they come into contact. Social learning such as this, is just as relevant at home as it is at school (Randall 1996). Many children don't tell their parents that they are being bullied, so parents need to take the possibility of their child being bullied into account if there are signs such as regular loss of pocket money or dinner money, torn clothes, unexplained upset, truancy, reluctance to go to school or other, sudden, negative changes in behaviour (Besag, 1989).

10.2 Parents have key role to play in protecting not just their own children but other children who they might hear are the victims of bullying. It is important for schools to create a facility where parents can have immediate access to a highly trained professional who understands the signs and symptoms of bullying, the nature of psychological harm and what action should be undertaken. As well as skilled school staff, parents should be made aware of the availability of an educational psychologist, an education welfare officer or Parent Partnership services. Parents should be given information about the school's anti-bullying policy, and kept informed about how their child is being helped as well as agreeing dates to review the situation. If they hear that the bullying continues or commences again after a period of time, they should be encouraged to contact the school immediately (Thompson *et al.*, 2002). This will avoid a scenario in which the school staff assume that the bullying has stopped, when it is still happening.

10.3 As part of an anti-bullying strategy (across all age groups, educational settings and Children's Services) it is critical that parents are provided with accurate up-dated information about bullying, its signs and symptoms and what they can do to help their child (or another person's child). In building confidence for parents to approach an educational setting, information and support should be provided to enable parents to remain calm, whilst keeping a record of events and actions to inform and facilitate intervention.

10.4 It would be appropriate to have a specific "anti-bullying" personalised learning plan for students where there appears to be an unresolved issue relating to bullying. The British Psychological Society would support the development of a targeted process where the parents and child would participate fully in the construction of the anti-bullying plan with clear review procedure. Parent Partnership organisations can go a long way in coordinating strategic responses to patterns of bullying across a local authority, and by working collaboratively with educational settings and other services ensure that the experiences of parents contribute to the overall policy.

What support and guidance the DfES provides to schools and to those affected by bullying, and how effective they are.

11.1 For more than a decade, the Government has taken serious steps to try to reduce bullying. The initial DfEE publication called *Don't Suffer in Silence* (DfEE 1994) was sent to all schools alongside the expectation that all schools would have an anti-bullying policy, which should be reviewed at regular intervals. The pack was updated in 2000 and revised in 2002. This time schools had to request the pack, so fewer schools (5,000) received it. A few years later, questionnaires completed by a quarter of a 10% sample suggested that in half of these schools bullying had reduced and none of the schools reported that it had increased (Smith and Samara, 2003). This relatively successful outcome is likely to be because this was a highly motivated group of schools which used many of the suggestions in the pack. In 2003, more emphasis by the Government on

anti-bullying policies in Ofsted inspections helped to alert all schools to the need to have these in place. An Ofsted report described good practice in tackling bullying in Secondary schools (Ofsted, 2003). The British Psychological Society supports these strategies, as well as more recent initiatives such as Promoting Emotional Health and Well being (Healthy Schools, 2004), Developing Emotional Health and Well being: a whole school approach to improving behaviour and attendance (2005). The distribution of the SEAL materials to schools is another good DfES initiative. There are plenty of materials in the package on anti-bullying approaches which could form a very helpful base for staff training and further developments in the school.

11.2 Given that bullying causes psychological harm, anti-bullying policies and initiatives need to be constantly up-dated and remain as a standing priority within any educational setting. Organisational psychology highlights the need for constant monitoring and formative evaluation in order for the anti bullying strategies to be effective. The use of highly trained experts, such as educational psychologists, to support schools' anti bullying policies would go a long way towards ensuring that school environments were attuned (DfES, 2002). Procedures need to be implemented thoroughly and consistently throughout the school community. It is this widespread community involvement in the process, backed up by specific procedures at class and individual level, which appear to be the critical factor in achieving significant shifts in levels of bullying behaviour. (Thompson, Arora and Sharp, 2002)

The role of other organisations, such as non-governmental

12.1 The Anti-Bullying Alliance was founded by NSPCC and NCB in 2002, and brings together over 50 national organisations from the voluntary and private sectors, local authorities, professional associations and the research community. It aims to reduce bullying and create safer environments in which children and young people can live, grow, play and learn. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development held a conference in Stavanger in 2004 on school bullying and violence and there is international co-operation in researching bullying (Smith *et al*, 2004).

To what extent schools can be responsible for bullying that takes place off their premises and how they can deal with it

13.1 Schools are part of the community in which they are located and from which they receive their pupils. By attending the school, pupils bring the community into the school. Legally schools may not have a duty to stop bullying by and against their pupils outside their premises, but it makes moral and practical sense to try and influence interactions within the community in a positive way (Randall, 1996). Often, bullying incidents in school may have been triggered by events outside the school, and carry on outside school hours, so it is very difficult to draw the line as to when staff should not try to exert a positive influence. With community support actively encouraged and written into the school's anti-bullying policy, it will be easier for the school to reduce bullying amongst its pupils.

Whether particular strategies need to be used to tackle homophobic and racist bullying

14.1 Homophobic bullying in teenagehood attacks a person who is already vulnerable in trying to establish a sexual identity for themselves which is not shared by the majority of others of their age. In both cases, self-esteem may suffer even more than in other cases of bullying. Hence, sensitive support for the victim is necessary. It is also necessary for schools to strive to discuss matters of sexual orientation in an open and positive manner, so that a more accepting climate can be established. Local authority support service staff need to ensure that they are fully aware of issues related to psychosexual development in childhood and adolescents and that they have appropriate policies and codes of conduct and practice in place. Ryan (2001) points out that, with few exceptions, most support staff working with schools lack knowledge about LGB people, are usually ambivalent about the needs of LGB people, and may hold stereotyped attitudes and beliefs.

14.2 Educational psychologists are well placed to provide an understanding of the psychological impact of bullying and lead developments in local authorities through:

- raising the issue of homophobic behaviour and its implications;
- Providing advice and guidance, consultation, individual, group and family based work and training in order to raise awareness among school staff, school governors and parents/care-givers of the needs of LGBT students;
- Supporting the development of comprehensive equal opportunities and pastoral care policies;
- Advising on materials and resources that lead to a greater understanding of discrimination against LGBT pupils;
- Setting up and running group support programmes such as that described by Monsen and Bailey (in press—2007) for those young people who are finding it particularly difficult to develop a positive sense of themselves;
- Encouraging schools to work with appropriate and relevant LGBT community support groups.

14.3 Racist bullying and harassment constitutes an attack on the person's identity as part of a group and therefore can also be very hurtful. Good community relationships are vital for influencing the pupils in the school to respect each other's culture and religious practices. The Hampton report (1998) enquired of young people the strategies they felt which might be employed to usefully address racial bullying. 72% of the 12–20-year-olds were of the opinion that teachers and pupils needed to begin to tackle this at pre school level. In addition there needs to be:

- Training for staff to raise their awareness.
- Clearly defined and articulated procedures in place to challenge racism.
- Support for those who face racism.

In addition to the above recommendations, we would suggest the following strategies as important in tackling homophobic and racist bullying:

- Having a standing agenda item on the school council.
- Eliciting the views of parents.
- Responding to individual incidents in a rigorous way to assess and address any trends that may be developing.

October 2006

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Memorandum submitted by The Association of Educational Psychologists

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This submission attempts to address some of the points raised in the terms of reference, paying particular attention to the section on tackling the problem of bullying in schools and the wider community. It centres on two approaches to bullying that are well supported by research evidence to be effective in preventing and dealing with bullying in schools. The first is a multi-level approach, which is explained in this paper with some examples of activities. The second is a Restorative Approach that respects all individuals and provides a framework for opposing unacceptable behaviour, such as bullying.

2. INTRODUCTION

The Association of Educational Psychologists is a certificated Trade Union and professional association that represents 93% of Educational Psychologists in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The majority of Educational Psychologists work in Local Authorities providing advice and support for children and young people aged between three to 19 years.

3. A key part of the role of Educational Psychologists is to support children and young people who have social, emotional and/or behavioural issues at school that adversely impact on their ability to access the curriculum. These difficulties may, and often do arise because of bullying at school and in the wider community. As applied psychologists, Educational Psychologists have expertise in all aspects of child development, and are able to use their knowledge and skills to effect positive change for children, young people and their families. Educational Psychologists have knowledge and skills of social relationships, group dynamics and organisations and apply psychology to bring about change at a wider, systemic level that will benefit all the children and young people within the school.

4. Educational Psychologists are often requested to provide advice and support on bullying issues. This can be through i) training; ii) providing therapeutic support to individual children and young people; iii) helping the school to set up support systems and undertake a needs analysis; iv) advising on the school's anti-bullying policy, and related work.

5. EXTENT AND NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

The terms of reference for the submission asks how bullying should be defined. Bullying is commonly understood as aggressive behaviour that is intended to cause harm or distress, exists in a relationship in which there is an imbalance of power or strength and is repeated over time. Bullying may involve physical actions, spoken and written words, including text messages on mobile phones, or social isolation. Bullying is frequently indirect or subtle in nature, including the spreading of rumours.

6. D'Angelli found in a 1998 study that up to half of lesbians and gay men had experienced some form of bullying in school. In 2002, Adams, Cox and Dunstan reported on a growing body of research evidence in the UK suggesting that homophobic bullying is more severe than general bullying, and that homophobic bullying is not always taken as seriously as other forms of bullying by teachers. It is estimated that 40% of young gay people have attempted suicide, and that bullying is a major contributory factor.

7. SHORT AND LONG TERM EFFECTS

Research has found that the short-term effects of bullying on children and young people include:

- Loss of esteem and self confidence.
- Withdrawal from social situations.
- Inability to concentrate.
- Truancy.
- School phobia.
- Attempted suicide.

8. Long term effects of bullying have been found to include the following:

- Feelings of guilt and shame.
- Depression.
- Anxiety, including panic attacks.
- Fear of meeting strangers.
- Social isolation.
- Exceptional timidity (Elliot and Kilpatrick, 1994).

9. TACKLING THE PROBLEM

Conflict resolution, peer mediation strategies and group therapy have all been shown to be relatively ineffective in preventing and resolving bullying issues. This is because bullying behaviour results from a power imbalance rather than deficits in social skills, in fact bullying involves highly developed social skills. It is also important to acknowledge that bullying behaviours are maintained by tangible and social reinforcers. Both of these factors need to be considered when it comes to developing and implementing interventions that aim to deal with bullying.

10. The two approaches that will be looked at here are multi-level bullying intervention programmes and approaches based on Restorative Justice.

11. The Elton Report stated, “[. . .] research suggests that bullying not only causes considerable suffering to individual pupils but also has a damaging effect on school atmosphere.” (Department of Education and Science, 1989, pp 102–103). It therefore makes sense to tackle bullying at the systemic level of the school, as well as dealing with situations at the level of the individual.

12. One of the oldest and most researched bullying prevention programmes is that devised by Olweus (1983). The main goal of the programme was to make the school a safe and positive learning environment for all children. An important premise of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Programme is that bullying behaviour can be checked and re-directed into more pro-social directions through restructuring of the social environment.

13. More recent interventions have built on the work of Olweus, and it appears that one of the most effective approaches to bullying involves multi-level strategies that target bullies, victims, bystanders, families and communities. Work by Larson, Smith and Furlong (2002) found that for a multi-level approach to be effective, it must include the following:

- School-level interventions designed to change the overall culture of the school. This could be undertaking a needs assessment, and the planning and co-ordination of strategies.
- Classroom-level interventions targeting teachers and other adults and including the integration of bullying prevention material into the curriculum.
- Student-level interventions to target individual and small groups of victims and bullies. This could include teaching students to recognise and report bullying and how to intervene to help victims, developing social competence by changing views and attitudes through interactive teaching approaches and helping victims to recognise attributes that place them at risk of being bullied.

For this multi-level approach to be successful, involvement of parents/carers is vital, and all of the interventions must be fully implemented. Partial implementation of strategies has found to be ineffective.

14. The second approach to bullying that will be covered in this submission is Restorative Justice. This is a process through which all stakeholders come together to resolve how to deal with the consequences of bullying behaviour and its implications for the future. At its core are the values of healing, moral learning, community participation and caring, respectful dialogues, forgiveness, responsiveness, apology and making amends.

15. Re-integrative shaming is pivotal to an approach to bullying based on the principles of restorative justice. Re-integrative shaming is where disapproval is communicated within a continuum of respect for the bully. The bully is treated as a “good person” who has done a wrong deed. This is different from the stigmatization form of shame, where the bully is treated as a “bad person”, and is less likely to be perceived as someone who can change his or her ways.

16. This type of approach is integral to behaviour management strategies. In Japanese classrooms, Lewis (1989) identified four principles of behaviour management in Japanese classrooms that had a positive impact on the prevention of bullying behaviour. These were:

- Minimising the impression of teacher control.
- Delegating control to children.
- Providing plentiful opportunities for children to acquire a “good girl” or “good boy” identity.
- Avoiding the attribution that children intentionally misbehave.

The Association of Educational Psychologists is pleased to have had the opportunity to contribute to the Select Committee’s inquiry and will be pleased to provide any further evidence, in written form or orally, that the Committee feels may be of benefit or interest to it.

Memorandum submitted by the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL)

A. INTRODUCTION

1. The Association of School and College Leaders represents 13,000 members of leadership teams in maintained and independent schools and colleges throughout the UK. Bullying in schools is clearly of major interest to our members at the institutional level and out of their concern for the education system as a whole.
2. Leaders and staff in schools and colleges take bullying very seriously. We know the negative impact it has on children's lives.
3. Bullying in all its forms is unacceptable and schools and colleges are both proactive and reactive in dealing with this issue.
4. However, bullying is to be found in all walks of life and in all institutions. It is not exclusive to young people or just schools and colleges, though it is of particular concern when vulnerable and immature people are affected, which of course includes children in school. It is therefore important that a clear definition of bullying is set which allows adults in and associated with schools to discriminate between the ebb and flow of relationships and true bullying.
5. Bullying is the repeated and deliberate bad treatment of one person by another over a length of time. The treatment can consist of verbal abuse, unpleasant or derogatory comments, threats, name calling or physical abuse. It can be carried out by an individual or a group. It is one group or individual attempting to assert power and control over another.
6. There are many other definitions which could be used but all identify that the unacceptable actions of others are hurtful, deliberate and repeated.
7. In the ebb and flow of a relationship friends can fall out or make new friends and this can impact on other students who are not sufficiently mature to accept and move on from this rejection. This applies more often to girls. Students need a set of skills to deal with these events and need another set of skills to deal with bullying. Schools use their pastoral systems and Personal, Social, Health and Career Education programmes (PSHCE) to provide opportunities for students to develop these skills. This learning should help them with developing their adult relationships. Schools try to work with parents and carers to help them support their children through these times.
8. Bullying is not something that can be stamped out forever. It can only be combated by a continuous process of educating, learning, identifying, modelling, using strategies and developing emotional intelligence. As the different year cohorts move through schools and colleges so leaders and staff continue this process.
9. ASCL considers that it is a human as well as a professional responsibility to show bullying to be unacceptable, but it is also essential that we have strategies to challenge and support the bully as well as support and nurture the victim.
10. Schools and colleges cannot carry this responsibility on their own. Parents and carers have a duty to educate and model behaviour which engenders robust emotional health and shows clearly that bullying is socially unacceptable. Sometimes students come from homes where this early and continual parental guidance is not available. This presents institutions with a difficult challenge that requires more help than they can provide.
11. We believe that key to a child's emotional well being and to their ability to reject bullying is their self esteem and self confidence. Schools work hard to develop and nurture these essential elements of an individual's self worth. Opportunities are designed to achieve this through the PSHCE curriculum, across the subject curriculum and through extra curricular activities. Staff are expected to value each child and model interactions and behaviour which demonstrates commitment to self worth.
12. We have organised our remarks as follows:
 - (a) Introduction
 - (b) Scale of bullying. How do we know?
 - (c) Strategies employed to combat bullying.
 - (d) Issues.
 - (e) Measures to improve anti bullying action in schools and colleges.

B. SCALE OF BULLYING. HOW DO WE KNOW?

13. Preventative measures are taken by school and college leaders to educate and inform students and parents about bullying issues. Members also use hard and soft data to ensure they have knowledge of bullying in their institutions. It is important that they know so that appropriate action can be taken using the anti bullying policy.

14. Schools and colleges operate on a set of values which accentuate respect, dignity and tolerance. These values underpin all that an institution does; with committed staff, governors and leaders a culture is created where students feel happy, safe and achieve.
15. Members employ a variety of means to both check the health of a school in terms of bullying and to identify any incidents of bullying.
16. Staff may refer concerns about behaviour in particular changes in behaviour which could indicate a student is being bullied. Pastoral staff, including support staff (those who are not teachers), also play a major role by knowing their students and related friendship groups and constantly monitoring the emotional wellbeing of their students.
17. Parents may also contact leaders with concerns about their children which could indicate bullying. Such contact is always taken seriously but often we are asked to act in a low key way because parents prefer that their child or others do not know of the contact. In these circumstances we do take action often citing our own concerns as a reason for our investigation into an issue.
18. Sometimes students self refer if they feel that they have a strong relationship with a member of staff. This cry for help is again always taken seriously and appropriate action taken. Other students may see bullying taking place and know that this will not be tolerated by the school and consequently tell a member of staff.
19. Other means of checking bullying include consultation with form councils and school council where the elected members are active in reporting concerns or perhaps problem areas around the school. Colleagues report that this is a useful means of gaining information.
20. Further means of gathering information include focus groups and the use of regular questionnaires.
21. This is not an exhaustive list of means employed for gathering information but it illustrates school leaders' commitment to making bullying uncool.

C. STRATEGIES EMPLOYED

22. Schools and college leaders employ a wide range of strategies to combat bullying. There is no one size fits all solution, each school finds robust methods to educate about bullying, and to identify and stop it.
23. New secondary students require an induction period during which they receive clear messages about their new school and its expectations. Students will have come from varying primary schools often much smaller in size than the average secondary school. Mid year admission students also need a clear induction programme which includes the schools expectations of behaviour and anti bullying procedures.
24. Head teachers and leadership teams are crucial to the success of an anti bullying policy. Whilst all staff are expected to implement the policy it is the senior team who give a clear steer and message about bullying. If clear and fair actions are taken and there are no reprisals then the students, parents and staff have confidence and power to deal with issues.
25. Parents are encouraged to work with secondary schools and colleges on their child's admission by talks, newsletters, information leaflets and communication with our institutions. Parent partnership is essential as when they and schools work together most problems can be solved.
26. The form tutor and head of year pastoral relationships are important to parents for communication especially in a large education institution. They are also a point of contact and information for the students, who receive quality listening time from adults who can advise students and provide strategies and support.
27. A range of staff who can provide students and parents with more specialised help now work in schools and colleges. Mentors, counsellors, education welfare officers (EWOs), youth workers school based police officers (SBPOs), health professional and others can be found in many institutions. They add to the school's response to the *Every Child Matters* (ECM) agenda and contribute to its anti bullying ethos. For example, an appropriate SBPO professional is a powerful force who is seen as a figure of authority inside and outside school, again reinforcing the anti bullying message. Mediation skills are a highly useful means of solving bullying issues.
28. Restorative justice is one successful strategy used not just in bullying issues. It sends a message to the bully and their associates and to the school community that bullies will be held responsible for their actions and will be expected to make restoration.
29. Schools who can buy in mental health professionals report the success of this action. However many schools cannot afford to provide this type of support.
30. Clear communication pathways which are quick and responsive to bullying concerns are established in schools and colleges. Investigations into allegations of bullying need to be swift and appropriate action taken, including communication with parents.

31. Assemblies are used to reinforce the positive message about achievement, self-esteem and self-confidence. They also are used to convey our institutions' values and expectations especially around bullying.
32. PSHCE and other student personal development programmes are devised to emphasise the school and society's message about value of the individual and strategies to deal with growing up including social and emotional well being. The Social, Emotional and Behavioural Skills (SEBS) curriculum is in the early stages of development but information suggests that it helps students to deal with emotional issues.
33. Nurture groups and reactivate groups of students are proving useful in using peer pressure and social dynamics to change students' behaviour. In some areas this is supported by the education welfare service and youth service. Where there is good practice these groups build up students self esteem and self confidence.
34. Personalised timetables can also be used judiciously to help students improve their self worth where they feel that they are achieving and of value rather than failing in school.
35. Schools and colleges set out clear expectations of behaviour in codes of conduct, learning charters, learning contracts, home/school agreements and similar documents. Where students break these codes appropriate action is taken.

D. ISSUES

36. Some dysfunctional families model unacceptable and anti social behaviour which is adopted by their children. This behaviour can promote and condone bullying. As mentioned earlier this provides a major challenge to schools and colleges. School and college leaders do not accept this behaviour, but need more support from external agencies to reinforce this stance.
37. The ECM agenda is still developing and some agencies are more engaged than others in working with schools to provide joined up action. It is important that there is information sharing and that professionals drawn from various agencies work together to support the child. This is not always the case.
38. School leaders report a worrying increase in child mental health problems. Generally schools and colleges are not trained to deal with such vulnerable and damaged children. Whilst some students' behaviour can be explained by adolescence some is beyond the experience and skills of school staff. More accessible help is needed, more quickly.
39. Cyber bullying is of great concern to school leaders. Mobile phone and internet bullying is extremely difficult to combat as it is often done outside school, sometimes by individuals who do not belong to the school community. Even where there are bans on mobile phones in school students often supported by parents are often able to circumvent them. Lost and borrowed phones add to the problem in finding the bullies. Chat rooms, blogs and personal web sites also exacerbate the problem. Schools and colleges have strict policies about cyber access and monitor internet and email usage but students often find ways to evade access control and the magnitude of the task makes continuous real time monitoring impossible. Parents must take responsibility for cyber bullying that takes place outside school and know what their children are accessing and saying on line.
40. Bullying brought into school from outside is always difficult to deal with. Schools are part of a wider community where there are family and friend interactions. Members are being expected to deal with bullying issues which arise from outside school often involving individuals over whom school leaders have no jurisdiction. Support from external agencies is then required and not always forthcoming.
41. As parents, we all love our children but sometimes we need to challenge and question our child's interpretation of alleged bullying. A particular child's story may not be the whole truth, yet some parents will always believe their child. School leaders always investigate and seek the truth. Sometimes the outcome of an investigation is not the outcome parents want to hear. The parent who will not accept the schools' findings can become irrational and threatening.
42. Sadly, there are occasions when students make malicious allegations about others who they say have bullied them. Our zero tolerance of bullying can present an unhappy student with an easy way to be vindictive. Generally school leaders can recognise this and take appropriate action against a mischievous claim.
43. ASCL feels that making anti bullying week a one week occasion gives the wrong message to students and parents. Bullying is unacceptable at any time and schools' curriculum and strategies ensure that this is emphasised throughout the year. An event for which students are encouraged to paint their faces and hair blue does not give anti bullying the gravitas that it deserves. Signing an anti bullying charter is unnecessary as schools are committed to a set of values and mission which do not tolerate bullying.
44. Staff development in dealing with bullying is always welcome and ASCL would be pleased to support this, especially in relation to the skills and experience which support staff professionals bring into our institutions.

45. In mid year admissions and admissions appeals parents can often cite bullying as the reason for leaving a school. On investigation many colleagues find that there is no evidence to support the claim. The damage to school reputations is unacceptable, especially as the school has no way of defending itself in this process.

E. MEASURES TO IMPROVE ANTI BULLYING ACTION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

46. The Anti-Bullying Alliance needs to win the hearts and minds of secondary heads and senior leaders.
47. Further development is needed in the ECM agenda to ensure all appropriate agencies work together and share information.
48. The supply pool of professionals other than teachers needs to be developed.
49. Investment in resources for schools and colleges concerning self esteem and self confidence would be useful.
50. Development of inter agency solutions, eg reactivate groups, would be useful.
51. Schools and colleges should be asked to identify what type of professional development is needed to help staff to combat bullying. Efforts should then be made to meet these requests.
52. Schools need help to deal with cyber bullying.
53. Mental health issues need to be investigated in school and provide appropriate support needs to be provided for our members.
54. Some parents need help to develop appropriate parenting skills.
55. There needs to be a clear recognition of the difference between bullying and friendship break down.
56. Though there are particular failures, schools and colleges are doing an excellent job in fighting bullying. This should be recognised and good practice built on.

October 2006

Memorandum submitted by the National Union of Students (NUS)

NATIONAL UNION OF STUDENTS

The National Union of Students (NUS) is a voluntary membership organisation comprising a confederation of local student representative organisations in colleges and universities throughout the United Kingdom, which have chosen to affiliate. We have nearly 750 constituent members—virtually every college and university in the country. NUS represents the interests of around five million students in further and higher education throughout the United Kingdom. It provides research, representation, campaign work, training and expert advice for individual students and students' unions.

NUS LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANS (LGBT) CAMPAIGN

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans (LGBT) Campaign is one of four autonomous Liberation Campaigns within NUS (along with the Black Students' Campaign, the Women's Campaign and the Disabled Students' Campaign). These liberation campaigns seek to represent and empower individuals who experience disadvantage and discrimination in terms of status and opportunity because they belong to a particular demographic group.

NUS LGBT Campaign holds two conferences each year, attended by delegates from students' union LGBT societies who elect the National LGBT committee and pass policy to act upon. NUS LGBT fights for the rights of LGBT students and the wider LGBT community and is the nationally recognised representative voice for LGBT students. Through the work undertaken, NUS LGBT provides support to LGBT societies in students' unions and organises campaigns, training and networks at local and national levels. NUS LGBT Campaign is committed to campaigning for improvements in the lives of LGBT people, and this includes fighting for fair and equal access to further and higher education.

INTRODUCTION

NUS members are students' unions who represent students in further and higher education. Therefore the focus in this response is on the experiences of LGBT people who have succeeded in reaching further and higher education despite experiencing homophobia at secondary school. Particular attention has been given to the ongoing consequences of homophobic bullying and heterosexism on individuals' physical, mental and social wellbeing. The ways in which schools deal with, or fail to deal with, homophobic bullying and the

ways in which they could do this better are addressed. This submission reflects policy passed at NUS LGBT Campaign Conferences and the experiences of five LGBT students who we interviewed in detail about their time at school. We use quotes from their case studies throughout to illustrate our points.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NUS LGBT Campaign believes that:

- Bullying should be defined in relation to the experiences of the person it affects. It is any action taken which makes a person feel intimidated, excluded, devalued or unsafe.
- Homophobic bullying is a constant presence in schools and colleges and takes numerous forms, including verbal and physical attacks, taunts and theft, and it can be initiated by both teachers and pupils.
- Victims of homophobic bullying are not necessarily LGBT, but may be perceived to be, or are bullied because of their association with LGBT people.
- Those who do not fulfil or follow expected gender roles and patterns are frequently rejected by their peers. NUS LGBT Campaign regards this as transphobia, which usually hinges on a perceived difference in an individual's appearance or behaviour. Frequently, trans⁹ young people are subject to the same discrimination, disadvantage and bullying as lesbian, gay and bisexual young people. Often bullying is based on a culture of intolerance of diversity of gender expression, and this must be taken into account when addressing the subject of homophobic bullying.
- Homophobic bullying can have serious implications on the academic achievement of young people, and their progression into higher or further education. Young people who have been bullied suffer from poor physical and mental health as a direct result of their experiences. The effects of homophobic bullying can continue into adulthood.
- Schools have a responsibility for the moral as well as the academic education of those in their charge. Schools in England and Wales have a duty of care to ensure the safety and to protect the emotional well-being of every person in their care (Children's Act 1998). The legacy of Section 28 has compromised teachers willingness and ability to fulfil this duty.

NUS recommends that:

- Education should be inclusive and recognise diversity.
- Comprehensive and inclusive anti-homophobic bullying policies should be implemented in all schools.
- All new teachers undergo mandatory training on issues of diversity and equality.
- Regular training days for all teachers to refresh their understanding of diversity and equality issues.
- The discussion about LGBT people be included throughout the curriculum in order to challenge heterosexism.

THE EXTENT AND NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

1.0 *How bullying should be defined*

Homophobic bullying manifests itself in a wide range of ways—from physical attacks, to verbal abuse, to exclusionary or isolating behaviour. The students we spoke to had experienced physical violence, verbal taunts, theft and/or destruction of property, and being the subject of constant “jokes”. NUS LGBT Campaign defines bullying as any action taken which makes another feel intimidated, excluded, or unsafe. We believe that bullying has a hugely adverse effect on young people's academic achievement and social, physical and mental wellbeing.

1.1 *The extent of homophobic bullying*

Whilst few statistics exist detailing the extent to which homophobic bullying occurs, there is plentiful anecdotal evidence which suggests that homophobic bullying is endemic in our schools, and this reflects a worrying trend of intolerance. All of our respondents acknowledged that homophobic bullying in some form had taken place in their school, and several spoke of it as a “constant” presence in their lives.

⁹ NUS LGBT Campaign uses the word trans as an umbrella term to refer to the trans community as a whole. Trans covers all those people who self-define as such; for example, this definition may include people who self-define as transsexual, transgender, transvestite or genderqueer.

Homophobic bullying does not only affect LGBT children and young people, but those who are perceived to be “different” or who are friends with “different” people.

Pete

“A lot of students at my school were bullied for being “gay” despite many of them being straight, except for myself, [. . .] it wasn’t just me that got bullied for being gay. My best friend who was straight used to get bullied for being gay too, just because he was friends with me. A lot of things were “gay”, but because I was confused about my sexuality at school and not sure of who I was, I didn’t come out. But still, this didn’t stop the bullies”.

Bullying is not only carried out by pupils but by teachers. This can take the form of outright homophobia:

Chris

“In my school the bullying was verbal and constant. I went to a Boys Grammar School and even some of the teachers would make comments about homosexuality (eg ‘You don’t want to be a “woopsy” do you?’).”

Pupils can become the targets of homophobic bullies for numerous reasons. Kate was bullied for the way that she expressed her gender through her appearance:

Kate

“In my school it was always verbal, and with me personally it was all about the way I looked. I know others who had a lot of verbal abuse about the way they walked, talked, their taste in pencil case etc. This was mostly the boys though.

Anna was made to feel isolated and alone by the language and comments used by other young people in her school. Despite never being attacked physically or verbally, she sees this as having been detrimental to her self-image and preventing her “coming out”.

2. SHORT AND LONG TERM EFFECTS

2.1 *The effect of bullying on academic achievement, physical and mental health, and social and emotional wellbeing*

NUS LGBT Campaign believes that homophobia experienced in school can have a severe detrimental affect on the ability of young people to enter further and higher education. The damaging effect of bullying can endure long after it occurs. This can have long-lasting implications for the mental health of LGBT people and can damage their ability to access and succeed in education. LGBT young people are far more likely to leave school at 16 rather than continue with their education, as a result of bullying.¹⁰ Homophobic attitudes at all levels of education leave a lasting effect on all young people, including heterosexual young people. Attitudes developed when young can last a lifetime.

2.1.1 Academic achievement

All respondents felt that homophobic bullying was detrimental to their academic achievement. Rather than being able to learn in a safe and constructive environment they had to contend with abuse from their peers, which often went unchallenged by teachers, and made academic work considerably more difficult.

Mike

“I had a few bad weeks, and it really affected my GCSE grades in one subject, which was mostly because the lessons were directly after PE when most of the bullying took place.”

Pete

“I didn’t do as well in my GCSEs as expected [. . .] but (thankfully) I wasn’t bullied at all in FE so I achieved really good results.”

Chris

“During my GCSEs I was an A*, A or B person. However, after coming out my grades dropped a lot lower.”

Anna highlighted the issue of being afraid to come out and the problems that this could cause. This illustrates how heterosexism can be damaging even when a young person is not being physically or verbally attacked.

Anna

“If I’d have felt able to come out to my friends then I think it would have helped me concentrate on my academic work more, instead of constantly worrying about people finding out.”

¹⁰ Rivers, I (2000) “Social Exclusion, Absenteeism And Sexual Minority Youth”, Support for Learning, 15 (1), 13–18.

2.1.2 Physical and mental health

There is clearly a correlation between experiencing homophobic bullying and suffering poor mental health. The isolation many young LGBT people feel as a result of heterosexism is compounded by homophobic attacks. Rates of suicide, depression and self-harm are considerably higher among LGBT young people compared with young people that are not LGBT. One report found that 40% of LGBT adults who have been bullied at school had attempted suicide on at least one occasion and 53% had contemplated self-harm as result of being bullied.¹¹ Our respondents highlighted the impact of bullying on their physical and mental health:

Mike

“I had a few quite bad depression bouts when I was in school.”

Pete

“I became very ill at school, and had a very low immune system. I saw a counsellor for two years as I became depressed. It got to the point where the bullying got so bad I look an overdose, and tried to commit suicide.”

Chris

“Since the bullying started, I gained nine stone in weight, and ended up with an eating disorder where I would constantly comfort eat. Also the thought of my mum finding out about my sexuality was frightening. Every time she would go out I would worry that another parent would tell her, so there was constant worry.”

Mike described the relationship between physical bullying and long-term emotional well-being:

Mike

“I was bullied both verbally and physically through years 9 and 10. This was instigated because I came out to someone I thought I could trust, but he blabbed it all over the bad groups of kids. I was only badly beaten once, leaving me with a couple of broken ribs. Naturally, these healed quite quickly, but the mental image and memories still remain.”

2.1.3 Social and emotional wellbeing

One of the most difficult aspects of schools for LGBT young people is “fitting in”. The perceived differences between them and other pupils, heightened by heterosexism, can make this very difficult.

Mike

“I was never really socially accepted in middle school [. . .] it was either being geeky or gay. That made me a bit of a social outcast to most groups.”

Pete

“I didn’t have many friends at school, so I became very isolated and lonely.”

Chris

“I did not go out and stayed at home as much as possible. Although I did have friends, I only met them in school and did not pursue friendship outside of school as I was afraid that the bullying would continue.”

The social and emotional well-being of a young LGBT person can be harmed by being distinguished from their peers as “different” or “alien”. Anna explains that she felt defined by her sexuality in other’s eyes, as it was not seen as “normal” by them.

Anna

“When I did eventually come out as bisexual in my second year of FE, my sexuality was always joked about and brought up into conversation. Although I was happy about my sexuality being known about, I hated that it was always talked about. I was made to feel abnormal, and although my sexuality was accepted, the fact that people made a big deal of it made me feel like an outsider.”

Kate

“I think the worst part was that to an ignorant young straight person you’re a weird alien thing.”

¹¹ Rivers, I (2001) “The Bullying of Sexual Minorities at School: its nature and long- term correlates”, *Educational and Child Psychology*, 18 (1), 32–46.

2.2 *Whether and how the effects of being bullied persisted into later life*

Homophobic bullying can ruin lives. So much of a young person's confidence revolves around their identity and being accepted by others. If, because of their identity, they are not accepted, this can lead to feelings of worthlessness. Those who suffered physical and verbal attacks do not forget them when they leave school. Memories of bullying and harassment at school can affect confidence levels and adversely affect social and academic achievement later in life.

Mike

"The mental image and memories of their attacks on me still remain."

Pete

"I spent years in counselling as a result of the bullying I experienced in school."

The experiences of young LGBT people who have been bullied at school can affect the extent to which they feel a part of mainstream society in adulthood:

Kate

"I got upset obviously. Unfortunately the result was that I now have quite a vile dislike of straight culture."

3. TACKLING THE PROBLEM

3.1 *How schools deal with homophobic bullying*

3.1.1 How schools fail to help pupils

We constantly come into contact with students who tell us that many teachers do not know how to deal with homophobic bullying. One of the most recently cited causes of this uncertainty is a lack of clarity about the status of Section 28 and its implications on the activities of teachers. It is very clear that the damaging effects of this piece of legislation continue despite its repeal. Whilst some schools have, and implement, anti-bullying policies which allow pupils to be punished for homophobic bullying, very few schools proactively tackle the issue of homophobia and heterosexism. This inaction means that the root cause of homophobic bullying is not being addressed.

Many young people felt that they were not taken seriously when they reported instances of homophobic bullying to their teachers. In addition pupils came up against outright homophobia from teachers or were blamed for causing the bullying by choosing to come out.

Mike

"My school basically turned a blind eye to the root cause: homophobia. They dealt with the bullying as best they could within their policy at the time, but often their punishments for the bullies was lines or detention—the punishment with the least effort involved. There were some other punishments that they threatened using, but actually never resorted to.

In my opinion, to just pose empty threats on a bully is like offering them *carte blanche*. If the school and management had actually carried out their threats it would have stopped sooner."

Pete

"A lot of the bullying took place in lessons, and the teacher's used to tell me to take no notice rather than sorting the issues out. The teachers said it was best for me to keep away from the bullies so I spent the last 18 months at school every break and lunchtime confined to the library.

One day in particular I remember this one guy who came up to me and said 'My cousin told me you're a faggot [. . .] you fucking faggot'. He was wearing a knuckle duster and punched me several times in the arm. When I reported it to the school a couple of days later they said I had no evidence despite the massive black bruise on my arm. When I pointed him out in assembly to my form tutor she didn't do anything about it.

My sister threatened to speak to the school governor and LA, it was only then they tried to intervene. But after a few stern words with the bullies, it continued. I felt like the teachers saw me as a whiner and moaner. They also didn't take the homophobic bullying seriously: when I confided in one teacher that I thought I was gay or bi, she told me I only had myself to blame for the bullying."

Chris

"At school many of the teachers were homophobic as well as the pupils. There were not a lot of people to go to."

Kate

"My school didn't deal with it. I think most of the time teachers dismiss it as idle teasing or don't even know its going on. The only time something was done was when I informed one of the teachers that if a certain person didn't stop doing what he was doing I was going to beat the living daylight out of him. That worked."

3.1.2 Best practice

A zero tolerance approach to homophobic bullying, and visibility of LGBT issues in the curriculum were both cited as factors in contributing to a more inclusive experience of education:

Mike

“My latest experience of education at my college was great. I was totally accepted and not bullied once, except for my first day. They made it perfectly clear to all students that bullying would not be tolerated, and that everyone only had one chance. I remember on my first day some guys from my school made some remarks about me being gay and joining the YMCA, and a tutor overheard the remarks, and the next thing I knew the guys were in with the Assistant Principal being told that their behaviour would not be tolerated, and all this happened without me mentioning a word to anyone!”

Kate

“My school did do HIV peer counselling which dealt with gay couples—I thought that was very good.”

3.1.3 Recommendations for improvements

NUS LGBT Campaign calls for a comprehensive plan of action to tackle the culture of homophobia and heterosexism in schools. Homophobic bullying is a direct result of a culture which marginalises the experiences of LGBT people and privileges and celebrates heterosexuality, and must be dealt with as part of a wider scheme to encourage tolerance and celebration of diversity of people in schools. We asked our respondents to make recommendations for improvements based on their experiences:

Anna

“I think that presenting a positive view of LGBT people in schools could have helped a lot, and that if this is done in schools, ‘gay’ will be less of a playground joke.”

Mike

“Schools and management should carry out the threats they make to bullies.”

Pete

“I think that if the school had implemented an active anti-bullying charter that was displayed in every classroom, and made it perfectly clear on it that sexist/racist/homophobic etc abuse would not be tolerated and made sure that all the students knew what the sanctions were, for example suspension, this would have maybe deterred some of the bullies.”

NUS LGBT Campaign calls for:

- Comprehensive and inclusive anti-bullying policies that include homophobic and transphobic bullying to be implemented in all schools. These should include stipulation that all instances of bullying should be dealt with on a record and report basis. This is necessary to fully understand the extent of bullying in schools, and to ensure that instances of homophobic bullying, as well as other forms of bullying, are not ignored. However, it must be recognised that this “firefighting” approach is not enough to tackle the heterosexist discrimination suffered by LGBT young people in schools.
- Mandatory training on issues of diversity and equality for all new teachers. This should draw on case studies of children and young people who have experienced homophobic bullying. The lives of LGBT people should be specifically considered, for example, when creating and delivering lesson plans on social issues, sexual health and relationships.
- Regular training days for all teachers to refresh their understanding of diversity and equality issues.
- The inclusion of discussion about LGBT people throughout the curriculum in order to challenge heterosexism. It is essential that the lives of LGBT people are “normalised”, and in order to do this, they must be included in lesson plans at all levels of education.

Memorandum submitted by The Childrens Legal Centre

HOW BULLYING SHOULD BE DEFINED

There needs to be a clear definition—preferably in statute—of “bullying” in the school context. It has been widely accepted for a long time that bullying is far more than physical or verbal abuse or threats. Isolation from one’s peer group is a common type of bullying and particularly difficult to detect and counter.

With the advance of technology “bullying” should be defined to include contact (or lack of contact) by mobile phone/text and e-mail.

Any definition should be drawn to include the situation where pupils are bullied by teachers and other staff, as well as by their peers.

THE EXTENT AND NATURE OF THE PROBLEM OF BULLYING IN SCHOOLS

The Childrens Legal Centre operates two education law contracts with the Legal Services Commission. One of these is to provide telephone advice as part of the National Education Line. The line is accessible to children, parents, carers and professionals working with children. We receive a large number of queries concerning bullying in school. The queries are usually from the parents or carers. Most of the cases we deal with have a bullying element.

We believe that other education law advice services (eg ACE, IPSEA) have similar experience to the Centre. The statistics point to bullying in school continuing to be a huge problem. The cases which come to our attention are likely to be the tip of the iceberg.

Many victims of bullying are afraid to confide in teachers or in their parents. They fear that reporting the bullying will make things worse. They have no confidence that the school will be able to protect them from the bullies. Case studies from the Centre suggest that this fear may be justified.

It is easier for schools to deal with the victims of bullying and their families than the perpetrators. Consequently the solutions proposed end up as a penalty for the victims eg changing them into different form or teaching groups away from the bullies.

There is still a significant number of school managers who refuse to accept that bullying occurs in their school. Reports of bullying in such schools are consistently played down. Victims who report bullying are treated as hysterics, or possibly even liars. It is even more difficult to obtain a sympathetic hearing when the allegation of bullying is made against a member of staff.

The penalties imposed on bullies by schools do not always fit the crime or act as a deterrent. The Childrens Legal Centre has found examples of bullies who received only one or two day fixed-term exclusions for a serious physical assault. In spite of the requirement for each school to have an anti-bullying policy, there appears to be little consistency in the way different schools treat bullies.

Homophobic and racist bullying is still part of school culture. It is more pronounced in some geographical areas of the country. Most schools now have specific provision in their discrimination and behaviour policies to deal with such issues. By and large they are dealt with more severely than bullying without these elements.

Many looked after children are frequent victims of bullying. This may arise because lack of funds reduces their ability to fit in with prevalent culture.

It is still unclear whether the drive to increase tolerance through the teaching of PHSE and citizenship has had any positive impact.

There is no doubt that victims of bullying—whether at school or elsewhere—often go on to bully others. Some pupils bully others because of their own lack of self-esteem and self-worth. Pupils with special educational needs may become victims of bullying but may also be bullies. There does seem to be a “victim posture” which attracts bullying. This may be due to the pupil’s special needs or circumstances, or may come about after being bullied. The Centre recently encountered an example of this. A pupil with special educational needs transferred to secondary school and immediately became the victim of several groups of bullies. Despite the school’s efforts, he was physically assaulted and verbally abused every day. After only three weeks at the school he is so frightened that he has become school phobic.

SHORT AND LONG-TERM EFFECTS

Bullying reduces self-esteem and creates feelings of pressure and hopelessness. It is impossible for a child to perform to his or her best ability academically when faced with daily bullying from other pupils or from teachers.

Many victims of bullying are frequently absent from school due to real, or exaggerated, physical illness. In the worst cases, pupils become school phobic—unable to cope with the school environment at all. Some spend long periods of time out of education. Sometimes parents feel that they have to remove their children from a school because the school has not protected their child from bullying. It may not be possible to find an alternative school quickly, so the child loses important parts of their education. Parents may feel forced to home educate their children in order to protect them. There have been examples of parents being prosecuted due to the child's non-attendance in these circumstances.

Truancy can also be a sign that a child is being bullied in school.

Bullying can result in psychological trauma that lasts a lifetime. In one case the Centre represents a twenty-one-year-old man who is still suffering from clinical depression due to severe bullying and unsympathetic treatment at school.

Bullies may receive a short-term boost of confidence through having power over a victim. However, in the long run, there will be no enhancement of self-esteem. If schools impose penalties for the bullying behaviour in the form of exclusions, a bully's education will be disrupted, and his or her academic achievement reduced. Exclusion from school is often the precursor to involvement in the criminal justice system.

TACKLING THE PROBLEM

Government policy on bullying is aimed:

- At encouraging victims to report bullying.
- Educating pupils so that they recognise bullying is wrong—avoid it and discourage the behaviour in others.
- Requiring schools to have bullying policies in place and be aware of the problem.
- Giving schools greater powers to punish bullies—particularly by exclusion.

The difficulty with all the approaches to date is that parents have no effective remedy when schools fail to implement bullying policies and/or protect the pupils.

The existing complaints system—to governors, to the local authority and then to the DfES is long-winded and rarely effective. The Local Government Ombudsman has no jurisdiction over the internal management of schools. The courts have been reluctant to find schools negligent when they fail to protect pupils from bullying.

The Director of the Children's Legal Centre, Professor Carolyn Hamilton, is legal advisor to the Children's Commissioner for England. His office recently considered the issue of bullying and produced a report. The main recommendation of this report is the setting up of an independent tribunal system to consider intractable bullying disputes between parents and schools. The Committee may wish to consider his report if it has not been submitted separately.

It is important for the parents of victims to communicate their concerns to the school as quickly as possible. Schools, in turn, should always take a parent seriously. There are no magic wands, so parents may need to be patient as the school investigates and instigates measures to ease the problem. At the same time they need to encourage the child to believe that things will get better. Parents should not be discouraged if schools do not take their concerns seriously at first. They should enlist help from medical and counselling services whenever possible.

It is very distressing to learn that your child has been bullying other pupils. The natural reaction of parents is denial. Schools should be aware of this when communicating with parents. It is important that school responses are measured, and take account of the needs of the victim and the bully. Dialogue with parents to identify what help their child may need is vital, so that the cause of the behaviour can be identified.

There are still major areas of difficulty in the joining up of support services. Social Services are understaffed in most areas. Social workers respond to only the most serious child protection cases. Our experience at the Centre suggests that it is rare for the police to prosecute pupils for harassment or assault on school premises. On occasion, schools avoid reporting potential criminal behaviour to the police, because of the affect on the reputation of the school. Even when the police are involved, the victim may be too frightened or too emotionally fragile to take part in the prosecution process. GP's vary in the level of support they provide to victims of bullying. When the medical professionals are supportive of victims or of bullies there is no certainty that their opinions will be given proper weight by the school.

The responsibility of a school to confront and punish bullying has to be limited geographically and in time. Schools do not have the resources to police the local area in order to prevent bullying. It would not be appropriate for them to do so. However, there should be a responsibility on schools to deal with bullying when it occurs on school buses, and immediately outside the school premises at the beginning and end of a

school day. Schools cannot ignore bullying that takes place in the community, if that bullying also affects relationships within the school itself. When a school becomes aware of such behaviour, it may be best to use an outside agency such as the police to impose sanctions, as the school cannot investigate allegations properly when incidents have occurred in the wider community after school hours.

Strategies to tackle bullying effectively should include:

- Ongoing education to influence attitudes to/tolerance of others regardless of differences in social class, race, sexual orientation etc.
- Systems which give victims non-threatening opportunities to report bullying.
- Reassurance that reports of bullying will be taken seriously by those in authority.
- Consistency in the way bullying is dealt with.
- A more effective complaints system accessible by parents/carers and pupils.
- Alternative education provision for those traumatised—temporary or permanent.

September 2006

Memorandum submitted by Luke Roberts, Lambeth Children and Young Peoples' Service

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This submission focus on the use of restorative approaches, as a way of reducing bullying in schools. The submission includes both some of the philosophy of restorative Justice and how it has adapted in the education context, as well as the specific models used called restorative approaches. The submission used evidence gathered from the Youth Justice Board evaluation of restorative justice in schools (2004).

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SUBMITTER

Luke Roberts is the Restorative Approaches Co-ordinator (RAC) for Lambeth Children and Young Peoples' Service.

The role of the RAC is to implement the philosophy of restorative justice within the context of the primary, secondary, special schools and Pupil Referral Units. The main aim of restorative approaches is to develop systems that focus on the inter-personal and social network damage that occurs when bullying takes place. This has meant facilitating a number of meetings in a restorative way to support pupils, parents and staff when in conflict.

The role has meant working with Police, Youth Offending Team's Educational psychologists, Education consultants and advisors, voluntary organisations and Health specialists.

Luke has also set-up a London borough forum for Local Authorities wishing to implement restorative approaches.

Luke has a post-graduate diploma in Legal Practice.

EXTENT AND NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

1. *How bullying should be defined*

1.1 Bullying is often defined as having a repetitive element based on aggressive and coercive behaviour.

I would like to offer an alternative definition:

Bullying is behaviour that causes harm and has an effect on the injured party by reducing their self-esteem.

1.2 This definition also includes types of bullying that are more strategically used by girls such as gossip and social isolation techniques. (Boys are twice as likely to use physical violence than girls however girls three times more likely to use gossip and social isolation YJB 2004). Any definition should also include group bullying, which is often between friendship groups as they collapse. In addition bullying may not be intentional if the perpetrator does not perceive as harmful to the victim.

1.3 In addition bullying can be a one-off incident if it causes in the fear of repercussion in the injured party, this may either be by the perpetrator or group/friends. In essence this means that once a primary incident has happened low level intimidating behaviour maybe enough to keep the fear of re-occurrence alive in the victimised party.

2. *The extent and nature of the problem of bullying in schools*

2.1 The level of bullying statistically has remained one in four pupils over the last few years. However bullying in schools is not as clear cut as in other setting eg victim/offender criminal behaviour or in the workplace. The role of victim and perpetrator are not static roles in low-level bullying incidents, where the young people can move between role over a period of time. Each person may have harmed the other and although brought to the schools attention this is only a snapshot of the entire conflict between the two parties.

2.2 The introduction of the mobile-phone has created a dimension to bullying, focus in recent years was on happy-slapping i.e random acts of violence record on mobilephones to be relived after the initial incident and shared later with the group. The use of mobile-phone videoing means that bullying can move from the private sphere between the parties involved to the public sphere as the speed of information means that other pupils may view the incident which compounds the victimisation.

2.3 A key challenge is for schools to move away from only the punitive process of punishment and exclusion as this only replaces individual aggression with institutional aggression. Often school will deny bullying happens to protect school reputation, or will refer only to the behaviour policy. Often the exclusion process merely displaces the problem rather resolves it.

3. *The extent of homophobic and racist bullying*

3.1 The extent of homophobic bullying is systemic with homophobic language part of common usage. Regardless of the actual sexuality of the injured party the level of tolerance shown by pupils and more importantly staff allows this type of low-level bullying to persist.

3.2 Homophobic bullying is not so easily identifiable unless there are clear access points for further support, many young may be having an internal struggle with their sexual identity and may not have told their parents, this means that there are less social support structures unlike racist bullying.

3.3 The nature of racist bullying has moved on from white to black bullying as was prevalent with the influx of Caribbean's, it is worth mentioning at this point that a lot of parents in Lambeth still carry the scares of racist bullying from their own time in school and schools that do not recognise this can inflame a already volatile situation.

3.4 Racist bullying in a diverse borough such as Lambeth, often falls on the latest emigrant group such as Eastern Europeans, or groups that have remained closed for example the Somali groups in Lambeth are often seen as distinct from other African groups.

4. *Why some people become bullies and why some people are bullied*

4.1 Restorative Approaches focuses on the harm caused by bullying this is particularly important in the school context where the roles of the victim and bully can be inter-changed particularly with low-level bullying. The use of restorative approaches is effective for young people as they listened to impartially and are given the opportunity to tell there side of the story, including reasons for there actions and what they need to put the situation behind them. Also the approach emphasises the emotional impact that the incident has on both bully and victim, and where appropriate their parents and the school.

4.2 I am able if appropriate to take the Committee through the harm exercise used to illustrate the commonality between victim and bully.

4.3 From a criminological point there are particular types of victims eg where a new technology is available such as mobile phones this may increase young persons chances of being a victim. Likewise there maybe a particular type of behaviour that triggers bullies such as perceived disrespect by another pupil.

4.4 The levels of emotional articulation taught at schools have a clear impact on the levels of bullying and the reporting of bullying where young people are unable to express themselves in an emotionally healthy way there will be a strong correlation with bullying.

SHORT AND LONG-TERM EFFECTS

5. *The effect of bullying on academic achievement, physical and mental health, and social and emotional wellbeing*

5.1 The effect of bullying is most evident during the transition from Year 6 to Year 7. As young people are developing new social networks and Peer groups, the effects mean that young people can withdraw from school or be withdrawn from school by the parents. This type of social exclusion means pupils are falling behind on their academic achievement with few support mechanisms for the young person and their parents.

6. *Whether and how the effects of being bullied persist into adult life*

7. *The effects of bullying on those who bully*

Dependent, remorse or likely to develop strategies that become more criminal outside of education system.

TACKLING THE PROBLEM

8. *The Government policy on bullying*

8.1 The Government's policy on bullying has focused on exclusion as the means of addressing this type of behaviour in schools. However, a number of initiatives, such as the Healthy Schools Programme with its focus on emotional health and well-being, the introduction of the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) and the introduction of secondary SEAL in September 2007, all support the *Every Child Matters* agenda. Both local authorities and schools have consequently had to implement a holistic approach to support both victim and bully, as well as inquiring into the underlying causes of the situation. Unlike the Youth Justice Board, the DfES has not formally endorsed restorative justice as a means of supporting pupils in conflict. A document from the DfES, offering guidance on restorative approaches (and the models which could be implemented in schools with case studies) is necessary to give schools support. It is important that restorative approaches are not made compulsory as this is a process that can take up to three or four years to become part of the school culture and some schools may not be in a position to adopt the ethos.

9. *How schools deal with bullying*

9.1 (See Appendix 1 and 2)

9.2 Appendix 1 shows a model of bullying in schools based on the Youth Justice Board's evaluation of RJ in schools. At the bottom of the pyramid is low-level bullying such as name-calling, hitting and gossip. At this level, behaviour is inter-changeable with all participants capable of both inflicting and receiving harmful behaviour. The report notes a gender difference in the way boys and girls bully.

9.3 Where the bullying either intensifies or increases in frequency or both, this type of behaviour moves up the pyramid. At this point it is likely to be explicitly mentioned in a school behaviour or anti-bullying policy with the expectation that staff are able to intervene. Above this are major incidents where the pupils are either facing fixed or permanent exclusion because of the incident.

9.4 Appendix 2 shows how different restorative approaches can be used to reduce the escalation factor with bullying. The use of restorative approaches has been developed on a hierarchy of models:

- Restorative Conference—used for high level incidents, work with peer groups and parents and pupils facing exclusion.
- Staff mediation—where staff are able to mediate a situation between two pupils.
- Peer mediation—young people who have been taught mediation skills and are able to use them at lunch or play times.
- Restorative incident form—this has been piloted at two primary schools which allow staff to use reflective questions to find facts and feeling from pupils around an incident and identify pupil led solutions.

9.5 The use of circle-time, the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning and Second Steps in primary schools have helped to promote the development of restorative approaches as part the overall emotional literacy ethos in schools. It is also anticipated that the Social and Emotional Behaviour in School for secondary schools from the DfES in 2007 will have materials to support restorative approaches.

9.6 The use of a menu of approaches has allowed schools to pick and choose what skills set they would like to develop to meet the needs of their school community and introduce conflict resolution techniques. In primary schools this has been predominately Peer Mediation, with Staff Mediation training to complement the skills young people will be developing. In secondary schools emphasis has been on Staff Mediation and the development of the language of conflict resolution to reduce teacher-pupil conflict in the classroom.

9.7 The use of the restorative conference model has been used successfully to support pupils where they are facing permanent exclusion, in the most recent conference I facilitated was between a Year 10 pupil who had been excluded for 22 days after assaulting a head teacher. The conference involved the pupil, his mum, the head teacher and the deputy-head. The success of the conference at this level is based on support for all those involved, and an impartial facilitator. The restorative conference model is useful for including parents in the direct resolution as they have often also been affected by the harm caused to their child and where their child is the perpetrator they are able to show that they do not condone their behaviour. The conference model also allows for new communities of support to be built around young people, as when it is discovered that there has been a third party stirring between the pupils involved.

9.8 The use of these restorative models can now be taken-up by a wide variety of staff including Teaching Assistants, Learning Mentors, Lunch Time Supervisors, Teachers, Senior Leadership Team, Safer Schools Officers, to help create a restorative ethos where the damage to relationships and their repair take on a greater significance as has been implemented in schools in the London Boroughs of Lambeth and Lewisham, as well as other places outside London.

10. *How parents can help if their children are being bullied or are bullying others*

10.1 Teaching parents conflict-resolution-techniques is vital, so that they can role-model different strategies for dealing with conflict. This has happened in Lambeth by the restorative approaches co-ordinator delivering training as part of a parenting programme with the Behaviour and Education Support Team. Additionally, a parents' meeting was held at a primary school to discuss between parents and teachers the challenging behaviour in school. What came out of both groups was that parents need clear guidance on how to interact with the school and that they also need as many strategies as possible for supporting their child.

10.2 Parents need to be able to access support channels at the school. However, behaviour policies often refer directly to the Headteacher as the first point of contact to report bullying. To reduce conflict, guidance should also be given to parents on contacting Learning Mentors, or class tutors as these are the people most likely to monitor any allegations and also to determine whether the level of escalation makes it necessary for referral to the Senior Leadership Team.

10.3 A clear definition of what bullying is should be made available to parents to clarify when behaviour constitutes bullying.

11. *What support and guidance the DfES provides to schools and to those affected by bullying, and how effective they are*

11.1 The DfES guidance often tells young people to tell someone, but this is only effective if action is taken by the person. Guidance from the DfES must be regularly up-dated at least quarterly with new initiatives and practical ways to support young people such as keeping a diary, telling someone you trust in school, with various school staff that can support the young person such as Learning Mentors. In addition, DfES guidance should also recommend support offered at local authority level, for both schools and young people to support those affected by bullying.

12. *The role of other organisations, such as non-governmental groups, in providing support*

12.1 The role of non-governmental groups in providing support is always compromised by having to find funding. This is a major constraint on the level of support offered to young people and the ability to find new and creative ways of supporting both victims and perpetrators of bullying. In addition, commercial companies offering advice about reducing bullying through consultancy are in danger of creating unsustainable models that use up school finances and show little long-term benefits.

12.2 Victim Support should proactively advertise and develop its services in schools, as young people will then feel more confident in approaching a known organization. If they are victims of a crime, they can self-refer, rather than being referred via the Police.

12.3 Mediation services in England and Wales needs to be developed so that restorative approaches to support schools and local authorities can be offered to the school community.

13. *The extent to which support services are joined up across different government departments*

13.1 The knowledge that the Youth Justice Board has on Restorative Approaches could support the DfES in developing an educational guidance package to schools.

14. *To what extent schools can be responsible for bullying that takes place off their premises and how they can deal with it*

14.1 Schools should be placed with a greater duty of care so that they are responsible for pupils while they are in school uniform. If a school's duty of care extends only to the school gate, this abrogates responsibility for issues in school with pupils, which can then escalate outside school and vice versa. At present it is easy for some schools to wave accountability once pupils are off-site, thereby displacing the problem rather than resolving it where the school has knowledge of a situation.

14.2 Also school responsibility must include inter-school conflict which often happens at transport hubs, and shopping centres, where the Police are often called to deal with the situation. The lack of inter-school communication often means pupils are able to meet out of school hours to continue either victimising a single pupil from another school or where various groups enter into conflict with each other.

14.3 The YJB Restorative Justice in School evaluation (page 61) has a case study on an inter-school conflict resolved using the restorative conference. In addition, it was apparent that pupils had over-lapping relationships such as a girl being bullied in one school had cousins in a girl gang in another. The restorative conference allowed all the minor grievances to be aired as well as the major incident.

14.4 Schools and local authorities should work more closely with the Police, Community Safety Team and Transport services to be able to identify pupils via uniform. They should also create safe havens where pupils can go if they feel victimised after of before school, such as a local shop where staff can telephone the school.

14.5 Also the duty of care should be extended to schools where they are clearly aware of a bullying incident that extends into the local community but do not inform parents or local Police officers such as Safer Neighbourhood Teams.

15. *Whether particular strategies need to be used to tackle homophobic and racist bullying*

15.1 Racial incident monitoring is collected at the local authority level, however little or no data exists as to how these incidents are resolved. In addition, clear guidance needs to be given to schools about racism, as abuse by, for example, Caribbean pupils towards African pupils may not be seen as racist, if it is seen as a Black issue.

15.2 Particularly important to racist and homophobic bullying are three key issues:

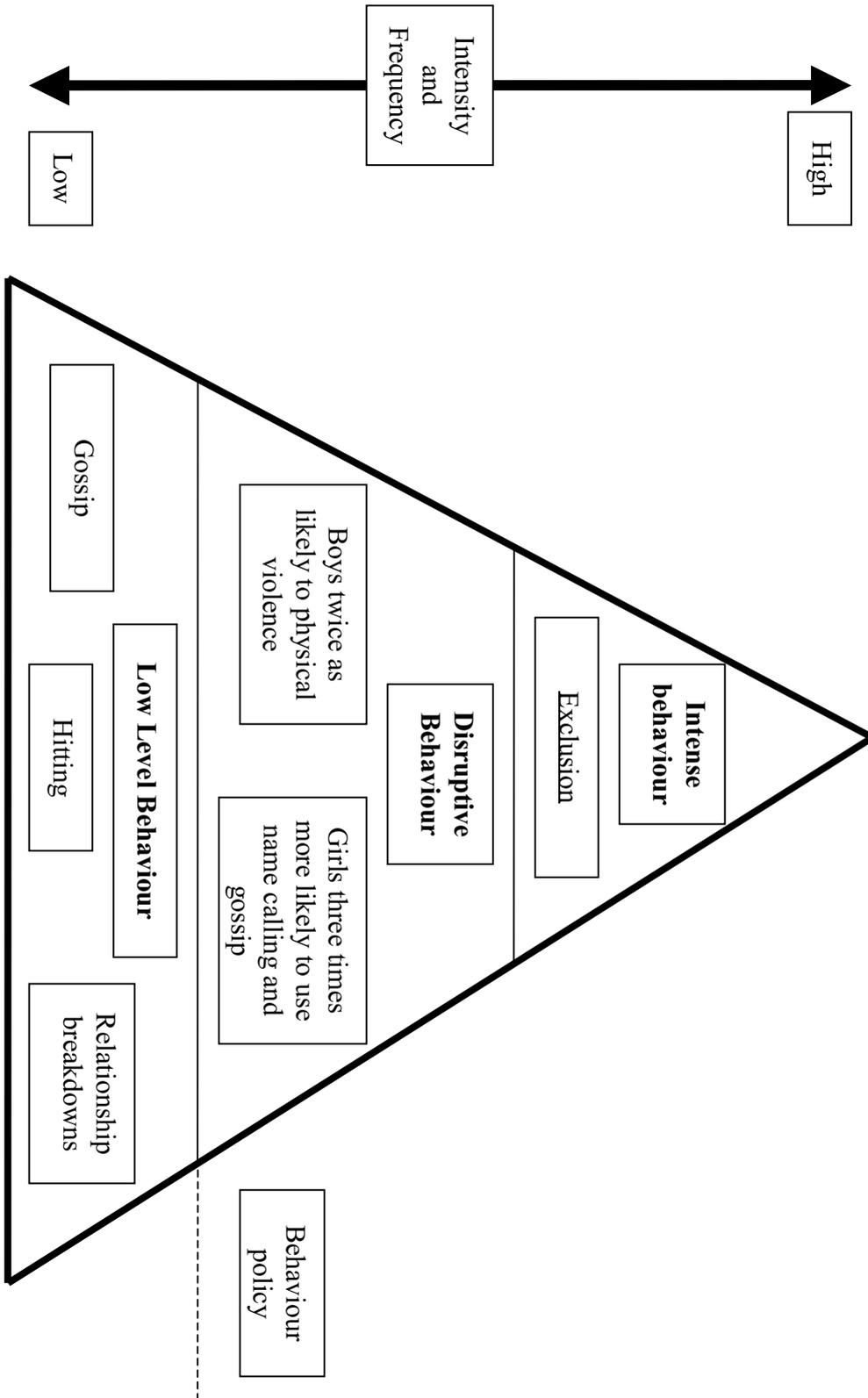
- Is the bullying done as part of a group?
- Are the racist views supported by family members ?
- Has the emotional impact of the racially/homophobic motivated behaviour on the victim been acknowledged in a supportive way by staff dealing with it.

The use of mediation either directly (face-to-face) or indirectly (through staff) can be beneficial in challenging stereotypes, and fostering new awareness of the impact of racism on the victim and family.

15.3 Staff training on homophobia is crucial to tackling the issue, so that language can be challenged by staff without their own sexuality being called into question.

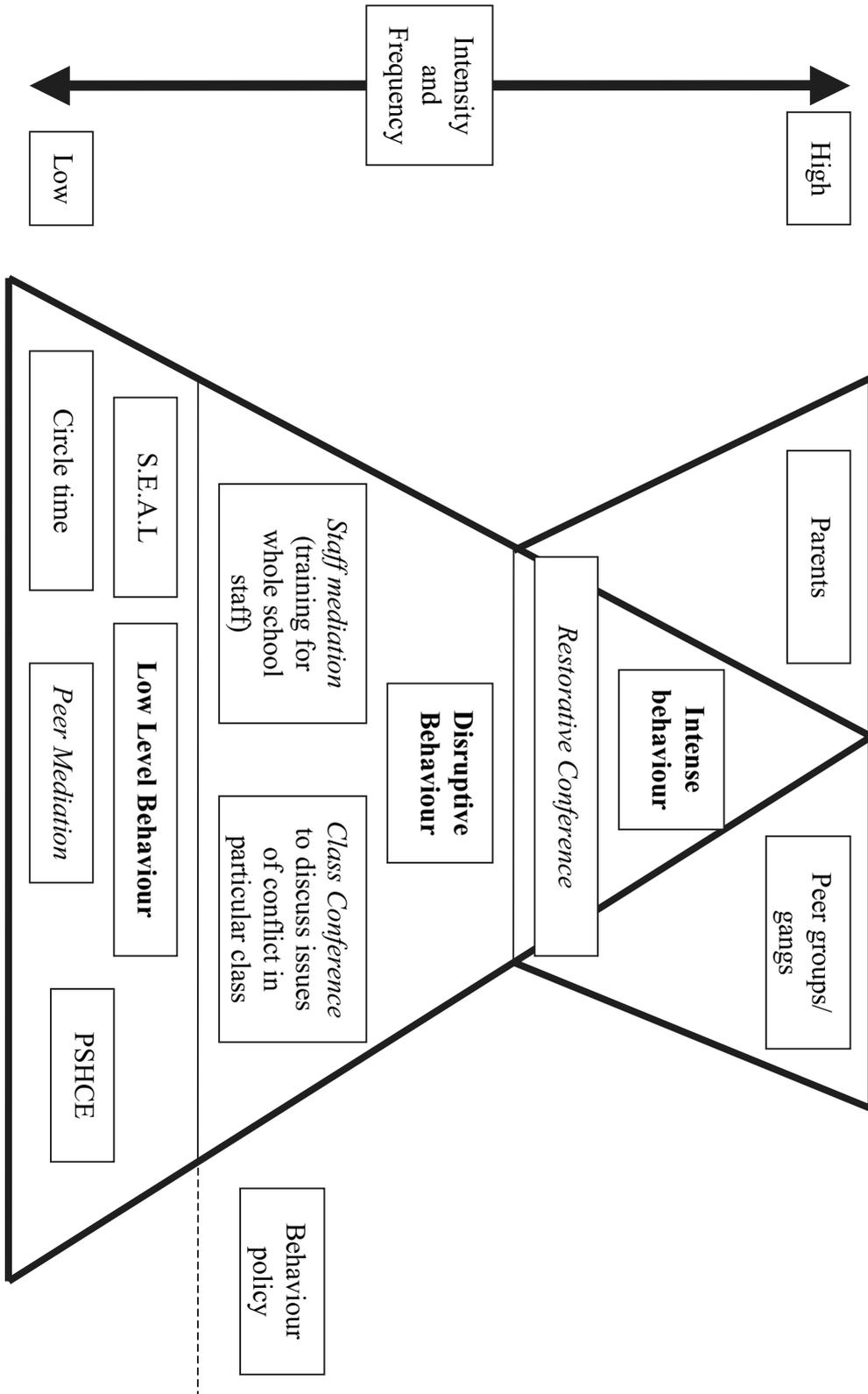
APPENDIX 1

A MODEL OF BULLYING IN SCHOOLS



APPENDIX 2

THE USE OF RESTORATIVE APPROACHES IN TACKLING BEHAVIOUR



Memorandum submitted by The Children's Society

1. INTRODUCTION

The Children's Society is the leading child-centred, social justice children's charity founded on Christian vision and values. Each year our projects work directly with 50,000 of England's most overlooked, ignored and rejected children. Our research and campaigning create positive change for thousands more.

The Children's Society is concerned about the welfare of all children and young people, and especially those who are at risk of exclusion from society as a result of racial discrimination, poverty, difficult personal and family circumstances or disability. We focus our work on young refugees, children and young people at risk on the streets, children and young people in trouble with the law, disabled children and young people and also work with Traveller and Gypsy children and children affected by substance misuse.

All of our work is guided by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which sets out the basic human rights that children everywhere—without discrimination should enjoy. One of the key principles underpinning our work is a child's right to be heard, as set out in Article 12 of the UN Convention, and for over a decade The Children's Society has been strongly committed to providing real and meaningful opportunities for children and young people to voice their concerns and offer solutions to the issues that affect them.

All children despite their race or abilities can become the victims of bullying but from our practice we know that some children are experiencing bullying more often than others and these experiences are linked to children belonging to an ethnic minority group, having a disability or being new to this country. Therefore we have focussed our submission on the bullying of disabled children, refugee children and Traveller and Gypsy children. Our submission is based on our practice, research and experience of working with these groups of children, young people and their families and includes their direct views and experiences obtained through various consultations and work with children and young people themselves.

2. BULLYING OF DISABLED CHILDREN, REFUGEE CHILDREN AND TRAVELLER AND GYPSY CHILDREN

Bullying on the basis of children belonging to an ethnic minority group or having a disability is more complex than other instances of bullying. Often it stems not just from relationships between individual children but from lack of understanding and prejudices supported by the media and by high levels of prejudice in society in general towards certain groups of people. Thus the study *Understanding prejudice: attitudes towards minorities* [2004]¹² showed that Traveller/Gypsy people top the list of groups against whom people express prejudice, followed closely by refugee/asylum seeking people. It means that dealing with instances of bullying of disabled children, refugee children and Traveller and Gypsy children requires a more concerted approach taking into consideration wider issues of social exclusion of these groups.

3. BULLYING AND DISABLED CHILDREN

3.1 *Experiences of bullying*

In the last decade with the introduction of disability discrimination legislation and a raft of special educational needs strategies some progress has been made in relation to providing inclusive education for disabled children. However, discrimination and bullying of disabled children remains a big issue. A number of UK studies have found that pupils with special educational needs are at higher risk of being bullied or teased [Gray, 2003].¹³

In The Children's Society's award winning Ask Us Initiative¹⁴ disabled children and young people speak openly about the impact of bullying and negative attitudes on their lives. "Ask Us" was a multi-media consultation on children's services with over 300 disabled children and young people across England, aged between four and 24-years-old. Many of the children and young people who participated have labels of severe learning disabilities and challenging behaviour. Some do not use speech but use sign language or express their wishes and feelings in other ways. The young people revealed that they regularly experienced bullying, exclusion and discrimination. They wanted to be treated with respect and to be part of their communities:

"It's not safe walking home, we get followed, chased and called names I think it's cos we're different"

"When I'm in college some people pick on me and swear at me and push me around"

"I got bullied quite a lot, I didn't like it, I walked out"

¹² *Understanding Prejudice: Attitudes Towards Minorities*, Valentine, G, McDonald, I, November 2004.

¹³ Gray P [2002] *Discrimination in Education: A review of literature on discrimination across the 0–19 age range*. London DRC.

¹⁴ Ask Us [2003] and Ask Us 2 [2004] The Children's Society.

3.2 Exclusion from mainstream education and everyday activities

The impact of bullying and negative attitudes particularly on the educational attainment of disabled children and inclusion of these children and young people in mainstream schools should not be underestimated.

In an ERSC funded study by the University of Edinburgh on the views and experiences of over 300 disabled children, bullying is identified as the main reason why disabled children move from inclusive schooling to special schools.¹⁵ It also highlights that many of the barriers encountered by disabled children are the result of social barriers rather than their disability. To combat this Meyer [2001]¹⁶ argues there is a need to focus on the development of positive relationships between disabled and non-disabled pupils.

The 2004 Ofsted report *Special educational needs and disability: towards inclusive schools* concluded:

“A minority of mainstream schools meet special needs very well [. . .] Taking all the steps needed to enable pupils with special educational needs to participate fully in the life of the school and achieve their potential remains a significant challenge for many schools [. . .] Over half the schools visited had no disability access plans and, of those that did exist the majority focussed only on accommodation”¹⁷

The Children’s Society’s own research has shown that the majority of children and young people are happy at school, however children with statements of special educational need are the unhappiest.¹⁸ Children and young people both from mainstream and special schools have highlighted bullying as a very significant issue in their lives.

“At my mainstream school all the disabled children get out early and sit together at lunch. It’s safer that way”

They perceived “being different” as the main reason for bullying and were aware of the effect that bullying could have on their education. They highlighted that the level of bullying is affected by the way individual teachers and schools deal with incidents. One pupil commented that when bullying happens it depends on which teacher is on duty as to if it gets sorted.

3.3 Strategies to prevent bullying of disabled children

- The Children’s Society hosted a conference on bullying for children and young people at which they suggested a range of strategies that might prevent bullying including bullying helplines, bully boxes, the use of drama, more emphasis on social skills in the curriculum and better communication within schools. They also acknowledged the importance to work with the bully to help and support them and that exclusion is not an answer.¹⁹
- Disabled young people in Liverpool told us that teachers play an important role in determining what happens about bullying. Children with SEN were more likely to ask a teacher for help first if they were bullied. But not all their experiences of teachers were positive and some children felt bullied by teachers:

“A lot of teachers are arrogant. At my first school three teachers sat down to discuss who was teaching me next year and the new teacher said I don’t want her in my class she doesn’t have the qualities. So I was going to have to move classes but my mum moved me school”

“I was the only disabled person at my old school and I was treated like nothing, most teachers said, ‘he is not disabled enough’. They thought I shouldn’t get more money spent on me than any one else”.²⁰
- The inclusion of disability awareness as a core component within the curriculum would we believe lead to a shift in the general perception of impairment and disability within society as young people grow up together, learning about one another. The Qualification and Curriculum Authority [2003]²¹ highlight the importance of PSHE and citizenship as a curriculum context for exploring attitudes and values, supporting inclusion, challenging discrimination and teaching a respect for diversity. It argues that for this to happen a “whole school approach” is necessary that integrates curriculum provision with school policies and practices. The schemes of work for citizenship at Key Stages 3 and 4, published in 2003, includes guidance on citizenship teaching about diversity. It specifically includes requirements to teach about diversity of national, religious and ethnic

¹⁵ The “Lives of Disabled Children” Colin Barnes, Marian Corker, Sarah Cunningham-Burley, John Davis, Mark Priestley, Tom Shakespeare and Nick Watson. ESRC’s Research Programme on Children 5–16: Growing into the 21st Century.

¹⁶ Meyer, LH, The Impact of Inclusion on Children’s Lives: Multiple Outcomes and Friendship in Particular. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*. 48 [1] 9–13.

¹⁷ “Special educational needs and disability: towards inclusive schools” October 2004, Ofsted.

¹⁸ What makes pupils happy and successful at school, PACT project, The Children’s Society, 2001.

¹⁹ Right to Education conference, TCS, 2002.

²⁰ Diversity and Difference. Consultation and Involvement of Disabled children and young people in Liverpool, TCS, 2002.

²¹ Qualifications and Curriculum Authority [2003] Respect for All: PSHE and Citizenship.

identities in the United Kingdom and the need for mutual respect and understanding. Disability equality and awareness is not currently a specific requirement of the citizenship curriculum and this should be rectified.

- Another issue of a great importance is developing staff skills in different communication methods. Disabled children make an enormous commitment to communicate. In The Children’s Society we feel the life chances of disabled children will be greatly enhanced when everyone around them have the skills, time and knowledge to understand them.

“Deaf children do not mix that often (in mainstream schools). Other kids bully them because they can’t understand them and think they are thick.”

“There is no one to complain to in schools, even if we did have someone to complain to they would have to know how to communicate properly. Like you’ve brought a level 5 signer with you that’s good we can understand them but in school there are not enough staff who can sign to (level 5). The stage 1–2 teachers are just crap, and there are just no enough BSL communicators”.²²

4. BULLYING AND REFUGEE CHILDREN

4.1 *Wider discrimination experienced by refugee children*

References to refugee children in this submission include both children and young people who have been through the asylum process and received a decision on their or their family’s asylum application and those who are awaiting a determination.

Considerable progress has been made in the last few years introducing policies, strategies and practice guidance in relation to the education of asylum seeking and refugee children. However, different government’s policies and strategies send contradictory messages in relation to refugee children. For example, when the Government ratified the UNCRC it entered a reservation in respect of the enjoyment of those rights by refugee children, the Government’s strategy for refugee integration suggest that integration can only start when the refugee status is determined, refugee children and families still get lower monetary support than people on Income support etc. Combined with the negative media coverage this sends out a message that discrimination against refugees is almost justifiable.

“What have I done to get this abuse from people? You do not want to show your feelings because you worry they might get to you more. Lots of refugees don’t tell people they are refugees because they get attacked” (Sophia, 15).

“Newspapers and politicians say we should go home. Do you think if our home was safe we would want to come here? No. We would be in our home. One day I hope to go home and build a place where homeless people can go” (Lindica, 14)²³

4.2 *Discrimination in the education system*

Our projects identify discrimination against refugee children across a range of services including in education. In accessing education, children are often being left out of mainstream schools for long periods of time and offered English classes (part-time) instead. The lack of adequate school places and support disproportionately affects this group of children, indirectly discriminating against them. The education system should be used to break down barriers and promote equal opportunities for all children.

“The school don’t give you a place, then police stop you and accuse you of bunking school” (Meena, 17)

“Life is better than before; but I didn’t have school from the time I came here. I want to go to school.” (Besnik, 15)²⁴

The traumatic experiences that refugee children have experienced in the past, the stress of going through the immigration processes, and the difficulties of finding a school place means that refugee children need antibullying policies to be part of a wider whole school strategy to support them to settle in a new school.

“I had problems fitting in, you feel isolated, you try to become someone you are not—I used to tell people I was half-caste because I did not want to admit I was Somali. I got lost in lies. I kept on bunking school because I was getting bullied. Then I fought back and I got kicked out of school. I felt like I had no future until I went to another school. Now I feel inspired by it. They set up a Somalian girls group.” (Imana, 15)²⁵

²² Dreams, Struggles and Survivors. Messages from young refugees. The Children’s Society, 2003.

²³ Dreams, Struggles and Survivors. Messages from young refugees. The Children’s Society, 2003.

²⁴ Dreams, Struggles and Survivors. Messages from young refugees. The Children’s Society, 2003.

²⁵ Dreams, Struggles and Survivors. Messages from young refugees. The Children’s Society, 2003.

4.3 *Strategies to prevent bullying*

When consulted about what should be done in schools refugee children said:

- Make refugee children feel welcome.
- Link the young people to refugee support groups in the community.
- Set up support groups within schools for refugees.
- Let the wider community and the refugee themselves know that refugees are an asset to your school.
- Educate all school children about refugees with the aim to raise awareness and create a positive image of refugees.
- Run mentoring schemes in schools.
- Be supportive “helping us and our parents”.

“In my school one day they all said hello in French—that was really nice—they made me feel welcome” Pascal

“I hope that we can raise awareness of refugees being not just refugees but human beings and that it reduces the attacks that refugees face” Luan,²⁶

5. TRAVELLER AND GYPSY CHILDREN AND BULLYING

5.1 *Discrimination in the education system*

A range of research documents as well various reports on human rights repeatedly highlight the fact that Traveller and Gypsy/Roma children and young people are among the most discriminated groups in Europe and in the UK, in particular. The Swann Report (1985) stated:

“Gypsy/Traveller children are affected by racism and discrimination, myths, stereotyping and alienation, which influences their education [. . .] The degree of hostility towards Romanies’ and other Travellers’ children if they do enter school is quite remarkable even when set alongside the racism encountered by children from other ethnic minority groups.”²⁷

Almost 20 years later and the situation has not changed a lot:

“The [UN] Committee [on the Rights of the Child] is concerned at the discrimination against children belonging to the Irish and Roma Travellers. The Committee is also concerned at the existing gap between policy and effective delivery of services”.²⁸

“The [UN] Committee [on Elimination of Racial Discrimination] expresses concern about the discrimination faced by Roma/Gypsies/Travellers that is reflected, inter alia, in their higher child mortality rate, exclusion from schools, shorter life expectancy, poor housing conditions, lack of available camping sites, high unemployment rate and limited access to health services”.²⁹

Although in recent years there have been some government initiatives to deal with racism and bullying including the introduction of anti-racism legislation and anti-bullying policies in schools, not enough is being done to eliminate bullying in relation to Traveller and Gypsy children. Hence their educational attainments are lower in comparison to other groups, and drop out rates from secondary school as well as exclusions are much higher than for other groups.³⁰

5.2 *Learning from The Children’s Society’s projects*

It would be wrong to associate low educational attainment and higher exclusion rates to the experiences of bullying alone. Other factors such as a lack of sites play an important role. But our work with Traveller and Gypsy children show that negative experiences are very common.

The Children’s Society’s Children and Neighbourhoods project in London consulted Traveller and Gypsy children about their experiences of education. The teenagers felt there were no attempts made to teach or understand Gypsy and Traveller culture or history, and that this left them at a disadvantage within their wider peer groups at school. Bullying was a common theme, with many feeling isolated within their school peer group. One girl reported she would have to stop school when her older brother left, as he was the only person there who talked to her.

²⁶ Dreams, Struggles and Survivors. Messages from young refugees. The Children’s Society, 2003.

²⁷ Ofsted, *Education for All (the Swann report)*, 1985.

²⁸ *Concluding Observations of UN Committee on the Rights of the Child CRC/C15/Add.188 4 October 2002.*

²⁹ UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination’s *Concluding Observations on the UK’s compliance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination*, 2003.

³⁰ DfES, *Ethnicity and Education: The evidence on Minority Ethnic Pupils*, 2005.

Researchers working with The Children's Society's Cornwall Children's Project elicited the following views about education:

"The first day I went to secondary school I got bullied 'cos I lived on site'. I just don't take any notice any more I just ignore them. There's no point saying anything back cos it gets worse" New Traveller girl, 13.

"They say you're thick and you're a gypsy" Ethnic Gypsy girl, 10.

"Other kids never let you have the ball at playtime" Ethnic Gypsy boy, 12.

"I hate people bullying me because when I go home I start to cry" Ethnic Gypsy girl, eight.³¹

Children and young people from Dorset expressed similar views:

"I was looking forward to leaving school cos all other students took the p*** cause I lived on site"

"I want school just for Travellers cos you get bullied at schools you go to."³²

There is evidence to suggest that where schools do not deal with bullying experienced by Traveller and Gypsy children adequately, these children try to deal with these issues themselves and consequently are punished for their behaviour. In some cases it can even lead to exclusions.³³

5.3 Strategies to prevent bullying

The message from children and young people we work with is that there is a need to provide positive and trustworthy information about different cultures, traditions and beliefs directed at different age groups. Our consultation with children and young people on the Home Office's Strength in Diversity strategy, showed that young people also felt there was a lack of accurate and consistent information about other cultures. The view of young people was that availability of such information might improve race relations.

"Use young people from different cultures to educate and learn from each other" (young person, The Children's Society response to Strength in Diversity consultation) (September 2004)

"Creating awareness at a young age such as nursery and playground group about culture, traditions" (young person, The Children's Society response to Strength in Diversity (September 2004))

Traveller and Gypsy children also often tell us how important their culture is to them. Creating opportunities for them to learn about their cultural heritage and develop it further would build their self-esteem, confidence in schools and help develop their relationship with their peers.

6. EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE FROM THE CHILDREN'S SOCIETY'S PROJECT IN ROCHDALE

The Childrens Society has been working in partnership with the local authority in Rochdale for several years delivering anti bullying activities in schools across the borough. Bullying is addressed as part of a comprehensive strategy that includes training, policy development, prevention and a range of interventions including peer support schemes [Playground Pals and Peer Mentors] and Emotional Learning Groups. In one primary school the Emotional Learning Group was established as an after school facility for children worried about relationships with their peers. Support from parents was high and over time the group has bought a focus to difficult behaviour issues and a key result has been a less difficult transition from primary to secondary school.

All of the school community is involved in the anti bullying work (staff alongside children who have been bullied or who have been bullies) and take ownership of implementing their own strategy. A young person's steering group with representatives from a range of schools ensures the work of the team stays on track from a young person's perspective.

The project encourages schools to think particularly about the bullying of disabled children and refugee children. Work has taken place within special schools. A very successful consultation day, "The Whole Picture" took place with disabled children and young people. The day used art work and games to enhance the spoken and written words to express children and young people's views and experiences of bullying. The projects Playground Pals Initiative has now been adapted for use within special schools.

³¹ Quotations taken from Sarah Newton, *The Right to the Right Education*. Research carried out with the Cornwall Children's Project, 2003.

³² Report from young Travellers focus group, Dorset. The Children's Society Traveller Children's project.

³³ Gypsy Traveller students in secondary schools: perception of behaviour and patterns of exclusion, Chris Derrington, *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, 5 (2), 2005 pp 55-61.

Following a training package being delivered to young people in one secondary school, that aimed to raise awareness about refugee issues, and dispel some of the myths, the young people decided they wanted to form a welcome group that was responsible for welcoming asylum seekers or refugees to the school. The group wrote a play that they delivered in PSHE lessons to students lower down the school, making them more aware of refugee issues.

October 2006

Memorandum submitted by Save the Children

INTRODUCTION

Save the Children is the leading UK charity working to create a better world for children. We work in many countries, including England, helping the most disadvantaged and socially excluded children. Our focus on child rights is underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Through our programme of work in education we concentrate on the most marginalised groups of children and young people, including those who are at risk of being excluded from school. Our work with refugee and asylum seeking children aims to give them a voice in a country where they often feel stigmatised and alone.

Save the Children welcomes this inquiry by the Select Committee into bullying and would like to raise a number of issues for consideration evidenced by our practice. We also undertook a short consultation with a group of refugee and asylum seeking children concentrating specifically on the terms of reference for this inquiry.

Save the Children is a member of the Anti-Bullying Alliance.

CONTEXT

The UNCRC states that children have the right to protection against discrimination, protection from being hurt and, help if they have been hurt or badly treated.³⁴ Childline have stated that the majority of the calls they receive from children relate to bullying. Even children who are not being bullied often fear that they will be in the future^{35,36}.

HOW BULLYING SHOULD BE DEFINED

It is important that children are clear about the definition of what constitutes bullying. Ofsted define bullying as: “aggressive or insulting behaviour by an individual or group, often repeated over time, that intentionally hurts or harms”.

Experience from our Independent Education Advocacy Project (IEAP) in a primary school demonstrated that many of the children were unclear about what constituted bullying. Children repeatedly approached our development officer complaining of bullying when they had fallen out with a friend and yet those who were being bullied did not feel confident enough to tell the school or believe that the situation would improve.

It is therefore important that schools work with children to define bullying when drawing up anti-bullying policies.³⁷ This will ensure that all pupils are aware when they or others are bullied and are confident about the procedures to follow when complaining to a teacher.

An anti-bullying project undertaken by Save the Children in Hull³⁸ worked with pupils to identify different types of bullying. They highlighted: verbal abuse, physical and mental abuse and theft of money and possessions.

THE EXTENT AND NATURE OF BULLYING IN SCHOOLS

The 14 young refugee and asylum seeking young people we consulted have all experienced bullying since coming to England (Appendix A). In some cases the bullying is felt to be indirect in its nature, such as overhearing derogatory comments or being ignored. In other cases the bullying is much more overt and can include nasty texts and e-mails, physical attacks and racist abuse.

³⁴ United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: Articles 2, 19 and 39.

³⁵ Children and Domestic Violence in Rural Areas: A child-focused assessment of service provision, Stalford, Baker & Beveridge, 2003.

³⁶ Bread is Free, Save the Children, 2002.

³⁷ Khan, J, Are You Talking to Me? Young People's participation in anti-bullying. East Sussex Council: 2006.

³⁸ Foster, M, Reporting on an Anti-Bullying Pilot to Initiate a Culture Change, Save the Children: 2000.

In our experience it is often children who are perceived to be “different” in some way who become the victim of bullies. Bullying is one of the main reasons that Gypsy and Traveller children drop out of school. Bullying towards these children is often not tackled by teachers because they themselves have little understanding of the children’s culture and are therefore ill equipped to tackle such discrimination. Save the Children provides anti-discrimination training for professionals in the early years sector who come into contact with Gypsy and Traveller children. Evaluation of the sessions has highlighted that until they received training many practitioners were unaware of both the Traveller culture and the difficulties faced by these children in educational settings.

SHORT AND LONG-TERM EFFECTS

Young people we consulted highlighted the sense of isolation, fear and loneliness that result from bullying. They also felt that in the long-term children’s education could be damaged, either because they were scared to do well and become the focus of unwanted attention or because they would not want to go to school due to fearing the bullies.

Anna³⁹ is a white British nine-year-old who referred herself to our independent education advocacy project in April 2005. Anna has bad scarring on her hand and was being bullied because of this. Anna had reached the stage where she did not want to go to school and had even attempted to stab herself. Anna did not feel she could talk to the school about her problems.

The Save the Children development officer worked with Anna on her self-esteem⁴⁰ and confidence and liaised with the school to improve the playground and reduce opportunities for bullying as well as helping to build more constructive relationships between Anna and her peers.

Bullying can have life changing consequences. Some young people have been excluded from school for retaliating against bullies⁴¹; this has led to them missing substantial periods of education and in some cases never returning to school⁴².

TACKLING THE PROBLEM

It has been a legal requirement that all schools should have an anti-bullying policy since 1999 and in our experience the majority do. The creation of the Anti-Bullying Alliance and funding of anti-bullying co-ordinators has also gone some way to help tackle the problem. However, in our experience schools can have difficulty in implementing their strategies not least because bullying by its very nature can often mean that the only evidence schools have is the word of one pupil against another.

Teachers often receive little training focussed on how to deal with bullying in their initial teacher training and while local authorities and schools usually do their best there is often little budget left to invest in specific courses.⁴³ As highlighted by the young people we consulted it is essential that teachers receive adequate training so that they are well equipped to deal with complaints of bullying.

In relation to racist and homophobic bullying, training must include awareness of different cultures, races and sexuality.⁴⁴

The current focus on both the SEAL⁴⁵ programme and citizenship education provides an ideal tool for working with children around issues of culture and sexuality as well as empathy for other children. Our consultation highlighted how important it is for schools to be seen to take action against racist bullying.

This is an issue of racial discrimination and it is imperative that children are shown that discrimination in all its forms is unacceptable.

We would also suggest that children in both faith schools and schools made up predominantly of a single race are given the opportunity to mix with children from other cultures via school linking projects.⁴⁶

As a result of our anti-bullying project in Hull anti-bullying week was arranged within the school with a number of events taking place. By turning the issue into one that involved the whole school the children felt that “it teaches other people who haven’t been bullied what it feels like to be bullied”⁴⁷.

³⁹ Not her real name.

⁴⁰ Alexander, J, *Bullies, Bigmouths and So-called Friends*. Hodder: 2006.

⁴¹ Khan, J, *Missing Out on Education: Children and young people speak out*, Save the Children: 2003.

⁴² Taylor, F, *A Fair Hearing: Researching young people’s involvement in the school exclusion process*. Save the Children: 2005.

⁴³ www.bullyonline.org

⁴⁴ Warwick, I & Douglas, N, *Safe for All: A best practice guide to prevent homophobic bullying in secondary schools*. Institute of Education: 2001.

⁴⁵ *Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning*.

⁴⁶ Hatch, B, *Diversity and Dialogue -Building better understanding between young people in multi-faith Britain*. Save THE Children: 2006. See also the Diversity and Dialogue website: www.diversityanddialogue.org.uk

⁴⁷ Foster, M, *Reporting on an Anti-Bullying Pilot to Initiate a Culture Change*, Save the Children: 2000.

Our experience has demonstrated that local authority and regional anti-bullying staff are very overstretched. This can mean that some schools get little or no support in developing and sharing good practice. It is important that all schools are given support to develop effective anti-bullying strategies and projects. There is much good practice already underway, such as mentoring and buddy schemes, friendship stops and pupil counsellors.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is important that schools work with children to define bullying when drawing up anti-bullying policies. Policies should make explicit that discrimination in all its forms is unacceptable.
2. It is essential that teachers receive adequate training so that they are well equipped to deal with complaints of bullying.
3. Children in both faith schools and schools made up predominantly of a single race should be given the opportunity to mix with children from other cultures via school linking projects.
4. All schools must be given support to develop effective anti-bullying strategies and projects, building on available examples of best practice.

FURTHER WORK

The refugee and asylum seeking children we consulted with on this issue have identified bullying as a priority area and would be happy to meet with members of the committee in the future to discuss these issues further. We are aware that there is little time to hear oral evidence for this inquiry, however should the committee wish to hear directly from some young people please do not hesitate to get in touch.

BACKGROUND

Brighter Futures is a network of young refugees and asylum seekers who want to improve the lives of other young people in similar situations by giving them a voice. Groups of young people meet in the Tees Valley, Manchester and London to:

- Discuss issues chosen by the young people.
- Plan activities.
- Socialise.
- Support each other.
- Collectively campaign.

The groups are supported and co-ordinated by staff from Save the Children's England programme.

The Tees Valley Group has identified racist bullying as their most important issue. The young people have produced a set of posters and post cards to raise awareness of the issues in local schools. They have also presented their views to a range of decision-makers including the Children's Commissioner for England, civil servants from the Home Office, MP's and Peers at a conference and seminar in London during April 2006. The group is currently producing a DVD to raise awareness of racist bullying in schools in the Tees Valley area.

CONSULTATION—19 SEPTEMBER 2006

In the Tees Valley, Brighter Futures involves young people aged 14–17 years from Stockton on Tees, Redcar and Middlesbrough. Currently 14 young people regularly attend meetings at the Middlesbrough International Community Centre. All but two of the group are female and all but one arrived in the UK with family members. One young woman arrived unaccompanied and is living with foster parents. The countries of origin of the group are as follows:

- Zimbabwe 10
- Somalia 2
- Congo 1
- Burundi 1

The consultation took the form of an informal discussion with 3 members of staff in attendance.

EXTENT AND NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

We asked the group to give examples of the racist bullying they had experienced or witnessed:

- Over-hearing jokes that make you feel uncomfortable.
- They say we are from the jungle.
- Being judged by the way we look.

- Other people think they are better than us.
- Getting texts or MSN messages telling us to go home.
- Physical attack.
- Being called a terrorist.
- Being pushed out of the dinner queue.
- Being ignored by teachers.
- Asking for help and not being taken seriously.
- People shouting abuse in the street.

The group had all been subject to racism either at school or in the community, yet the young people's experiences at school depended on which school they attended. Some praised their school for dealing with racism/racist incidents but others felt isolated and even felt that teachers did not know how to deal with the issue. Some of the group were keen to mention that it is not only white people who are racist.

SHORT AND LONG-TERM EFFECTS

For many of the young, people racism was a relatively new experience. Some of the group only felt safe at home or in the library. They identified the following effects:

- Sense of isolation.
- Fear and loneliness.
- Fear to excel because you will become the focus of unwanted attention.
- Racist bullying hurts.

TACKLING THE PROBLEM

Suggestions included:

- Teacher training.
- Racism awareness across the whole school.
- Better mechanisms to deal with racist bullying in school such as mentoring schemes.
- Teachers to respond and take action on racist bullying.
- Show more films/educate people through the media about different cultures in the world—so we can learn to appreciate each other for our differences.
- More projects that help black and white young people to mix.

September 2006

Memorandum submitted by Stonewall

INTRODUCTION

1. Stonewall welcomes the inquiry into bullying being undertaken by the Education and Skills Committee and we are grateful for the opportunity to submit written evidence. Stonewall is a national organisation working across Great Britain that has campaigned for justice and equality for lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people since 1989.

2. Stonewall works to tackle homophobic bullying in schools through our Education for All campaign. This evidence paper focuses on homophobic bullying, to reflect our area of expertise. Homophobic bullying, as with all forms of bullying, seriously compromises the life chances of the young people it affects. The Education for All campaign, launched in early 2005, aims to supply teachers with the appropriate tools and advice to create a positive learning environment for all pupils, to support lesbian, gay and bisexual young people and to create a healthy and open learning environment in which everyone has the opportunity to learn.

3. Stonewall is carrying the Education for All campaign forward through a number of projects, including:
- The development of an anti-homophobic bullying website suite for the Department for Education and Skills, working with Educational Action Challenging Homophobia (EACH).
 - In conjunction with the Mayor of London, a DVD for secondary school teachers on how to address homophobia, a copy of which has been sent to every secondary school in London.
 - A School Climate Survey of young people in the UK who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or are questioning their sexual orientation. The survey focuses on the prevalence of homophobia in schools; why it happens, the perpetrators, the victims, and how this homophobia affects others.
 - An annual conference for key education professionals.

4. We have adhered to the inquiry terms of reference by way of headings in this paper.

EXTENT AND NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

How bullying should be defined

5. A person is being bullied when he or she is exposed repeatedly and over time to negative actions on the part of one or more students, teachers or support staff. It also involves an imbalance of power, where the person who is bullied has difficulty defending him or herself. This imbalance of power is particularly acute when a student is gay, or is perceived to be gay. In this case, they can experience discrimination because the bully believes that being gay is inferior.

The extent and nature of the problem of homophobic bullying in schools

6. Homophobia in schools is almost endemic and demonstrates itself through various means. It is perpetuated where it goes unchallenged. Homophobia is a learned behaviour and the school, home environment and media play a significant role in tackling it. Homophobic bullying may manifest itself in many of the same ways as other types of bullying, such as through verbal abuse or physical abuse, and in many cases these are used in combination.

7. A unique characteristic of homophobic bullying, which can lead to particular isolation for those young people who endure it, is the need for them to “come out” should they decide to reveal the bullying to a teacher, parent or fellow pupil. Even for young people who are not lesbian or gay or questioning their own sexuality, they may feel fearful about seeking help and support due to uncertainty about the sort of response they might receive.

8. One feature to note is the use of the word “gay”, which has over the past decade come to mean “rubbish” or “lame” by many young people and is often used in acts of homophobic bullying. Role models, such as the Radio 1 DJ Chris Moyles, who repeatedly use “gay” in a derogatory way, have a negative impact on the fight against homophobia in schools. The persistent use of the word “gay” in a negative way makes it increasingly difficult for both teachers and pupils to be positive about gay, lesbian and bisexual identities.

9. Physical homophobic bullying occurs in many schools across Britain. In 2002, DfES reported that 26% of secondary school teachers were aware of physical homophobic bullying. In the Stonewall survey *Queer Bashing* (1996) almost half of respondents aged under 18 had experienced violence. Schools have influence and responsibility over young people’s development and play an important role in challenging homophobia and homophobic bullying.

The extent of homophobic and racist bullying

10. In 2002 DfES reported in *Bullying: Don’t Suffer in Silence* that 82% of secondary school teachers said they were aware of verbal homophobic bullying and 26% were aware of physical homophobic bullying.

11. Sex and Relationships, Ofsted 2002 states, “[. . .] in too many secondary schools homophobic attitudes among pupils often go unchallenged. The problem is compounded when derogatory terms about homosexuality are used in everyday language in school and their use passes unchallenged by staff. Where problems arise, staff have often had insufficient guidance on the interpretation of school values and what constitutes unacceptable language or behaviour.”

12. A survey of 5,854 pupils in secondary schools in Scotland noted that 3.2% of pupils stated that they were attracted to members of their own sex (Rivers and Duncan, 2002). Using this as an average figure of same-sex attracted young people in England, and given there are around 3,896,000 pupils in mainstream and independent secondary schools in England during 2003, around 125,000 pupils in these schools may be attracted to others of the same sex (Warwick, Chaise and Aggleton, 2004).

13. Studies in the UK and US show LGB young people in school who are on the receiving end of homophobic bullying to be between 30–50% (Rivers and Duncan, 2002). In England, given the estimate of around 125,000 same-sex attracted pupils in secondary schools, between 37,400 and 62,350 may currently be directly experiencing homophobic bullying (Warwick, Chase and Aggleton, 2004).

14. The Bullying of sexual minorities at school: its nature and long-term correlates (Rivers, 2001) studied the types of bullying experienced by 190 LGB adults, and found that:

- 82% of respondents had been subject to name-calling.
- 71% had been ridiculed in front of others.
- 60% had reported being hit or kicked.
- 59% had rumours spread about them.
- 58% had been teased.
- 49% had their belongings stolen.

- 27% had been isolated by their peers.
- 11% had been sexually assaulted by either peers or teachers, whilst at school.

Why some people become bullies and why some people are bullied

15. Homophobic bullying can affect all pupils regardless of their sexual orientation. Pupils who are perceived to be different or do not fit into the heterosexual norm risk being on the receiving end of homophobic bullying. This could include girls who participate in what are deemed to be “masculine” sports or boys whose academic achievement is not considered appropriate by their social group. Many young people who have gay or lesbian parents/carers also experience homophobic bullying.

16. Being gay is often seen as inferior to being heterosexual. It is possible that young people use homophobic bullying as a means of safeguarding their heterosexual identity. Also, young gay, lesbian and bisexual people who are frightened of being perceived to be gay, can themselves resort to homophobic bullying as a “cover” of their own sexuality.

SHORT AND LONG-TERM EFFECTS

The effect of bullying on academic achievement, physical and mental health, and social and emotional wellbeing

17. Homophobic bullying threatens to compromise each of the five stated aims of the Government’s *Every Child Matters* initiative:

- Be healthy.
- Stay safe.
- Enjoy and achieve.
- Make a positive contribution.
- Achieve economic wellbeing.

18. As explained in *Youth Matters*, the Green Paper published in 2005, homophobia and discrimination can lead to social exclusion whereby young gay people may seek out an adult environment and engage in high risk behaviour.

19. LGB pupils are more likely to leave school at 16, despite achieving the equivalent of six GCSEs at grade C. In *Social exclusion, absenteeism and sexual minority youth* (Rivers, I. 2000), 81% of LGB people surveyed held or were studying for GCSEs, but only a third went on to higher education. 72% of LGB adults surveyed reported a regular history of absenteeism at school due to homophobic harassment. 50% who had been bullied at school had contemplated self-harm or suicide—40% had made at least one attempt to self harm.

20. Guidance by the NASUWT, *Tackling Homophobic Bullying*, states that homophobic bullying can lead to low self-esteem, a culture of fear, pupil indiscipline, pupil or staff absenteeism, reduced staff productivity, staff turnover, poor teaching performance, reduced learning outcomes, stress, loss of health, and self-harm. Homophobic bullying damages all pupils if not tackled as a consequence of an unsafe learning environment.

21. Research carried out in 2003 found that 51% of gay men and 30% of lesbians reported being bullied physically at school, compared with 47% of heterosexual men and 20% of heterosexual women. (*Mental health and social wellbeing of gay men, lesbians and bisexuals in England and Wales*, Royal Free College and University College Medical School, 2003).

22. Stonewall is producing a major piece of quantitative research of young people, which will be published in early 2007. We hope that it will provide current evidence of the prevalence of homophobia in schools; why it happens, the perpetrators, the victims, and how this homophobia affects others.

Whether and how the effects of being bullied persist into adult life

23. Homophobic bullying may incur long term consequences. In cases where schools fail to provide a safe learning environment for all children and young people they risk ostracising pupils who are homophobically bullied. If homophobic bullying is not stopped, bullies may continue to bully in their adult life and young people who are on the receiving end of homophobic bullying will be more reluctant to be open about their sexuality. This has clear implications for their self-esteem.

24. As LGB pupils who are bullied are more likely to leave school at 16, despite achieving the equivalent of six GCSEs at grade C, in some cases where bullying goes unchecked young gay people will not have had equal opportunities to continue their education as their heterosexual counterparts.

25. Research on gay men, lesbians and bisexuals who self-identify as having been “victims” of homophobic bullying at school, shows that 26% of participants indicated they had been or continued to be distressed regularly by recollections of bullying in school (Rivers, 2004).

The effect of bullying on those who bully

26. Homophobia is a learned behaviour and will continue unless it is challenged. Young people who homophobically bully run the risk of continuing their behaviour in their adult life. Increasingly, employers value knowledge and skills in diversity. Bullies who have not had their behaviour challenged may pay a penalty in the workplace in adult life compared to their counterparts whose education has been inclusive and where homophobic bullying has been tackled.

TACKLING THE PROBLEM

The Government's policy on bullying

27. Homophobia, Sexual Orientation and Schools: A review and implications for Action (DfES 2004) identified that schools must identify common principles for tackling homophobic bullying in schools, create opportunities for dialogue between schools and key agencies, and conduct a thorough impact assessment of policies, practices and procedures in schools.

How schools deal with bullying

28. Despite the high number of homophobic incidents in schools, only 6% of schools have fully inclusive anti-bullying policies that deal specifically with homophobic bullying. Many schools cite the lack of experienced staff and lack of policies as the reasons for their not dealing with the problem (DfES, 2002).

29. DfES has published guidance *Stand up for us* (2004) on how to tackle homophobic bullying in schools. It outlines a whole school approach, whereby school leaders and management, policies and procedures, monitoring of bullying recognise homophobic bullying as a type of bullying and where a school strategy should clearly state the way in which the school tackles it.

30. The Mayor of London and Stonewall have produced a teacher training DVD *Spell it Out*, which provides teachers and other school staff with the tools and confidence necessary to tackle homophobic bullying in schools. This initiative is not part of the government's policy. We believe that the Government is doing the right things as far as their stated policies go, but the challenge remains of how to get these policies into practice in schools, in order to provide teachers with practical tools.

How parents can help if their children are being bullied or are bullying others

31. Parents play a significant role in the fight against homophobic bullying. They should be part of the discussions with teachers and school governors about the school's anti-bullying policy. They can help to ensure that the policy is inclusive and acknowledges homophobic bullying as a type of bullying and that there are clear procedures on how to tackle it.

32. Friends and Families of Lesbians and Gays (FFLAG) is an organisation that offers support to parents with gay and lesbian children. Educational Action Challenging Homophobia (EACH) provides a national helpline to pupils and parents that experience homophobic bullying in school. It offers support and guidance on how to help a child who is being homophobically bullied.

What support and guidance the DfES provides to schools and to those affected by bullying

33. DfES is working closely with Stonewall and EACH in developing an anti-homophobic bullying suite on the DfES website. This tool is aimed at education professionals and provides practical steps to better tackle homophobic bullying in schools.

The role of other organisations, such as non-governmental groups, in providing support

34. The reluctance in the past of public bodies to tackle homophobia and homophobic bullying in schools has led to the growth of strategic and operational non-governmental groups that tackle homophobic bullying.

35. Stonewall was established in 1989, as a response to the introduction of Section 28, legislation which has had repercussions on schools and the way that homophobia and homophobic bullying has been tackled. After the repeal of Section 28, Stonewall launched the national Education for All campaign, in conjunction with FFLAG and LGBT Youth Scotland, to tackle homophobic bullying in schools. Stonewall is working in collaboration with over 70 organisations across the country and has produced materials for education professionals and for young people which provide the tools and confidence to tackle homophobic bullying.

36. Educational Action Challenging Homophobia (EACH) was established in 2001 to support young people who experience homophobic bullying. It provides a telephone helpline to support young people who are homophobically bullied. EACH also offers training for the education and health services, LAs and schools and colleges.

Whether particular strategies need to be used to tackle homophobic and racist bullying

37. *Every Child Matters* states that all children and young people should be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well being. Children and young people who are on the receiving end of homophobic bullying may suffer from low self-esteem, play truant, have lower attainment levels and leave education earlier. They risk not fulfilling their potential. Strategies for tackling homophobic bullying are vital in order for the Government to achieve the outcomes of *Every Child Matters*.

38. It is essential that homophobic bullying is acknowledged as a specific problem and a specific type of bullying. Education professionals need to recognise and understand the isolation that young gay people can feel as a result of this particular type of bullying.

39. Training for teachers on how to tackle homophobia is essential. We know that there are teachers who want to do the right thing but feel that they do not have the necessary tools. The *Spell It Out* DVD produced by Stonewall and the Mayor of London has met with an extremely positive response from London teachers. It is important that effective diversity and equality training is given during teacher training. We understand that tackling homophobic bullying, along with many other forms of bullying, is not covered by teacher training colleges, which is regrettable.

CONCLUSION

40. Stonewall welcomes the Education and Skills Committee's inquiry into bullying, which we see as an important step in understanding the extent and nature of bullying in our schools.

41. We are pleased that homophobic bullying is specifically recognised within the terms of reference; homophobic bullying is one of the most difficult forms of bullying to tackle, as acknowledged by Ofsted.

42. Stonewall would be more than happy to provide further evidence to the Committee as required.

October 2006

Memorandum submitted by the Office of the Children's Commissioner

1. EVIDENCE TO THE EDUCATION AND SKILLS SELECT COMMITTEE: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Bullying infringes children's rights and blights childhoods. For those caught in bullying situations, the impacts on health, safety, educational attainment, positive social engagement and economic wellbeing are serious and may be severe. Children and young people consistently rate it as the most important personal safety issue facing them, and consistently call on policy makers to take action to prevent and manage it.

1.2 We know from international research that anti-bullying programmes in schools can reduce conflict if applied consistently over time. Although an inconsistent and incomplete evidence base in this country hampers policy development and performance management, it appears that multi-faceted anti-bullying programmes are beginning to reduce the level of the problem.

1.3 We know that bullying in schools reflects patterns of prejudice and discrimination in wider society, so that children who can be construed as "outsiders" are more likely to face attack. BME groups and those who identify themselves, or are identified as lesbian or gay, for example, face greater risks than their peers. Other at risk groups include children in care, travellers, children with disabilities and children with Special Educational Needs. The dynamics of bullying are such that most children may be vulnerable at some point, and that roles in bullying situations—bully, assistant, reinforcer, outsider, defender, victim—may be interchangeable.

1.4 From talking to children and young people about their experiences, we know that bullying can feel overwhelmingly threatening and humiliating. Physical injury, or fear of it, is one aspect of a range of threats to the child's wellbeing. We know that victims of bullying often take unauthorised absences and are less likely to stay in full time education; and bullies too face the risk of suspension or exclusion. Disengagement from education, especially when combined with low self-esteem as we find in some victims of bullying, may increase the likelihood of risk-taking behaviour such as unprotected sex or substance abuse. Poor academic performance in turn has a direct bearing on young people's chances of employment and economic success. There is some evidence that bullies whose aggression goes un-challenged are more likely than their peers to go on to criminal offending.

1.5 Bullying takes a myriad of forms, some of which will be difficult for adults to detect directly. Cyber bullying is one such covert means of victimisation. Unless children and young people are actively involved in shaping and implementing anti-bullying strategies, interventions are likely to be blunt and ineffective. Children and young people's involvement is key to developing the trust, responsibility and empathy that will inform any successful strategy.

1.6 Many local authorities are investing considerable energy and leadership in tackling bullying, and where local co-ordinators are established, a valuable knowledge base is building and there are signs of progress. The Healthy Schools Programme is providing a useful inter-disciplinary framework and challenge. The Commissioner is encouraged by the early, positive impact on behaviour of embedding children's rights principles in schools, particularly where linked with teaching materials and techniques intended to promote empathy and responsibility, such as SEAL and R-Time.

1.7 When the Children's Commissioner asked children and young people what works against bullying, they highlighted the need for adults to be knowledgeable and proactive and for their own experience and learning to be integral to any strategy:

- Pick it up early, before it spreads.
- Ensure through training that teachers and inspectors do not collude with bullying.
- Teach about diversity and equality.
- Do not rely on victims to approach adults before intervening.
- Use the experience of young people in peer support programmes.
- Teach techniques for calming down and being resilient.
- Treat young people's information with care.
- Work with children and young people to change bullying behaviour.
- Build groups that form friendship outside of school.
- Involve children and young people and their parents in finding solutions and resolving bullying.

1.8 Inconsistent recording and reporting of incidents has hampered performance management, and many local authorities are only now in the process of establishing baselines against which the problem can be assessed. The Commissioner therefore repeats his call for maximising interagency and specialist support for schools, and for conducting annual school surveys to establish the extent of the problem.

1.9 Case evidence suggests that the current arrangements through which parents and carers can complain about schools' treatment of bullying do not enjoy broad confidence, and in some cases undermine the principle of home-school partnership which should underpin effective anti-bullying programmes. At the invitation of the Secretary of State, the Children's Commissioner is currently reviewing bullying complaints procedures, and will be making recommendations by the end of 2006.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 The Children's Commissioner for England welcomes the Education Select Committee's decision to inquire into bullying in schools. Bullying has been the greatest single concern reported to us by children and young people, and bullying is therefore one of the Children's Commissioner's twelve priority areas.

2.2 The role of the Children's Commissioner for England was established in the Children Act 2004 to provide an independent, national voice for all children and young people, especially the disadvantaged and vulnerable. Professor Sir Albert Aynsley-Green was appointed in June 2004 as the first Commissioner. The Children's Commissioner has the general function of promoting awareness of the views and interest of children in England. This is a broad and strategic remit that gives him flexibility over which matters he wishes to consider. In carrying out this function he works within the framework of the five outcomes described in *Every Child Matters*. He must also have regard to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1 Bullying is not a specific offence in United Kingdom law. Some European countries, and 19 American states have enacted legislation penalising peer-to-peer bullying in schools, but criminal actions in the UK must be on the grounds of specific breaches of the criminal law such as "threatening behaviour" (section 4, Public Order Act 1986), or harassment (Protection from Harassment Act 1997).

3.2 Bullying is not defined by age. Though prevalence and behaviour change, bullying is far from being a specifically a childhood phenomenon. In fact, there are clear links between the amount of adult aggression to which children are exposed and their involvement in bullying behaviour (see 5.3).

3.3 Since the late 1970s, bullying among children has been the focus of considerable international research and policy development. Most definitions of bullying include all or most of the following elements:

- Aggression.
- Intentional hurtfulness.
- Abuse of power (asymmetric conflict).
- Repetition.

3.4 These are included in what is probably the most comprehensive definition, by the Australian academic Ken Rigby:

Bullying involves a desire to hurt + hurtful action + a power imbalance + (typically) repetition + an unjust use of power + evident enjoyment by the aggressor and generally a sense of being oppressed on the part of the victim.¹

3.5 The “hurtful action” can take numerous forms, such as name calling, verbal abuse, spreading of rumours, malicious use of communications technology, ostracising, attacks on property or persons. These can be conducted one-to-one, or a group may persecute an individual.

3.6 However encompassing and generally satisfying the definition finally adopted, some of its key elements have margins of ambiguity that complicate implementation at practitioner level. The elusiveness of a psychological intent to inflict hurt and the absence of traditional power imbalances in cases of indirect bullying, for example, can render identification and management problematic.² Distinctions between bullying and other types of aggression are not always meaningful to young children,³ and the requirement for repetition does not always meet young people’s needs or expectations.⁴

3.7 Agreeing ownership for a workable definition is one of the key elements in establishing and implementing an anti-bullying policy, whether within a particular institution or across a community. Children and young people’s involvement is crucial, as is the definition’s simplicity. A formula agreed by Leicestershire’s anti-bullying team uses an acronym: bullying is where another child does something nasty to you:

S everal
T imes
O n
P urpose

3.8 Bullying definitions sit within wider behaviour frameworks, which in turn influence how it is understood. The *Every Child Matters* outcomes framework has had a significant impact by associating bullying clearly with discrimination:

Stay Safe—Aim: Children and young people are safe from bullying and discrimination.

Making a Positive Contribution—Aim: Children and young people develop positive relationships and choose not to bully or discriminate.

3.9 The linkage provides insight into the relational dynamics driving many bullying situations, and acknowledges the disproportionate victimisation of BME, disabled and other minority, “outsider” groups. This is constructive in shaping preventative strategies, and helpfully situates personal choices and behaviours in a broader social context where other anti-discriminatory strategies and curriculum operate. However, caveats need to be considered. Bullying detects and punishes “difference”, but it also creates it. For example, many bullying situations arise out of broken friendships, especially in the case of girls, and in these situations the victim is driven from the position of intimate to that of outsider. Adult anti-discriminatory frameworks, as commonly used, are likely to miss the diversity and subjectivity of children’s distinctions. Some differences that give rise to vulnerability can be identified with a degree of confidence, others cannot. The views of primary school pupils in Leicestershire about why they were bullied illustrate the complications:

“My curly hair.”

“My strange name.”

“Because I have glasses.”

“Because I haven’t got friends and I’m not British.”

“I was rubbish at football.”

“Because I am different.”

“He didn’t like me.”

“My colour and religion.”

“Because I was new in the school.”

“I don’t really know because I didn’t do anything to them.”

“Because of clothes and the property that I owned.”⁵

3.10 The Children's Commissioner would wish to see bullying understood and tackled in a children's rights framework. It is an act of persecution which, depending on its form, will engage one or several of the Articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child:

Article 16—"no child shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his or her honour and reputation"—eg spreading rumours.

Article 19—"States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child" eg physical or verbal bullying.

Article 28 (1)—(e) "take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates" eg victims of bullying self-excluding.

Article 28 (2)—"States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity" [and in conformity with the UNCRC] eg ensuring treatment of bullies and those who are bullied under anti-bullying policies is not degrading or humiliating.

Article 29 (d)—Education should include "the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin" eg discriminatory bullying.

Article 37 (a)—"no child shall be subjected to torture, or other inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment" eg bullying by teachers.

Article 39—"States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of a child victim of: any form of physical neglect, exploitation or abuse; torture or any other form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; or armed conflicts. Such recovery and reintegration shall take place in an environment which fosters the health, self-respect and dignity of the child" eg the health consequences of bullying and the need for help through appropriate specialist services such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.

4. EXTENT AND NATURE OF BULLYING IN SCHOOLS:

4.1 Definitive statistics on the extent of bullying in English schools are elusive. In part, this is due to difficulties in agreeing a common language, common thresholds and common reporting measures and periods. In part, this is due to children and young people's reluctance to report their persecution. A survey of young people in Bedfordshire in 2004 found that 28% of boys and 22% of girls said that they would keep any worries about bullying to themselves.⁶ Even given these difficulties, the lack of systematic reporting and sustained large-scale research is disappointing and should be addressed.

4.2 Specialists usually put the proportion of children subject to bullying at any one time at around 10–20%, but some studies find that more than 50% of children or young people report having been subjected to bullying at some point. In a Home Office study of youth crime in 2000, 33% of 12–16-year-olds reporting having been bullied at school in the previous year.⁷ A study by Young Voice in 2001 found that over half 13–19-year-olds had been bullied.⁸ A cross national study in 2001 found that 12.2% of English 10–14-year-olds had been bullied in the previous six months.⁹ Research for the DfES in 2003 reported that more than 50% of Primary School children and more than 25% of secondary school children said they had been bullied in the past year.¹⁰

4.3 Local surveys tend to fall within the higher end of this range. A 2005 study of Cheshire students in years 7, 8 and 9 found that 37% had been bullied in the current school year.¹¹ Importantly, variation between schools, including schools in apparently similar circumstances, can be substantial. Oliver and Candappa's research for DfES in 2003 revealed that in year 8, the proportion of pupils who reported having been bullied varied by school from 17%–52%.

4.4 Children and young people consistently report a high level of concern about bullying in terms of their personal safety and emotional wellbeing. In research for its Children and Young People's Plan in 2006, Solihull found that 26% of secondary school age students were sometimes afraid to go to school because of bullying.¹² Research in Cumbria in 2003 found that 46% of girls in years 5 and 6 were sometimes frightened of going to school because of bullying.¹³ A survey of secondary school age children in Bath and North East Somerset in 2005 asked "What would make the biggest difference to your life?"; 36% said less bullying.¹⁴ Consultation with children and young people in Doncaster to inform their Children and Young People's Plan showed that "by far the greatest concern to children and young people is the issue of bullying, often by their peers, sometimes by older children."¹⁵ From April 2005—March 2006, Childline received 37,032 calls about bullying, and another 4,018 which were mainly about other issues, but went on to discuss bullying as a problem. This constituted 23% of all calls, making it children's biggest single cause of concern (as it has

been for the last nine years). The Children’s Commissioner set up a competition in 2005 to invite children and young people’s views on what issues were most important to them. Online feedback identified bullying as an issue for 55% of those who entered, making it the single most significant single area of concern.¹⁶

4.5 Although it is difficult to arrive with certainty at levels of school bullying, research consistently shows that its prevalence and nature changes by age. Bullying increases during primary years, peaking at around age 10, then declines steadily.¹⁷ Younger children are much more likely to use physical violence than older children, for whom indirect and relational means are more common.

Racist Bullying

4.6 Racist bullying is relatively under-researched, though evidence suggests that a serious problem exists. A study in 1994 of 6,000 children found that 17.4% of boys and 18.1% of girls in primary schools, and 12.1% of boys and 6.3% of girls in secondary schools had been called nasty names “about my colour”.¹⁸ A survey of bullying in Islington in 2001 found that 29% of those who had been victims of bullying had been racially insulted.¹⁹ Research with young travellers in Cambridgeshire in 2005 revealed that 36% had been bullied while at school, and a subsequent project documented the severity of much this persecution:

- Sometimes they would [. . .] put things in my hair, spit on me and hit me. One person hit me so hard that I thought I’d break my cheek. They also took my money.
- I was bullied from my first day at school. Not just by the children, but by the teachers too. I got called all sorts of names like “Gypsy”, “smelly”, “tramp”, “no good”, and “pig”. I had children throw stones at me, pinch me and punch me.
- Once [my children] came home beaten up, their coats wet with urine. The bullies had taken their coats into the school toilets and urinated on them.²⁰

4.7 Broader research published in 2001 supports the suggestion that where BME children experience bullying, it is twice as likely to be severe.²¹ Moreover, bullying incidents are a subset of the indirect and direct racist hostility which BME children are likely to experience in a number of situations. These bullying attacks may therefore amplify a broader experience of rejection, and impact a child’s sense of cultural as well as personal worth.

Homophobic Bullying

4.8 Evidence of homophobic bullying, mainly through small scale studies, suggests that children and young people identified as lesbian or gay face a higher risk of victimisation than their peers. A Stonewall study of lesbian and gay men’s experience of violence in 1996 found that 24% of respondents under 18-years-old had been violently attacked by fellow students (cited Adams et al, 2004). Research in Northamptonshire secondaries in 2003 found that 64% of year 9 and 10 students had seen other students being homophobically bullied, and 26% had themselves been homophobically bullied.²² Though teachers are aware of the extent of the problem (82% of secondary school teachers aware of verbal homophobic bullying, and 26% of physical homophobic bullying, it is perhaps the form of bullying least likely to be self-reported.²³ Disclosure carries risks not associated with other forms of bullying:

I was being bullied at school. When my dad found out, he was sympathetic, but that’s because he didn’t know why I was being bullied. Since he found out I was gay, he freaked. Since then, every time he gets angry at me for something he threatens to throw me out of the house. He never used to do that.²⁴

5. WHY SOME PEOPLE BECOME BULLIES AND SOME PEOPLE ARE BULLIED

5.1 We know that in bullying situations, children and young people perform certain roles—bully, victim, bystander—but it is not possible to predict with confidence which role(s) which child will play. Recent research has tended to disrupt old ideas of bullies as predominantly angry, socially maladept and empathically deficient. There is some evidence that a background of conflict, power-assertive discipline, domestic violence, uninvolved fathering (for boys) and a domestic environment in which the child feels that their views go unheard all increase the likelihood of bullying.²⁵ However, the phenomenon of “bully-victim” – a child who has been bullied and also bullies another—suggests that hard and fast distinctions can be hard to sustain. Bullying is dynamic and situational, so that bystander children, for example, may play quite different roles ranging from assistants to reinforcers to outsiders to defenders on different occasions.

5.2 This is not to discount the role of personality, but to caution against rash stereotyping and pathologising, which in the past has led to misconceived interventions. In an international review of the effectiveness of anti-bullying practices, Peter Smith has pointed out that anger management support for bullies is unlikely to be effective, since there is no general evidence of anger problems among children who bully.²⁶

5.3 Isolating the role of personality as regards vulnerability to bullying is also somewhat problematic. Any such attempt must be prefaced at both policy and pastoral level with a clear message that nobody ever deserves to be bullied, and that it is not the victim’s fault. In many instances, as has been observed, bullying

relates to prejudice and it impacts disproportionately on “outsider” children. Nevertheless, evidence does suggest that victims of bullying may often be somewhat anxious children, with poor social problem solving skills and a relatively limited ability to read the motivations of others.²⁷ Victimisation will be destructive of self-esteem, low self-esteem may increase vulnerability to attack, and the effects may be bi-directional.²⁸ Other research suggests that girls who have been bullied are twice as likely as their non-bullied peers to have been beaten:

“It is as though bullies and victims have a common experience of seeing or living through higher levels of violence, than other children.”²⁹

6. SHORT AND LONG-TERM EFFECTS

Be Healthy, Stay Safe

6.1 The consequences of bullying are deep and wide-ranging. Children and young people who are being bullied are not safe, and their health can suffer significantly. One study found that primary school children who were bullied were more likely to report disturbed sleep, bed-wetting, feeling sad, headaches and stomach aches.³⁰ A more recent international study of adolescents has confirmed this picture, and underlined that the seriousness of physical health problems such as headache, stomach ache, backache and dizziness, and psychological problems such as bad temper, nervousness, poor sleep patterns and helplessness, deepens with the seriousness and duration of victimisation.³¹ Long term and intense bullying can lead to a variety of post-traumatic stress disorders.³²

6.2 Some signs of distress may be evident to parents and professionals, and it is important that information is available to help them spot potential signs and intervene appropriately. Parent Line Plus has recently brought out a useful guide for carers: “Be Someone to Tell: What Can I do if My Child is Being Bullied”. Beatbullying has a Toolkit for healthcare professionals which provides a section on the emotional, physical and behavioural signs of bullying. It further describes how severe cases can lead to withdrawal and self-abuse eg defensive and withdrawn body language, eating disorders, alcohol and/or drug abuse, self-harming and suicidal thoughts.

6.3 Modern anti-bullying practice as pioneered by Professor Dan Olweus sprang out of public outrage at the suicide of three Norwegian boys, aged 10–14, following severe victimisation by their classmates. Although there are no authoritative figures for how many children and young people are driven to consider or attempt suicide, children and young people’s testimonies frequently reveal the overwhelming despair caused by bullying:

Bullying is horrible. I have been bullied since the age of 4. When I was 13 I tried to kill myself.³³

6.4 Over 1998–99 ChildLine analysed the calls they received about suicide. They received 701 calls where suicidal ideation was the main problem, for whatever reason. In the same period, they received 337 calls from children whose main reason for calling was bullying, but who said this made them feel like killing themselves.³⁴ Research with young lesbian, gay and bisexual adults in 2000 found that 40% had made at least one attempt to self-harm. Investigations by Neil Marr and Tim Field put the figure of suicides among British children each year because of bullying at 16 or more, a phenomenon they termed “bullycide”.³⁵ Depression and anxiety have been closely associated with adolescents who have been bullied³⁶ and bullies themselves.³⁷

6.5 The prevalence of serious physical injury is not known. Although the great majority of bullying incidents are verbal or relational, particularly among girls, a minority do include assault. Of young people found to have been bullied in Islington in 2001, 20% said they had been beaten and badly injured.³⁸ 22% of bullied children and young people consulted in East Sussex “Straight to the Top” conference in 2005 said they had been physically assaulted.³⁹ Girls are less likely to suffer physical attack. Small scale research conducted over the Summer term in a South Wales Accident and Emergency department in 1999 revealed that an average of three children a week were seen as a result of injuries caused by bullying. 60% of victims were boys, and 40% were girls. 60% of attacks took place at school, causing cuts and abrasions in 25% of cases, bruising in 20%, and bone fractures in 15%. Some children had been forced to take drugs.⁴⁰

Enjoy & Achieve, Make a Positive Contribution, Achieve Economic Wellbeing

6.6 As one might expect, children and young people will try to remove themselves from school if they feel unsafe. 72% of lesbian, gay and bisexual adults have reported a regular history of school absenteeism due to homophobic bullying.⁴¹ Parents or carers who find that their child is being bullied and have no confidence in the action the school is taking to protect him or her will in some cases withdraw their child. This can escalate into protracted and bitter disputes. Exclusion is a sanction that schools are prepared to use against bullies in only the most severe cases, yet it has the effect of exposing the child or young person to greater risk of social exclusion. There is some evidence to suggest that bullies are more likely than those who have not bullied to become involved in criminal activity later in life. A small scale qualitative survey of young offenders by Kidscape in 1994 found that 62% had been bullies at school, and 23% had been bystanders. Nearly all the bullying had been in gangs. The type of crime to which these young people progressed generally involved both theft and assault.⁴² These findings coincide with Professor Dan Olweus’ 30 year

follow-up studies in Norway that found that around 60% of boys who were bullies at aged 11–14 had at least one criminal conviction by the age of 24, and up to 40% had three or more convictions, compared with 10% of the control group who were not involved in bullying.⁴³

7. TACKLING THE PROBLEM

Legislation, Guidance and Inspection

7.1 Government has taken welcome steps in recent years to require and support better practice in schools. The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 placed a duty on headteachers to “encourage good behaviour and respect for others [. . .] and, in particular, prevent all forms of bullying among pupils (Section 61(4)). Schools must have a written policy setting out how they tackle bullying, though this may be part of the behaviour and discipline policy. The duty on schools to “safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils”, imposed by the Education Act 2002 (Section 175) covers the problem of bullying. Particular duties on schools to protect children from racist disadvantage and discrimination were introduced by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1998 was repealed in 2003, following concerns from teachers that it was having a detrimental effect on pastoral care and support for lesbian and gay pupils. Since 2005, Ofsted’s inspection framework for schools has required it to assess how well schools are contributing to meeting *Every Child Matters* outcomes, within which bullying is located. The Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005 provided new protection to children with disabilities by requiring schools, as public bodies, to promote disability equality. Proposals contained in the Education and Inspections Bill currently before Parliament re-enact existing duties, and would require more clarity regarding sanctions in cases of bullying, and at least some degree of consultation with pupils as to the contents of its anti-bullying policy.

7.2 Guidance to schools on how to tackle bullying, *Don’t Suffer in Silence* was first issued in 1994, was revised and re-issued in 2000, and a new edition is in preparation. Material from this guidance, as well as from Ofsted’s *Bullying: Effective Action in Secondary Schools* (2003) formed the basis of an Anti-Bullying Charter agreed by DfES in consultation with the Secondary Heads Association, the National Association of Head Teachers, the Anti-Bullying Alliance and others in 2003 as part of a high-profile drive against bullying under a “Zero Tolerance” theme. It included TV and poster advertising and extra resources for teacher training. Specific advice on tackling homophobia within schools, “Stand Up for Us”, was produced for DfES in 2004, and new guidance specifically on tackling homophobic bullying is currently being produced. Advice for teachers on how to prevent and respond to racist and religiously bigoted bullying was produced by DfES in 2006. A number of recent policy initiatives have had a direct bearing on bullying, in particular the National Primary and Secondary strategies on Behaviour Improvement and Attendance, “Removing Barriers to Achievement” (2004) and Community Safety Partnerships.

7.3 Since 2004, DfES has funded the Anti-Bullying Alliance, which is a collaboration of over 65 local and national organisations with a close interest and involvement in bullying prevention. Co-ordinators in each of the English regions support and spread good practice. The Children’s Commissioner worked with the ABA to conduct research with children and young people to produce the “Journeys” anti-bullying booklet (see 8.3).

7.4 Government has combined its tightening of the statutory framework and its varied support programmes with the clear and understandable message that bullies should always be punished. Children and young people, including victims of bullying, often favour problem-solving, mediated approaches.

Types of Intervention:

Healthy Schools

7.5 The National Healthy Schools Programme has supported schools to develop holistic services, and its Standards framework is requiring a more systematic and evidenced approach. Bullying is explicitly present within the programme’s emotional health and wellbeing theme, with judgements on the adequacy of a schools anti-bullying policy being required in the Standards inspection criteria. Healthy Schools must demonstrate that staff, pupils and parents are aware of, understand, own and implement the school’s anti-bullying policy. In addition, pupils must have opportunities to discuss it periodically. Early evidence shows that fear of bullying is reducing in primary schools involved in the programme.⁴⁴

7.6 Though it is difficult to ascribe particular changes in pupil behaviours—in this case bullying—to any specific change in the school’s internal or external environment, it is reasonable to assume that the progress made by Healthy Schools comes through a combination of direct attention to bullying, and more general support for emotional development, pro-social attitudes and student voice. The Children’s Commissioner believes that whole-school, whole-child approaches, drawing in specialist services and support, are key to preventing and managing bullying.

Children's Rights

7.7 Hampshire County Council has been working in conjunction with UNICEF's Rights Respecting School programme in implementing its own Rights, Respect and Responsibilities (RRR) initiative covering pupils and students aged from 3–16. 300 Hampshire primaries and around 25 secondaries are now involved, and some of its primaries were the first in the UK to be awarded UNICEF's Rights Respecting School Level One awards. The award recognises that the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child has become embedded in the school ethos and curriculum, promoting democratic, participatory teaching styles. Independent evaluation of participating Hampshire schools, as well as Ofsted inspections, have been extremely positive, revealing how readily children have understood and embraced concepts of rights, responsibilities and their relevance to their learning choices. Schools have become less adversarial, children are more mutually supportive and outward-looking, have improved problem solving skills, greater social and self-understanding and higher self-esteem. Teacher motivation has also improved considerably, making for more effective rights modelling in classrooms. Teachers note that applying the Convention enables schools to draw together subjects and activities into an understandable and affirmative moral framework.

7.8 Classroom disruption and aggression have dropped markedly. During its involvement in the programme, one primary has seen its SATs rise from 133 to 231, its absence level fall from 8%–6.6% and the number of children excluded fall from 8–2. Bullying has declined, and teachers report that children who in the past would have been intimidated by bullies are responding assertively with reference to their rights: "stop that, I have the right to play".⁴⁵

7.9 The Children's Commissioner regards bullying as a rights issue, welcomes what has been achieved to date and looks forward to the national launch of UNICEF's programme in the spring of 2007. Anti-bullying policies do not stand alone in a school. Their success is crucially dependent on the whole-school ethos, and in particular the degree of responsibility given to pupils and students for making choices and resolving conflicts.

Personal, Social and Health Education

7.10 PSHE provides teachers with a clear opportunity, and indeed obligation to work on bullying. Within the National Curriculum for PHSE pupils should be taught:

Key Stage 1. "that there are different types of teasing and bullying, that bullying is wrong, and how to help to deal with bullying".

Key stage 2. "to realise the consequences of anti-social and aggressive behaviours, such as bullying and racism, on individuals and communities [. . .] [and] to realise the nature and consequences of racism, teasing and bullying and aggressive behaviours, and how to respond to them and ask for help".

Key Stage 3. "about the effects of all types of stereotyping, prejudice, bullying, racism, and discrimination and how to challenge them assertively".

Key Stage 4. "to challenge offending behaviour, bullying, racism and discrimination assertively and take the initiative in giving and receiving support".

7.11 The Children's Commissioner believes that all children and young people should be supported to have these discussions. Their importance strongly supports arguments for making PHSE a statutory foundation subject at Key Stages 1–4 (ages 4–18).

DfES Don't Suffer in Silence

7.12 Of the 25 possible interventions described in the DfES *Don't Suffer in Silence* anti-bullying resource (2000), schools were most satisfied overall with involving parents, developing whole-school policies and working to improve playground safety. Infant and primary schools found circle time the most effective technique. Evaluation respondents consistently highlighted the need for a survey of the nature and extent of bullying with staff, pupils and parents to inform their work. Although 83% of secondaries had conducted such a survey, only 70% of infant schools and 56% of primary schools had done so.⁴⁶

SEAL and Empathic Development

7.13 Feedback from schools using SEAL materials seems to have been positive in terms of its ability to generate empathic, pro-social attitudes and prevent bullying, even though the weightiness of the materials can be somewhat off-putting. Schools are reported to be increasingly confident in combining its materials with other techniques, such as R-Time (a methodology to promote relational skills). The Roots of Empathy programme which has been developed in Canada has shown great promise as a means through which young children can learn to understand their own emotional needs, and so reduce levels of aggression. The Office of the Children's Commissioner supports approaches that nurture children and young people's emotional self-awareness at all developmental stages.

Anti-Homophobic and Anti-Racist Interventions

7.14 More resources are becoming available nationally for tackling homophobic bullying, including resources supported by the Association of London Government (“Burning”) and the Mayor of London (“Spell it Out”), and some local authorities are supporting and drawing on material produced by their local youth groups, for example Gay and Lesbian Youth in Calderdale’s anti-bullying pack. It appears that an increasing number of local authorities are now identifying the need to ensure that homophobia is explicitly mentioned in anti-bullying policies and are committing themselves to improving reporting and training. Reporting of racist incidents is already mandatory, though improvements to collection and analysis are underway in several areas of the country.

Effectiveness

7.15 A wide range of materials and approaches are available to schools with which to tackle bullying. The lead team on bullying (part of the educational psychology service) in one local authority offers training in around 40 different techniques, on how to approach different sets of needs. The multiplicity of approaches enables schools to choose, combine and adapt in their specific settings and in particular cases of conflict. Evaluating the effectiveness of any single approach in such multi-layered environments is problematic. Evidence does suggest that bullying behaviour can be reduced more effectively in primary than secondary schools, although it is unclear how far this is related to the different nature of the school environment or to a peer climate where attitudes to victims become increasingly negative in early adolescence. There is little evidence that approaches that attempt to improve bullies’ self-esteem or social skills change behaviour. However, it does appear that approaches supportive of self-esteem and assertiveness among victims can reduce their victimisation.⁴⁷ The Children’s Commissioner has commissioned the University of York to conduct a review of the existing evidence base, with particular regard to the evaluated effectiveness of different techniques and strategies. It will be published in Anti-Bullying Week 2006.

8. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S INVOLVEMENT

Peer Support

8.1 Children and young people regularly emphasise how important it is for them to be involved in solving the problem of bullying. For example, children and young people consulted in Blackpool in preparation for its Children and Young People’s Plan “felt that support from other children was important and suggested the development of peer support networks within schools”.⁴⁸ Peer support can take a number of different forms, ranging from buddying to playground champions to friendship benches to circle of friends. At its most advanced, it can take the form of peer mediation schemes addressing conflict and bullying. Where peer mediation has been reviewed, it has been found that over 80% of disputes result in lasting agreements. Research suggests that peer support in its varied forms improves the quality of school relationships and provides opportunities to detect bullying at a much earlier stage than would be possible for adults alone. Friendship-based peer support seems to improve children and young people’s sense of safety and, by promoting pro-social attitudes, may change potential bystanders into defenders. Crucially, 82% of pupils using peer support schemes report that they have helped by giving them the strength to cope with bullying (Cowie & Hutson, 2005).⁴⁹

8.2 The Children’s Commissioner believes that all anti-bullying strategies must incorporate three different dimensions: preventing bullying; intervening when it occurs; and providing emotional support to children and young people who have been targeted. It is the last of these elements which is has generally been least developed, so the growth of peer support is particularly to be welcomed and encouraged.

Journeys: Children and Young People Talking about Bullying

8.3 The Children’s Commissioner has worked with children and young people to understand their experiences of bullying and the strategies they have used to overcome it. Young people’s experiences and views have already been gathered into a booklet—“Journeys”—40,000 copies of which were distributed within six months, and which is in the process of being reprinted to meet demand. “Journeys” highlights young people’s “top 10” recommendations for action:

- Pick it up early, acting before it becomes entrenched:
 - Early intervention without young people’s active engagement is extremely difficult. Young people know what is happening before adults do.
- Teachers and Inspectors need training to ensure they do not collude with bullying:
 - Collusion may be through misunderstanding (adults not understanding the hurtfulness of terms being used), or through inattention or lack of sympathy. Collusion destroys trust, and reinforces bullying.
- Teach about diversity and equality:
 - Young people are clear that discrimination needs to be challenged publicly and regularly.

- Do not rely solely on the target to identify who is bullying them before intervening. Consider support groups, buddies or peer supporters or a bullybox:
 - Young people have many ideas about how problems can be reported, and can quality check these. Reporting directly to an adult is a risk that many young people are reluctant to take.
- Use the experience of young people in peer support programmes:
 - These programmes build and value young people’s skills, and can breakdown bystander cultures.
- Teach techniques for calming down and developing resilience:
 - Bullying erodes self-confidence and self-esteem, so young people need additional support.
- There are risks for children in telling someone. Adults should handle this information with care:
 - Children and young people in have indicated their dissatisfaction with teachers attitude to confidentiality.⁵⁰ Training needs to emphasise its importance.
- Work with children and young people to change bullying behaviour:
 - Children and young people appreciate the complex motivations behind bullying, and value opportunities to understand as well as change behaviour.
- Being part of a group outside school can help build confidence and friendship:
 - Children and young people realise that having few friends increases their vulnerability to bullying and reduces their ability to cope with it.
- Involve children, young people and their parents in finding solutions and resolving bullying:
 - The negative effects of bullying are magnified when parents, children and schools disagree about how to respond.

8.4 Further consultation with children of primary school age, to be published as a second “Journeys” resource in Anti-Bullying Week has produced a “top ten” tips specifically for primary ages:

- Consider the effects on the child who is bullied.
- Teachers should involve parents.
- It helps if bullies don’t get a reaction from you.
- Teachers could try and make bullies understand how it feels.
- Friends can be a real help.
- Dialogue can be a way out of long term conflicts.
- Supervise at key times.
- Find out what’s behind the bullying.
- Support groups in the playground.
- Nobody deserves to be bullied.
- Lunchtime clubs can reduce playground problems.

9. OBSERVATIONS AND FUTURE FOCUS

9.1 The Children’s Commissioner welcomes the energy, imagination and leadership being brought to bear on bullying across England. Regional co-ordinators, and, where they exist, specialist senior local authority officers appear to have been particularly effective in maintaining focus for what is long-term work. This investment is starting to show encouraging results. For example, Leicestershire’s figures, as reported through its annual pupil attitude survey, show a reduction of approximately 25% for year 5 pupils, and 25% for year 6 pupils from 2002–03 to 2005–06.

9.2 DfES’ role has been positive, and its guidance and resources have proved useful in their own right, as well as a catalyst for local activity and local resources. Given that children and young people’s involvement and ideas must be at the centre of anti-bullying work, and that local inter-agency partnerships must be creative and committed, it is right that anti-bullying activity looks and feels distinctive in different parts of the country.

9.3 A significant outcome of the training and advice provided is that schools are able to better identify bullying. It is an ongoing challenge to engage with those schools who fail to recognise the extent of the problem within their school and choose not to access training and support. Local training staff have reported that schools where least energy is applied to the problem (due to a failure to identify or accept the levels of bullying within the school), will in some cases be those where problems are actually most acute. Standards are not yet high enough for every child. Consideration should be given to whether requiring greater specification within schools’ anti-bullying strategies, to bring them more in line with the good practice envisaged by the Anti-Bullying Charter in terms, for example, of homophobia and training commitments, would provide more consistent protection.

9.4 More consistent reporting would be helpful. At the moment, schools are only required to report racist incidents, and although many do work closely with their local authority in reporting incidents, this co-operation is not universal. Mandatory reporting could and should detail the type of incident and the bias involved.

9.5 An annual survey of perceptions of bullying is now accepted good practice in many schools, and consideration should be given to how all schools might be induced to adopt the practice.

9.6 The Commissioner welcomes the national performance indicators for children's services which are being developed for Joint Area Reviews relating to Staying Safe (% 11–15 state they have been bullied in last 12 months) and Positive Contribution (% 10–19 admitting to (a) bullying another pupil in the last 12 months (b) attacking, threatening or being rude due to skin colour, race or religion). While recognising the challenges in producing valid statistics for bullying among primary school age children, we know both that children are more likely to be bullied while at primary school, and that interventions to change behaviour are more likely to be effective at this point. The Commissioner therefore urges further consideration of how to bring all school age children within the indicators.

9.7 As children and young people have rightly identified, trust and co-operation between parents and schools is an essential element of any anti-bullying policy. However, the approaches made to the Children's Commissioner, and the experience of colleagues nationally, confirm that this trust sometimes breaks down, and problems are then made worse by the absence of an independent complaints system.

9.8 At present, the options for a child or parent who wish to complain about bullying, or the failure of the school to address the bullying, are limited. Where a child alleges that he or she has been bullied, either the child or a parent may raise this matter with a teacher. If the complaint is not satisfactorily resolved, a complaint may be made successively to the Headteacher, and then to the Governors of the school. If the complainant remains dissatisfied after a hearing before the governors of the school, it is possible to take the complaint further, and complain to the LA. However, the normal response of the LA is that the complaint relates to a matter of internal discipline within the school and the LA has no basis on which to interfere. A final complaint may be made to the Secretary of State for Education under ss 496 and 497 Education Act 1996 if the complainant believes that the governing body or local authority has acted unreasonably or is failing to carry out its duties properly. It does not appear, however, that any complaint at this level has ever been upheld.

9.9 The Children's Commissioner, at the request of the Secretary of State, is reviewing this situation and making recommendations for change. A draft document, proposing an independent element within the process, will be launched for discussion in Anti-Bullying Week, and is expected to be finalised early in 2007.

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October 2006

Memorandum submitted by beatbullying

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Definition:

beatbullying accepts the definition used by the Anti-Bullying Alliance of which we are a leading member.

- Bullying is a subjective experience and can take many forms, making it extremely difficult to define. Children, young people and adults can instigate bullying. The nature of bullying is changing and evolving as technology develops.

Bullying is harmful to all involved, not just the bullied, and can lead to self-doubt, lack of confidence, low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, self-harm and sometimes even suicide. Bullying generally fits into one of two categories: emotionally or physically harmful behaviour. This includes:

- Name-calling; taunting; mocking; making offensive comments; kicking; hitting; pushing; taking belongings; text messaging; emailing, gossiping; excluding people from groups; and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours.
- Definitions are different and individuals have different experiences; however from the accounts we have heard from children and young people we consider bullying to be:
 - repetitive, wilful or persistent;
 - intentionally harmful, carried out by an individual or a group; and
 - an imbalance of power leaving the victim feeling defenceless.

Extent

- Each week at least 450,000 young children are bullied at school; (beatbullying/YouGov 2006).
- Each week a further 500,000 are bullied outside of school in the community; (beatbullying/YouGov 2006).
- 45% of bullying is perpetrated on the streets and in neighbourhoods; (beatbullying/YouGov 2006).
- 130,000 children are bullied every day in the capital—65,000 on the streets of London. (beatbullying/YouGov 2006).

A universal issue

- Despite claims to the contrary it is critical to highlight that, in beatbullying's opinion, there is absolutely no link between bullying and ethnicity, faith, economic or social status. Our development team has worked with thousands of young people over the last five years who have been bullied or who are bullies. Every last young person has filled in evaluation and monitoring questionnaires and surveys. After independently collating all material we can categorically say that no one socio-economic or ethnic group experiences more or less bullying and no one group bullies more.

What are the obstacles to tackling bullying?

- Children and young people not reporting bullying.
- An inconsistent approach to bullying and poor communication between the people and organisation who have a responsibility for the child's/young person's welfare.
- Reaction without prevention.

Indicators of Bullying

Bullying can be remarkably difficult to detect, particularly if the culture at school is not yet one where it is considered acceptable to talk to adults when bullying occurs. However, there are certain physical, emotional and behavioural indicators that young people who are being bullied or are bullying often display and an awareness of these can help the school to be alert to young people who are experiencing difficulties in this area.

Bullying is a community issue!

beatbullying believes and feels it has more than adequate evidence to suggest that bullying is, in fact, a community issue and not just a schools and/or behavioural issue: In policy and practice terms to successfully combat bullying all aspects of our communities need to engage with the issue. Recent studies, undertaken by beatbullying as part of the Bully Watch London campaign, highlight that 45% of bullying is perpetrated on the streets and in neighbourhoods. In the capital, for example, 130,000 children are bullied every day—65,000 on the streets of London.

Bullying, truancy, exclusion and depressive illness

Bullying consistently figures 1st or 2nd on the list of the most important issues in relation to personal safety, safety at school and safety in the community of young people across the UK by young people and their parents. Critically there is a strong correlation between bullying and truancy, exclusion, and self-exclusion; and a strong predictor of risk in later life to depression, self-harm, tendencies toward suicide and criminality.

There is an inextricable and, in terms of policy and practice, mostly ignored link between bullying and truancy:

- 42% of young people who have been bullied truant; (beatbullying 2006).
- 13% truant on the odd day while they were being bullied; (beatbullying 2006).
- 24% truant regularly—ie they took weeks off at time over a period of months; (beatbullying 2006).
- 6% truant once or twice a week while they were being bullied. (beatbullying 2006).

There is an inextricable, proven and, in terms of policy and practice, link between bullying, truancy and youth crime.

- 23% of young offenders sentenced in court have engaged in truancy to a significant degree.
- 45% of young people who have committed an offence have truanted.
- 64% of young people who committed their first offence aged 11 or below played truant for the first time aged 11 or below.

Tackling bullying is in beatbullying's opinion only satisfactorily achieved when we seek to prevent and not merely intervene:

Racist and inter-faith bullying

- 17% of young people report experiencing incidents of racist bullying.
- 14% of young people report experiencing incidents of inter-faith bullying.
- 45% of young people report witnessing incidents of racist or interfaith bullying (beatbullying 2006).

There are thousands of crimes related to bullying against young people going unreported

During beatbullying's experience of working with thousands of young people we have collated considerable information concerning unreported crimes against young people by young people. Initially the team received information in an unstructured and anecdotal fashion. Once we clarified the pattern beatbullying's policy unit began to measure unreported crime perpetrated by bullies against other young people: In the last 24 months, beatbullying has collated information concerning 2,163 unreported crimes in London alone (ranging from actual bodily harm, grievous bodily harm, sexual assault, rape, mugging, blackmail, stalking, theft and even home invasion perpetrated against children as young as nine-years-old).

Prevention, prevention, prevention!

There are, beatbullying regrets, numerous resources, programmes and intervention models which are introduced into schools that have absolutely no proven track record of success or impact. Hundreds of thousands of pounds are paid to charities and limited companies by schools. Prevention models must be independently reviewed and analysed to ensure that the resource and intervention is rigorous, provides value for money and is proven to work.

Indicators of bullying

Bullying can be remarkably difficult to detect, particularly if the culture at school is not yet one where it is considered acceptable to talk to adults when bullying occurs. However, there are certain physical, emotional and behavioural indicators that young people who are being bullied or are bullying often display and an awareness of these can help the school to be alert to young people who are experiencing difficulties in this area. All professionals working with young people should, at the very least, be aware of these indicators.

Racist bullying and inter-faith bullying

A sample of 2,592 young people aged between 10–16 were surveyed.

Field dates January 2006 through July 2006:

Report findings

17% of young people report experiencing incidents of racist bullying.

14% of young people report experiencing incidents of inter-faith bullying.

45% of young people report witnessing incidents of racist or inter-faith bullying.

Why are some young people bullied?

In beatbullying's opinion and experience there is no proven reason, notable trait or difference which explains why some young people are bullied. No pattern, no particular personality trait, no specific body image, ethnicity, sexuality, age or ability can be identified. Crucially, the notion sometimes forwarded in the press by commentators or other voluntary organisations that youngsters that have been bullied have a victim complex or a limited or weak personality is abjectly preposterous and without evidence or merit. Such a view is overwhelmingly deconstructed and rejected by the thousands of young people, and indeed adults, who have experienced bullying. If we agree that one million young people are experiencing bullying every week are we seriously saying that all have a victim complex! It's nonsense.

Why do some people bully?

beatbullying acknowledges that this may be a controversial statement, but in six years experience of actually working with hundreds of young people that bully and not publicly procrastinating or making assumptions about behaviours. beatbullying's staff have never ever met a young person who was bullying his or her peers that were not or had not been bullied themselves. We hope that any reader will place that statement in the context of a staff team who actually works on the ground, day in day out, with young people that bully. Over time we have explored, discussed, worked with, intervened and prevented young bullies from continuing their behaviour. This is not a statement that is made without evidence or professional experience of working with young bullies. beatbullying suggests that to make assumptions about the nature, experience or behaviour of young people that bully without direct experience of working with young people who are bullies is both unhelpful and misguided in terms of policy and practice.

Tackling the problem

Tackling bullying is, in beatbullying's opinion, only satisfactorily achieved when we seek to prevent and not merely intervene. There are, beatbullying regrets, numerous resources, programmes and intervention models which are introduced into schools that have absolutely no proven track record of success or impact. Hundreds of thousands of pounds are paid to charities and limited companies by schools. Prevention models must be independently reviewed and analysed to ensure that the resource and intervention is rigorous, value for money and is proven to work.

Government policy

Most importantly; central government needs a set of stand-alone policies to tackle bullying, drawn up in coalition with the sector. Incredibly, central government really has no policies which seek to prevent bullying—which is a scandal, considering bullying is consistently named by young people and their parents in survey after survey as the issue they are most worried about and affected by.

In addition:

- Adults need to realise that young people know how to beatbullying: we have the solutions, we can mentor, campaign, support and assist our peers, we can be assertive, we can change the culture.
- All adults working with children, wherever they are in our community, to be trained in providing young people with anti-bullying help, support and strategies.
- All adults studying to be teachers or youth workers to have proper anti-bullying training before they enter our schools or youth clubs to teach or work with us.
- Strategies to deal with bullying to be taught as part of the curriculum, perhaps as part of personal, social and health education.
- Borough councils to have anti-bullying strategies which deal with bullying as a community issue, and that these policies are open for public comment and review.
- Government to design a national anti-bullying strategy in consultation with young people, the statutory and voluntary sector.

The Anti-Bullying Alliance

beatbullying is a member and has just taken up a seat on the national steering committee. We are proud to be part of a coalition of organisations who are all, at the very least, attempting to prevent millions of young people laying in bed at night terrified of going to school in the morning. beatbullying does however have serious concerns about the Anti-Bullying Alliance and feels it is not at times fit for purpose.

Effects persisting into adulthood

A comprehensive listing of all of the consequences of all forms of bullying (physical, emotional, sexual) and abuse that are well documented in the vast literature on bullying and its effects into adulthood, would include, but in no way be limited to, the following: showing anxiety and low self-esteem; being distrustful, fearful or angry; feeling guilty or responsible; having negative self-attributes; feeling unworthy, helpless or hopeless; suffering sleep disturbances such as insomnia or nightmares; presenting symptoms of depression or suicidal behaviours; demonstrating phobic avoidance, psychosis, paranoia or amnesia; having self-destructive behaviours such as self-mutilation or eating disorders; running away from home; abusing alcohol or drugs; being violent or aggressive; having criminal and delinquent behaviours including truancy; becoming socially withdrawn; displaying maladaptive interpersonal patterns; having difficulty forming stable, secure relationships; post-traumatic stress disorder; experiencing developmental delays, neurological impairment, cognitive and intellectual deficits, language deficits, poor academic achievement, reduced initiative and motivation, poor school performance or decreased likelihood of graduating from high-school and revealing high levels of re-victimisation. This is a daunting list of potential problems that can clearly have very negative consequences both for the individual who suffered the maltreatment and the wider society.

Parents and bullying

Parents merely need to be delivered accessible, easily applicable and simple information by schools, Local or national government: beatbullying has trained 4,000+ parents, guardians and foster carers across the UK in the last five years delivering very effective information. The information assists parents whose child is being bullied and parents whose child is/or suspected of bullying. Every survey beatbullying undertakes with parents highlights two critical elements: firstly it is their No 1 priority and fear for their children and secondly, when they are furnished with appropriate and accessible information, their fear decreases and they successfully intervene with their children and very often get involved in drawing the issue to the attention of their school and other parents.

Support and guidance the DfES provides to schools and to those affected by bullying and how effective they are

Excellent resources insofar as they are mostly intervention orientated and broadly do not encourage prevention work. beatbullying acknowledges that, rightly or wrongly as it stands, it is for the anti-bullying sector to deliver high quality prevention programmes. Where the DfES provides guidance to the prevention sector it is very good. Representatives from the schools sector are obviously best placed to comment upon effectiveness.

The role of other organisations, such as non-governmental groups providing support

beatbullying would suggest that it is the charitable and NGO sector that is most capable of successfully intervening and preventing bullying. Upon analysis of current research into proven models of prevention across the western world it is the voluntary sector who have most successfully prevention programmes that actually seek to affect a "culture" on the ground across communities.

The extent to which support services are joined-up across different government departments

Joined-up government around bullying is unfortunately very limited, only because there is not mandated template of response. beatbullying would further argue that central government is not really grasping the nettle—or indeed acknowledging that bullying is actually a community issue and not just an issue for schools and the DfES. All the most up-to-date research suggests 45%+ of all bullying goes on outside of school.

To what extent schools can be responsible for bullying that takes place off their premises and how can they deal with it

beatbullying believes quite strongly that schools are not responsible for bullying that takes place off their premises. In our experience, of working with and training thousands of teachers, making schools responsible for all bullying across a community is self-defeating. This adds to a sense of unfairness many teachers feel—considering the vast majority have not received even rudimentary training on how to combat bullying let alone having to try and make an impact across their neighbourhood.

Whether particular strategies need to be used to tackle homophobic and racist bullying? Inter-faith and Racist bullying

As a response beatbullying has developed and successfully piloted “BB Inter-faith” which, to our knowledge, is the only fully modelled response to inter-faith and racist bullying. The project’s aims and objectives are outlined below:

Homophobic bullying

beatbullying is currently piloting a homophobic bullying prevention programme. As our results have not yet been evaluated we feel unable to comment as this time.

MAIN BODY OF WRITTEN EVIDENCE

How bullying should be defined

1. beatbullying accepts the definition used by the Anti-Bullying Alliance of which we are a leading member.

- Bullying is a subjective experience and can take many forms, making it extremely difficult to define. Children, young people and adults can instigate bullying. The nature of bullying is changing and evolving as technology develops.

2. Bullying is harmful to all involved, not just the bullied, and can lead to self-doubt, lack of confidence, low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, self-harm and sometimes even suicide. Bullying generally fits into one of two categories: emotionally or physically harmful behaviour. This includes: Name-calling; taunting; mocking; making offensive comments; kicking; hitting; pushing; taking belongings; text messaging; emailing, gossiping; excluding people from groups; and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours.

3. — Definitions are different and individuals have different experiences; however from the accounts we have heard from children and young people we consider bullying to be:

- Repetitive, wilful or persistent.
- Intentionally harmful, carried out by an individual or a group.
- An imbalance of power leaving the victim feeling defenceless.

4. The extent and nature of the problem

Bullying—The Facts:

1. Each week at least 450,000 young children are bullied at school; (beatbullying/YouGov 2006).
2. Each week a further 500,000 are bullied outside of school in the community; (beatbullying/YouGov 2006).
3. Every year 40,000 young people telephone helplines about bullying; (ChildLine 2006).
4. More than one in five severely bullied children will attempt to take their own life, (Insitute of Education 2003).
5. 1 in every 2 school exclusions and 46% of school non-attendance is in some way related to bullying; (Institute of Education 2004).
6. 1 in 3 adults living in the UK have witnessed bullying on the streets; (beatbullying/YouGov 2006).

7. 42% of young people admit to truanting due to being bullied; (beatbullying online survey 2005).
8. An MSN/YouGov survey of 500 teenagers shows that 11% of 12–15-year-olds have been bullied via the Internet; (MSN/YouGov March 2006).
9. More than 130,000 young Londoners are bullied each and every day; (beatbullying survey 2005).
10. More than 65,000 young Londoners are bullied out on the streets every day; (beatbullying survey 2005).
11. beatbullying (2005) research polling 3,000+ young people reports that:
 - (a) 47% have suffered some form of text, photo text, video text, email, chat-room, web pages or online bullying; (beatbullying/Carphone Warehouse survey 2006).
 - (b) 29% of 11–19-year-olds had been threatened or harassed using mobile phones; (beatbullying/Carphone Warehouse survey 2006).
 - (c) 44% of parents are worried about their child being bullied or threatened by mobile phone;
 - (d) 79% of teachers are worried about text bullying;
 - (e) 29% of those surveyed said they'd told no one about being bullied;
 - (f) 11% admitted sending a bullying message to someone else;
 - (g) 73% of young people who had received a bullying text knew the bully, 26% said it was a stranger;.
 - (h) 56% have suffered some form of text/mobile phone bullying;.
 - (i) 6% of young people report they have been a victim of “happy slapping”; (beatbullying online survey 2006).
 - (j) 35% of young people report witnessing an incident of “happy slapping”; (beatbullying online survey 2006).

5. *Bullying and primary aged, 5–11-year-old, children*

In 2005 beatbullying surveyed 1,492 young people aged between 8–11 from primary schools across the UK:

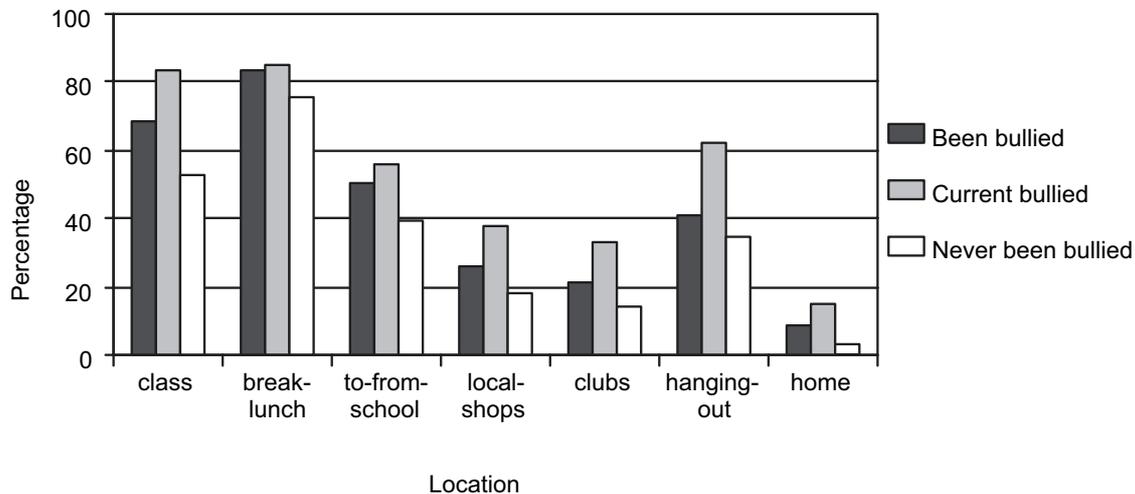
- 54% report they had been bullied.
- 51% report it made them feel “depressed/sad or alone”.
- 32% reported that it affected their sleep.
- 62% of children report that it made them not want to go to school.
- 19% reported that they had stayed off school because they were being bullied.

6. *Bullying a community issue!*

beatbullying believes and feels it has more than adequate evidence to suggest that bullying is, in fact, a community issue and not just a schools and/or behavioural issue: In policy and practice terms to successfully combat bullying all aspects of our communities need to engage with the issue. Recent studies, undertaken by beatbullying as part of the Bully Watch London campaign, highlight that 45% of bullying is perpetrated on the streets and in neighbourhoods. In the capital, for example, 130,000 children are bullied every day—65,000 on the streets of London.

7. A beatbullying/YouGov 2006 poll hopefully further demonstrates that bullying is close to epidemic proportions out on the streets and in our neighbourhoods and not just in our schools. 38% of adults in England and Wales report that they have witnessed incidences of bullying on the streets and out in their communities in the last year. 38% of adults witness bullying on the streets because beatbullying would argue some parts of government and the media are failing to recognise that nearly 50% of all bullying of young people goes on outside of schools on the streets and in neighbourhoods.

**Internet Questionnaire: Location of bullying by
bullied status for 12 - 16s**



Source: beatbullying questionnaires—sample 1,586 (research December 2005—April 2006)

8. As we go on to outline in this report we hope to demonstrate bullying is an issue for all agencies and departments that work with, assist or indeed come in contact with young people. beatbullying's services are sought out by schools (of course) and also organisations working with young offenders, young carers, young refugees and asylum seekers; faith groups; police authorities, LAs and children's services; LGBT groups, refuges, prisons, pupil referral units, organisations working with young people who are long-term self-excluders or runaways; the Army; the NHS; youth clubs/groups; football clubs; groups working with young people who have mental health problems, are self-harming or who have eating disorders—the list goes on and on and our capacity runs at 50:1. For every one organisation we can work with 50 others are seeking intervention. Critically, in practice terms for beatbullying, it's the community that continues to tell us that bullying is a community issue.

9. *Bullying, ethnicity, faith and socio-economic status*

Despite claims to the contrary beatbullying feels it is critical to highlight that, in our opinion, there is absolutely no link between bullying and ethnicity, faith, economic or social status. Our development team has worked with thousands of young people over the last five years who have been bullied or who are bullies. Every last young person has filled in evaluation and monitoring questionnaires and surveys. After independently collating all material we can categorically say that no one socio-economic or ethnic group experiences more or less bullying and no one group bullies more.

10. *What are the obstacles to tackling bullying?*

1. Children and young people not reporting bullying

Children and young people often don't report bullying when it happens. The reason for this is often bad experiences of reporting that they or their friends may have had in the past, where adults have not listened to, respected or responded to their fears, concerns and experiences of bullying (including where adults have failed to take any action to stop the bullying or taken insensitive action that makes the problem worse for the young person). In beatbullying's pilot research project 87% of the 11–16-year-olds interviewed felt that adults did not listen to them about the issue of bullying.

11. Parents or carers have an extremely important role to play in enabling any child in their care to report bullying if it happens to him/her, or if he/she sees it happening to another child. Firstly, they can build a child's trust that adults will listen to them and respond to what they are saying without simply taking matters into their own hands by doing it themselves. Secondly, they can help a child to access help from other adults such as teachers and youth workers and to ensure that they listen to that child and respond appropriately as well. Here are some ways that parents or carers can help to make it more likely that a child in their care will report bullying:

12. Show that they think his/her opinion is important by actively asking for it on a regular basis; particularly about matters which affect him/her.

13. When he/she expresses an opinion they should listen. They may not agree with it, it may even be offensive to them, but they should try to respond calmly and in a way that proves they have really listened to what she/he said.

14. They should never suggest to a child that kids who get bullied are weak, that bullying is "part of growing up", "a harmless bit of fun" or "nothing serious". If they hear a child in their care or one of his/her friends saying something like this, they should challenge them and talk to them about the reasons that

bullying happens and the consequences for kids who get bullied (there's much more information about causes and consequences in the rest of the toolkit). They should try to get the child to discuss it with them. This works better than just talking at them.

15. If a child in their care is being bullied or bullying, they need to make sure that they deal with the situation in a fair way, that he/she understands the reasons behind any action that is being taken and that he/she is involved in the planning and carrying out of that action wherever possible.

16. If they are responsible for the care of more than one child, it is very important to ensure that all of their opinions are asked for and that they are seen to treat them all in an even-handed way so that they feel equally valued and learn to value each other as equal.

17. An inconsistent approach to bullying and poor communication between the people and organisations that have a responsibility for the child's/young person's welfare.

Children and young people usually have contact with lots of different groups and organisations in the community—for example schools, Pupil Referral Units (PRUs), youth clubs, GPs and social services.

18. Even if these groups and organisations have anti-bullying policies and initiatives (schools and PRUs have to have an anti-bullying policy by law), staff are often not properly trained on what the policy involves and so they do not all handle bullying in the same way. The anti-bullying policies and initiatives used by many groups and organisations are often written without talking to the children and young people that the organisation works with and who the policies and initiatives are designed to help. Also, most organisations don't tell anybody who matters anything that matters about their anti-bullying policy and initiatives so that staff, children and young people and parents and carers might know that a policy and initiatives exist, but nobody knows what this really means or what rights and responsibilities the policy and initiatives give them.

19. If a child is at school or at a PRU, they should have been told about its anti-bullying policy. All schools and PRUs have to have one and it is very important that parents/carers are told about it. The information that is given to parents/carers should include how to go about reporting bullying to the school if it happens to a child in their care. If the parents/carers haven't been given access to this information it is a good idea to ask their child's teacher or Head of Year if they could let them have a copy of the policy.

20. Because bullying is not just a school problem, but something that can happen in lots of different settings where children and young people take part in activities together, not to mention on the street and on their way to and from leisure and school activities, it is essential that schools, PRUs and other organisations working with children and young people in a particular area talk to each other. As we've already seen, children and young people say that bullying also happens in settings where there is no adult who is directly responsible for stopping it for example on public transport, in local parks, around local shops. For this reason it is a good idea for schools, PRUs, youth groups and Police Community Safety officers/Schools Liaison officers to link up with local shopkeepers and transport companies to try and prevent bullying that happens on the streets and deal with it properly if it does happen. Parents and carers also have something important to contribute to these groups because they are the adults who are responsible for a child's care in the hours when he/she is not in education or at clubs, etc. For this reason, parents and carers should have a representative on any anti-bullying community group. If parents or carers would like to see a group set up or would be interested in setting one up themselves, they should try bringing the subject up at a PTA meeting at their child's school or with the head teacher at their child's PRU.

21. Reaction without prevention Anti-bullying policies and initiatives have tended to be reactive—designed to stop bullying behaviour when it happens within an adult-supervised setting and to punish the person/people doing the bullying. Policies like this are not very effective at tackling the problem of bullying as a whole because they only ever deal with individual incidents of bullying. In order to deal with bullying effectively, it is essential to work on preventing it happening in the first place as well as reacting to it when it does happen.

22. Bullying has lots of things in common with other types of violent, abusive and anti-social behaviour and it is very closely linked to the problem of social exclusion. It is important that professionals (teachers, youth workers, etc.) and parents and carers work with young people to help them understand the links between bullying and other types of behaviour that they may find easier to admit are harmful.

23. Because bullying happens so often in situations where children and young people are alone together without adult supervision it is important that all adults who have an input into young people's education and welfare, particularly parents and carers, try to help young people understand the causes and consequences of bullying and to show/help them to find alternatives to bullying and responses to being bullied that are tried and tested that they can use in situations where they don't have access to adult help or intervention.

24. Anti-bullying policies and initiatives that are only reactive reinforce the belief that bullying is an unavoidable part of growing up and a problem that is so deeply rooted in our society that any attempt to reduce it is doomed to failure. This is not true and is very damaging for children and young people to hear—it will make children and young people who are being bullied feel even more hopeless and convinced that no one can help them, it will allow young people who are bullying to excuse their behaviour as just part of the normal scheme of things and it will discourage all other children and young people from questioning bullying when they witness it.

25. *Indicators of Bullying*

Bullying can be remarkably difficult to detect, particularly if the culture at the school is not yet one where it is considered acceptable to talk to adults when bullying occurs. However, there are certain physical, emotional and behavioural indicators that young people who are being bullied or are bullying often display and an awareness of these can help adults to be alert to young people who are experiencing difficulties in this area.

26. *Indicators displayed by young people who are being bullied*

Physical

Physical injuries that the young person cannot or will not give a convincing explanation for (for example, cuts and bruises, pain in arms and legs), particularly if the young person is often injured. The young person may have been uninjured at the start of the school day but sustain an injury since arriving at school. Cuts, bruises, bite marks and cigarette burns can also be the result of self-harming as a response to bullying or child abuse.

27. Torn or damaged clothing (for example, clothing that has been soiled or graffitied on). Again, the young person may be unable/unwilling to explain how the clothes were damaged.

28. General physical ill-health is often a sign of emotional and psychological stress. Pupils who are being bullied may spend a lot of time off school due to vague illnesses (for example, tummy aches, headaches, feeling sick, colds etc). They may also make regular requests to be excused from lessons or to be sent home due to such illnesses.

29. *Emotional signs*

1. Mood swings or apparent changes in personality. Obviously everybody experiences mood swings, particularly during adolescence, but regular contact with specific pupils will throw up any extreme mood swings or personality changes.
2. Constant anxiety/nervousness.
3. Depression—pupils may seem depressed or complain of feeling depressed.
4. Tearfulness for no apparent reason.
5. Lack of confidence and negative self-image. Pupils who are being bullied often put themselves down and devalue their own abilities.
6. Hostility and defensiveness. Young people who are being bullied may complain of feeling or seem to feel picked on.

30. *Behavioural signs*

The experience of being bullied often causes pupils to have very confused feelings. Pupils who are being bullied sometimes respond by withdrawing into themselves and sometimes by lashing out. Many pupils who are bullied manifest both these behaviours.

1. Withdrawal and self-abuse.
2. Being generally withdrawn (including withdrawal from physical contact with other pupils, avoiding eye contact, general nervousness and reluctance to communicate).
3. Less active and effective participation in lessons and after-school activities and/or frequent unexplained absences. Pupils who are being bullied may find it increasingly difficult to focus on both class and homework. They may seem to have opted out.
4. An inability to concentrate. The increased anxiety experienced by pupils who are bullied can result in their seeming distracted.
5. Eating disorders. For example, a pupil may comfort eat or denying himself/herself food; their eating habits may change; or they may suddenly gain or lose a significant amount of weight.
6. Alcohol and/or drug use (this can sometimes be a coping mechanism or a result of peer pressure). Of course alcohol or drug use is unacceptable at school, and are listed by the DfEE on the National standard list of reasons for exclusion and have to be dealt with seriously. However, it is important to be sensitive to the reasons that a pupil may be using alcohol or drugs to ensure that they are not simply being penalising for this and contributing to his/her feelings of exclusion and isolation.
7. Self-harming.
8. Lashing out and abuse of others.
9. Behaving in a disruptive and challenging way during school time.
10. Behaving or starting to behave in a bullying way towards other pupils and/or staff.

31. *General*

1. The young person may frequently “lose” money, possessions, items of clothing and equipment.

2. The young person appears tired and lethargic and may complain of sleep disturbance/insomnia; or alternatively may seem hyperactive with too much energy.
3. Young people who are experiencing bullying on their way to and from school may go out of their way to avoid other pupils at the beginning and end of the school day. For example, they may start arriving to take part in activities much earlier or later than other pupils, and leaving before or significantly after others, to avoid meeting the pupils who are bullying them.
4. A pupil who shows one or more of these indicators is not necessarily being bullied, but these signs are a good indication that something is causing that young person difficulty and distress. You and the school have a responsibility to find out what is bothering that pupil and to support them in accessing help.
5. Many of the indicators listed above are also common to young people experiencing abuse at the hands of an adult. If, for any reason, it is suspected that a pupil is a victim of abuse as a result of following up on indicators that have been observed, or if the pupil discloses abuse then it must be acted upon in accordance with the school's Child Protection Policy. If a child discloses abuse to you or a member of staff, ensure that you/the staff member receives adequate support as well as the pupil.

32. *Indicators displayed by pupils who are bullying*

Physical

1. Using physical strength/physical presence to intimidate, influence and impress other pupils.

Emotional

2. Refusal/inability to empathise with others.
3. Desire to be in control. Pupils who bully often display a need to be in charge of events and an inability to share leadership or work co-operatively with others. They may be able to work with others, but only on their terms.
4. Inability/refusal to accept responsibility for actions. In a bullying situation, they often express the opinion that the responsibility for bullying lies with the victim, that it is his/her fault for being weak or not standing up for him or herself.
5. A tendency to relate to others in a negative way, for example persistently making negative comments about other people's appearance, intelligence, ability, family, behaviour etc.

33. *Behavioural*

1. Professing an exaggeratedly high self-opinion. Many young people who bully have low self-esteem and bully in order to exert their will over others and give themselves a sense of power and superiority. They often brag about their exploits and abilities to cover a low sense of self-worth.
2. Professing indifference for areas and activities in which they do not excel. This may involve ridiculing other children and young people who have strengths in these areas.
3. Once again, a pupil who shows one or more of these indicators is not necessarily bullying but they are displaying and supporting behaviours and attitudes that impact on other pupils and themselves in a negative way. It is important that individual teaching staff and the school community as a whole challenge these behaviours and attitudes, both directly (through conversations with the pupil in question) and indirectly (through teaching practice and the content of lessons).

34. *The extent of homophobic and racist bullying*

beatbullying has undertaken considerable work around the issues of racist and inter-faith bullying.

Racist bullying and inter-faith bullying:

A sample of 2,592 young people aged between 10–16 were surveyed.

Field dates January 2006 through July 2006:

Report findings

17% of young people report experiencing incidents of racist bullying.

14% of young people report experiencing incidents of inter-faith bullying.

45% of young people report witnessing incidents of racist or inter-faith bullying.

35. As a response, beatbullying has developed and successfully piloted "BB Inter-faith". To our knowledge this is the only fully modelled response to inter-faith and racist bullying. The project's aims and objectives are outlined below:

36. A BBC/YouGov report published in November 2005 reported that faith-based bullying had risen by some 600% post 9/11. During 2005 beatbullying surveyed 5,000 young people, of whom 45% reported that they had been involved in faith-based/racist bullying.

37. The BB Inter-faith approach is one that recognises and celebrates differences and suggests that all faiths should be positively endorsed. BB Inter-faith aims to encourage young people from different backgrounds to work together for the common good and to recognise that behind different backgrounds there is a common humanity and civic identity. In doing this, BB Inter-faith hopes to build bridges between people of different backgrounds with a view to overcoming inter-faith bullying, bigotry, sectarianism and intolerance. To build harmony and a world where inter-faith bullying is unacceptable it is necessary to examine the sources of bullying and disharmony, understand what is to be examined, then create an approach which, while recognising the value of diversity, assists young people, schools, youth groups and their communities to work together to avoid sectarianism, inter-faith conflict and bullying through key learnings and issues addressed via this project.

38. *BB Inter-Faith*

- Understanding what the opportunities and challenges are for young people living in a multi-faith society.
- How BB Inter-faith can build better understanding between young people with different beliefs, so disagreement and diversity can be discussed without conflict, anger or violence.
- Challenge young people to discuss and explore different beliefs and value systems and how they impact young people in relation to living and being schooled together.
- Finding out what the experience of young people is in relation to inter-faith bullying; what are their experiences of assimilation, exclusion, sanitization, or normativism, of bias and tokenism, and what about these experiences may lead to inter-faith bullying.
- As with all our intervention/prevention programmes, BB Inter-faith will explore issues around inter-faith and sectarian bullying and create awareness programmes using a variety of innovative mediums including art, drama, creative writing, music and new media. beatbullying development workers will provide expert support and advice. Once working policy, educational material and solutions will be developed by each individual panel, education awareness programmes will be rolled out to the wider community groups, organisations and schools where peer mentoring, peer listening and the beatbullying prevention model and literature is delivered to thousands of young people.

39. *Project Outputs:*

- Establish six borough-based Peer led anti inter-faith bullying forums/six borough-based sets of resources and solutions to be cascaded across each borough, by young people for young people.
- 600 Peer leaders/ambassadors graduating with the assistance and support of beatbullying staff will then cascade learning out to a minimum of 6,000 of their peers in schools and youth organisations providing them with significant/proven anti inter-faith bullying solutions.
- Working in partnership to provide inter-faith anti-bullying solutions with a minimum of 270 partner agencies.

40. *Project Outcomes:*

- Increase in the reporting of inter-faith bullying by young people and a decrease in inter-faith bullying.
- Decrease in inter-faith bullying by the young people who are trained and mentored by the beatbullying inter-faith leaders.
- Young people have ownership and responsibility for making changes to inter-faith bullying situations that affect them and have greatly improved knowledge of inter-faith bullying by young people and the professionals working with them.
- Children and young people have increased self-confidence and increased ability to deal with significant life changes and challenges, an increased sense of team work, an ability to manage their anger more effectively to resolve conflict without violence or bullying.

41. *Homophobic bullying:*

Childline's excellent work on homophobic bullying is very much in line with beatbullying's findings:

Why some people are bullied and why some people are bullies?

Why are some young people bullied?

In beatbullying's opinion and experience there is no proven reason, notable trait or difference which explains why some young people are bullied. No pattern, no particular personality trait, no specific body image, ethnicity, sexuality, age or ability. Crucially the notion sometimes forwarded in the press, by commentators or other voluntary organisations that youngsters that have been bullied have a victim complex or a limited or weak personality is abjectly preposterous and without evidence or merit. Such a view is overwhelmingly deconstructed and rejected by the thousands of young people, and indeed adults, who have experienced bullying. If we agree that 1 million young people are experiencing bullying every week are we seriously saying that all have a victim complex?

42. *Why do some people bully?*

beatbullying acknowledges that this may be a controversial statement, but in 6 years experience of actually working with hundreds of young people that bully and not publicly procrastinating or making assumptions about behaviours. beatbullying's staff have never ever met a young person who was bullying his or her peers that were not or had not been bullied themselves. We hope that any reader will place that statement in the context of a staff team who actually works on the ground, day in day out, with young people that bully. Over time we have explored, discussed, worked with, intervened and prevented young bullies from continuing their behaviour. This is not a statement that is made without evidence or professional experience of working with young bullies. beatbullying suggests that to make assumption about the nature, experience or behaviour of young people that bully without direct experience of working with young people that bully is both unhelpful and misguided in terms of policy and practice.

43. beatbullying has comprehensive evidence (which will be published in early 2007) which shows that young people bully mostly because they have experienced bullying from parents, siblings, peers or other adults. Their role models are inadequate—they view physical or emotional manipulation as the norm. Young bullies from all social, ethnic and economic sections of our society are mostly attention deficient, suffering from inadequate parenting, failed role modelling and a lack of moral parameters or direction at home or in school. Many have been left to design their own sense of self, define their own code of ethics without adequate assistance or direction. Unfortunately many young bullies also observe “bullying” behaviour being tacitly or overtly sanctioned at home, at school, by their peers, in the media and out on the streets and in their neighbourhoods. Such tacit approval only bolsters their sense that when you bully, you get the attention you crave, the sense of identity they are very often confused about and very often the “respect” they seek from peers and other young people. The phrase “any attention is better than no attention” is, in beatbullying's view, critical to the way society, government and other policymakers view the reasons why some young people bully.

44. That said, beatbullying also rejects completely the notion that young bullies do not have individual responsibility or the ability to change their behaviour. In the last six years we have successfully prevented hundreds of young bullies continuing their behaviour and have reshaped their attitudes. This has happened because during our prevention programmes we have demanded they take personal responsibility for the way they behave and their inability to manage their anger or navigate conflict. Notable, in most cases, is that young people want to change their behaviour and be offered a chance. That is why beatbullying focuses on working with very vulnerable young people. In practice terms we view vulnerable in terms of a young person whose parents have died of an Aids related illness, a young person in foster care, or a young person whose father is in prison. But we also view a young person who sits in their bedroom alone with limited or no contact with parents (including absent parents), a mother who has been on anti-depressants for years or a middle-class family blighted by domestic violence as vulnerable because as many young bullies are socialised by the latter as they are by the former.

45. Lastly, in relation to young people that bully, in our experience approximately 5–7% of young bullies are unreachable—so out of control that any programme of prevention is doomed to failure. Many have significant mental health issues and anger management issues which need to be dealt with by mental health professionals and not in schools or the community.

46. *The effects on academic achievement; physical, mental, social and emotional wellbeing:*

Research indicates that both young people who bully and/or are bullied on a regular basis are far more likely to become socially excluded than their peers. They are at increased risk of dropping out of education, more likely to become involved in crime and more likely to be involved in physically and/or emotionally abusive relationships as adults (Cowie, 2000, 2003).

47. A multi-agency, community-wide approach to bullying has been shown to be very effective in Sweden (whole school/community approach—Dan Olweus), Canada (Canadian Government, national strategy “a collective stand in schools and communities [against bullying]”, the Child and Youth Friendly Ottawa and Bullying Awareness Network) and New Zealand (Kia Kaha project). Young people have contact with many different groups during the course of their day-to-day activities and it is important that these groups share best practice and information around bullying so that children and young people receive fundamentally consistent anti-bullying messages and information to therefore allow young people who are already socially excluded or at risk of social exclusion to not fall through the net.

48. Bullying is inextricably linked to social exclusion. It often results from social exclusion, takes the form of socially excluding the young person being bullied, and results in further social exclusion—exclusion from school which in turn tends to lead to young people becoming even more isolated from society, despite the best efforts of many Pupil Referral Units.

49. As a problem of social exclusion, it is essential that bullying is addressed by a socially inclusive, community-wide effort. All of us—children, young people and adults alike—play a part in many different communities. It is necessary that all of us are aware of the fact that we are a valued part of these communities and that being part of a community gives us certain responsibilities.

50. “From the NFER Excellence in Cities (EiC) Attendance Analysis, we know that once pupil, school and background characteristics are taken into account, there is an association between absence rates and pupil attainment. The research shows that higher than average absence levels were associated with reduced GCSE attainment (especially for boys) and KS3 English attainment.”

51. The Youth Justice Board’s Annual Youth Crime Survey, completed by MORI, shows that excluded young people are more than twice as likely to commit an offence than children in mainstream school. In the latest survey 26% of young people in mainstream school say they have committed an offence in the last 12 months, while 60% of excluded young people say they have committed an offence over the same period.

52. Bullying consistently figures 1st or 2nd on the list of the most important issues in relation to personal safety, safety at school and safety in the community of young people across the UK by young people and their parents. Critically there is a strong correlation between bullying and truancy, exclusion, and self-exclusion, a strong predictor of risk in later life to depression, self-harm, tendencies toward suicide and criminality.

Statistics show us for example that:

1. Young people suffer a million incidents of bullying a week.
2. Bullying behaviour is linked with all sorts of anti-social behaviour such as alcohol and drug abuse, vandalism, shoplifting, truancy and self-exclusion (Olweus 1999, 2001, 2003). 60% of young male bullies, for example, are convicted of at least one crime as adults as opposed to 23% of young males who did not bully.
3. At least 35% of all young people who self-exclude from school do so because they are being bullied (beatbullying/H & F).
4. Depending on the study, 10–20% of days lost to truancy are bullying related; ie if we agree that 50,000 young people are absent without permission every day in the UK then it is likely that 5–10,000 absenteeism’s are bullying related.
5. Academic attainment is also severely effected. 80% of youngsters being bullied report low concentration, 51% report disturbed sleep and 54% report low self-esteem. In a beatbullying survey 72%+ of young people that are being bullied report that their studies have suffered. (beatbullying 2005).

53. *Bullying and truancy*

beatbullying’s policy and research department has undertaken the most recent, and to the best of our knowledge, the only UK based survey exploring the relationship between bullying and truancy.

A sample of 2,592 young people aged between 10–16 were surveyed.

Field dates Jan 2006 through July 2006:

Report findings:

- 42% of young people who have been bullied truanted.
- 13% truanted on the odd day while they were being bullied.
- 24% truanted regularly—ie took weeks off at time over a period of months.
- 6% truanted one or twice a week while they were being bullied.
- Children rate bullying as the No 1 reason they truant.
- DfES figures show that there are 6,987,260 children of school age in the UK.
- Our figures show that 55.5% of all young people are bullied, or 3,877,929 children per year.
- 42% of these truant, or 1,628,730 children.

54. Figures linking truancy and crime:

- Studies have shown that two-thirds of male juveniles arrested while truant tested positive for drug use.
- During a recent sample period in Miami more than 71% of 13–16 year olds prosecuted for criminal violations had been truant.
- In Minneapolis, daytime crime dropped 68% after police began citing truant students.

55. The central element of this groundbreaking report suggested that, “As truants, all children are potential victims of others. They are unable to seek the support of those who would normally care for them and are liable to be abused by those who would do them harm”. The findings further revealed:

- About 35% of all juveniles arrested in this period committed the offences during school hours (3,752 out of 10,691).
- About 16% of the offenders arrested throughout this period were juveniles (10,691 out of 63,467).
- The number of young offenders arrested for committing offences during school hours equates to nearly 6% of the total number of offenders of all ages arrested in London during this period.

- Offences committed during school hours, in order of frequency, include theft, handling stolen goods, burglary, criminal damage, assault and robbery.

56. In the Misspent Youth Report (1996), the Audit Commission states that 23% of young offenders sentenced in court had engaged in truancy to a significant degree. Further evidence as reported in The Youth Survey 2004 reports that:

- 45% of young people who have committed an offence have truanted.
- 64% of young people who committed their first offence aged 11 or below played truant for the first time aged 11 or below.

57. Anecdotal evidence: why young people that are being bullied truant:

- “when someone says they will see you after school”
- “To be able to feel safe, and with them not being around it felt as though I could breath again”
- “Because everyone at school is making fun of me and I never have anyone to sit with or hang round with because everyone thinks I’m a freak”
- “getting a kicking and a kicking and a kicking. What would you do?”
- “I was frightened”
- “Because when your at school everyone calls you names but you can escape from it when you leave”
- “would you go to work [. . .] if you knew you would get a kicking? Right! Course you wouldn’t”

58. beatbullying would like to suggest that perhaps, at last, there is credible evidence linking bullying to truancy. If, as it is mostly agreed, that there is a link between truancy and criminality, then considering children rate bullying as the No 1 reason that they truant in policy and practice terms it may be appropriate that government looks closely at this link and includes anti-bullying strategies within the respect agenda and behaviour toolkits.

59. *Bullying as a crime against a young victim:*

During beatbullying’s experience of working with thousands of young people we have collated considerable information concerning unreported crimes against young people by young people. Initially, the team received information in an unstructured and anecdotal fashion. Once we clarified the pattern beatbullying’s policy unit began to measure unreported crime perpetrated by bullies against other young people. In the last 24 months, beatbullying has collated information concerning 2,163 unreported crimes in London alone ranging from actual bodily harm, grievous bodily harm, sexual assault, rape, mugging, blackmail, stalking, theft and even home invasion perpetrated against children as young as nine years old.

60. *Effects persisting into adulthood*

A comprehensive listing of all of the consequences of all forms of bullying (physical, emotional, sexual) and abuse that are well documented in the vast literature on bullying and its effects into adulthood would include, but in no way be limited to, the following: showing anxiety and low self-esteem; being distrustful, fearful or angry; feeling guilty or responsible; having negative self-attributes; feeling unworthy, helpless or hopeless; suffering sleep disturbances such as insomnia or nightmares; presenting symptoms of depression or suicidal behaviours; demonstrating phobic avoidance, psychosis, paranoia or amnesia; having self-destructive behaviours such as self-mutilation or eating disorders; running away from home; abusing alcohol or drugs; being violent or aggressive; having criminal and delinquent behaviours including truancy; becoming socially withdrawn; displaying maladaptive interpersonal patterns; having difficulty forming stable, secure relationships; post-traumatic stress disorder; experiencing developmental delays, neurological impairment, cognitive and intellectual deficits, language deficits, poor academic achievement, reduced initiative and motivation, poor school performance or decreased likelihood of graduating from high-school and revealing high levels of re-victimisation. This is a daunting list of potential problems that can clearly have very negative consequences both for the individual who suffered the maltreatment and the wider society.

61. In addition to all these consequences of bullying there are health concerns. A groundbreaking Canadian study highlights the fact that bullied children appear to end up with long-term recurring health conditions in adulthood. Significant long-term psychological health consequences of bullying include depression, anxiety and drug dependencies. Risk of suicide or suicidal behaviours are measured more highly among abused adolescents and survivors than the non-abused population. This has implications for increased costs to the healthcare system.

62. Furthermore, whether in school or as dropouts, studies show that abused adolescents often use drugs and alcohol to cope. It may be that their distress motivates them to engage in behaviour that reduces their negative emotions and dulls the pain. They may have feelings of low self-esteem and also use substances to cope with negative feelings about themselves. They may feel isolated, which results in them looking toward other marginalized groups for acceptance. These groups tend to engage in more delinquent behaviour, including use of alcohol and drugs. One study showed that bullying increased the adolescent rate of alcohol, marijuana and hard drug use or dependence by a factor of two. Additionally, bullied children started the

use of these substances earlier than the control group. The authors concluded that “adolescent substance abuse appears to be exceptionally resistant to change and is accompanied by a host of medical and mental health problems.”

63. *The effects of bullying on those that bully*

Bullies too have demonstrated poor psychosocial patterns. This problem behavior stems from their home environment and the child’s relationship with his/her parents and siblings. Children who grow up in environments where their parents and siblings are both physically and emotionally aggressive and who lack compassion are more likely than others to grow up as bullies (Duncan, 1999). Bullies display aggressive behaviors against “weaker” peers in order to create a sense of stability in their lives. This stability is in the form of power and also higher status amongst peers. These children grow up experiencing the same feelings as young people that are being bullied of:

- worthlessness;
- depression;
- tension;
- low self-confidence.

64. It is, however, important to remember that no real research has been conducted into the long-term effects of bullying on those that bully.

65. *Tackling the problem*

Tackling bullying is, in beatbullying’s opinion, only satisfactorily achieved when we seek to prevent and not merely intervene. There are, beatbullying regrets, numerous resources, programmes and intervention models which are introduced to schools that have absolutely no proven track record of success or impact. Hundreds of thousands of pounds are paid to charities and limited companies by schools. Prevention models must be independently reviewed and analysed to ensure that the resource and intervention is rigorous, value for money and is proven to work. Some of the best advisory work in undertaken over the internet by charities like bullying online, yet the power of net to re-educate and support is still not sufficiently acknowledged or funded.

66. Independent evaluation of beatbullying’s prevention model by New Philanthropy Capital:

“Recommendation: NPC believes that *beatbullying* has a proven model to reduce bullying. *beatbullying* was founded on a weight of research evidence into the need and continues to see research into its effects as an important part of its work. It has an impressive performance management system, developed by post graduates at the London School of Economics, which allows it to closely monitor progress.

67. beatbullying would like to suggest that our prevention programme works (fully and rigorously evaluated by funders and other independent bodies).

68. Here are some of our results:

After becoming involved with beatbullying schools, youth groups and community organisations report that incidents of bullying are down by up to 39% and the reporting of bullying by young people is up by more than 60% (reported by schools, youth clubs, community orgs);

- 94% of young people we work with stated that our approach helps them to beatbullying.
- 45% of young people who said they were being bullied when they started working with beatbullying said that beatbullying has helped them to stop being bullied.
- 32% of young people who had worked with beatbullying said they had told someone for the first time that they were being bullied.
- 47% of young people who said they were being bullied when they started working with beatbullying said that beatbullying gave them an outlet to express their anger, fear and frustration.
- 61% of young people who said they were being bullied when they started working with beatbullying said that beatbullying made them more confident.
- 84% of participants, who admitted to having been a bully, would work hard not to bully again.

69. Other results of note:

- 15,000+ young people have progressed through the beatbullying bullying prevention schemes in the last three years;
- beatbullying has worked with 2,150+ agencies providing them with bespoke mentoring, peer listening, Listening Ear, beatbullying club information, beatbullying surgery outlines and formats, literature, access to training, online information, toolkits, conferences and seminars in the last three years;
- 600,000 children have been provided with a variety of beatbullying resources designed by young people for young people in the last three years including leaflets, info cards, access to posters and toolkits; and

- beatbullying online bullying prevention portal www.bbcllc.com and suite of websites have received 750,000 unique users in the last year.
70. Other prevention programmes currently being progressed by beatbullying:
- BB MasterKlass prevention using football as an intervention tool.
 - BB Grooves prevention using music as an intervention tool.
 - BB Curator prevention using art and design as an intervention tool.
 - BBcllc prevention using online tools.
 - BB Inter-Faith prevention work—working to train young leaders.
 - BB Out working with young lesbian and gay people.
 - “M8Z” (c) prevention programme for primary aged young people.
 - BB Junior prevention programme for primary age citizenship.

71. You can see some of the posters and information cards designed by the young people we have worked with so far by logging onto the *beatbullying* website www.bbcllc.com or www.antibullyingweek.org

beatbullying also works on big national campaigns to help raise awareness of bullying and recently worked with The Carphone Warehouse, 20th Century Fox on www.takeastand.org and Warner Bros Pictures on the recent summer hit *The Ant Bully*.

INCIDENT FORM

Age:

Class or Year Group:

Name *:

Name of Peer Listener:

1. Please describe what happened/is happening.
2. Where did it happen?
3. When did it happen?
4. Who was being bullied?
5. Who was doing the bullying?
6. Did anyone else see it happen, and if so, who?
7. Was the bullying a one-off incident or part of a bigger problem?
8. How did the bullying make you feel?
9. Was the person being bullied physically hurt?
10. Did you/he/she need medical help?

11. Have you told anyone else about the bullying?

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Friend | <input type="checkbox"/> | Teacher | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Brother/sister | <input type="checkbox"/> | Youth worker | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Parent/carer | <input type="checkbox"/> | Doctor/nurse | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other family member | <input type="checkbox"/> | School nurse/chaplain | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (please tell us who) _____ | | | |

12. If you haven't told anybody else, what has stopped you?

13. If you are the person experiencing the bullying, what sort of help would you like to stop it (eg someone to speak to the people who are bullying you and keep an eye on the situation to make sure it doesn't get worse)?

14. Do you have any worries now that you have reported the bullying?

- You don't have to give any of the information marked with a * if you don't want to, but if you do give it you will make it easier for us to help you stop the bullying. We promise that any information you give us will be treated responsibly and we will talk to you (if you have given us your name and contact details) before we take any action.

72. *Creating a Safety plan*

As a Peer Listener you can create a Safety Plan together with your team of Peer Listeners. You might want to use it as a way of helping people when they come to you. It might also prove useful just for you, in case you are experiencing bullying.

73. If you have experienced or are experiencing bullying, this is a plan to help you stop the bullying and be safe again or help others to be safe again. It will give you ideas about who can help and how to get help, and practical things that can be done which may help you and others to avoid being bullied. When putting together your safety plan, think about the people that will be using it. They might need specific advice or support and the safety plan could help them by giving them all the information they need.

74. *Tell somebody*

If you are being bullied it is really important that you tell someone. If you have already managed this and are working on this safety plan with the person that you have told, well done! But keep reading for ideas about who else can help you and how they can help you if you let them know what is happening.

75. The following are things that can be part of a safety plan:

- Never give up. No matter how hard things are, they can change.
- In an emergency don't be afraid to call 999. The police are there to HELP YOU if you are in danger.
- Use a helpline like ChildLine on 0800 11 11.
- Many websites have information including www.bbcllc.com; www.kidscape.org.uk for example.
- Try and avoid being on your own in places that are known to be unsafe.
- Keep—a DIARY of all the things that are happening to you, so that people can help you based on the information you have given them.
- TALK—to your parents, teachers, youth workers, community wardens, friends or Connexions advisors.
- It is not part of life and not part of growing up, it can be STOPPED!.
- Try and remember that you're not actually on your own, even though it might feel like that sometimes. There are thousands of other young people who are going through similar experiences. Ignore the people that have a problem with you, you don't need them.
- Tell someone quick—don't keep it in.
- Don't let bullies put you down.
- Speak out against bullying.
- Stay safe!
- Help other people that are being bullied!
- Working together, things can change!
- Why should you care about what they think?
- You're not alone there is always someone who can help.
- Be true to yourself.
- Please don't put up with bullying!
- Please don't bully other people!
- Bullying damages confidence and causes pain!
- Don't standby—get help for those that need it.

76. *Things that might stop people telling*

You might be scared that the bullying will get worse if the people doing it find out that you have told someone. This doesn't have to be true. Nobody needs to know that it was you who reported the bullying and if you don't tell anyone about it, it is likely to get worse because the person or people bullying you will think that they can get away with it.

77. Maybe you reckon that nobody can do anything to help? This isn't true either, and you have a right to get help to put a stop to the bullying.

78. *Where can you get more information and advice?*

beatbullying

www.bbcllc.com—beatbullying's website for children and young people: including case studies, games, the art gallery and the beatbullying Surgery. New content is always being added. If you have any artwork or video and audio diaries, photography and stories and would like to share them with other young people, use the submission forms and send them in.

www.beatbullying.org—this is our site for teachers, parents and other professionals working with young people.

www.antibullyingweek.org—here you will find loads of information that can help you plan activities, find advice or play games and download useful information

79. Here are some websites where you can find out more about bullying and ways to deal with it and get some advice:

ChildLine 0800 11 11

(Free to call, you can speak to a counsellor about anything that is worrying you, including bullying, at any time of day or night, every day of the year.)

www.childline.org.uk

www.anti-bullyingalliance.org—The Anti-Bullying Alliance home page has links and information on a number of organisations and resources.

80. *Other models of note:*

CHIPS (ChildLine In Partnership with Schools) CHIPS is ChildLine's schools' initiative. It was started in 1998 and since then over 1,000 secondary schools have become involved in the project. CHIPS is based on the idea that kids and young people have the ability to help each other can help make changes that can improve their lives and the lives of others Have a right to be listened to and respected.

How does CHIPS work?

As the name suggests, CHIPS is mostly based in schools (secondary schools) and works by building up a relationship with young people and the schools that they go to. CHIPS deals with all sorts of issues including bullying. Here are the services that they provide schools with: Information about issues that affect them (eg government legislation, schools' statutory responsibilities to their pupils).

Resources (leaflets, information, lesson plans on different issues including bullying). ChildLine staff visiting schools and working directly with pupils and staff (eg doing workshops on different issues including bullying). Conferences, reports and published articles in local, national and specialist papers that give young people the opportunity to get their opinions heard and acted upon. Support and guidance in setting up a peer support scheme in the school to help deal with bullying and other problems that children and young people may face. Schools that join the CHIPS scheme become part of a national network, where individual schools can share the good ideas and the methods that they find are good for combating bullying with each other. Schools that are part of CHIPS get a regular newsletter and mailings about relevant conferences and events. What is a peer support scheme? A peer support scheme is a system where children and young people provide support for those of a similar age. There are different types of peer support schemes: peer education (where young people share information and ideas for dealing with bullying with others at their schools/youth groups), peer mediation (where young people, with the support of teachers or other adults such as counsellors or behavioural support workers, act as moderators where there is a grievance between pupils) and peer listening (where young people are trained in listening skills, so that others at their schools/youth groups can come and talk to them if they have a problem). For more information about the types of peer support schemes that are up and running around the country, go to www.mentalhealth.org.uk/peer/forum.htm.

81. *No Blame*

The Avon No Blame approach to bullying was developed by George Robinson and Barbara Maines in the West of England in 1994 and is very similar to another strategy to deal with bullying called Shared Concern developed by a man called Anatol Pikas in Sweden. Basically, both No Blame and Shared Concern make it their priority to stop bullying behaviour by improving relationships between those who are bullying and those being bullied, instead of blaming and punishing the bullies. No Blame is based on the idea that unless staff working with young people encourage them to understand what it is like to be bullied their behaviour and the culture of bullying will never really change, no matter how severe the punishments for bullying are, how well-policed the school/PRU/youth group environment is, or how much those experiencing bullying are encouraged to be assertive. There are seven steps to the No Blame approach: Interview with the young person who has been bullied. Once the teacher finds out that bullying has happened he or she talks to the girl or boy who has been bullied to find out how she/he feels about it. The teacher won't ask for any details about the type of bullying that took place, but will ask for names of the other girls and boys who were involved. Meeting with the other students involved The teacher will arrange a meeting between him or her and the other boys and girls that the victim of the bullying has named. These will be the person/people who were directly doing the bullying, as well as anyone who was standing around and egging them on, or just watching it happen. No Blame reckons that six or eight people is a good number to have at this meeting. Explain the problem The teacher will explain to the other boys and girls involved about how the victim of the bullying is feeling (maybe using a poem, story or piece of art to help express this). The teacher does not discuss details of the bullying that took place or blame any or the entire group for the behaviour. Share responsibility: Without blaming the group the teacher states that he or she knows that the group are responsible and can do something about the situation. Ask the group for ideas. The teacher encourages every member of the group to come up with a way that the young person who has been bullied could be made to feel happier. The teacher will give positive responses to ideas, but does not make the group promise to abide by them. Leave it up to the young people. The teacher will arrange to meet the young people individually in about a week's time for an update on the situation. He or she will close the meeting by giving the young people the responsibility to solve the problem. Review meeting. The teacher meets up with the boy or girl who was being bullied and each member of the group individually to discuss how things are going and whether anything has changed. The idea behind this is for the teacher to monitor the bullying and to keep the young people involved in the process. There are a lot of strong opinions as to whether the No Blame

approach is effective or not, eg Kidscape are very publicly against use (www.kidscape.org.uk/info/noblame.shtml). There seems to be a general feeling that it may have some value but should not be relied on exclusively and that it is most effective when used with younger children.

82. *Restorative justice*

The idea behind restorative justice is to make both young people who bully and young people who are bullied feel part of their communities again, with a voice that will be listened to and rights and responsibilities. In theory, restorative justice programs hold young people who bully to account and negotiate penalties for their behaviour whilst avoiding excluding them from their communities (school, youth groups, family and friends and their local communities). It also offers young people who are bullied a chance for their voice to be heard and to express their feelings about being bullied in a supportive environment. One of the ways that restorative justice can work is through a “community accountability conference”. This is a meeting that takes place between the young person/people who have used bullying behaviour and the young person/people who have been bullied. The meeting is chaired by a teacher/youth worker from the school/PRU/community group that the two young people go to. Each of the young people involved is supported at the meeting by the people who care about them, whether family/carers/close (adult) friends. At the meeting, all parties will be given an opportunity to express their feelings. It is made clear that bullying behaviour is not condoned under any circumstances and a penalty is negotiated and given to the young person or young people who were taking part in the bullying behaviour. Just like the peer mentoring programs that CHIPS supports and the No Blame approach, people who believe in restorative justice say that it works best if everyone in the community involved understands the idea of restorative justice for all. It is important that the school, PRU or youth group encourages and teaches all its members (including staff) how to build a community based on respect, consideration and participation. This doesn't mean that everybody has to love or even like each other—it's just about respect. If restorative justice is an approach that an organisation chooses to take then it's very important to actively work on bullying prevention as well—giving young people skills in understanding conflict, how to avoid it and how to sort it out when it happens.

83. *Government policy*

Most importantly, central government needs a set of stand-alone policies to tackle bullying drawn up in coalition with the sector. Incredibly central government have no anti-bullying national strategy: A scandal, considering bullying is consistently named by young people and their parents in survey after survey as the most the issue they are most worried about and effected by.

beatbullying has, over the last years, consulted thousands of young people, professionals and parents to understand how they think central government should tackle bullying. A series of pointers/policy recommendations have organically evolved out of this process which young people and professionals have worked up. A petition based on parts of this consultation is due to be published and presented to government during Anti-Bullying Week 2006. It has already received 25,000+ signatures from across the UK.

- Adults to realise that young people know how to beatbullying. We have the solutions, we can mentor, campaign, support and assist our peers, we can be assertive, we can change the culture.
- All adults working with children, wherever they are in our community, to be trained in providing young people with anti-bullying help, support and strategies.
- All adults studying to be teachers or youth workers to have proper anti-bullying training before they enter our schools or youth clubs to teach or work with us.
- Strategies to deal with bullying to be taught as part of the curriculum—perhaps as part of personal, social and health education.
- Borough councils to have anti-bullying strategies which deal with bullying as a community issue, and that these policies are open for public comment and review.
- The DfES should mandate LAs and schools to sign-up and implement the DfES Charter for Action and not just make it voluntary.
- Government need to design a national anti-bullying strategy in consultation with young people, the statutory and voluntary sector.
- Incidents of bullying are sometimes criminal offences and need to be treated as such. Thousands of criminal incidents go unreported by young people because society views it as bullying or, worse, part of growing up.
- There is an inextricable link between bullying and truancy. Consequently if government leads on preventing bullying then truancy rates will inevitably be reduced.
- Schools and Pupil Referral Units may need to be encouraged or mandated to ring-fence part of their budget so independently reviewed prevention programmes can be delivered in all schools.
- Government agencies such as the Police, social services, children's services and youth services should all be involved in delivering anti-bullying programmes. Delivery should just be left to schools and the DfES.

84. *The Anti-Bullying Alliance:*

Obviously the Government's most public policy initiative has been to fund the Anti-Bullying Alliance over the last three years.

85. beatbullying is a member and has just taken up a seat on the national steering committee. We are proud to be part of a coalition of organisations who are all, at the very least, attempting to prevent millions of young people from lying in bed at night terrified of going to school in the morning. beatbullying does, however, have serious concerns about the Anti-Bullying Alliance and feels it is not at times fit for purpose.

86. Although brilliantly assisted by the DfES, and not in our opinion over managed by the DfES, ABA has over the last year been badly lead operationally, sought at times to contain the views of members and non-members and failed to encourage a professional debate on different models of prevention. Critically it has consistently failed to communicate the brilliant work being undertaken by members and non-members in the sector because it will not come out and justify its own existence and seeks to merely contain difference. A recent example of this is ABA requesting, in writing, copies of any written evidence offered to the select committee by member organisations prior to submission.

87. In beatbullying's opinion therefore we feel that the Anti-Bullying Alliance should, with the guidance of the DfES, undertake a root and review of primary purpose, its democratic structures, how excellent work and prevention models should be communicated to young people and professionals and how best member organisations can justify the hundreds of thousands of pounds of public money being spent.

88. *How parents can help their children (bullied and bullying)*

Parents merely need to be delivered accessible, easily applicable and simple information by schools and local or national government. beatbullying has trained 4,000+ parents, guardians and foster carers in the last five years across the UK delivering very effective information. The information assists parents whose child is being bullied and parents whose child is or suspected of bullying. Every survey beatbullying undertakes with parents highlights two critical elements. Firstly it is their No 1 priority and fear for their children and secondly, when they are furnished with appropriate and accessible information, their fear decreases and they successfully intervene with their children and very often get involved in drawing the issue to the attention of their school and other parents.

89. *Support and guidance the DfES provides to schools and to those affected by bullying and how effective they are.*

Excellent resources insofar as they are mostly intervention orientated and broadly do not encourage prevention work. beatbullying acknowledges that, rightly or wrongly, as it stands it is for the anti-bullying sector to deliver high quality prevention programmes. Where the DfES provides guidance to the prevention sector it is very good. Representatives from the schools sector are obviously best placed to comment upon effectiveness.

90. *The role of other organisations, such as non-governmental groups providing support:*

beatbullying would suggest that it is the charitable and NGO sector that is most capable of successfully intervening and preventing bullying. Upon analysis of current research into proven models of prevention across the western world it is the voluntary sector who has most successfully prevention programmes that actually seek to affect a "culture" on the ground across communities.

91. Critically, there is considerable evidence that when quality programmes are introduced by outside agencies outputs and outcomes are increased as young people will often work with people and share sometimes very personal details of their lives with people that are not figures of authority.

92. *The extent to which support services are joined up across different government departments*

Joined-up government around bullying is unfortunately very limited, only because there is not mandated template of response. beatbullying would further argue that central government is not really grasping the nettle—or indeed acknowledging that bullying is actually a community issue and not just an issue for schools and the DfES. All the most up-to-date research suggests 45%+ of all bullying goes on outside of school.

93. beatbullying's services are sought out by schools (of course) and also organisations working with young offenders, young carers, young refugees and asylum seekers; faith groups; police authorities, LAs and children's services; LGBT groups, refuges, prisons, pupil referral units, organisations working with young people who are long-term self-excluders or runaways; the Army; the NHS; youth clubs/groups; football clubs; groups working with young people who have mental health problems, are self-harming or who have eating disorders—the list goes on and on and our capacity runs at 50:1. For every one organisation we can work with 50 others are seeking intervention. Critically, in practice terms for beatbullying, it's the community that continues to tell us that bullying is a community issue.

94. There are some outstanding examples of borough and county councils that are considering bullying as an inter-agency issue such as Durham, Merton, Enfield, Havering, Islington, Essex and Leeds.

95. "bullying can often = behavioural problems = non attendance = exclusion = crime = substance abuse". (Head Teacher, Newham 2003)

96. beatbullying's over-arching aim is to intervene in, prevent and reduce incidents of bullying within a community setting. Due to the nature of bullying this cuts across and is inter-linked with a variety of other issues and social phenomena facing both young people and children. Therefore bullying is not only a stand-alone issue but also cuts across other problems faced by young people, for example, substance abuse, underachieving (47% of young people that are bullied or are bullies are underachieving, Cowie, H 1999), behavioural problems, mental illness, vulnerability to violence and social, cultural and personal exclusion.

97. An example of "joined up" policy and practice.

beatbullying conceived of, designed and wrote the initial project brief and business plan. beatbullying successfully lobbied the Mayor, GLA and Transport for London; all of whom agreed to become involved in-kind. beatbullying also bought the 33 London Boroughs, Tequila/London (an advertising/marketing agency) and 450 schools, youth agencies and community organisations to the partnership; all of whom made financial or in-kind contributions. This very successful campaign melded the government, charitable and private sectors—all working together in policy and practice terms to assist all Londoners to beatbullying. It had massive hearts and minds impact, 400 pieces of press and is merely the foundations of a programme that will carry on for some years.

98. *Bully Watch London—May 2006 (please see attached appendices for outline)*

Bully Watch London aims: to raise awareness of bullying to all Londoners and encourage adults and young people who are aware or observe bullying to safely take action and contact people in authority to deal with the problem. Audience: All Londoners. Campaign concept: the introduction of Bully Watch London loosely based on the neighbourhood watch idea. The campaign encourages civic responsibility: Message: "Bully Watch London. If you spot it, you can stop it".

99. *Campaign placement demographics*

1,400 poster sites across all TfL sites, 4,000 bus circuit sites, 250,000 bully watch stickers, 250,000 A4 posters, 250,000 leaflets, 250,000 Badges, Website, Sticker/poster/badge distributed in BWL goody bag to 20,000 Big Issue readers and workshops and town hall style meeting for parents and young people. Bully Watch London packs were distributed to thousands of schools, youth organisations, community organisations, news agents, shops, sports and leisure facilities, offices, shopping centres, stations, bus sites and homes.

100. The campaign used the strapline—"If you can spot it, you can stop it"—to highlight the practical steps that every Londoner—young and old—can take to stop bullying.

101. Bully Watch London had a simple aim to increase the confidence of adults in understanding how to spot, intervene and report bullying and increase the confidence of children that adults will do something about it. The campaign is a joint initiative between the Mayor of London, beatbullying, Association of London Government and Transport for London, Chelsea Football Club and Tequila/London (an advertising/marketing agency).

102. *Results*

(The project as not been fully evaluated as yet, as a series of town hall style meetings and trainings are being undertaken with parents form across the Capital).

103. *Bully Watch London Helpline*

A total of 1,751 calls were made to the Bully Watch London helpline since launch.

	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Parents, carers or guardians	876	50.03%
Young people aged 11–18	191	10.91%
Young people aged 5–11	45	2.57%
Traders and businesses	89	5.08%
Schools	105	6.00%
Community Organisations	92	5.25%
Professionals	263	15.02%
Others	90	5.14%

104. *Enquiries and information: Call topics*

876 London parents, carers or guardians were advised and supported by beatbullying staff on issues relating to the following areas: truancy, school failing to engage with family of bullied young person, victim being excluded from school, happy slapping, text bullying, hate websites, homophobic bullying, inter-faith bullying, worries about knife crime, local harassment issues, child currently out of school needing advice, seeking more literature, young people being bullied by a teacher and 1 attempted suicide. Many parents/carers have been placed on an email data base and will be invited to the parents' seminar.

105. www.bullywatchlondon.org

26,436 unique users to www.bullywatchlondon.org

Received 126 emails to info@bullywatchlondon.org seeking advice or comment

106. *Information campaign:*

Distributed 295,000 pieces of literature to 4,500+ organisations.

107. *To what extent schools can be responsible for bullying that takes place off their premises and how can they deal with it?*

beatbullying believes quite strongly that schools are not responsible for bullying that takes place off their premises. In our experience of working with and training thousands of teachers, making schools responsible for all bullying across a community is self-defeating and just adds to a sense of unfairness many teachers feel considering the vast majority have not received even rudimentary training on how to combat bullying let alone have to try and make an impact across their neighbourhood.

108. *Whether particular strategies need to be used to tackle homophobic and racist bullying?*

Inter-faith and Racist bullying

As a response beatbullying has developed and successfully piloted “BB Inter-faith”, to our knowledge this is the only fully modelled response to inter-faith and racist bullying. The project’s aims and objectives are outlined below:

109. A BBC/YouGov report published in November 2005 reported that faith-based bullying had risen by some 600% post 9/11. During 2005 beatbullying surveyed 5,000 young people, of whom 45% reported that they had been involved in faith-based/racist bullying.

110. The BB Inter-faith approach is one that recognises and celebrates differences and suggests that all faiths should be positively endorsed. BB Inter-faith aims to encourage young people from different backgrounds to work together for the common good and to recognise that behind different backgrounds there is a common humanity and civic identity. In doing this, BB Inter-faith hopes to build bridges between people of different backgrounds with a view to overcoming inter-faith bullying, bigotry, sectarianism and intolerance. To build harmony and a world where inter-faith bullying is unacceptable it is necessary to examine the sources of bullying and disharmony, understand what is to be examined, then create an approach which, while recognising the value of diversity, assists young people, schools, youth groups and their communities to work together to avoid sectarianism, inter-faith conflict and bullying through key learnings and issues addressed via this project.

111. *BB inter-faith over view*

- Understanding what the opportunities and challenges are for young people living in a multi-faith society.
- How BB Inter-faith can build better understanding between young people with different beliefs, so disagreement and diversity can be discussed without conflict, anger or violence.
- Challenge young people to discuss and explore different beliefs and value systems and how they impact young people in relation to living and being schooled together.
- Finding out what the experience of young people is in relation to inter-faith bullying; what are their experiences of assimilation, exclusion, sanitization, or normativism, of bias and tokenism, and what about these experiences may lead to inter-faith bullying.
- As with all our intervention/prevention programmes, BB Inter-faith will explore issues around inter-faith and sectarian bullying and create awareness programmes using a variety of innovative mediums including art, drama, creative writing, music and new media. beatbullying development workers will provide expert support and advice. Once working policy, educational material and solutions will be developed by each individual panel, education awareness programmes will be rolled out to the wider community groups, organisations and schools where peer mentoring, peer listening and the beatbullying prevention model and literature is delivered to thousands of young people.

112. *Project Outputs:*

- Establish 6 borough-based Peer led anti inter-faith bullying forums/six borough-based sets of resources and solutions to be cascaded across each borough, by young people for young people.
- 600 Peer leaders/ambassadors graduating with the assistance and support of beatbullying staff will then cascade learning out to a minimum of 6,000 of their peers in schools and youth organisations providing them with significant/proven anti inter-faith bullying solutions.
- Working in partnership to provide inter-faith anti-bullying solutions with a minimum of 270 partner agencies.

113. *Project Outcomes:*

- Increase in the reporting of inter-faith bullying by young people and a decrease in inter-faith bullying.
- Decrease in inter-faith bullying by the young people who trained and mentored by the beatbullying inter-faith leaders.

- Young people have ownership and responsibility for making changes to inter-faith bullying situations that affect them and have greatly improved knowledge of inter-faith bullying by young people and the professionals working with them.
- Children and young people have increased self-confidence and increased ability to deal with significant life changes and challenges, an increased sense of team work, an ability to manage their anger more effectively to resolve conflict without violence or bullying.

114. *Homophobic bullying:*

- 80% of secondary school teachers say that they are aware of homophobic bullying.
- 25% of secondary school teachers are aware of physical homophobic bullying.
- 90% of schools have a general anti-bullying policy whereas only 6% of schools have a policy which proactively deals with homophobic bullying.
- Young LGBT people are more likely to leave school at 16 despite achieving grades that merit them continuing education.
- 40% of young LGBT pupils fear that homophobic bullying will continue if they stay on at school after 16.
- 75% of bullied LGBT young people feign illness or truant from school to escape the impact of homophobic bullying.

115. The effects of homophobic bullying are not limited to young LGBT people. An education culture where homophobic bullying exists can affect anyone singled-out as different. A culture where any sort of bullying exists makes our communities unsafe for everyone.

116. *BB Out is different. Different as our work is 100% youth-led and 100% youth-authored.*

This means that young LGBT people themselves decide on how the campaign is run, what information the campaign contains, and how the campaign is marketed. In this way, we can be sure that the campaign content, design and implementation is by young people for young people.

BB Outputs

- Increases in the reporting of homophobic bullying by young LGBT people.
- Measurable decreases in bullying of young LGBT people in London due to the delivery of education and prevention programmes.
- Greatly improved knowledge of homophobic bullying and anti-bullying strategies by young people, professionals, parents and carers through the panel work, film creation (ActOUTbb), website and media.
- Increased confidence and self-esteem of young people affected by homophobic bullying and empowering often socially excluded young people to develop solutions to homophobic bullying based upon their experiences and needs.
- Standardisation of response to homophobic bullying within and across sectors, boroughs, pan-London and eventually nationally.

117. *Appendices:*

About beatbullying

Multi-award winning beatbullying empowers young people to lead anti-bullying campaigns in their schools and local communities and builds the capacity of local communities to sustain the work. beatbullying has directly and indirectly worked with 500,000+ young people over the last 3 years assisting and supporting young people that are being bullied, re-educating and changing the behaviour of young people that bully and preventing bullying in schools and communities across the UK. The team has worked with 2,500+ agencies locally, regionally and nationally in the last three years.

118. *Outputs*

- Establishment of 200 borough-based inter-community youth panels.
- A minimum of 5 million children provided with a variety of beatbullying resources designed by young people for young people.
- Providing boroughs and localities with best practice anti-bullying models agreed by and co-designed by local schools, youth groups and community organisations.
- Providing anti-bullying training and toolkits to the professionals working in a minimum of 15,000 agencies.
- Developing the beatbullying internet portal and e-learning suite. Providing youths, professionals, carers and parents with accessible anti-bullying resources which are accreditable via the e-mentoring scheme.

119. *Outcomes*

- Increases in the reporting of bullying by young people.

- Measurable decrease in bullying of young people in the UK due to the delivery of education and prevention programmes across all sectors of the community.
- Greatly improved knowledge of bullying and anti-bullying strategies by young people, professionals, parents and carers through the panel work and the dissemination of literature and use of the website.
- Increased the confidence and self-esteem of young people affected by bullying and empowering often socially excluded young people to develop solutions to bullying, based upon their experiences and needs.
- Standardisation of response to bullying within and across sectors, localities, boroughs, regions and nationally.

120. *Partnership/Collaboration*

beatbullying will be working in 45 boroughs by 2006. beatbullying is proud to have recruited in excess of 450 partner organisations in boroughs across the UK and is working with 2,000+ agencies (all of whom have made constructive and important contributions to beatbullying). Partner agencies include a variety of diverse organisations including schools, youth groups, youth clubs, community groups, Connexions, faith groups, Pupil Referral Units, racial equality councils, groups working with young people from black and minority ethnic heritage, groups working with refugees and asylum seekers, groups and organisations working with young people from travelling communities and groups and organisations working with young offenders.

121. *The beatbullying prevention model in action—services and activities*

The BB community response model has five distinct phases, working with three distinct groups over a period of 12–15 months.

122. *Phase 1—Inter-agency partnership*

Individual borough inter-agency panels are established. Young people self-select or are selected by their school, youth group or community organisation to represent their borough on the BB panel. Quite intentionally, the majority of young people contributing to the programme are considered highly vulnerable or are socially, economically or culturally excluded.

123. They are young people who bully, perceived as bullies, those at risk of being bullied, young people who are bullied, those at risk of undertaking criminal activity and those who are at risk or have been excluded from mainstream education. In particular we aim to actively involve young people, many of whom are traditionally silenced and excluded. This includes physically disabled young people, those from black and minority ethnic communities, faith groups, asylum seekers, young people from travelling communities, lesbian, gay and bisexual young people, and/or young people who are questioning their sexuality and those from deprived communities.

124. All aspects (types) of bullying are responded to including racial, genderised, religious, homophobic, inter-faith, psychological, physical and emotional bullying.

125. The young BB ambassadors, as they have become known, then go through an eight month programme of intense creative and intellectual workshops formulating anti-bullying policy, practice, responses, toolkits and solutions authored by young people for young people. Aided by skilled anti-bullying advocates (adults) creative activities including art, drama and creative writing are used to develop an agreed borough-wide campaign. The young people also produce literature which includes posters, leaflets, information cards, poems, stories, songs, websites, plays and videos that demonstrate the types of bullying they are experiencing and how they feel this should be dealt with using the following creative methods and model:

126. *Art/Design/Print*

Our BB panels explore bullying, its impact and the consequences of bullying and the effect it has on the quality of their lives and the lives of their peers, using as many visual devices as possible. Our aim is to create from their ideas a versatile, insightful and far-reaching campaign. It is also about creating campaigns that look not just at the victim, but at the bully themselves. All our ambassadors can paint, draw, collage and graffiti their ideas. These ideas can then be translated into poster material, information cards and also standalone works of “community art”. Through the use of art as a medium to express themselves they can build and broadcast a formidable anti-bullying statement.

127. *Creative Writing*

At the BB panels the young people are given the opportunity to use creative writing to explore the many issues surrounding bullying. By introducing a diverse range of fun exercises, the young people are encouraged to express their thoughts, feelings and opinions in writing. With the support of a creative writer they are then able to develop their ideas into a form which appeals to them. This can be anything from short stories to MC lyrics—the choice is theirs!

128. Drama In the drama sessions the young people work with professional actors on developing bullying scenarios that affect them through scripting a scene to acting it out. The work includes playlets, role-plays and monologues all with a clear message. This work is filmed to be able to show other young people how to deal with situations, offering different outcomes and forming part of an important teaching resource.

129. *IT*

In the IT sessions the young people work with professional graphic designers, web designers and new media specialists to construct a 6–10 page anti-bullying borough website. The sites include artwork, policy, downloads, help seeking information, links and bullying issues of local importance.

130. Once all information and the campaign has been developed, this information is then distributed free of charge borough-wide to schools, youth groups, Community Safety Teams and other youth organisations whose young people have been involved in the panels. Each borough has a minimum of 8,000 youth authored pieces of literature for young people. The borough campaign is presented and agreed upon by all partner agencies and is then published locally and presented to the LA and to councillors.

131. *Phase 2—roll out to young people across each borough*

beatbullying cascades the programme/campaign out to participating agencies, schools and organisations. Working closely with the BB ambassadors who have gone through intense training, the BB team then goes back into all partner schools, organisations and agencies and run similar workshops with as many young people from each organisation or school as are nominated.

132. Using a “whole” schools, youth groups and community organisations approach a BB day is run in each organisation/school. The team led by the young people then disseminates solutions/practice and literature to inter-agency partners. For example, after close consultation with teachers or youth workers, beatbullying may organise a miniature anti-bullying campaign for the young people, we may set up a mentoring/buddying scheme. What beatbullying always does is listen to the young people about what works for them and always facilitates evaluated schemes and practice.

133. *Phase 3—inter-agency training of professionals*

In addition to working with the young people, free of charge training is provided for staff on how to deal with bullying as beatbullying cascades the results of the inter-agency panels. Training is provided to members of staff nominated by our partner agencies and facilitated in an inter-agency environment. This ensures that best practice is translated around the borough, anti-bullying networks are established and staff from a variety of disciplines and sectors can, all things being equal, respond to bullying in a standardised way.

134. During the training professionals are also invited to work up a “professional’s campaign” using many of the same mediums as young people do. Over time this will also be distributed free of charge to partner agencies.

135. Professionals (and partner agencies/organisations) also receive, free of charge, a comprehensive beatbullying toolkit available in paper copy or downloadable format at www.beatbullying.org. Bespoke toolkits are available to teachers, head teachers, teaching assistants, behavioural support workers, youth offending team members, personal advisers (Connexions), governors, mentors, parents, youth workers, community workers, school nurses, dinner ladies, social workers, health care professionals and local bus drivers etc. Toolkits for a variety of other professionals, including prison officers, are being made available all the time.

136. *Phase 4—sub-regional inter-agency co-operation.*

As the roll-outs of individual borough campaigns are planned in clusters a sub-regional initiative is then delivered cross-borough. For example, Lewisham, Lambeth and Southwark unite, as do Croydon, Merton and Sutton etc. All results, campaigns, information and solutions are exchanged by the young people for the young people. A sub-regional statement of policy expectation is constructed, resources are refined and press work is undertaken to gain local publicity. Forward planning is critical to this co-operation and crucial to ensuring that the young people of each borough continue to own the programme.

137. *Phase 5—Peer mentoring, peer listening and peer activism*

Young people who become BB ambassadors go on to become mentors if they so choose. Full training is undertaken with the young people and they work with beatbullying staff as volunteer mentors, guiding and using their experience of the process to assist and mentor other young people who have joined beatbullying.

Note: after Phase 4 the cycle begins again in each borough.

136. *The beatbullying prevention programme actually works!*

“There are examples of organisations that innovate, that adapt to new needs and opportunities, that tackle seemingly insoluble problems. Take beatbullying, the current Charity of the Year—it empowers young people to lead anti-bullying campaigns in their schools and local communities, and builds the capacity of local communities to sustain the work” (David Milliband MP, Minister for Local Government, at the time of speech).

The brothers' mum is exceptionally pleased with their progress, according to mum they are measurably more confident, very committed to BB and are now using what they have learnt to look out for each other. They are talking about bullying as a family and trying as a family to come to terms with the issues facing their older brother Michael. Both importantly say they want to make a difference.

146. Fummi and Charity Age 15 and 16 Living in Lambeth

Bios: Fummi and Charity are sisters and asylum seekers. Both have experienced bullying since they arrived in the UK two years ago. In and out of school, they have suffered verbal, racist, cultural and physical bullying. They have also been systematically harassed about their sexuality as their community is culturally opposed to girls and boys mixing before the age of enfranchisement. The bullying culminated in bricks being thrown through their window at home.

Although mediation had taken place at the school they attend, according to Fummi and Charity this has not worked because they were never believed. Although BB have no independent verification of this, as with all young people who say they have been bullied we start by saying we believe them.

Unfortunately during the first month of the sister's involvement with BB, Fummi was excluded for violent behaviour. There is much debate about what actually led to Fummi's violent outburst. Fummi and her parents believe it was a final frustrated reaction to two years of bullying and her exclusion was profoundly unfair.

Following the incident, the school felt that Fummi could no longer attend the BB programme. BB disagreed and agreed that Fummi could remain a member of the panel.

Fummi feels that BB "are the only people to give her chance" and "the only people that believed her [and her sister]". This according to Fummi and Charity is the central problem with anti-bullying policies and programmes, so often young people are not believed.

Both sisters have continued to be very involved with BB, and both sit on the Web Site advisory committee. Unprompted sisters and some friends meet once a week to discuss the design of the BB kid's web site and are responsible for crucial decisions about the direction and content of the site.

Fummi is currently applying to go to college so she can take her GCSEs and A Levels she was unable to sit this year. BB will provide her with a reference.

Memorandum submitted by the YWCA

1. YWCA England & Wales is the leading charity working with young women facing poverty, discrimination or abuse. We provide support, information and the opportunity to learn. We campaign with young women and carry out research on issues they feel are holding them back.

2. We work with young women in areas of socio-economic deprivation, running over 140 programmes with more than 5,000 young women each year. In a safe environment, we support young women to challenge violence or abuse, learn new skills, finish their education and improve their health and self-esteem. In all our work, we listen to what young women need and work with them to influence policy, overcome barriers and change negative attitudes.

3. YWCA is gravely concerned that young Gypsy and Traveller women are experiencing both racist and gender/sexuality based bullying in schools leading to them leaving school early and rarely achieving academically.

4. Our recent desk research and small scale interviews with support staff and young women have raised the following concerns about bullying:

5. Young Gypsy and Traveller women face such extreme racist bullying, including physical attacks, that they stay away from schools and miss out on their education.

6. Prejudice against Gypsy and Traveller pupils is not always recognized as racist bullying and may not receive the necessary attention.

7. Some of the girl on girl bullying young women face can be subtle, for example stealing possessions, text messages or isolation. This is hard for teachers to spot and can go unnoticed in the classroom.

8. Many young Gypsy and Traveller women have a strict moral code of conduct, this includes never discussing sex and physical relationships, bodies, or boyfriends with any men or women outside the immediate family. To break this code would bring shame on the young women and their families. Having a boyfriend, having sex, kissing them or being sexually propositioned all risk breaking a young woman's moral code. Anecdotally, YWCA has found that some young women report that they have been propositioned or pressured to have boyfriends or sex as a form of bullying. This has led to them leaving school.

9. YWCA would be happy to present oral evidence to the Committee.

October 2006

Memorandum submitted by Teacher Support Network

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Teacher Support Network makes a tangible difference to the lives of 100,000 teachers every year through its telephone, online and school-based services.
2. Teacher Support Network believes that the effectiveness of the professionals who educate, guide and inspire our young people is absolutely critical to the quality of education.
3. When bullying in schools is discussed, the bullying of teachers is often over-looked as an issue
4. Due to the nature of schools, bullying can often be more intense than in other work places. The person affected by the bullying will find it hard to escape from the person they perceive to be bullying them.
5. Teachers often find it difficult to talk to anyone about the bullying either through fear of the repercussions should the bully find out or because they feel ashamed of admitting how it is affecting them.
6. Harassment, relationships with adults at work and relationships with pupils are among the top issues that teachers contact Teacher Support Network about.
7. Teacher Support Network has undertaken three online surveys this year in order to learn more about homophobic, racially motivated and cyber bullying.
8. 60% of respondents to the survey on homophobic bullying have experienced harassment or discrimination due to their sexual orientation or gender identity.
9. 72% of respondents to the black and minority ethnic teacher survey have experienced or witnessed discrimination or harassment. 60% said this came from managers; 46% from pupils; and 49% from colleagues.
10. Preliminary findings of the cyber bullying survey show that it is happening at home (38%), in the evening 76%) and perpetrated by managers and persons unknown (both 36%).
11. Bullying and harassment can cause a lack of confidence and low self-esteem and can lead to stress-related sickness which can lead to long-term sickness absence. In severe cases teachers can feel suicidal and some leave the teaching profession, seeing this as the only solution.
12. This has a negative impact on the educational experience of young people as teachers lack the enthusiasm for their subject and their confidence to deliver their classes effectively. Prolonged periods of absence can disrupt much needed continuity in teaching.
13. The requirement for all schools to have a behaviour policy as out lined in the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives schools the opportunity to involve the whole school community in creating a positive culture of respect.
14. As incidents of cyber-bullying continue to increase, schools must fulfil their duty to protect their staff from work-related bullying wherever it occurs.
15. Bullying behaviour can be provoked by stress. The implementation of the Health and Safety Executive's Management Standards for Work-related Stress would be a positive step towards reducing stress in schools.
16. Coaching and mentoring for all teachers, but particularly school managers, would give them the opportunity to reflect on their behaviour and the way it impacts on those around them.
17. Schools should ensure that teachers are aware of services such as Teacher Support Network where they can seek advice and support.

INTRODUCTION TO TEACHER SUPPORT NETWORK

18. Teacher Support Network is an independent charity dedicated to improving the wellbeing and effectiveness of teachers whether training, serving or retired. Each year the charity makes a tangible difference to the professional and personal lives of tens of thousands of teachers and trainees who access our online and telephone services.
19. Over the past seven years, Teacher Support Network has become a major source of support for the teaching profession from training to post-retirement. Current services include:
 20. Teacher Support Line, the first dedicated clinical support service for teachers and trainees anywhere in the world, providing free, confidential counselling, advice and information to teachers every day, 24/7. Teacher Support Line Cymru provides the same service to teachers and trainees in Wales.
 21. Teacher Support Online email-based coaching service was launched in March 2006. Teachers and trainees email their queries and concerns to qualified coaches over a secure internet link and receive an answer within 24-hours, which can develop into a dialogue as the coach works with the teacher or trainee to find solutions to the issues raised.

22. Teacher Support Network's website, www.teachersupport.info, provides a range of factsheets, self-help tools and news items for teachers and trainees to access themselves.

23. Money advisors provide teachers and trainees with advice on budgeting, debts and benefits. Financial assistance, through needs-based grants and loans, is available to all teachers. At present the charity's guidelines do not allow for grants and loans to be given to trainees, but this is open to negotiation if the TDA would like to discuss further.

24. Having been registered as an independent charity since 1962, the Teachers Benevolent Fund launched Teacherline (later Teacher Support Line) in 1999 to provide a free, confidential information, support and counselling service for trainee, serving and retired teachers.

FACTUAL INFORMATION

25. When bullying in schools is discussed, the bullying of teachers is often over-looked as an issue, despite it being acknowledged that bullying is sadly a feature of many workplaces. Teacher Support Network believes that measures to tackle bullying among teachers will not be successful unless we also tackle the bullying of teachers whether it comes from pupils, colleagues or managers.

26. Due to the nature of schools, bullying can often be more intense than in other work places. The person affected by the bullying will find it hard to escape from the person they perceive to be bullying them. In other workplaces it is possible to leave the office for a short time if one needs a break. In a school, they may find the bully sharing their workspace and sitting with them in the staff room. If the bullying happens in the classroom, a teacher cannot simply walk out. They have to maintain their professionalism and remain until the class is over.

27. Like many young people affected by bullying, teachers often find it difficult to talk to anyone about the bullying either through fear of the repercussions should the bully find out or because they feel ashamed of admitting how it is affecting them. When the bullying comes from managers, it is difficult for teachers to know where to turn should they want to talk about it, feeling that they will not be taken seriously by other managers. Many teachers feel more comfortable turning to the independent and confidential services provided by Teacher Support Network.

Calls to Teacher Support Line

28. Harassment, relationships with adults at work and relationships with pupils are among the top issues that teachers contact Teacher Support Network about.

29. From analysing the calls to Teacher Support Network and from speaking to our professional coaches and counsellors, we have an insight into the prevalence of bullying and the impact it has on teachers.

30. This year almost 60 teachers a month have made initial contact with us concerned about harassment, discrimination, relationships with colleagues and relationships with pupils. These were recorded as follows:

2006 (10 months only)

183 contacted Teacher Support Line in relation to harassment:

- bullying 159
- racial 8
- disability 4
- sexual 1
- sexual orientation 2

7 contacted Teacher Support Line in relation to discrimination:

- racial 6
- disability 1
- sexual 0
- sexual orientation 1

345 called in relation to concerns with other adults at work:

- manager 142
- colleague 85
- mentor/tutor 17
- parent 12
- subordinate 3
- Governor 1

Teaching assistant 17

21 called in relation to concerns with relationships with pupils

18 in relation to pupil behaviour

7 in relation to violence

4 in relation to abuse

3 in relation to threats

4 uncategorised

TOTAL: 577 teachers

We estimate that each teacher calls, or is called back an average 3.5 times. This equates to 2020 calls overall on these topics; 202 calls per month.

31. The way that bullying from managers manifests itself and the impact it has on individuals is illustrated in the case studies included in this document (Para 57).

HOMOPHOBIC, RACE-RELATED AND CYBER BULLYING

32. In addition to the knowledge we have from our service users, Teacher Support Network has also undertaken three online surveys this year in order to learn more about specific types of bullying.

33. The first was run jointly with the TES to coincide with LGBT History Month in February. Of a self-selecting group of 197 teachers, 60% of teachers have experienced harassment or discrimination due to their sexual orientation or gender identity.

34. The most common form this took was offensive jokes or language (69%), name calling (53%) and taunting/mockery/ridicule (52%).

35. The biggest perpetrators were pupils, followed by colleagues, managers and pupils' parents.

36. The impact of this kind of harassment is potentially devastating. Of those who completed the survey, 50 had become stressed or ill, 24 were afraid to go into work and 14 teachers resigned, all as a direct result of their experiences in school.

37. In October we ran a survey jointly with the NUT aimed at black and minority ethnic teachers to coincide with Black History Month and the NUT Black Teachers' Conference. Of a self-selecting group of 251 teachers, 72% have experienced or witnessed discrimination or harassment. 60% said this came from managers, 46% from pupils, 49% from colleagues.

38. While offensive jokes or language was the second most common form of discrimination (48%), racially motivated discrimination appears to be more covert than homophobic bullying with it being most commonly felt by teachers being looked over for promotion (50%). Refusal to cooperate (35%) and deliberate exclusion from work-related activities (28%) also featured highly. When asked about the impact this had on the teachers 61% said it reduced their confidence/self esteem, 48% said they coped with it, 37% became ill/stressed but carried on working and 33% felt their productivity/teaching effectiveness was reduced.

39. Since November 2006 Teacher Support Network has been jointly running a survey with ATL looking at a new form of bullying known as cyber-bullying. This is bullying perpetrated by the use of mobile phones, email and the internet. Websites like ratemyteacher.co.uk are being used to post personal attacks on individual teachers.

40. The survey results will be published in the New Year but preliminary findings show that this is a form of bullying that goes beyond the school gates with it happening at home (38%), in the evening (76%) and perpetrated by managers and persons unknown (both 36%).⁴⁸

41. Mary Bousted, General Secretary of ATL, describes this kind of bullying as "insidious, pernicious and totally unacceptable".

42. School policies on all forms of bullying vary dramatically and in many cases do not exist. Where they do exist they are not always enforced effectively and many do not cover specific types of bullying particularly homophobic and cyber bullying.

The impact of bullying

43. We have seen from our survey results and from talking to teachers through Teacher Support Line and our online coaching that bullying and harassment can cause a lack of confidence and low self-esteem and can lead to stress-related illness which can lead to long-term sickness absence. In severe cases teachers can feel suicidal and some leave the teaching profession, seeing this as the only solution.

⁴⁸ Figures correct as of November 17 2006. Survey open until February 2007 on www.teachersupport.info

44. This not only has a potentially devastating impact on the individual teacher, their friends and family. It will also have a negative impact on the educational experience of young people as teachers lack the enthusiasm for their subject and their confidence to deliver their classes effectively. Prolonged periods of absence can disrupt much needed continuity in teaching.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Policy

45. Teacher Support Network believes that schools and colleges should take a whole-school approach to tackling the issue of bullying. The requirement for all schools to have a behaviour policy as out lined in the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives schools the opportunity to involve the whole school community in creating a positive culture of respect.

46. Staff, students, governors and members of the local community should be involved in producing the behaviour policy. Each person is likely to feel more ownership of the policy if they have been given the opportunity to define their own rights and responsibilities.

47. There must be an awareness of clear and consistent sanctions that will be brought against anyone who breaches the policy and bullies or abuses another individual whether they be a student or member of staff.

48. As incidents of cyber-bullying continue to increase, school policies must take this into account. Bullying is not restricted to the school grounds and can be inflicted in a teacher's own home. Schools have a duty to protect their staff from work-related bullying wherever it occurs.

49. Government policies must take into account developments in technology that have produced these new forms of bullying and give schools the support they need to sanction the perpetrators and take steps to prevent further incidents.

Prevention

50. A whole-school behaviour policy, if properly implemented, should lead to a positive improvement of pupil behaviour and should also have a positive impact on the school staff. However, this alone is not enough to rid a school of incidents of bullying, particularly those that happen among staff.

51. Bullying behaviour that comes from school managers can be the product of the stress the manager is under. The implementation of the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE's) Management Standards for Work-related Stress would be a positive step towards reducing stress in schools.

52. Teacher Support Network's sister organisation, Worklife Support, has been working with schools in partnership with the HSE to implement the standards. DfES backing for the standards would increase their profile within the sector and encourage more schools to take them on.

53. Coaching and mentoring for all teachers, but particularly school managers, would give them the opportunity to reflect on their behaviour and the way it impacts on those around them. Teacher Support Network has experience of school managers contacting us having been approached by a colleague about their perceived bullying behaviour. These teachers are often shocked at how they have made others feel and welcome the opportunity to work with us to improve the way they communicate with those that they manage.

54. In addition, programmes of Continuing Professional Development must be backed up with adequate *personal* development opportunities. For example, teachers who have been trained in communication skills or classroom management techniques will be far better able to put the theory into practice if they have also considered their own levels of self-confidence and assertiveness; understood what makes them angry or afraid when challenged by a pupil or colleague; have thought about the words and mannerisms they use to maintain discipline—and then adapted their behaviour to turn negative situations into positive, inspirational experiences.

Support for those affected

55. Schools should ensure that teachers are aware of services such as Teacher Support Network where they can seek advice and support. Where local authority support services are available these should be widely advertised. Teachers are often unaware that this support is provided and can feel that they are left with no where to turn.

56. Local authorities should consider the policies they have in place to protect staff and the support they can offer schools in improving school culture, reducing stress and preventing bullying.

 CASE STUDIES

57. The following are anonymous notes from the qualified coaches and counsellors who talk to teachers on Teacher Support Line. They illustrate how bullying among staff manifests itself and how Teacher Support Network works with teachers to resolve challenging situations and improve their health and wellbeing.

Teacher A

58. Teacher A is a nursery school teacher who called Teacher Support Line saying that she was experiencing problems with the headteacher and felt intimidated and bullied. Teacher A said the headteacher had told her that staff had been complaining about her and that she didn't know what she was doing even though she has always had very good reviews and a good relationship with her colleagues. I explored Teacher A's thoughts and feelings around this situation. Teacher A said she used to suffer from depression and is worried that it will be triggered again by this situation. She is planning on taking sick leave and we explored how she could use this time positively. Teacher A said she felt guilty for leaving her colleagues in this situation we explored these feelings and what would happen if she didn't take time off. We looked at support in her life and how she could regain her confidence by doing things for herself in the time off for example hobbies etc. I offered Teacher A further support if she felt she would like to call again.

Teacher B

59. Teacher B called about the common problem of bullying. Her bully was a senior manager and Teacher B had had issues with him for several years. She claimed that he bullied most people at the school, causing quite a few to leave over the years for alternative positions elsewhere as a result of his behaviour and attitude. Teacher B explained that the head of the school was well aware of the situation but deems this individual's presence at the school so valuable that he was not prepared to act on the allegations being constantly made against the bully. Teacher B said that the union representative based at the school was also a victim and was off with stress.

60. The situation has been building progressively and has now reached the point where Teacher B feels the need to change schools to get away from this individual, but at the same time had issues with the fact that if she did this then the bully would have won.

61. We discussed the causes of bullying. Through our discussions, Teacher B considered the possibility that the bully was threatened by her for the good work she does at the school. This realisation increased Teacher B's confidence to act and stand up for herself.

62. From here tactics were discussed including the upright position of body language to display lack of intimidation; avoidance if possible; to never be alone with the bully to provide the opportunity for him to run her down; the questioning of any derogatory comments or requests made; contacting her union if necessary; and the keeping of notes of all incidences for future reference. Teacher B finished the call on a more confident and determined not to allow this person to get away with his behaviour and undermine her in this way as she now realised she was his equal, not his subordinate.

Teacher C

63. Teacher C told me about the prolonged and continual bullying that he had faced from the headmistress since her arrival 2 years ago. Teacher C was struggling to find the motivation and energy to get out of bed in the morning and had sought medical advice. He had been diagnosed with depression, though up until now had refused to take time off work as he believed this action would only give the headmistress more ammunition to use against him. This belief was increasing his already overwhelming stress levels further. During my first contact with Teacher C, we explored the issue of the bullying and the impact that this was having on Teacher C's life, particularly his psychological and physical wellbeing. We then explored solutions to address this situation. The idea of involving the Union and asking for their support appealed to Teacher C who saw it as the only way to stop this situation. A number of attempts to discuss this with the headmistress had failed, therefore a third party was required to intervene. By the end of our second session Teacher C had realised the benefits of staying away from this hostile environment, which was impacting on his depression and decided the benefits of taking time off (as suggested by his GP) outweighed any negatives from such action. Our third session involved looking at options to reignite past interests and hobbies and what obstacles there may be to achieving this goal. We also discussed increasing exercise levels to help combat the depression. By the end of this third and final session, Teacher C's mood had lifted considerably and he felt that he was now in control of the situation, his outlook on life had changed considerably.

Teacher D

64. Teacher D complained about bullying from her head. Her head has withdrawn a promotion offered previously and is withholding communication from the client. She is also highly critical of all areas of Teacher D's job. The problem started when the Teacher D requested time to think about the promotion offer that was made. She is also aware she is suffering from anxiety, stress and is experiencing panic attacks as a result of the attitude of her head towards her.

65. Teacher D has confronted the head personally but the action has only made matters worse. She has been to the doctors and has taken time off work. She is reluctant to take prescribed medication and wants to try to control her health issues herself.

66. With regards to acting against the bullying, I suggested she check the policies and procedures at the workplace first. I also suggested she contact her union. I provided the Teacher D with the contact number for the Andrea Adams Trust, and supplied the website addresses for Teacher Support Network and TheSite.org for information on handling stress, anxiety and controlling panic attacks. I agreed with Teacher D to return to Teacher Support Line as and when required as she felt that she would like some further support later.

November 2006

Memorandum submitted by the National Union of Students (NUS)

The National Union of Students (NUS) is a voluntary membership organisation comprising a confederation of local student representative organisations in colleges and universities throughout the United Kingdom, which have chosen to affiliate. We have nearly 750 constituent members—virtually every college and university in the country. NUS represents the interests of around five million students in further and higher education throughout the United Kingdom. It provides research, representation, campaign work, training and expert advice for individual students and students' unions.

INTRODUCTION

NUS members are students' unions representing those studying in further and higher education. The focus of this response is on the experiences of students in the further and higher education sector and the effects of bullying on these students.

This submission suggests that further and higher education is in desperate need of more comprehensive information about bullying and increased resources to tackle it. If the issue of bullying is not tackled, it will continue to be a major problem throughout further and higher education.

Bullying does not stop at school, bypass FE/HE and return again in the work place. Bullying can affect anyone at any time. No matter where it is, or when it takes place it is harmful to all involved, not just those bullied. It can lead to self-doubt, lack of confidence, low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, self-harm and sometimes even suicide. 1 in 4 students suffer from some type of mental illness. This statistic will most defiantly have a section of students being bullied within it.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NUS believes that:

- There is a relationship between bullying at university and retention.
- There are no statistics on the extent of the problem. No research into bullying in FE and HE has been done, in turn this has meant that the problem has been underestimated.
- The problem of bullying is not confined to peer groups, students are also bullied by lecturers and supervisors. Often, bullying disproportionately affects postgraduate students. The bullying of anyone by anyone is not acceptable.
- Bullying can have serious implications on a student's academic achievement, and progression. Those who have been bullied suffer from poor physical and mental health as a direct result of their experiences. The effects of bullying can continue throughout life.
- Universities have a responsibility for the pastoral as well as the academic care of those in their charge.

NUS recommends that:

- A review is undertaken regarding further education and higher education's approach to bullying.
- Education should be inclusive and recognise diversity.
- There be regular training days for all teachers to refresh their understanding of diversity and equality issues.

- Comprehensive and inclusive anti-bullying policies should be implemented in all further and higher education institutions.

THE EXTENT AND NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

1. How bullying should be defined NUS defines bullying as any action taken which makes another feel intimidated, excluded, or unsafe. We believe that bullying has a hugely adverse effect on students' academic achievement and social, physical and mental wellbeing.

1.1 The extent of bullying on FE and HE campuses

There are no official statistics in FE and HE about the extent of the problem. Much of the current research is anecdotal.

NUS has recently launched its own survey into the extent of bullying on campuses, which is due to conclude in late January. The statistics used in this submission are the responses of the survey from 21 November until 10 December.

EVIDENCE TO DATE FROM THE NUS SURVEY:

74% of respondents did not know if their college or university had a policy on bullying.

Extent of Bullying:

- To date, 62% of respondents claimed that they have been bullied while at university and 34% stated that it lasted longer than a year.
- 61% of respondents know of someone that has been bullied and of those, 28% said that the person was bullied for over a year.
- 35% of students were bullied by a fellow student,
- 24% by a flat-mate. This is particularly difficult as often, the victim does not tell anyone that they are being bullied. They have to live alongside the bully, which can make the situation worse and in many cases, it is the victim who must move out rather than the bully.

Reasons for Bullying:

- 17% suffered from homophobic bullying (homophobic bullying can affect anyone who is perceived as "different" or who is friends with those who are "different");
- 10% were bullied on their academic ability; and
- 10% were bullied on social class.

Nature of Bullying:

- The nature of bullying changes as technology develops. Students are now vulnerable to bullying through internet chat rooms and mobile phones.

Of those who were Bullied:

- 82% suffered verbal abuse;
- 60% were victims of malicious lies;
- 71% suffered humiliation; and
- 64% experienced unfair criticism.

Effects of bullying:

Bullying is harmful to all involved, not just the bullied, and can lead to self-doubt, lack of confidence, low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, self-harm and sometimes even suicide:

Of those who were bullied:

- 80% had reduced self-esteem;
- 68% had disrupted sleep patterns; and
- 60% said that it affected their academic performance.

Consequences of bullying:

- 50% of people did nothing while they were being bullied—confronting the bully or the group of bullies is a big leap. Often, the victim of bullying feels that they are at fault.
- 21% talked to a friend that they felt that they could trust.
- 0% sought external support agencies.

Of those who reported the bully:

- 31% say that nothing happened.

NUS WOULD LIKE TO SEE

- A review regarding further education and higher education institutions' approach to bullying.
- Guidance given to further and higher education institutions that encourages that institution and the students union to produce comprehensive, practical and inclusive anti-bullying policies. Further and higher education institutions need to recognise that bullying is an issue that needs to be tackled. Any guidance should include:
 - A stipulation that all instances of bullying should be dealt with on a record and report basis. This is necessary to fully understand the extent of bullying in further education colleges and universities, to ensure that any form of bullying is not ignored.
 - Training on issues of diversity and equality for all new teachers and lecturers. This should draw on case studies of people who have experienced bullying. For example, when creating and delivering lecture plans on social issues, sexual health and relationships.
 - Regular training days for all teachers and lecturers to refresh their understanding of diversity and equality issues.
 - The Government forming legislation that is specific on bullying. There is no direct clause in the law regarding bullying, however under "The Equal Opportunities Policy", the law demands fair and equal treatment through the following:
 - The Equal Pay Act 1970
 - The Sex Discrimination Act 1975
 - The Race Relations Act 1976
 - The Disability Discrimination Act 1995
 - The Protection from Harassment Act 1997

December 2006

Memorandum submitted by Response Newcastle Action Against Bullying

1.1 There is now a wealth of information available to schools about what constitutes good practice in anti-bullying matters and many schools have readily adopted these practices.

1.2 Much has been written about clear, consistent, coherent policies which have been compiled in consultation with the school and its community. Where schools have followed these consultative pathways, the outcomes for all concerned have been impressive.

1.3 However not all schools act upon advice and support wherever it originates and many schools have policies which are anything but consultative or effective.

1.4 At present taking on board good practice initiatives in anti-bullying work within schools remains an optional extra and for many schools bullying will never compete in the priority stakes for time attention and energy with, for example, the standards agenda.

1.5 Head teachers tell us that bullying matters for their school are "not on the radar." Hence as a dedicated anti-bullying service we are sometimes rendered impotent to help where this view, perhaps understandably, prevails.

Something such as bullying that blights so many children's lives cannot be left to chance in this way.

Good schools find the time and the resources to promote the issue. Others appear not to.

Schools regrettably have to be called to account for the work they do in this area. At present there is little or no accountability.

1.6 Future research has to focus on those management structures and processes which facilitate genuine whole school responses. It is likely that individuals in some schools charged with anti-bullying issues have at present neither the status nor the skills in organisational development to facilitate a process of change.

1.7 We know that there is no easy fix. What is clear is there is no future in just promoting new approaches and interventions for schools to adopt in anti-bullying matters if the receiving culture in some situations will not support such measures.

1.8 Bullying is far too critical an issue for advice and support to be picked over as if it were a chocolate box.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Response is the Newcastle LA anti-bullying service, working into all 11 Secondary and 29 of the 73 Primary and First schools(due to funding criteria) across the City.

2.2 We are funded through Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and Children's Fund, originally from April 2004 until March 2006, but continuing until March 2008 reducing by 25% and 50% respectively.

2.3 It is a development project seeking out effective anti-bullying prevention and intervention strategies to assist schools and the wider community in responding to bullying behaviour.

2.4 Our team consists of people from a range of disciplines and backgrounds and have the shared ethos making a difference to the lives of young people in our City

3. CASE STUDY

Here is a typical example of what happens when a young person comes up against a school who actually believe that they deal well with bullying behaviour.

This storyline is not uncommon and is one we hear with regular monotony.

This is this week's story.

Today I met another success story!

A mature, sensitive and vulnerable 12-year-old girl who had made a choice based on her first hand knowledge and available evidence, who because of the behaviour of some students and the response of her school, is feeling less and less confident and more and more isolated.

This is an example of what we are trying to promote in our young people, to study the available information and make an informed choice, and have to support them in this position. Yes?

She has made the difficult decision not to return to her school where she feels unsafe, unwelcome, unsupported and let down. Where she has been attacked physically by students and emotionally, by both students and staff.

She is very aware and able to articulate how difficult she is going to find starting in a new school, but also believes that it is her only choice given the alternative of returning to an environment where her insecurities have been well fostered and enhanced by a system that should be so much better.

Why does the school not fight tooth and nail to keep this smart and ambitious young girl?

Why do they think that their response to this situation is acceptable?

Why, when they are the best placed people to help, support and prevent these types of bullying behaviours, do they continue to get it so wrong?

I ask them. Can you not learn from this?

This is a success!

She wishes to go to school. She is prepared to travel a long distance at extra expense with increased personal and family disruption in an attempt to achieve her ambition of becoming a doctor.

I must congratulate her on that decision and support her to make this massive and possibly traumatising move to a new school.

I believe that due to her excellent communication skills and the support of her family, she is equipped to manage this change.

This is one case. Unfortunately this story has been told all too often.

I have called it a success, because of the possible positive outcome for the young person. Many of our team's "successes" are assisting young people to leave one school and begin another where the perception is that bullying will be more effectively addressed.

4. IDENTIFIED PROBLEM AREAS

4.1 Is it fair to say that many schools do not deal effectively with bullying?

We know from case study, first hand evidence from young people and their families and anecdotally that, although best placed, schools are often the least likely to achieve real and positive outcomes when dealing with bullying behaviour.

4.2

- They have no clear definition of what is and what is not bullying
- They have little or no training in effective prevention or interventions
- They are often “too busy”
- They believe what they are doing is effective
- They do not address bullying as a whole school issue
- Policies are often wordy and non specific in direction
- Many do not treat it seriously until threatened and then often become defensive
- They do not welcome assistance other than splinter activities, which may be exciting, relevant and even sometimes enjoyable, but don't have any affect on the school response
- The school “culture” often promotes bullying
- Students and the wider community are not consulted in meaningful and on-going ways
- Lines of communication are often blurred
- Staff do not see it as their issue. They are there to teach.

This is not an exhaustive list, but I feel exhausted even thinking about it!

5. FACTUAL INFORMATION

5.1 This is our experience—There is excellent practice in some schools and it is they that can be a model for others, however, the level and pace at which anti bullying work lacks progress over the last decade is startling considering the availability and access to good practice.

5.2 When asked about their views about bullying in a Newcastle secondary school in October 2006, here is an example of conflicting responses from teachers:

- It is a bigger problem than we think, name calling and inferred aggression is evident in many classes.”
- Refer to head of year or head of school.”
- “It happens to a small extent.”
- Can be a problem; but on the whole dealt with quickly and effectively. All pupils and staff are aware of issues and the need to prevent it”

5.3 These are the responses from students in years 8, 9 and 10 at the same school.

- Teachers bring the bully and victim together and that reveals the victim has told on the bully, giving the bully another reason to bully”
- Teachers don't take much care about people getting bullied”
- Some teachers are supportive and listen to your problems but some” don't do anything”

6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

6.1 Strong levels of engagement in the whole school approach

6.2 Long term managed anti bullying self evaluation framework

6.3 Mandatory from government for all schools to engage in ABSEF framework (doc enclosed)?

6.4 Training—in “what works” for all school staff

6.5 Invest in city wide programmes that relates various initiatives within a framework—Response ABSEF

6.6 Student leadership programme that endeavours to harness existing power and influence by providing targeted training and support for student leaders.

6.7 Use of short term measure to influence long term change. Specialist workers engaging with schools and the wider community. It is often difficult to change cultures from the inside, but appropriate external influence can assist and speed the process.

6.8 Everyone within the school community taking an active role and agreeing on good and bad practice. Identifying the root processes that create a bullying culture and promote its acceptance in schools?

6.9 Working with schools and other organisations to support them in recognising their own current situation and putting together a plan that moves them forward to their desired position

6.10 The most effective and successful anti bullying development pathway is seen by the whole school approach envisioned by the whole school, where there is relational energy being invested by the whole school and a strong, clear and coherent expectancy (vision) shared by the whole school. Whole school shared responsibility from the individual to the collective.

6.11 Long term generational investment not to be traded away for the short term stage managed show piece forms of anti bullying work.

6.12 The school community actively exhibits a sense of shared responsibility.

6.13 Training about creating the capacity in teachers to respond appropriately and the capability of handling bullying behaviour.

6.14 Going to source—Approaching Teacher training colleges offering clear anti-bullying practices from anti bullying specialists so there can be inbuilt teaching elements around bullying countermeasures and whole school approaches.

6.15 Participation is crucial to expanding strategies suggested by group consultation that is inclusive and experiential. Our team have trained and experienced practitioners in facilitation and can support schools in this process with staff, students, parent/carers and other members of the community

December 2006
