HM Government

Staying Safe:

A consultation document

Contents

Foreword by Ed Balls

Keeping children and young people safe is a top priority. It is the responsibility of us all. That is why this consultation document seeks to promote discussion about how we could all do that better. Its purpose is to set out how we can work together to help children and young people stay safe, and make the most of their talents and new opportunities to fulfil their potential. I want to encourage the widest possible range of responses.

Childhood has changed. Children's lives today are different from those of the previous generation, just as our childhood was different from that of our parents. Some of those changes are for the better, bringing new opportunities and experiences. Others present challenges and sometimes bring risks. But all children and young people everywhere, whatever their background or circumstances, need a childhood that they can enjoy and which allows them to thrive and develop their full potential.

Commitment to improving children's safety is shared right across Government. In *Every Child Matters*, we set out our aim to help all children and young people achieve five outcomes – ones that children themselves had told us are the most important to them: being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being. Staying safe is vital for children and young people's happiness and well-being. Unless they are safe, children will not be able to achieve in other areas of their lives.

Children and young people today are, in many ways, safer than in previous generations and have opportunities that their parents and grandparents would not have dreamed of. Rates of accidents are down, including on the roads. Many childhood diseases can now be prevented or cured.

But society today is more complex than in previous generations, and this can bring new risks for children and young people's safety. Family structures are changing, communities are more diverse, and some of the traditional support networks, particularly for parents, are not available to many families. Growth in new technologies has brought wonderful new opportunities for education, information, communication and leisure but it also brings new opportunities for people who wish to harm children – for example through online grooming, sharing abusive images or as a means to bully other children and young people.

We rightly have high expectations for our children today. We want them to be protected from any sort of harm and abuse. But this does not mean that we should wrap children and young people up in cotton wool. Childhood is a time for learning and exploring. Through playing and doing positive activities, children and young people can learn to understand better the opportunities and challenges

in the world around them, and how to stay safe. We want everyone in society to take responsibility for helping children and young people to stay safe. This does not mean interfering in other people's lives, but does mean accepting a collective responsibility for children's safety and welfare. It is important that we all recognise that children and young people are individuals, just as much members of society as any adult, and they deserve to be valued, respected and listened to.

Government has a role to play in supporting parents to strike the right balance between protecting their children whilst allowing them to learn and explore new situations safely. We are introducing the toughest vetting and barring scheme ever for people working with children. And at a local level, we have put co-operation on children's safety on a statutory footing, with Local Safeguarding Children Boards in every local authority area. Improving children's life chances – and their chance of having a safe and happy childhood – will be one of the themes of our nationwide consultation over the summer to develop a Children's Plan for our country.
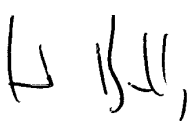
But bringing up children is the responsibility of parents not Government, and children and young people know that their family and friends can do most to keep them safe.

Parents – fathers and mothers – worry about their children's safety, including keeping children safe on the roads and protecting them from strangers. Parents we have talked to tend to worry most about risks they had encountered in their own childhood, but there are new threats in today's society. Parents generally feel a responsibility for other people's children as well, but are sometimes worried about the consequences of intervening if they have concerns about another child's safety.

By publishing this document for consultation, we want to raise awareness of how we can all help children and young people to stay safe. We set out what is happening nationally and locally to keep children safe, and highlight examples of good practice which we hope can help to share ideas and spread innovation. We also look at areas where we think we could be doing more to improve children's safety, as well as how we can make action already underway or planned more coherent and more effective.

We want to hear your views and start a debate about children's safety. How safe do you think children are? If you are a parent, what concerns do you have about your children's safety, and how do you address these? If you are a child or young person yourself, are the views of children and young people included here the same as yours and those of your friends? And as a member of the public, do you feel a sense of responsibility for protecting children? If you work with children and young people, or employ people who do, do you know what your role is in keeping children safe?

I am particularly pleased and proud to launch this consultation on behalf of my colleagues across Government. We hope that by talking about these issues, and by proposing new work in some areas, we can do even more to improve the safety of children and young people.

Rt Hon Ed Balls MP,
Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families

1. Introduction

1.1 Children and young people today enjoy a variety of activities and opportunities that would have seemed unimaginable to their parents and grandparents. The internet and other new technologies have opened up a world of information, education, communication and entertainment. Travel has become cheaper and easier. Improvements in educational standards mean that more children and young people have the opportunity for further studying and better job prospects.

1.2 Children and young people have more choice, but also face new challenges. Children grow up in many different family and community structures, and sometimes in countries different from where they or their parents were born. And while standards and opportunities have improved overall, some children are still left behind, particularly in some groups in society.

1.3 Being safe and secure is fundamental to a child's health and well-being. Children and young people today are, in many respects, safer than their parents' or grandparents' generations. They are less likely to die in accidents, including on the roads, and medical advances mean that more newborn babies survive.

Children's safety has improved in many areas…

The number of accidental injuries to children has been declining steadily: a 33% decrease in the death rate for under 15s since 1995-1997, and a 35% decrease in the serious injury rate since 1995-6.

By 2006, there had been a 52% reduction in the number of children aged 0-15 killed or seriously injured in Great Britain in road traffic accidents compared to the average for 1994-1998.

Following the launch of the *Back to Sleep* campaign in 1991 there was a reduction in the number of babies dying from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome from nearly 2 per 1,000 live births before 1991 to under 0.5 per 1,000 by 2005.

1.4 Children in the UK are safer than in many other Western countries. UNICEF found that United Kingdom ranked second in OECD countries on the measure of deaths from accidents and injuries, with fewer than 10 deaths per 100,000 children and young people aged up to 19.

1.5 Society today is more aware of, and more open about, the types of harm that might happen to a child or young person. We are starting to listen to children and young people more, and value their opinions about their own lives. We expect a reasonable standard of life for all children and young people, and where this is not offered, where a child is going hungry or being left on their own, we more readily recognise the signs and act upon them. Where once we may

have regarded some accidents as inevitable, we now expect steps to be taken to reduce their likelihood, such as traffic calming measures or safety features in playgrounds. We know more about child abuse and its long-term effects, and problems which were once kept behind closed doors, or within families, are now more readily identified. And we know that bullying can have a negative impact right through a child or young person's life, and have begun to tackle it.

1.6   Over the past decade, significant progress has been made in services offered to children and families. A new legal framework has been put in place, laying the foundations for reforms aimed at achieving the five outcomes children and young people told us they most value:

- being healthy;

- staying safe;

- enjoying and achieving;

- making a positive contribution; and

- achieving economic well-being.

1.7   In central Government, a new Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) has been created. Each local authority in England has a new Director for Children's Services, responsible for bringing together organisations working to improve children's health, learning and safety. Reforms driven by the Every Child Matters strategy have helped all practitioners and services to organise their work around the needs of children and their families. There is also now a Children's Commissioner for England, who is the independent voice for children and young people.

1.8   In every local area, children's trusts bring together all the different organisations working with children and young people. Professionals work more often in teams with colleagues from other services – for example social workers, nurses, police and teachers are all working together in better ways to meet the needs of children and families. These teams may be based in children's centres or in schools which offer 'extended' services from 8am through to 6pm.

1.9   Of all the five outcomes, young children see safety as the most important[1]. Staying safe is about more than just preventing accidents. It is also about helping to keep children safe from bullies, crime and anti-social behaviour, and protecting children who are at risk of abuse and neglect. To stay safe, children and young people also need to have security, stability and be cared for by parents, carers and families. Sometimes in this document we use the term 'safeguarding'. For some, safeguarding may have a narrow definition, focused on protecting children from abuse and neglect. But safeguarding used here covers the range of things we all need to do to keep children safe and promote their welfare.

1.10   We have made significant progress in reducing accidental harm to children and young people. But in other areas, progress is difficult to prove. Although we know more about child abuse, the real extent of abuse may be higher than identified through formal measurement systems.[2]

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1   Dr Roger Morgan, Children's Rights Director for England, *Younger Children's Views on 'Every Child Matters': from the 2005 Children's Rights National Event for children aged 12 and under*, pp.8-10.
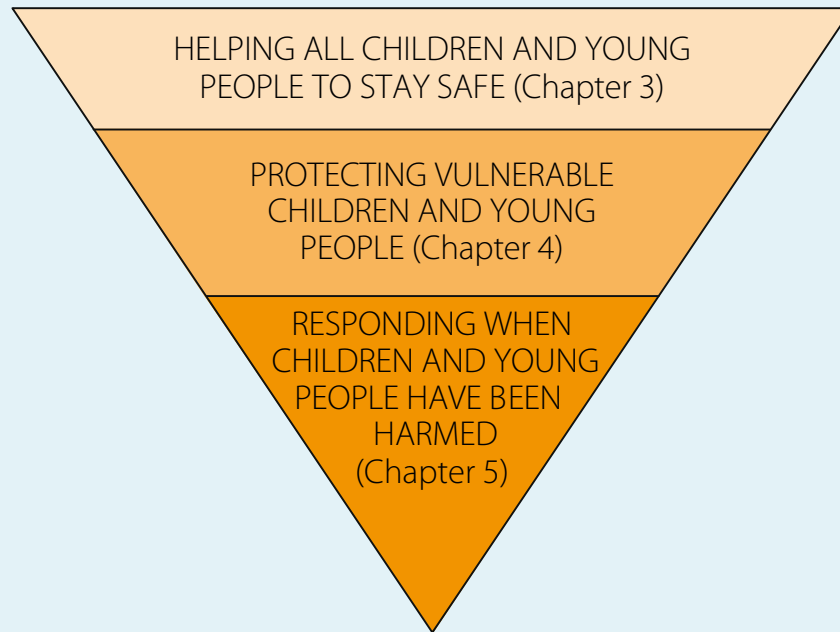
2   Cawson et al, *Child maltreatment in the United Kingdom: a study of the prevalence of child abuse and neglect*, London, NSPCC 2000.

Children and young people worry about their safety on the streets. The internet and mobile phones have provided new opportunities for those who seek to harm children and young people through online grooming or by accessing and sharing abusive images. And some children and young people can be exploited, through the sex trade or for domestic servitude.

1.11 Although most parents feel good about having children, almost all the mothers and fathers we spoke to acknowledged that they worry about their child's welfare, including a feeling that their children face increasing numbers of risks.[3] Parents thought that life is more difficult for teenagers nowadays than 20 years ago, and consequently there is more pressure on parents. Risks they thought had increased included roads, because of higher traffic volumes, the internet and violence, including by gangs.

1.12 So what does it mean for a child to stay safe in today's society? And what do we need to do to make sure every child and young person is as safe as possible? This is not about over-protecting children, nor is it about preventing children from making the most of the choice and opportunities open to them. It is about helping children and young people to enjoy their childhood and their teenage years, safe from harm or the fear of harm. It is about helping children to learn about their personal safety and understand how they can help themselves. And it is about helping parents to know what the risks of harm are, how likely these risks are to occur and what can be done to reduce them. However, this is not just the responsibility of parents, or local or national Government. Helping children and young people to grow up in safe environments is everyone's responsibility.

1.13 The purpose of this consultation document is to raise awareness of issues around children's safety, including how to strike an appropriate balance between keeping children safe and allowing them to grow, explore and enjoy their childhoods. This document sets out existing and proposed new work nationally and locally to keep children safe. We want to hear your views about our proposals, and after the consultation we will decide which actions to take forward.

1.14 When thinking about the work that happens nationally and locally to help children and young people stay safe, we look at three different levels of work. The document uses this framework to describe current work, and make proposals for new action. All children and young people need safe environments in which to grow and thrive. Some children and young people, including disabled children and children in care, are particularly vulnerable and we need to be sure there are targeted measures to help to keep them as safe as possible.[4] And sadly, some children will suffer, or have already suffered from harm, and for these children we need to respond effectively to minimise the short and long-term effects.

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3   The views of parents cited in this document were gathered in series of focus groups with parents conducted by the Central Office of Information (COI) in March 2007 to discuss safety issues, and communication and information needs.
4   See *Care Matters: Time for Change*, June 2007, available from http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/timeforchange/index.shtml

HELPING ALL CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE TO STAY SAFE (Chapter 3)

PROTECTING VULNERABLE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (Chapter 4)

RESPONDING WHEN CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE BEEN HARMED (Chapter 5)

1.15 Each of the areas for new action outlined here includes proposals for how to take this work forward. We are collectively committed to avoiding any increased pressure on council tax as a result of the proposals included. To ensure that the pressure on council tax is kept down, any net additional cost of new burdens placed on local authorities by proposals made here will be fully and properly funded. Any possible new burdens and additional cost estimates will be discussed with the local authority associations during the consultation process.

1.16 **Chapter 2** sets out what we know about children and young people's safety, including what children, young people and their families think about their own personal safety. We also set out the principles that should underpin all work in this area.

1.17 Safety is important for all children and young people and, in some situations, all may be at risk of harm, such as on the roads or using the internet. **Chapter 3** looks at how we can help all children and young people to be safer.

1.18 Some groups of children and young people are more vulnerable than others, such as children living in deprived areas, children in care, disabled children, migrant children, unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and children whose parents have problems with domestic violence or substance misuse. **Chapter 4** looks at action to protect vulnerable children and young people.

1.19 Some children and young people will come to harm, even where preventative action has been taken. Breaking an arm accidentally when playing outside may not have long-term negative effects, despite being a serious injury. But some harm can have a lifelong impact, and we should work together to reduce this. And those who harm children and young people will be dealt with swiftly, and arrangements put in place to ensure they cannot harm others. **Chapter 5** sets out what our response should be where a child or young person has been harmed.

1.20 In **Chapter 6** we set out how you can get involved and tell us your own views about children and young people's safety. You can write to us, email us or visit www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/stayingsafe for more information.

2. The challenge

2.1 This chapter sets out what we know about children and young people's safety, including what progress has been made, but also what challenges we still face. Children and young people have told us what concerns they have about safety, which are included here and in later chapters. Parents – fathers and mothers – have told us what worries they have, and these are also reflected.

Progress made

2.2 Children today are safer in many ways than previously. Rates of deaths from injury fell from 11.1 deaths per 100,000 children per year around the 1981 census to 4.0 deaths per 100,000 children per year around the 2001 census.[5] By 2006, the number of children 0-15 killed or seriously injured in road accidents had fallen by 52% compared to the average for 1994-1998.[6]

2.3 Children in England are also safer from certain causes of death than in many other countries. Overall, and for every age group, child injury death rates in England and Wales are less than half those in the US.[7] Chart 1 shows that the rate of child injury deaths has been declining in developed countries as a whole, but that the UK is second in terms of protecting children from accidental death.

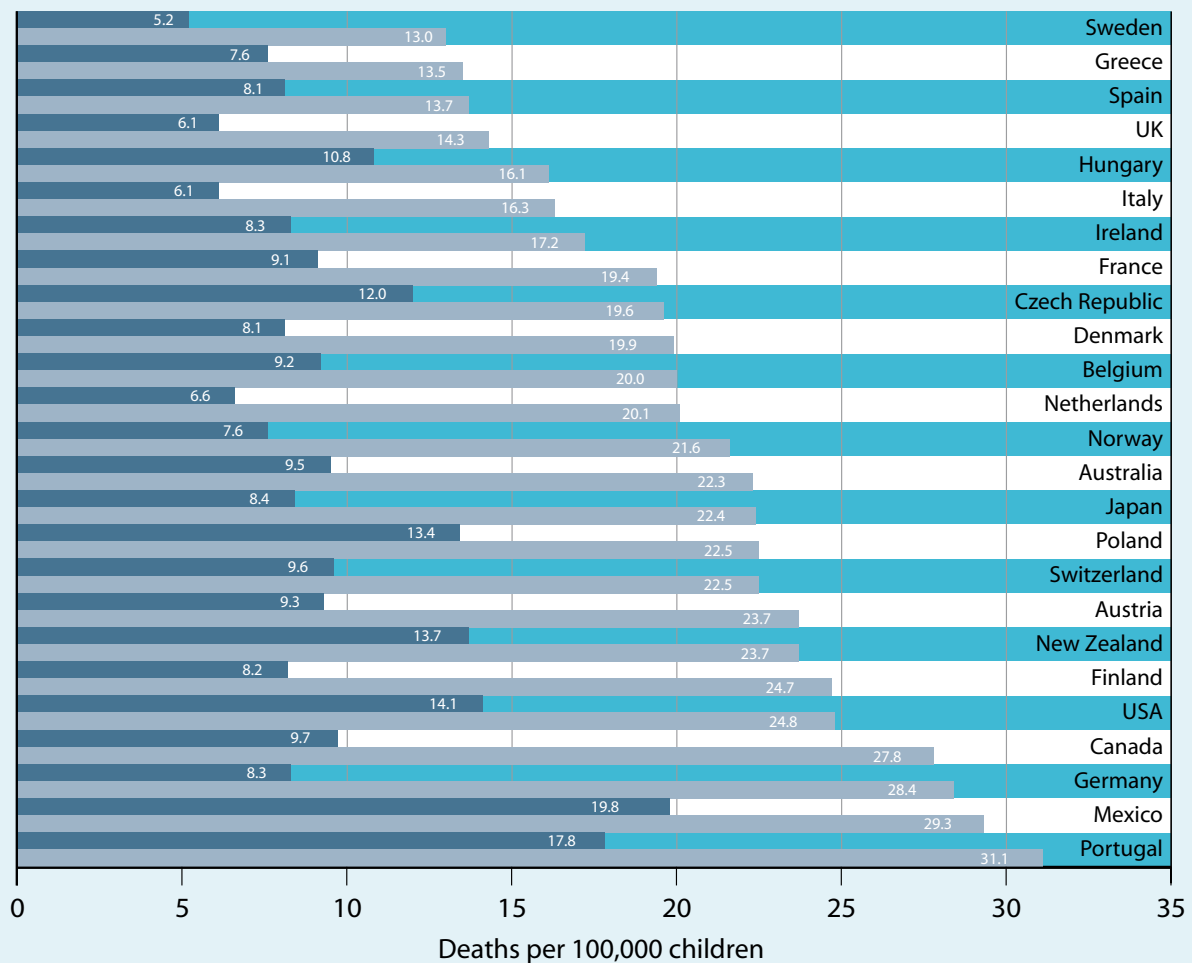5   'Deaths from injury in children and employment status in family: analysis of trends in class specific death rates', *British Medical Journal,* July 2006, volume 333 (119)
6   Data available in statistical bulletin *Road Casualties Great Britain: 2006 – Main Results*, available from www.dft.gov.uk
7   'Childhood injuries: extent of the problem, epidemiological trends and costs', *Injury Prevention*, May 2007 p.4

Chart 1: Rate of child injury deaths in the 1970s and 1990s

The longer bars show annual injury deaths per 100,000 children aged 1-14 in 1971-75 (the basis for the ranking) and the shorter bars show the rates in 1991-1995.[*]

Country	1991-1995	1971-75
Sweden	5.2	13.0
Greece	7.6	13.5
Spain	8.1	13.7
UK	6.1	14.3
Hungary	10.8	16.1
Italy	6.1	16.3
Ireland	8.3	17.2
France	9.1	19.4
Czech Republic	12.0	19.6
Denmark	8.1	19.9
Belgium	9.2	20.0
Netherlands	6.6	20.1
Norway	7.6	21.6
Australia	9.5	22.3
Japan	8.4	22.4
Poland	13.4	22.5
Switzerland	9.6	22.5
Austria	9.3	23.7
New Zealand	13.7	23.7
Finland	8.2	24.7
USA	14.1	24.8
Canada	9.7	27.8
Germany	8.3	28.4
Mexico	19.8	29.3
Portugal	17.8	31.1

Deaths per 100,000 children

*   Chart taken from UNICEF, *A League Table of Child Deaths by Injury in Rich Nations*, February 2001, p.7

2.4   People today are more aware of how to keep children safe including safer play environments and checks on the background of those working with children and young people. Even young children are becoming more aware of how to keep themselves safe, knowing that they are not supposed to talk to strangers, and that they need to know how to cross a road safely.[8]

2.5   Advances have been made in product design to keep children safe, particularly in the home. For example, changes in the design of products associated with suffocation and strangulation over a 20 year period to the 1990s resulted in a significant decrease in associated injuries.[9]

2.6   We know that certain groups of children are more vulnerable to abuse and neglect, including children of families living in temporary accommodation. We have acted to reduce the worst effects of living in temporary accommodation e.g. families with children forced to live for excessive lengths of time in cramped bed and breakfast (B&B) rooms, with no room to play or do

8   Children's Rights Director for England, *Younger Children's Views on 'Every Child Matters'*, p.14
9   'Preventing unintentional injuries in children and young adolescents,' *Effective Health Care*, June 1996, 2(5).

homework, and having to share washing and cooking facilities with strangers. A target that no homeless family should have to live in B&B for longer than six weeks, when being assisted under the homelessness legislation in England, was announced in March 2002. The B&B target was met in March 2004 and the vast majority of local housing authorities in England have succeeded in ending the long-term use of B&B hotels for families with children.

2.7 However, we know significant challenges remain. One specific challenge is how to measure whether children are safe. In 2006, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) commissioned NSPCC to examine how to measure the impact of work to protect children. Their report, *Towards a Public Service Agreement on Safeguarding,*[10] sets out suggestions for ways to measure progress on improving children's safety. In response to the report, the Government is exploring the best way to reflect the priority it attaches to safeguarding within the performance management framework. This will drive improvements in child safety over the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR07) period, which runs from 2008–2011. Final decisions on this will be made as part of the CSR07, which concludes later in the year. The rest of this chapter sets out what we know about risks to children's safety.

Maltreatment of children and young people

2.8 Most children and young people, when asked about their safety, do not list abuse as a main worry, and feel safe from abuse where they live.[11] They are right to feel this way, as abuse affects a minority of children. But it is very serious when it happens, not only because of the effect on the child at the time, but also because of the long-lasting consequences. The real extent of abuse may be higher than identified through formal measurement systems (see paragraph 2.12 below). Most parents we spoke to thought that abuse and neglect of children, including by family members, was a significant problem.

2.9 In 2005, nearly 400,000 children and young people in England received support from children's social care services. 37% of children receiving services in the census week needed this help because there were concerns about abuse or neglect.[12] Where abuse or neglect is substantial or continuing, children and young people are placed on the Child Protection Register, which means they receive intensive support from children's social care and other services. If abuse or neglect is very serious, children and young people may go into care, be placed with family or friends or be considered for adoption. At 31 March 2006, 26,400 children and young people were on this register because of concerns about abuse or neglect.[13]

2.10 Neglect accounted for 43% of child protection registrations in 2006. Neglect is not just a problem for young children; older children and young people can also suffer. Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and or psychological needs, which is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development. Neglect, as with other types of abuse,

10   J. Mesie, R. Gardner and L. Radford, *Towards a Public Service Agreement on Safeguarding*, NSPCC, February 2007, available from www.dcsf.gov.uk/research
11   Dr Roger Morgan, Children's Rights Director for England, *Safe From Harm: Children's Views Report*, July 2004, p.6.
12   DfES, *Children in Need Census* 2005 http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/VOL/v000647/index.shtml
13   See statistical release *Referrals, assessments and children and young people on Child Protection Register, England – year ending 31 March 2006*, available from www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway

nearly always overlaps with some form of emotional abuse and can take many different forms depending upon the age of the child, the perpetrator of the neglect, its severity and duration.

Chart 2: Category of registration, Child Protection Register, 2006
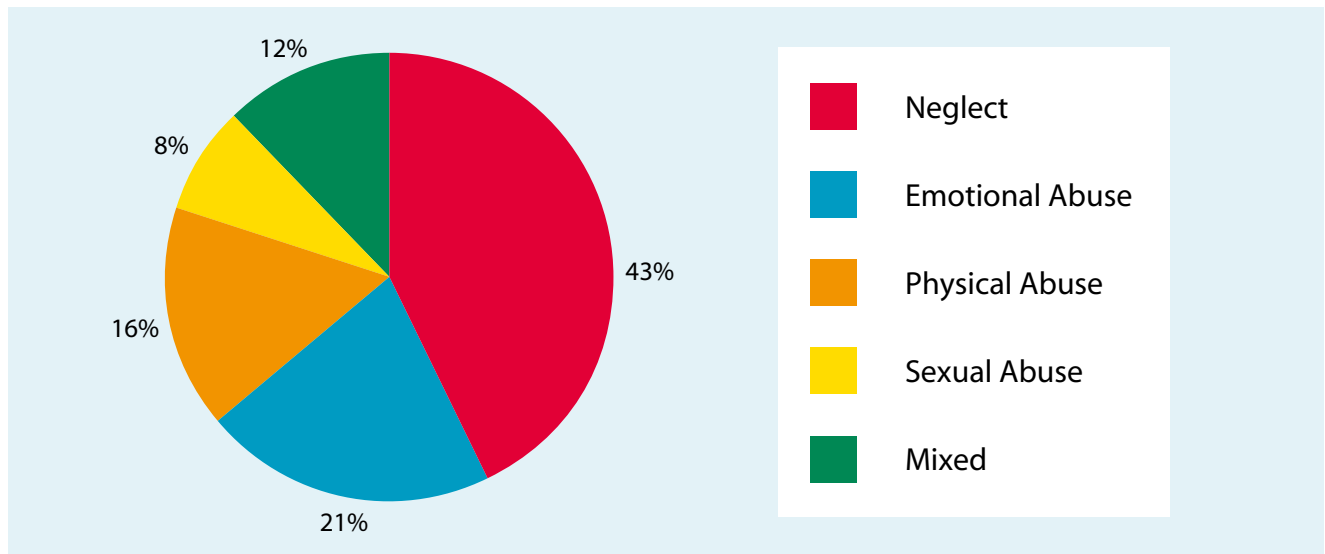
2.11 Where maltreatment is very serious, children and young people are at risk of death by the hands of their abusers. The chart below shows wide variation across Western countries as to the number of deaths attributed to maltreatment, with the UK ranking in the middle of the range.

Chart 3: The annual deaths of children under 15 categorised either as maltreatment or 'of undetermined intent' per 100,000 children in the age group. Averaged over 5 years in the 1990s (source: UNICEF, 2003)
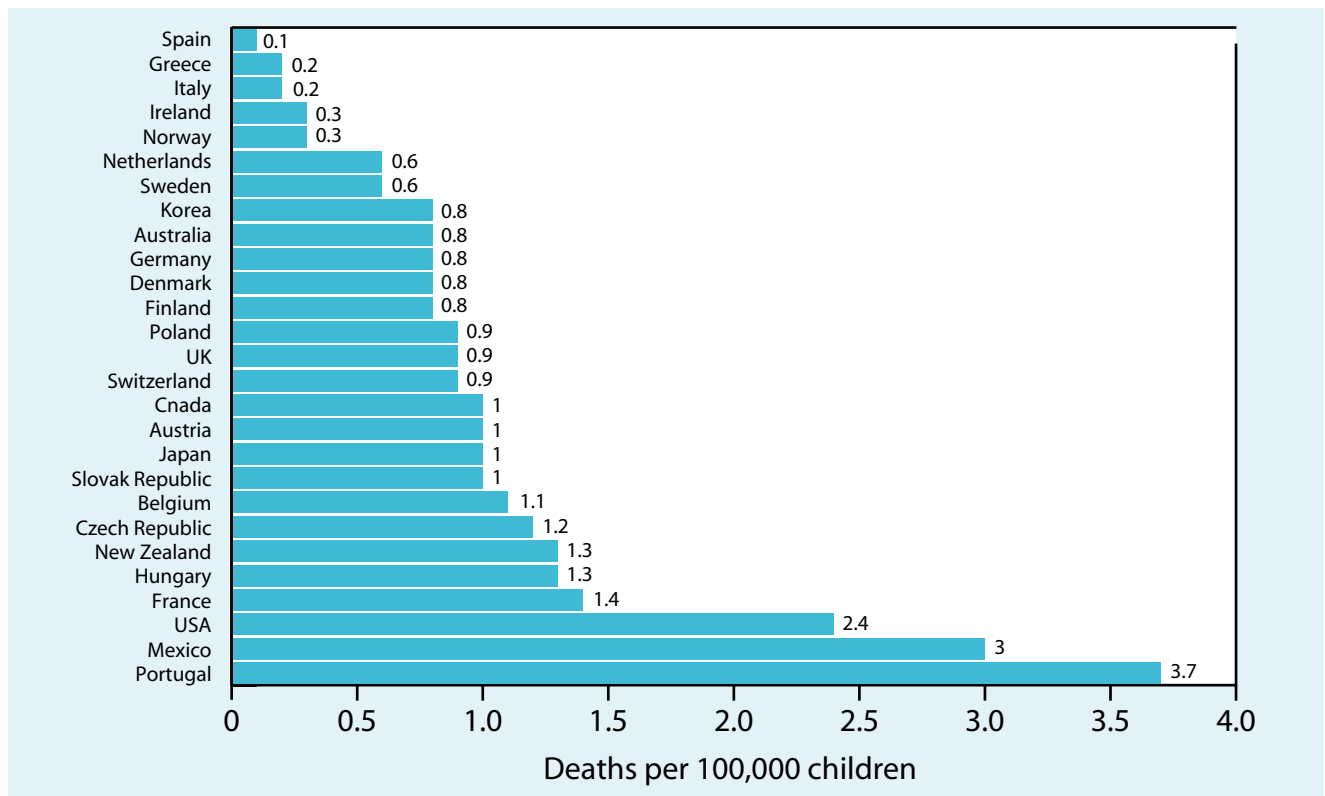
2.12   The real extent of maltreatment is likely to be higher than identified in statistics on abused children known to services. A study carried out by the NSPCC in 2000 questioned a random sample of young people aged 18-24 about experiences during their childhood. The study found that the vast majority of people interviewed grew up in loving homes, with their birth parents caring for them well. However, the study also found that all types of abuse (physical, neglect, emotional and sexual abuse) were more common amongst this sample than would have been expected, based on the numbers of children and young people currently receiving support from children's social services.[14] In the sample interviewed for the NSPCC study:

- 7% of children had experienced serious physical abuse at the hands of their parents and carers during childhood;

- 1% of children aged under 16 experienced sexual abuse by a parent or carer and a further 3% by another relative during childhood;

- 6% of children experienced serious absence of care at home during childhood; and

- 6% of children experienced frequent and severe emotional maltreatment during childhood.

2.13   Those who abuse children are most often someone the child or young person knows, and are frequently family, wider family or friends. Abuse by strangers is rare, and according to one study, only 5% of sexual abuse was carried out by an adult stranger or somebody the victims had just met.[15] Abuse by those working with children is uncommon, although very serious where this does occur.

2.14   To some extent, children and young people are aware of this, and some young children realise that it is not only strangers who could pose a threat, but also the adults they know and spend time with.[16] However, some children and young people do fear being kidnapped or abducted by strangers. Although they may realise the chances of this happening are small, it is still something that concerns them. Parents worry about the threats that strangers can present to their children, but many realise that the likelihood of their child being abducted or harmed by a stranger may be exaggerated by the media.

2.15   A significant proportion of perpetrators of child sexual abuse are other children and young people. Home Office statistics show that in 2003 approximately 25% of people convicted for sexual offences were aged between 10 and 24.[17] Some groups of children and young people asked about safety thought that there was good protection in place nowadays from the risk of abuse by adults, but not from the risks posed by other children and young people.[18]

2.16   The chances of abuse or neglect are sometimes increased where families and the environment in which they live show certain characteristics. Research evidence suggests that child abuse

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14   Cawson et al, *Child maltreatment in the United Kingdom: a study of the prevalence of child abuse and neglect*, 2000 (London, NSPCC)
15   Cawson et al, *Child maltreatment in the United Kingdom: a study of the prevalence of child abuse and neglect*, 2000 (London, NSPCC)
16   Children's Rights Director for England, *Younger Children's Views on 'Every Child Matters'*, p.13
17   Home Office, CSIP, NIMHE and Department of Health *The needs and effective treatment of young people who sexually abuse: current evidence*, October 2006, p.17
18   Children's Rights Director for England, *Safe From Harm*, p.18

and neglect occurs as a result of a complex interaction between different factors which impair parenting, including:

- domestic violence;

- low self-esteem;

- social isolation;

- mental health problems; and

- substance misuse.[19]

2.17 Child sexual abuse is associated with multiple problems, including chronic ill-health, unemployment, poor housing, domestic violence and other forms of abuse occurring within the family.[20]

2.18 However, it is important to recognise that many families experience the same social or personal disadvantages, and abuse does not occur. Abuse can also happen in families where none of these factors exist.

2.19 Recent research has shown that referrals to children's social care in one sample were lower than expected from Asian communities, accounting for 2.9% of referrals compared to 3.7% of the total population in the sample.[21] Researchers suggested some reasons why this might be the case, including:

- services not being geared to Asian communities, not ethnically sensitive and a lack of understanding of the needs of the Asian community;

- a lack of awareness of help that different local agencies can offer, perhaps due to language difficulties; and

- embarrassment at seeking help for problems within a very tight knit community.

2.20 The long-term effects of abuse in childhood can be damaging and pervasive. Maltreated children perform less well on standardised tests and achieve poorer school marks, even when socio-economic status and other background factors are taken into account. Recent research has shown that maltreated children are at higher risk of being the victims of bullying.[22]

2.21 In later life, children who have been physically abused have higher rates of psychiatric problems, violence and anti-social behaviour.[23] Abuse may impair psychological and physical health for many years.[24] Similarly, evidence shows that neglect can result in damage to health, emotional

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19 J. Gaudin, *Child Neglect: A Guide for Intervention,* 1993 (Washington DC, National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect, US Department of Health and Human Services) and P. Crittenden, 'Child Neglect: Causes and Contributors,' in (ed.) H. Dubowitz, *Neglected Children: Research, Practice and Policy,* 1999 (Thousand Oak, Sage)

20 D.P.H. Jones & P. Ramchandani, *Child Sexual Abuse: Informing Practice from Research*, 1999, (Abingdon, Radcliffe Medical Press).

21 H. Cleaver, D. Nicholson, S.Tarr & D. Cleaver, *Child Protection, Domestic Violence and Parental Substance Misuse: Family Experiences and Effective Practice*, 2007 (forthcoming)

22 Chris Mills – *Problems at home, problems at school: The effects of maltreatment in the home on children's functioning at school – an overview of recent research,* 2004 available from http://www.nspcc.org.uk/inform/publications/downloads/ProblemsAtHome_pdf_gf25321.pdf

23 Kolko, D. J. 'Child physical abuse', in J. E. B. Myers, L. Berliner, J. Briere, C. T. Hendrix, C. Jenny & T. Reid (eds.), *APSAC Handbook of Child Maltreatment* 2002 (Second ed.) (Thousand Oaks, Sage).

24 Kaplan, S., Pelcovitz, D., Labruna, V. 'Child and Adolescent Abuse and Neglect Research: A Review of the Past 10 Years. Part I: Physical and Emotional Abuse and Neglect,' *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry,* 1999 Vol 38, pp.1214-1222 and Kendell-Tackett, K.A., Williams, L.M., and Finkelhor, D, 'Impact of sexual abuse on children: A review and synthesis of recent empirical studies', *Psychological Bulletin*, 1993, vol. 113, pp. 164-180.

and behavioural development, and identity.[25] In one study, 50% of children who subsequently sexually abused others had been abused themselves.[26]

2.22 Chapters 3, 4 and 5 set out work we are carrying out or proposing to address these issues, including the crucial role of Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs), a safe workforce and proposals to improve practice in children's social care.

Accidental injury and death

2.23 Whilst overall numbers of accidental deaths have reduced, accidents remain a leading cause of death and injury to children and young people.

Chart 4: Leading causes of mortality by sex, ages 1-14, 2003 (cancers grouped, accidents split)*

Male			Female		
	No of deaths	% of all deaths		No of deaths	% of all deaths
Malignant neoplasms (cancers)	145	19.6	Malignant neoplasms (cancers)	128	20.4
Congenital malformations	66	8.9	Congenital malformations	73	11.6
Land transport accidents	57	7.7	Land transport accidents	44	7.0
Cerebral palsy and other paralytic syndromes	32	4.3	Cerebral palsy and other paralytic syndromes	23	3.7
Meningitis	31	4.2	Influenza and pneumonia	20	3.2
Accidental threats to breathing	23	3.1	Meningitis	19	3.0
Influenza and pneumonia	21	2.8	Epilepsy and status epilepticus	18	2.9
Accidental drowning and submersion	20	2.7	Homicide and probable homicide	16	2.6
Chronic lower respiratory diseases	20	2.7	Cardiomyopathy	13	2.1
Homicide and probable homicide	19	2.6	Accidental threats to breathing	11	1.8
All causes of death	738	100	All causes of death	627	100

*   Taken from Office for National Statistics, *Leading causes of death in England and Wales – how should we group causes?* Winter 2005, p.10

2.24 As mentioned already, rates of accidents amongst children and young people have been falling over recent years. But for some groups of children and young people, the risk of accidents has not fallen at the same rate:

● children of parents who have never worked or who are long-term unemployed are 13 times more likely to die from unintentional injury, and 37 times more likely to die as a result of exposure to smoke, fire or flames than children of parents in higher managerial or professional occupations;

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25   Crittenden, P. 'Research on Maltreating Families: Implications for Intervention' in J. Briere, L. Berliner and J. Bulkley (eds) *The APSAC Handbook on Child Maltreatment,* 1996 (Thousand Oaks, Sage)
26   For more information see: World Health Organisation/ISPCAN, *Preventing Child Maltreatment: A Guide to Taking Action and Generating Evidence,* 2006 David PH Jones & Paul Ramchandani, *Child Sexual Abuse: Informing Practice from Research,* 1999 (DH/Radcliffe Medical Press)

- children in the 10% most deprived wards are 3 times more likely to be hit by a car than children in the 10% least deprived wards; and

- fatality is twice as likely in boys as girls (aged between 1 and 14), a gap that increases with age.[27]

2.25 Statistics about social inequalities in rates of accidents reveal that despite overall reductions in deaths from accidents, there is still a challenge to be addressed to reduce these inequalities. This is discussed in Chapter 4.

2.26 Most accidents take place in the home. The Department for Trade and Industry (DTI)'s Home Accidents Surveillance System revealed that rates of unintentional injury were higher in residential areas with higher proportions of children from lower socio-economic groups.[28]

Chart 5: Children 0-14 who were victims of accidents, by location of accident 2002 (Source: DTI Home and Leisure Accident Surveillance System)
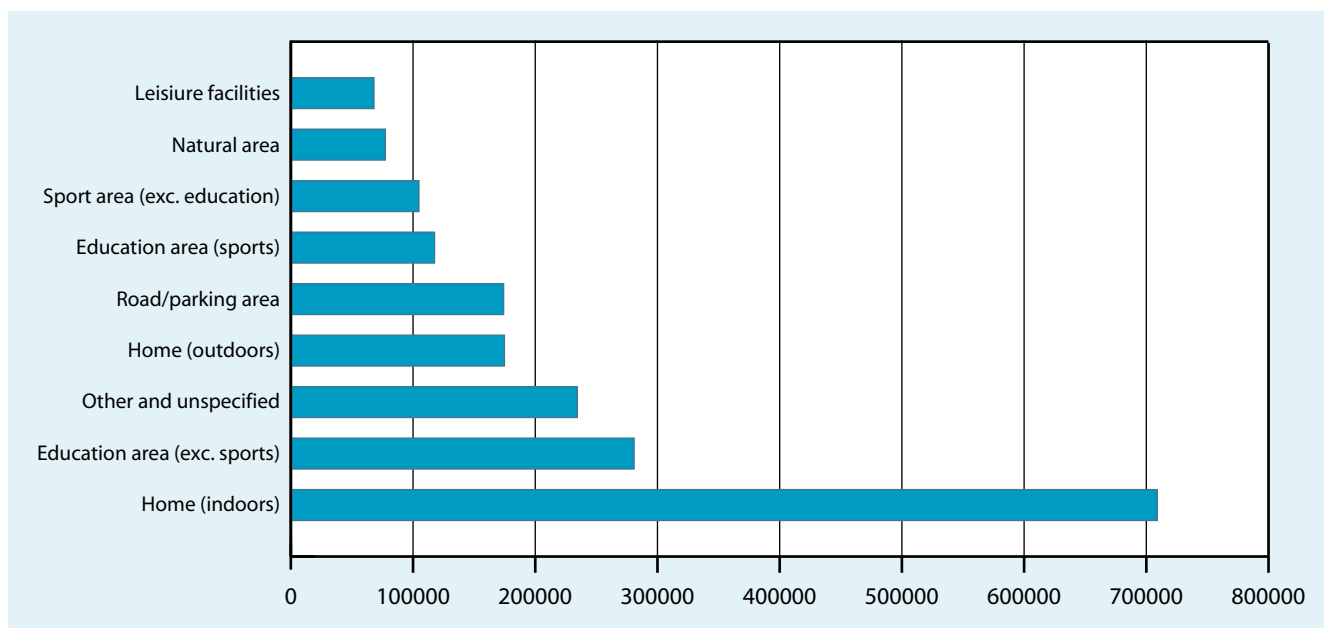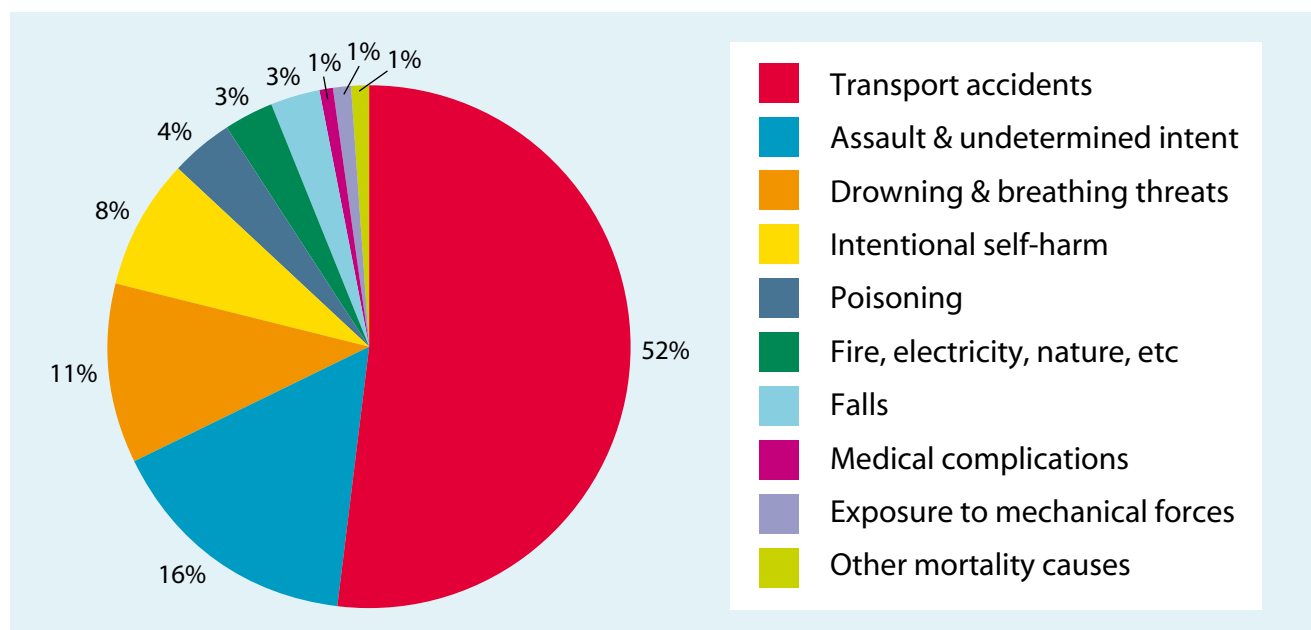

2.27 Accidents causing the most serious injuries occur on the roads, where 52% of deaths to children by external causes occurred in 2005. Although good progress has been made in reducing accidents to children aged 0-15, this has been less marked with the 12-15 age group than with 0-11 year olds. Child pedestrian deaths in England remain higher than in many other European countries.

2.28 Chapter 3 includes information on work to prevent children from coming to harm in their homes, in schools and on the roads. We also make proposals to help children and young people to protect themselves, including from accidental injury. In Chapter 4, we consider how to address the social inequalities in injuries and deaths from accidents.

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27   Audit Commission and Healthcare Commission, *Better Safe than Sorry*, February 2007, available from
     http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/reports/NATIONAL-REPORT.asp?CategoryID=&ProdID=B0354AA7-E411-45f0-8227-B5FDA6EB35A1
28   Audit Commission and Healthcare Commission, *Better Safe than Sorry*, February 2007, available from
     http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/reports/NATIONAL-REPORT.asp?CategoryID=&ProdID=B0354AA7-E411-45f0-8227-B5FDA6EB35A1

Chart 6: Underlying external causes of child injury deaths, aged 0 to 19, in England and Wales, 2005 (source: Office for National Statistics, Table 2 series DH2 no.32)*

Legend:
- Transport accidents
- Assault & undetermined intent
- Drowning & breathing threats
- Intentional self-harm
- Poisoning
- Fire, electricity, nature, etc
- Falls
- Medical complications
- Exposure to mechanical forces
- Other mortality causes

Values: 52%, 16%, 11%, 8%, 4%, 3%, 3%, 1%, 1%, 1%, 1%

* Excludes neonatal deaths (i.e. under 28 days)

Bullying and discrimination

2.29 Bullying has been consistently reported by children and young people as their top safety concern. The most common reason for children and young people to call ChildLine in the past 6 years has been to talk about being bullied. A national survey in 2006 found that 69% of respondents reported they had been bullied.[29] Other surveys report this as from 31% to over 50%.[30] Although what people may consider bullying may vary, children and young people have said that 'whether you are being bullied depends as much on how it makes you feel, as what actually happens.'[31]

2.30 New technologies like the internet and mobile phones extend the reach of bullying and offer new opportunities for bullies to harm their victims. 'Cyberbullying' is now a feature in the lives of many young people and there is concern that levels of cyberbullying are increasing. Recent research conducted by the Anti-Bullying Alliance identified that 22% of 11-16 year olds had been victims of cyberbullying at least once.[32] Cyberbullying can take place anywhere, and at any time, including in the victim's own home. An isolated incident of cyberbullying can lead to a child becoming a victim again on multiple occasions – for example a degrading or humiliating photograph taken on a mobile phone can be sent to a number of people.

29 See www.bullying.co.uk for more information
30 Cawson et al. *Child maltreatment in the United Kingdom: a study of the prevalence of child abuse and neglect*, 2000, (London: NSPCC)
31 Children's Rights Director for England, *Safe From Harm*, p.15
32 P.Smith, J.Mahdavi et al, *An investigation into cyberbullying, its forms, awareness and impact, and the relationship between age and gender in cyberbullying*, 2006

2.31 There are many different types of bullying, including children being picked on for something personal about them, such as race, religion, disability, sexual orientation or home life. Children in care are sometimes bullied because they live with foster carers.

Homophobic bullying	More than 28% of homophobic bullying victims had suffered violent attacks as reported in the National Bullying Survey 2006
Racist bullying	In mainly white schools, 25% of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds had experienced racist name-calling within the last week of the National Bullying Survey in 2006.
Bullying of children and young people with special educational needs	Mencap state that most children with special educational needs 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, with the figure rising to 59% for children with Asperger syndrome or high-functioning autism.

2.32 Research has shown the effects that bullying can have later in life. 20% of adults who had been bullied reported a loss of confidence because of it; 13% said it affected their relationships; 7% said it impacted on their job prospects; 9% were left feeling suicidal; and 8% had been treated for mental health problems as a result of childhood bullying.[33] Children who are bullies themselves may be at a higher risk of criminal convictions later in life. In one study, 25% of adults who had been identified by their peers at age 8 as bullies had criminal records, as opposed to 5% who had not been identified as bullies at age 8.[34]

2.33 Surveys report that between 30% and 50% of bullying takes place outside schools. The challenge of addressing bullying is extending beyond traditional school-based policies for tackling the problems. This challenge is discussed in Chapter 4.

Crime and anti-social behaviour

2.34 Harm to children and young people can result from crime or anti-social behaviour, which can take place in or out of school. Children and young people are all too aware of these risks, and that things that are supposed to help protect them, such as mobile phones, can also make them more likely to be attacked by someone wanting to steal their belongings.[35]

2.35 The most common forms of personal crime reported by children and young people were assaults without injury and personal thefts. Most assaults with and without injury reported by children and young people aged 10-15 take place at school, and are most often by other pupils (60%) or friends (34%) who are in the same age group. Most theft in this age group involved stationery and sports equipment. Children in this age group were most likely to tell their parents and friends if they had suffered an incident, and around a third of incidents came to the attention of their teacher.

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33 National Bullying Survey 2006, available from www.bullying.co.uk
34 Evidence from the British Psychological Society to the Education and Skills Select Committee
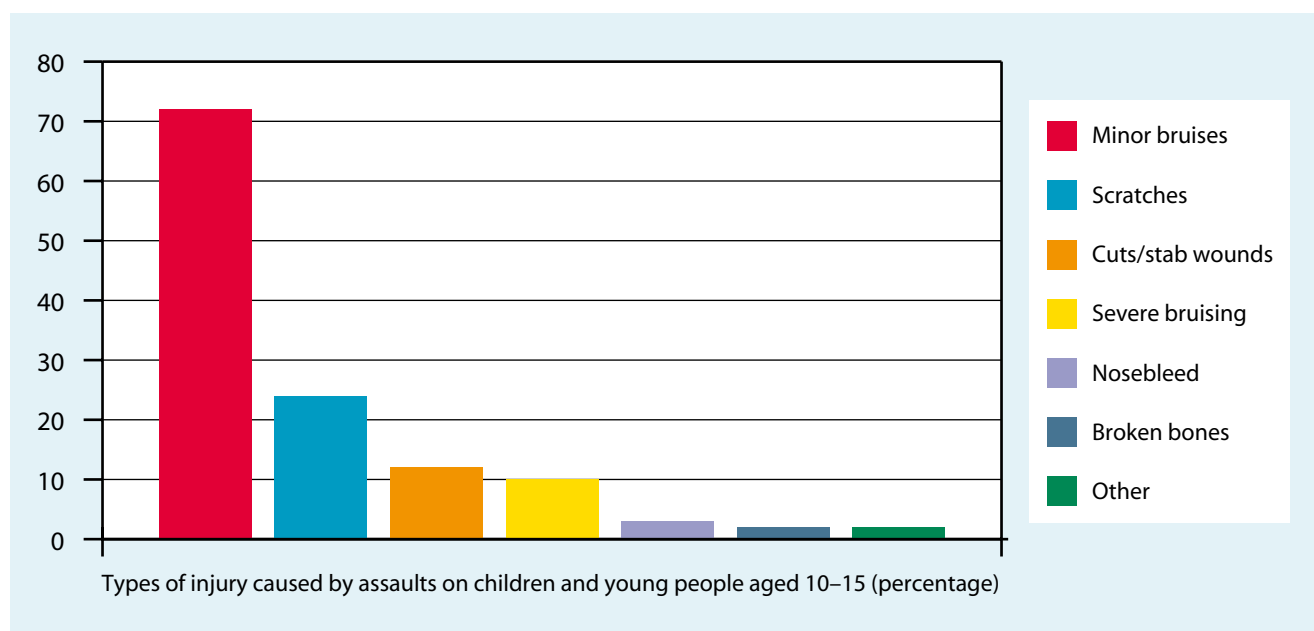35 Children's Rights Director for England, *Safe From Harm*, p.21

Table 1 Percentage of young people aged from 10 to 17 who were victims once or more in the last 12 months, by age[1]

	Age Group			
	10-11	12-13	14-15	16-17
Any personal victimisation	31	33	29	27
Any personal theft	16	18	16	14
– Robbery	3	2	2	3
– Theft from the person	6	6	5	6
– Other personal thefts	10	13	11	8
Any assault	21	21	20	16
– Assault (no injury)	12	17	14	10
– Assault (with injury)	14	10	10	9

1   Adapted from *Young People and Crime: Findings from the 2005 Offending, Crime and Justice Survey* (Home Office Statistical Bulletin 17/06, December 2006), p.67. Personal victimisation includes robbery, theft from the person, other personal theft and assault.

2.36   Where children aged 10-15 reported being assaulted and injured, this was most often by being grabbed, pushed or pulled, or being kicked. A range of injuries were caused, from minor to very serious.

Chart 7: Injuries sustained in assaults with injury in the last 12 months, children and young people aged 10-15[1]

Types of injury caused by assaults on children and young people aged 10–15 (percentage)

Legend: Minor bruises, Scratches, Cuts/stab wounds, Severe bruising, Nosebleed, Broken bones, Other

1   Adapted from *Young People and Crime: Findings from the 2005 Offending, Crime and Justice Survey* (Home Office Statistical Bulletin 17/06, December 2006), p.70

2.37   Certain characteristics made children and young people more vulnerable to being a victim of personal crimes, including:[36]

● being male;

● being drunk once a month or more;

● taking drugs;

● the existence of one or more disorder problems in the local area;

36   Taken from *Young People and Crime: Findings from the 2005 Offending, Crime and Justice Survey* (Home Office Statistical Bulletin 17/06, December 2006)

- having an indifferent or negative attitude towards the local area; and

- being brought up by only one natural parent.

2.38 Gun and knife crime is still relatively rare in England. There were 50 homicides in England and Wales involving firearms in 2005-6 (6.7% of all homicides), down 36% from 75 in the previous year, and the lowest recorded since 1998-9.[37] Homicides related to gang warfare, feud or faction fighting are also rare. In 2005-6, seven homicides were attributed to this cause, representing 1% of all homicides. These figures are for adults and children. In London during 2004-5, 2% of all recorded violent crime involved a gun, and 5% involved a knife. This includes where the weapons were used to assist a crime, e.g. an armed robbery. In London, recent trends, comparing the July-September quarter for 2004-5 with that of 2005-6, indicate that there has been a 14% increase in gun-enabled violence, and increases for homicides involving a gun or a knife (4 more offences for each compared to the same period in the previous year). The probability of serious injury is four and a half times greater when a knife is used to assist a crime. The risk of serious injury when a knife is involved in a crime is more than twice as great as where a gun has been involved.[38]

2.39 Children and young people can be at a higher risk of harm whilst being held on remand or serving a custodial sentence. There are currently around 2,900 children and young people in custody in England and Wales. The majority of children in custody are boys, with only 7% being girls. There are three types of accommodation for offenders under 18. In England and Wales there are 15 secure children homes, four secure training centres and 18 youth offender institutions with the latter containing 83% of children and young people in custody. These range in size from one child up to 360 children held in any one institution.

2.40 Protecting children and young people from crime and anti-social behaviour is vital to improving their safety. Chapter 4 discusses the issue of improving safety on the streets, and makes proposals for new action.

Parents and carers

2.41 Parents and carers want the best for their children, and parents' behaviour can have a crucial influence on what their children experience and achieve. Although mothers and fathers want to keep their children safe, they might not always fully understand the risks their children face. One study found that parents substantially under-estimate the risks their children face online:

- 57% of children have come into contact with pornography online (while 16% of parents say their children have seen pornography online);

- 46% of children claim to have given out personal information (but only 5% of parents realise this); and

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37 Home Office Statistical Bulletin, *Homicides, Firearm Offences and Intimate Violence 2005/6*, p.31.
38 Adapted from www.london.gov.uk/gangs/docs/guns-weapons-report.rtf

- 33% of children have received unwanted sexual or nasty comments (though only about 1 in 20 parents appear aware of this).[39]

2.42 Both mothers and fathers play a key role in educating their children about risks they face. Some parents thought that it was their responsibility to keep their children safe, whilst others, particularly in lower socio-economic groups, wanted more help from the state to protect their children from strangers and gangs. Parents we spoke to gave clear instructions to their children about how to keep safe, including where was safe and not safe to play, how far from home they could go, the importance of staying with other children, and needing to remain alert to the risks posed by strangers.

2.43 Parents' own behaviour can set an example to their children, whether positive or negative. An example is road safety, where if parents break speed limits, drive without seat belts or drive aggressively, their children are also more likely to be bad drivers when they start driving at the age of 17. As casualty rates among young drivers are still high, the role of parents in promoting road safety is vital.

2.44 Parental behaviour can have a serious negative effect on children's development. For example:

- children who grow up in violent households can show a lack of interest in their environment and poorer intellectual development;

- children of parents with alcohol or drug problems, mental illness or domestic violence issues can have an inability to concentrate at school, perform below expected ability and miss school often to look after parents or siblings;

- serious behavioural problems were 17 times higher for boys and 10 times higher for girls who had witnessed the abuse of their mother; and

- one study found that 26% of homeless 16-25 year olds had left home because of domestic violence.[40]

2.45 These findings have been reinforced by recent research on the effects of adult substance misuse on family life,[41] which reports that:

- alcohol is involved in 33% of child abuse cases, and 40% of domestic violence incidents;

- in at least 40% of domestic violence cases, there is also childhood physical and sexual abuse, involving the same perpetrator; and

- parental substance misuse or domestic violence issues made parents reluctant to own up to their problems because they are fearful their children may be removed from their care.

2.46 The challenge is to help parents understand what risks their children face, and how to manage these. Where parents themselves have problems, local services should work together to reduce the impact of these problems on their children's development and safety. Chapter 3 considers

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39   *UK Children Go Online* survey 2004 (LSE)
40   H. Cleaver, I. Unell & J. Aldgate, *Children's Needs – Parenting Capacity: The impact of parental mental illness, problem alcohol and drug use, and domestic violence on children's development,* (London, TSO, 1999)
41   H. Cleaver, D. Nicholson, S.Tarr & D. Cleaver, *Child Protection, Domestic Violence and Parental Substance Misuse: Family Experiences and Effective Practice,* (forthcoming, 2007)

how we can help parents to understand better the risks faced by their children, including road safety and the internet. Chapter 4 discusses how to address parental problems which impact on their children's welfare, including domestic violence and substance misuse.

2.47 We know that children and young people are safer where their parents provide stable home environments. However, for young people who run away from home, this support is no longer there, and they put themselves at increased risk of harm. For some, running away may be their reaction to problems in their homes. Research by The Children's Society carried out in 2005 found that of a large sample of young people, between 5.5% and 7.5% run away from home every year.[42] Some of the key findings include:

- around 1 in 6 runaways had slept rough whilst they were away. Males were more likely to sleep rough than females;

- over 8% of runaways reported being hurt or harmed on the most recent occasion that they had run away; and

- children who are eligible for free school meals were more likely to run away than those who are not (13.4% compared to 9.6%).

2.48 Work to protect groups who are vulnerable to harm, including young runaways is discussed in Chapter 4.

Rising to the challenge

2.49 So how should society respond to these challenges? The response should not be to wrap children and young people up in cotton wool, depriving them of opportunities to enjoy their childhood. Responding to these challenges is everyone's responsibility, not just that of the Government or public services. Everyone has a role to play, including children and young people themselves. What the Government can do is help parents and children and young people to understand what risks are relevant to them, and to be more realistic about the chances of being harmed.

2.50 On the next page, we set out the roles, responsibilities and principles which we believe should underpin all work to help children and young people to stay safe.

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42   The Children's Society, *Still Running II: findings from the second national survey of young runaways*, 2005

ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND PRINCIPLES FOR IMPROVING CHILDREN'S SAFETY

Children and young people, parents and families
Know what acceptable/unacceptable behaviour towards children and young people is, how to identify and manage risk of harm (and for parents, to help their children do so), and who to approach if they have concerns.

The **general public** help ensure children and young people are safe, including by their own behaviour, identify unacceptable behaviour by others towards children and act on any concerns.

Everyone **working with children and young people**, whether in paid employment or as volunteers, are alert to risks and indicators of harm, and know when and with whom to share information.

Children's social care	**Police Services**	**NHS organisations and staff**	**Services for vulnerable adults**	**Other services**
Act on child protection referrals, assess need, co-ordinate responses from local agencies to keep children safe and promote welfare.	Identify and act on child protection concerns, carry out criminal investigations, enforce road traffic laws and help to prevent harm.	Actively promote health and well-being of children, identify and work in partnership with agencies on safeguarding concerns, and provide timely, therapeutic and preventative interventions.	Prisons, adult mental health, adult substance misuse, domestic violence intervention projects recognise the links between service users who are parents, and risks to their children's safety, and safeguard children.	Schools, including extended schools, FE colleges, housing, planners, parks/green spaces managers, road safety officers create a safe environment for children and young people, educate children and young people about how to keep themselves safe, and refer child protection concerns.

We should create safe environments for all children and young people to help prevent harm, including employers checking the suitability of those who work with children – but take additional action for vulnerable groups of children.

Services should intervene where necessary, in the most effective way, at the most effective point.

Actions chosen should be proportionate to the needs of the child, the risk faced by children, and the impact they will have.

Local Safeguarding Children Boards and children's trusts
Lead the whole system locally including safe local environments, providing and promoting child protection training for service providers, safe roads, building effective partnerships, working within specific legislative frameworks, leading enquiries on specific cases and providing services for children in need.

Inspectorates
Ensure regulated services for children have effective child protection and safeguarding policies in place, and an ethos of safeguarding.

Central Government
Formulate policy and lead on strategy to safeguard children and young people, ensure a clear national framework is in place, develop the legislative framework, raise awareness of the issues and responsibilities, support local implementation, review policy and performance through inspection, support research and allocate resources

Where it is more appropriate to work in partnership to address concerns, efforts will be co-ordinated across Government and local services, including the private and voluntary sectors where necessary.

A culture of evaluation and learning will be embedded in all services.

There is no excuse for abusing, exploiting or neglecting a child, whether suggested for cultural or religious reasons, or reasons of income or social exclusion.

3. Helping all children and young people to stay safe

Summary

Safety is important for all children and young people. Work already underway to improve safety for all children and young people includes prevention of accidents in the home, improving protection for children on the internet, continuing to make schools, colleges and early years settings safe for children, improving safety on the roads and protecting children and young people from risks of abuse or neglect.

To reinforce this existing work, we are proposing new actions in five areas – play and taking part in positive activities; understanding and managing risks; a safe workforce; addressing new threats to children's safety; and helping Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) to make a difference.

Our proposals for new action include:

- launching a new communication campaign to encourage parents to let their children play outside in safe environments and take part safely in positive activities;

- promoting safer recruitment practices in all sectors where work with children is involved, extending guidance recently issued for schools and colleges to other settings;

- communicating to parents about how to keep their children safe in sporting activities; and

- publishing a best practice guide for LSCBs, to highlight examples of good local practice.

3.1 Safety is important for all children and young people – being safe at home, at school or college, on the roads, at play – and it is everyone's responsibility to create these safe environments, so that children and young people can enjoy and achieve. Children and young people rate staying safe as one of the most important things to help them enjoy their childhoods, but also want the freedom to enjoy their spare time and be with their friends.

3.2 In this chapter, we set out what work is currently being done to help children and young people stay safe in the environments where they spend time – at home, on the internet, at school or college, in children's centres, nurseries, pre-schools and out-of-school clubs, on the roads, in public spaces – and to protect them from the risks of abuse and neglect.

Safe in the home

3.3   For younger children particularly, homes can be places where accidents are likely to occur. Most parents are aware of these risks, and take simple steps to reduce them, such as fitting smoke alarms, stair gates, socket covers and cupboard safety catches.

3.4   When a child is born, and in the first years of his or her life, universal health services help parents to make sure that their homes are safe for a growing child. Midwives help parents to prepare their home for a new baby, and health visitors support parents in identifying risks in their home, and how these can be reduced. As public health nurses, health visitors contribute to monitoring accidents and considering how accident rates can be reduced in the local community. Health visitors look at how accidents in the home may be prevented and often set up local accident prevention campaigns, working with wider public health services, community groups and children's centres.

3.5   The Child Health Promotion Programme helps all families receive support to prevent ill-health for their children and promote their well-being.[43] For families living in disadvantaged areas, the risk of accidents is higher, so health visiting teams are expected to focus their skills and resources on reducing these risks. Many health visitors help families on low incomes to obtain safety equipment and improve their housing conditions.

Health-led parenting support

All families are different, and some need more support than others. Health visitors help to ensure that children who are most at risk of poor outcomes have more support. The Government is currently testing an intensive nurse-led home visiting programme for the most at risk families. The Nurse Family Partnership programme has been developed over 30 years in the United States, where it has achieved impressive reductions in accidental and non-accidental injuries. This approach is being tested in 10 sites across England, mainly through Sure Start children's centres, where specifically trained health visitors and midwives are delivering the programme to first-time young parents.

For more information, see http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/parents/healthledsupport

3.6   The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has been working with local authorities to ensure that housing is safe. This includes replacing wiring, installing modern kitchens and bathrooms, updating heating systems and improving insulation. Between 1996 and 2005 the number of homes classed as 'non-decent' fell by over 3 million, from 9.1 million to 6 million in 2005, benefiting almost 2 million children. Although housing conditions overall are improving, vulnerable families with children are much more likely to live in non-decent homes and in homes with serious disrepair. Public investment is helping close the gap between vulnerable and affluent households.

3.7   To help parents protect their children from fire risks, the Fire and Rescue Service works closely with children and families, encouraging and fitting smoke alarms in houses, and educating children in schools about how to keep their homes safe.

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43   As set out in Standard One of the *National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services*. See www.dh.gov.uk for more information

Bedfordshire & Luton Fire & Rescue Service – arson reduction

Bedfordshire & Luton Fire & Rescue Service has a three pronged approach to arson reduction:

- environmental – removing opportunities to commit arson, including Pride of Place events to improve specific areas where waste materials are dumped;

- investigation and detection – involving close collaboration with the police and encouraging the public to report information; and

- education – involving theatre education and community awareness raising.

The Fire & Rescue Service uses Stopwatch Theatre Company, which provides theatre in education productions to secondary schools, to educate Year 8 pupils about the dangers of arson and playing with fire. A 45 minute play explores the issues very powerfully, and culminates in the death of one of the young people involved in an arson attack on a school. The play is followed by a 30 minute interactive workshop in which children are encouraged to comment on what they have seen, and explore and understand the motivations – such as peer pressure and bullying – and the impact on the perpetrators, victims, the school and the wider community.

The number of deliberate fires in Luton and South Bedfordshire has been reduced by over 50% since 2003.

3.8   One of the most important aspects of improving children's safety is to help parents to create a stable and loving home environment for their children. Positive parenting is a critical protective factor, helping promote resilience to risk. Central government and local services can help to make sure parents – mothers and fathers – have the best information and a wide range of quality options and choices in their local area. In *Every Parent Matters*[44] we set out what Government is currently doing to promote the development of services for parents, as well as parents' involvement in shaping services for themselves and their children.

3.9   Positive relationships with their parents can help children and young people to understand how to manage risks. For example, teenagers who are able to have frank and unembarrassed discussions with their parents about sex and relationships are likely to start having sex later in life and are more likely to use contraception.

3.10 How parents discipline their children is an important part of positive parenting. The Government is currently undertaking a review of the operation of section 58 of the Children Act 2004. Section 58 limits the availability of the 'reasonable punishment' defence in cases involving alleged assaults by parents on their children. The review fulfils the commitment made during the passage of the Children Bill in 2004 to review the practical consequences of the changes to the law two years after they came into effect and to seek parents' views on physical punishment. The Government is conducting a survey of parents' views on physical punishment over the summer and is seeking views and evidence from parents, and those who work with children and families, on the operation of section 58. The results of the review will be presented to Parliament in the autumn.

Safe on the internet

3.11 In recent years, the internet has become increasingly accessible for children and young people whether at school, in public libraries, or at home. In June 2006, 68% of homes had internet

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44   Every Parent Matters is available from www.teachernet.gov.uk/everyparentmatters

access, and by January 2007, 100% of schools. Children and young people have faster, easier, more immediate access to online information than ever before. The Government's digital strategy means that the internet is central to children and young people's lives.

Children's use of the internet in Birmingham's libraries

Birmingham has 39 community libraries across the city, in addition to the Central Library. In 2005-6, there were over 2,600,000 visits to these libraries. When a child logs into a library computer, they are directed to a child friendly version of the Acceptable Use Policy, which they have to agree to abide by before proceeding. All libraries display the following posters close to their computers:

- 'Have fun surfing the net…but stay safe'

- A children's internet guide, written for children by Birmingham Libraries' staff and annually revised and updated. It includes safety information (*Be safe on the net* and *Netiquette*) as well as guidance on recommended websites, how to use search engines, internet jargon, netspeak and common domain names.

- *Feeling Safe in the Library*, which tells children to tell a member of staff if they feel ill, are lost or if anyone in the library makes them feel uncomfortable or scared.

Library staff are trained to support appropriate use of the internet as a learning resource and to be alert to any inappropriate use, or inappropriate sites being accessed. There is a procedure for staff to report concerns, and guidelines on the safety of children in libraries, which are updated annually and circulated to all managers and key staff, including security staff.

3.12 The internet provides great opportunities for children and young people in terms of education, information, communication and, importantly, for having fun. However, it can also provide a means for those intent on sexually exploiting children. Some offenders use technology to make and distribute child sex abuse images. Other offenders use technology to communicate, to share information and experiences, to carry out research and to target children and young people in order to 'groom' them to prepare them for later sexual abuse. The first reported case of child sexual abuse following online grooming was in 2000, but now more and more cases are reported to the authorities. Grooming is now the activity which is most frequently reported to the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP), making up one fifth of all reports.

3.13 Children and young people should be able to enjoy using the internet without having to worry about child sex offenders online. Children and young people can keep themselves safe by taking simple steps to protect their identity and not meeting up with friends they have made online without having an adult with them. Parents can help by learning more about what their children do on the internet, and encouraging them to protect themselves. Schools and colleges can teach children and young people about keeping themselves safe online. Public libraries normally have acceptable use policies as part of their safety procedures, to ensure that children are safe when accessing the internet. Companies and regulators of the communications industry can help to protect children and young people, by putting controls on software and by enabling people easily to report any suspicious behaviour or offensive images. National organisations which help to co-ordinate this action include CEOP[45], Becta[46], the Home Secretary's Task Force

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45   See www.ceop.gov.uk for more information about CEOP's work
46   See www.becta.org.uk for more information about Becta's work

on Child Protection on the Internet, the Children's Charities Coalition for Internet Safety, the Internet Watch Foundation and charities such as Childnet International.

3.14 To help educate children and young people about keeping themselves safe online, CEOP's 'thinkuknow' website provides information and resources to help children and young people, parents, teachers and other professionals to learn about internet safety[47].

CEOP education programme

Thinkuknow is the name of the education programme being delivered by CEOP to children and young people in schools throughout the UK. It helps children and young people to learn about risks they may encounter whilst using the internet and other new technologies. It focuses on three key messages:

● How to have fun online;

● How to stay in control; and

● How to report a problem.

CEOP has now trained 2,500 professionals to deliver the education programme in the UK. By the end of this academic year, 1 million children will have taken part. Thinkuknow has been designed to be emotionally engaging and uses a number of powerful, award-winning films to educate children and young people about the risks they may face.

3.15 Parents need to know which software they can buy to help protect their children from viewing unsuitable or illegal content on the internet. Ofcom, the communications industry regulator, has worked with the British Standards Institute (BSI) to develop a BSI Standard for internet content control software, and the first kite marks under this are due to be awarded this year. The Standard aims to allow parents to control easily their children's access to inappropriate internet content and services. This will help parents to monitor the online activities of their children, enforce limits on children's internet usage, and help children avoid accidentally accessing harmful, illegal or inappropriate content. Kite-marked products should be available in the shops by summer 2007.

3.16 The new school curriculum in information and communications technology (ICT) for 11-14 year olds includes a new emphasis on internet safety, including protection from cyberbullying. We anticipate that the new curriculum will start in September 2008, so that all children in this age group are taught about the importance of keeping themselves safe online.

3.17 Becta, the lead agency for ICT in education, has produced materials to help teachers learn about e-safety issues, so that they are able to teach children to use new technologies safely. These include:

● *Signposts to safety: Teaching e-safety at key stages 3 and 4* and *Signposts to safety: Teaching e-safety at key stages 1 and 2*, which contain background information, advice and guidance for teachers relating to e-safety issues and ways to embed e-safety into the curriculum;

● *E-Safety* which is a document to help develop whole-school policies to support effective practice; and

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47 see www.thinkuknow.co.uk

- *Safeguarding Children in a Digital World* which is a strategic overview of e-safety issues for policy makers, local authorities and schools, including a model for a co-ordinated approach by stakeholders.

3.18 Local authorities and LSCBs can help schools to educate children about internet safety. Becta has recently published *Safeguarding children online: a guide for local authorities and LSCBs* which provides a quick snapshot of the e-safety issues and risks that local areas should consider in keeping children and young people safe.[48] A series of checklists was issued alongside this guide.

Safe at school, college or in an early years setting

3.19 Schools and colleges should be places of learning, enjoyment and safety for children and young people. Schools and colleges are legally bound by a duty to carry out their work with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This should be set within a wider approach to well-being, which will include a new legal duty on schools to promote pupil well-being. A number of Further Education (FE) colleges have developed provision for student well-being, for example through the Healthy College Network. For nurseries and other early years settings in the public private and voluntary sectors, safety and well-being provision is set out in national standards.

Monks Coppenhall Primary and Nursery School – Crewe

Monks Coppenhall Primary and Nursery School is situated in an area of Crewe where most families are on a low income, and a higher than average percentage of pupils receives support from social care. The school decided to implement procedures to support children's safety and well-being and so remove barriers to their learning. These procedures include the following:

- for vulnerable children a teaching assistant or learning mentor is designated to check the children have eaten breakfast, have fruit at break time, have PE kit (provided by the school) and have basic clothing
- information about ChildLine is displayed around the school;
- training for all staff on safeguarding children and domestic abuse;
- children are taught in Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) about safety;
- Stay and Play sessions are organised by learning mentors for mums or carers with pre-school aged children, to develop good rapport and relationships with parents, so sensitive issues can be discussed;
- Family Learning courses run by school staff targeted at vulnerable mothers; and
- strong multi-agency working relationships at local level – the school takes the lead in assessment meetings, and has close working relationships with the school doctor, school nurse and Safeguarding Children Education Co-ordinator.

The school has seen improved attendance for vulnerable children as a result of these procedures. Two mothers who attended the Family Learning courses have gained confidence to leave their abusive partners and make a fresh start – thus improving their children's safety.

3.20 School nurses are an example of professionals working in schools who play an active role in helping to keep children safe both inside and outside school. Many school nurses provide advice

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48   Available from http://publications.becta.org.uk/display.cfm?resID=31049&page=1835

to schools on health promotion and protection. They identify risks and protective factors, teach parents and children, and increase awareness of prevention and first aid.

SAFE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS

3.21 Schools, colleges and early years settings should be safe and suitable physical environments for children and young people to learn and enjoy their time in education. Building Schools for the Future (BSF) is the biggest single Government investment in improving school buildings for over 50 years, which aims to rebuild or renew every secondary school in England over a 10-15 year period. Guidance to local authorities on BSF plans includes several safety aspects, such as:

● ensuring safety aspects of delivering extended services in schools have been considered, including security measures as a result of having a mix of children, young people and community users on site;

● using extended schools provision to provide young people with a safe place to be and quality activities to do during term time and school holidays; and

● how the local authority will ensure that children, staff and other community users feel safe and secure on school sites.

3.22 To help schools make sure their premises are secure, a range of law and guidance is in place, including powers for schools to remove nuisance intruders who have been banned from school premises, powers to screen children and young people for weapons, and powers to search them for weapons if they are suspected of carrying them.

A SAFE WORKFORCE

3.23 A key part of a safe learning environment for children and young people is the adults who work with them. People working in schools, colleges and early years settings can play a powerful preventative role in keeping children and young people safe, not only by teaching them about safety, but also by improving their resilience and self-confidence. School staff should also be willing to talk to children and young people about their safety concerns, whether these are about bullying or something happening at home, and help children and young people to access more specialist support if necessary.

3.24 Schools and colleges should make sure that adults who are working with children and young people are safe to do so. New, consolidated guidance published in November 2006, *Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education*,[49] underpinned by regulations, sets out the responsibilities of schools and colleges for children's safety, and how to ensure that those working in education settings are suitable for work with children and young people. For early years settings, this is set out in the national standards and Ofsted guidance and will be included in the new Early Years Foundation Stage. From autumn 2008, a new, even more robust scheme for checking people applying to work with children and vulnerable groups will be introduced (see paragraphs 3.59-3.64 below).

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49   *Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education* is available from www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications

3.25 One of the main safety issues for children and young people at school is bullying. No child should have to suffer the indignity and pain of bullying. Protecting children from bullies is vital if a safe learning environment is to be put in place, where children can thrive and achieve. The DCSF works closely with a range of voluntary sector partners in the Anti-Bullying Alliance to address bullying in schools. Every school is being encouraged to sign the Anti-Bullying Charter as a statement of their commitment to anti-bullying work, and to use the Charter as a framework for developing and or revising their anti-bullying policy.

3.26 Revised anti-bullying guidance for schools called *Safe to Learn: Embedding Effective Anti-Bullying Work in Schools* will be published this year. In addition to the main guidance there will be specialist guidance on how to tackle racist and homophobic bullying, and cyberbullying. Children with special educational needs and disabilities are particularly vulnerable as they do not always have the levels of social confidence and robust friendship bonds that can protect against bullying.

3.27 A taskforce on cyberbullying has been established to propose innovative and practical solutions to addressing this problem, and a digital information campaign for children and young people will be launched later this year along with guidance for school staff.[50]

Tackling cyberbullying

Mossley Hollins School in Tameside took a pro-active approach to preventing cyberbullying, starting with an information evening for all parents and carers of 11-14 year olds at the school, where the school's ICT teacher, a local police officer and a ChildLine representative discussed the issue of cyberbullying, how to prevent it, and how to offer support for young people affected. An interactive cyberbullying event was held for all Year 9 pupils, including an introduction to the problem as well as tips on preventing and reporting it. This event was delivered through drama and role plays and involved police and local experts.

After the event, a dedicated pupil-led cyberbullying prevention group was set up to discuss how the school could do more to tackle the issue. This group has now developed its own posters and drama activities, and worked with school leaders to redraft the existing anti-bullying policies to include tackling cyberbullying. National and local press have highlighted the work of the group, which has enabled it to help other schools in the area as well.

SAFETY OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

3.28 It is important that schools continue to look after the safety of children and young people when they are involved in school activities outside the classroom. School trips are an excellent way for children and young people to learn and explore in a safe environment. Many schools see visits both in the UK and abroad as essential, including visiting places of worship, museums, field study centres, farms and outdoor activity centres. To help children and young people's personal development, and help them to learn and manage risks, many primary schools offer a trip in Year 6 lasting up to 5 days away from home. For many this will be a new experience – and the most popular provision is outdoor adventure activities, where children get to try new activities, learn to

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50   See www.dcsf.gov.uk/bullying for copies of guidance on bullying and more information

work as a team and to look out for each other. For many young people, the Duke of Edinburgh Awards scheme offers similar learning.

3.29 In November 2006, the *Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto* was launched by DfES to urge schools to use the wealth of educational opportunities outside the classroom both on their doorsteps and further afield to inspire and motivate children and young people. The Manifesto sets out specific measures to help schools widen access to high quality and safe experiences for every child and young person.

3.30 An important complement to safeguarding children from abuse or neglect is keeping children reasonably safe from accidents on school activities. Alongside specific guidance on protection from abuse and neglect, DfES issued comprehensive guidance for schools on safety on school activities.[51] For the highest risk activities, including caving, climbing, trekking and water activities, the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority carries out statutory safety inspections.

3.31 Safer School Partnerships, where police are based in schools, take a joined-up approach to crime prevention, school safety, behaviour improvement and educational achievement. For more information see Chapter 4.

3.32 More and more often, young people aged 14-19 are taking part in work placements outside the school or FE college environment. FE colleges play a critical role in finding the right placements for young learners. The diversity of placements for young learners is wide, for example construction, childcare and retail. Colleges and providers of placements should work together to ensure young people are safe. The recent guidance *Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education* includes specific information on the roles and responsibilities of those involved in arranging and managing placements and other work-based activities.[52]

IDENTIFYING AND REFERRING CONCERNS ABOUT CHILDREN'S SAFETY

3.33 To keep children and young people safe, people working in schools (including boarding schools, and education provision in children's homes), colleges and early years settings should be able to identify any concerns about children's safety, and be willing to act on them. All staff working with children in schools, colleges and early years settings should have training on protecting children. Each setting should have a person designated to deal with child protection issues, who would have more specialist training which is kept up-to-date. This person will take the lead in dealing with any child protection issues, help and advise other staff, and work with other local agencies, such as children's social care or the police.

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51 See for example *Health and Safer: responsibilities and powers* (DfEE, 1998), *Health and Safety of Pupils on Education Visits* (DfES, 2001), *Group Safety at Water Margins* (DfES, 2003).
52 Available from www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications

Operation Fox – Stockport

Operation Fox aims to provide pro-active and preventative community-based social care services for children identified by schools as in need of extra support. Westmorland Primary School had identified some families where the child's basic needs were being met, but children were tired, withdrawn, had erratic school attendance and displayed some signs of behavioural difficulty. Children's social care had identified families whose children attended the school as particularly hard to reach, with some resistance to traditional social work.

Following an agreement between the school and Stockport children's social care, a senior social care practitioner was selected based on specific skills and now works at the school every Friday morning. Over a 10 week period, she worked with 21 families with the school. By being introduced to parents as a member of the school staff, she has overcome the traditional distrust the families felt for social workers. She has gained the trust and respect of all involved and referred cases to other agencies where appropriate. Her support has been welcomed in all cases.

Through this collaboration, the school is able to refer any safety and support concerns onto other agencies quickly and efficiently, in most cases avoiding the need for formal social care referrals. Children from families which have received support are reported to be better cared for, and have improved attendance and behaviour at school. The ongoing success of the collaboration will be judged in a variety of ways, including a reduction in the number of children referred to social care by the school.

Safe on the roads

3.34 One of the biggest risks for children is their safety on the roads, whether outside their homes while playing, on the way to and from school, or making journeys with their family, friends or on their own. The Department for Transport 's (DfT) road safety policies have been very effective in reducing the number of children aged under 15 who are seriously injured or killed in road traffic accidents. We have met the PSA target to reduce child (aged 0-15 years) fatal and serious injuries by 50% by 2010 compared with the 1994-1998 average. The reduction was 52% by 2006, showing that the target has been met four years early.

3.35 There is still more to do, including addressing areas of the target where we have made less progress. DfT's new child road safety strategy,[53] published in 2007, sets out the following priorities:

- older children (aged 12-15 years), where casualty reductions have been half that for younger children;

- boys, who form the majority of child casualties;

- child pedestrians – over 60% of child fatal or serious injuries are to pedestrians;

- disadvantaged areas – the target to achieve a greater casualty reduction in these areas by 2005 has been met, but this is still a priority area;

- children in different social and ethnic groups, and in urban and rural areas – to consider these different circumstances; and

- car drivers and other road users who have a responsibility for child road safety.

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53   Available from www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roadsafety/child/childrdsafetystrategy2007

3.36 The new strategy sets out an action plan of measures to help reduce child casualties further between now and 2010. The main priorities for new or additional efforts are:

- promoting effective practical child pedestrian training such as Kerbcraft;

- promoting good practice in road safety education;

- encouraging broad local partnerships to deliver co-ordinated road safety activities;

- communicating road safety messages to children and other road users through the Think! campaign;

- involving parents and peers in delivering road safety messages to children;

- encouraging wider use of 20mph zones where children are active; and

- co-ordinating road safety and school travel activities.

Mosque marshalling in Blackburn

Through a local partnership organisation, a mosque marshalling scheme was set up in Blackburn. Local volunteers act as marshals to assist children on the journey to mosques, which involves large numbers of children travelling on foot during busy periods, often in the dark. Other authorities have sought to learn from this example, which won a Prince Michael Road Safety Award.

3.37 Cycling is an excellent form of exercise and enjoyment for children, but there can be risks involved. Bikeability is the new standard for cycle training, and replaced the old cycling proficiency test in March 2007. Half of all children in Year 6 in England should have been trained by 2009. To encourage safe cycling, including to and from school, DfT has increased Cycling England's annual budget from £5 million to £10 million.

3.38 In contrast with the reductions in casualties for children aged up to 15, deaths on the roads of young people aged 16-19 have gone up slightly since the 1994-1998 baseline. We need to do more to help young people prepare for independence during their teenage years, in particular equipping young people for the responsibilities attached to driving a car or motorbike. The Government's review of the road safety strategy[54], published earlier this year, set out a comprehensive package of reforms. These include, for example, more enforcement and publicity on drink driving and seat belt use, which are particular concerns for young drivers and their passengers. The Government will reform fundamentally the way people learn to drive, so that learners can drive safely, not just master how to control a car. The three elements will be:

- new standards for what a learner should know and be able to do;

- a modern syllabus for what driver training needs to cover; and

- a revised testing process.

Safe from risk of abuse and neglect

3.39 All children can potentially be at risk of abuse and neglect, usually from someone they know, but sometimes also by strangers. Over a number of years, laws to protect children and young people from

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54 Available from www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roadsafety/strategytargetsperformance/2ndreview/screen

maltreatment have been tightened significantly. The Children Act 1989 set out a new and stronger legal basis for addressing the needs of our most vulnerable children. Subsequent work to improve practice, legislation and guidance has strengthened the system further. The Education Act 2002 created specific duties for schools and colleges to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The Children Act 2004 created new statutory LSCBs which work to co-ordinate and ensure the effectiveness of what services do to safeguard children in every local area. The 2004 Act also placed a legal duty on a range of organisations to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.[55]

3.40 The Government has recently updated and published the guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children* to help those working with children and young people to be absolutely clear about their roles and responsibilities. The main guidance is being supplemented by specialist guidance about specific types of harm, including abuse linked to a belief in spirit possession,[56] child trafficking, and forthcoming guidance on fabricated or induced illness, and sexual exploitation.

3.41 Steps should be taken to protect children from risks of abuse, such as checking the suitability of those working with them, and training those working with children to be able to recognise signs of abuse or neglect and know what to do about their concerns.[57]

Child Protection in Sport Unit

Sport can and does have a very powerful and positive influence on people – especially young people. But the reality is that abuse can take place in sport, and some coaches and other trusted adults involved in sport can pose risks to children and young people.

The Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) was established in 2001 as a partnership between the NSPCC and Sport England. It was set up following the publication of the *Child Protection in Sport Task Force Action Plan*, published in 2000.

The CPSU has four main functions:

- acts as the first point of contact for sports organisations about child protection issues;
- co-ordinates the production of child protection information and training for sports organisations;
- commissions research into a range of issues relating to child protection in sport; and
- develops and promotes standards for child protection procedures and training in all sports.

The CPSU has had considerable success in its work. In 2001, less than half of the sports governing bodies had a child protection policy. Now all funded sports and other sporting bodies have developed and implemented child protection policies and procedures, and having these in place is a condition of funding for sports bodies.

A number of sport governing bodies have produced, with the support of the CPSU, a protocol for information sharing. The information is shared with LSCBs, children's services departments and the police, to improve mutual confidence between the sports and statutory sector in sharing concerns about children's welfare.

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55 See *Statutory guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under section 11 of the Children Act 2004*, (HMG, 2007) available from www.ecm.gov.uk/socialcare/safeguarding
56 Available from http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/IG00220/
57 See *What to do if you're worried a child is being abused* (HMG, 2007), available from www.ecm.gov.uk/socialcare/safeguarding

3.42 Where people working with children have concerns about a child's safety or welfare, we have made it easier for them to share and discuss concerns with other professionals who may be working with the same child. This means that children can receive any extra help they need quickly before the problem becomes more serious. A variety of new developments is helping practitioners to work better together in this way to address concerns, including the Common Assessment Framework, ContactPoint and the extended school core offer, which will be available in all schools by 2010. The *Neighbourhood Policing Toolkit*, which has been piloted, will be developed to facilitate better engagement between the police and local children's services.

Areas for new action

3.43 We have set out some examples of work that the Government is doing to help service users, mothers and fathers, and children and young people to improve safety. This section focuses on areas where we consider that new action could help to improve safety further.

PLAY AND TAKING PART IN POSITIVE ACTIVITIES

3.44 We should not prevent children and young people from doing things they enjoy because of risks that can be managed. Children and young people themselves recognise that 'you can't make everything safe' and that a balance is needed between risks and fun.[58] Children recognise that knowing about risks and how to manage them is an essential part of growing up.

3.45 Playing and taking part in positive activities are important, as they help children and young people to learn about taking risks in a safe environment, can help to develop social skills and an enjoyment of physical activity, and teach children how to recognise and set boundaries. Encouraging greater opportunities for play is an important strand of Government work to tackle childhood obesity.

3.46 Through play, children are able to learn about risks and use their own initiative. If children and young people are not allowed to explore and learn through playing and taking part in positive activities, they will not learn how to judge risks and manage them for themselves. These skills learnt through play and other activities can act as a powerful form of prevention in other situations where children and young people are at risk. Current and future guidance for early years settings encourages learning experiences through both indoor and outdoor play.

3.47 We know that young people and their parents attach a high value to taking part in positive activities, that is having 'something to do and somewhere to go' with safe opportunities for new experiences. Parents we spoke to wanted more information about activities that could tempt their children outdoors. Participation in positive activities supports young people's personal development and helps them to build 'soft' skills – factors that can play a vital part in building resilience and addressing risky behaviour. Positive activities can also tackle specific issues that may lead some young people to feel unsafe in their communities or at home – for example, projects around staying safe, gang related issues or domestic violence.

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58   Children's Rights Director for England, *Safe From Harm,* p.20

Managing Risk in Play Provision

The Play Safety Forum, a group of national agencies involved in play safety, has produced *Managing Risk in Play Provision* to support the work of those involved in play provision of any kind (for example play areas, playgrounds, adventure playgrounds, play centres and holiday play schemes). These include local authorities, voluntary organisations, play equipment manufacturers and inspection agencies. The statement has relevance to other settings and environments in which children play, such as childcare provision, schools, parks and public open spaces. It will also be of interest to those involved in insurance and litigation in relation to play provision.

The statement focuses on physical injuries resulting from accidents. However, the overall approach, namely that a balance should be struck between risks and benefits, is also relevant to agencies concerned with other issues such as the personal safety of children.

3.48   It is clear that 'things to do, places to go' are vitally important. The 2001 Mori poll for the Audit Commission and the follow-up report in 2005 showed that 'activities for young people' was ranked by adults as the most requested improvement in local services; and 'facilities for young children' scored ahead of health, education and housing and almost level with crime reduction.[59] Research has shown that:

- almost half of children spend more than three hours a day watching television or playing computer games;

- more than 1 in 10 spend at least five hours or more a day watching television or playing computer games;

- more than one-third of children never play outside;

- nearly two-thirds of parents are worried about letting their children play outside; and

- three-quarters of parents feel that children face increased risks from playing outside unsupervised compared with five years ago.[60]

3.49   A recent survey completed for The Children's Society showed that adults believed that children should not be allowed out with friends unsupervised until the age of 14, despite the fact that most of the respondents had been allowed out themselves at the age of 10 or under when they were children.[61]

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59   See *Time for Play: Encouraging greater play opportunities for children and young people*, (DCMS, August 2006), p. 6.
60   Available on www.teachernet.gov.uk/growingschools/resources/funding/detail.cfm?id=52
61   See www.goodchildhood.org.uk for more information

Play and positive activities provision in local areas

Children's Play Initiative

In March 2006, the Big Lottery Fund committed £155 million to the *Children's Play Initiative*. 80% of this money is being used to develop free, open-access play provision in areas of the greatest need. 10% is being used to create an England-wide regional support and development infrastructure. Play England is supporting each local authority to work with local partners to develop local play strategies and plans. The remaining 10% is being used to support innovation.

This funding will help to create, improve and develop children and young people's free local play spaces and opportunities.

Youth Opportunity and Capital Funds

We know that many young people and their parents feel that there is not enough to do in their local area, or what is there is not of interest to them. In response we have launched the Youth Opportunity and Capital Funds – worth £115 million over two years (2006-2008) – which give young people the deciding say in what activities and facilities they want locally.

3.50 Children's trusts and local communities need to work together to provide opportunities for children and young people to play outside and take part in positive activities. This is not simply about providing local play areas, but also about building opportunities for outdoor play and activities into mainstream delivery of services, including for example, extended schools, planning use of local land and managing traffic. Communities can also recognise that children and young people need to play outdoors to be healthy and have fun.

3.51 *Strong and Prosperous Communities: the local government white paper,* published in October 2006, set out a vision for more empowered communities working in partnership with local authorities and other local agencies to shape services.[62] Proposed new laws will give local people, including young people, the right to make a 'Community Call for Action' through their local councillor, demanding a response on issues of concern for them. There will be new guidance and a support fund to help community groups become more involved in the management and ownership of local authority assets. Local communities may want to use these new opportunities to influence local authority priorities to improve information for parents, and facilities for children and young people in their area.[63]

Gorse Hill City Farm - Leicester

Gorse Hill City Farm is located in an area with little play space. A group felt that new equipment would help to enhance the city farm facilities, encouraging young children to visit this free educational site more often. Volunteers helped to clear rusty old play equipment at an evening barbeque, which was well attended by regular visitors, local residents and a group of long-term unemployed people. After the new play area had been installed, fencing was erected by trainees on a work experience training course.

'The whole community has really pulled together. Helping with this project has also given a feeling of worth and ownership to people on our back-to-work scheme for the long-term unemployed. One young man came in the evenings to help clear the site and has since joined our skills training scheme.' *David Sanderson, Gorse Hill City Farm.*

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62   Available from http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1503999
63   See www.idea.gov.uk for more information on Community Calls for Action

3.52 Parents often feel worried that their children will be at risk if they play outdoors because of traffic dangers, threats posed by strangers, and crime. To help encourage mothers and fathers to allow their children to learn about safety in this way, we propose to:

- **launch a new communications campaign to encourage parents to let their children play outside in safe environments and take part safely in positive activities.**

UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING RISKS

3.53 It is not just through play, sport and other activities that children and young people can learn about how to keep themselves safe. At school, some subjects involve practical activities where children and young people can learn to recognise the risks themselves and how to reduce these – for example in laboratory experiments in science, using cutting equipment in design and technology, and any form of PE or school sport.

> **The Injury Minimisation Programme for Schools – IMPS, Oxfordshire**
>
> IMPS is designed and delivered by a multi-professional team from health and education services in Oxfordshire. Schools receive the IMPS education resource pack, which includes accident prevention lessons for 7-11 year olds. Children also visit their local hospital and have a tour of Accident and Emergency (A&E) where they are taught what to do if someone is choking, electrocuted or if they or their friends are involved in road accidents. When the children return to school, there are follow-up lessons to consolidate the learning from the hospital visit.
>
> Evaluation of IMPS shows that children who have been taught in the programme had better knowledge of first aid, and how to contact emergency services, than children who had not been involved.

3.54 PSHE plays a key role in helping to give children and young people the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to lead confident, healthy and independent lives. Safety is one of the key subject components of the PSHE curriculum. It aims to help children and young people to keep themselves safe in the home, at school, while travelling, on work placements, in play, in sport and in leisure. Children undertaking safety education are taught about hazard awareness and recognition, both online and in the real world, attitudes towards safety and the role of emotions in managing risky situations.

3.55 Children and young people have told us that they would like to know more about keeping themselves safe, and about times and places of risk. They want to be taught awareness of risks from an early age, including who they can trust and who they cannot. Children want to be taught how to recognise when they are about to take a risk they can't cope with, and not to take it.[64]

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64   Children's Rights Director for England, *Safe From Harm,* pp. 29-32

Teaching safety in schools

There are a range of teaching materials on safety available for PSHE teachers, including:

- Miss Dorothy.com aims to increase self-esteem and develop awareness of safety issues, including on the internet, at home, on the street and in school. A range of materials is available including individual workbooks for children and a teaching pack.

- The DCLG Fire Kills Education Programme has been designed to be delivered by teachers with support of local fire and rescue services. The education packs have been made available to fire and rescue services in England to promote and champion fire safety in schools in their area.

- *Signposts to Safety* is a Becta-produced guide to teaching e-safety at Key Stages 1-4 (age 5-16).

- A database of road safety education resources has been produced by educari and is available at www.dft.gov.uk/roadsafety

For more examples see www.teachernet.gov.uk/pshe

3.56 Helping children and young people to keep themselves and one another safe is a fundamental form of prevention, and could have powerful effects. To enable the teaching of safety as part of PSHE, we propose to:

- **carry out a research study into the best PSHE materials for teaching about safety, helping teachers to identify which resources will be most helpful for their particular school; and**

- **create a module of Continuing Professional Development for teachers of PSHE about how to teach children and young people to keep themselves safe.**

3.57 We know that parents often underestimate the risks their children face online. Parents can also be unclear about whether or not their children have been bullied. Children and young people think that 'parents need to be made aware of all sorts of risks to their children'.[65] Children also found that adults often gave conflicting advice about what children should do to keep safe, so more consistent messages are needed.

Safe parenting handbooks – Birmingham

Birmingham Safeguarding Children Board produces three safe parenting handbooks to help to improve children's safety in the city:

- *Best Start* provides information for new parents, including babysitting, bedwetting, child protection, cot death, play and learning, safety outside the home and positive parenting.

- *Primary School Years* contains information for parents of children at primary school, including preventing bullying, children in need, children left alone, education, healthy lifestyles, internet safety and safety outside the home; and

- *You and Your Teenager* includes information on adolescence and puberty, anti-social behaviour, bullying, internet abuse and exploitation, sexual health, substance misuse and teenage pregnancy.

3.58 Parents also need to play an active role in checking that activities they are planning for their children are safe. To help parents to keep their children safe, we propose to:

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65   Children's Rights Director for England, *Safe From Harm*, p.33

- **provide information for parents about risks of harm faced by children and through Sure Start children's centres ensure information is given to families of young children; and**

- **communicate to parents about keeping their children safe in sporting activities.**

A SAFE WORKFORCE

3.59 People who work with children and young people, whether in paid employment or as volunteers, play vital roles in improving children's lives. But employers and others should make sure people who apply to work with children and young people are safe to do so. Most children and young people tell us that the adults who work with them make them feel safe. Parents should be able to feel confident that when they leave their children in the care of others, those people will not cause harm to their children, whether this is deliberate or accidental.

3.60 Children and young people have told us that they are aware of the risks of harm sometimes posed by people working with them, and of the measures taken to protect them, for example Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks. Most children and young people asked thought that their schools and their carers did a good job of protecting them from abuse.[66]

3.61 When employers are hiring someone new, it is vital that they carry out checks into that person's background, to check that he or she is not unsuitable to work with children. To help employers fulfil their existing and new duties for checking new staff, we have already tightened the system, including:

- strengthening regulations so that anyone cautioned as well as convicted for specified sexual offences against children will automatically be entered on List 99 and barred from working in schools and other education or regulated childcare settings;

- making CRB checks mandatory so that all new appointments to the schools' and early years' workforce require enhanced CRB checks, including staff entering the profession from overseas; and

- publishing consolidated guidance for employers in education settings, *Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education*, underpinned by new regulations.[67]

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66   Children's Rights Director for England, *Safe From Harm*, p.6
67   *Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education* is available from www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications

Better Choices, Safe Recruitment – North West

Better Choices runs three Connexions services in Manchester, Salford and Tameside. In addition to obtaining CRB disclosures before staff start working with clients, Better Choices carry out personal interviews which are in addition to normal recruitment processes. These personal interviews aim to ensure that the applicant is suitable to work with young people, and to find out about the person as an individual.

The personal interviews cover a number of themes, including:

● ability to work in a team setting;

● creating an open and trusting environment;

● ability to cope with challenge and emotional resilience; and

● awareness of child protection issues including duty of care and professional boundaries.

Once staff start work, there is a professional boundaries document to inform staff where their involvement with young people starts and stops.

3.62 We have also passed new legislation, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, which will allow us to create a new scheme for vetting individuals who are applying to work with children and vulnerable adults, and to bar them where they are found to be unsuitable to do so. The new vetting and barring scheme, which will come into operation from autumn 2008, will be the most robust system yet and provide a modern and improved vetting service for employers, including parents.

Vetting and Barring Scheme

The overriding aim of the new vetting and barring scheme will be to help avoid harm, or risk of harm, to children and vulnerable adults. It aims to do this by preventing those who are considered unsuitable to work with children and vulnerable adults from gaining access to them through their work. This will be done by:

● providing employers with a more effective and streamlined vetting service for potential employees, including an online checking facility; and

● barring unsuitable individuals from working, or seeking to work, with children and vulnerable adults at the earliest opportunity.

From autumn 2008, the responsibility for taking barring decisions will lie with the new Independent Safeguarding Authority which will be an independent statutory body. The application processes for vetting and barring decisions and for criminal records disclosures will be run by the CRB.

For more information, please see: www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/socialcare/safeguarding/vettingandbarring

3.63 Carrying out checks on the background of staff who are applying to work with children is only part of safer recruitment. Employers need to make sure they are confident in their recruitment processes and in the people they employ.

3.64 To fulfil our commitments to a safe children's workforce, and to help employers to guard against unsuitable people working with children, we propose to:

- **implement the new vetting and barring scheme and communicate duties under the scheme and the opportunities afforded by it to all employers of people working with children and young people, in both paid and voluntary work, and to parents;**

- **promote safer recruitment practices in all sectors working with children and young people, extending the recent guidance issued to education settings; and**

- **help employers to be aware of signs of abusive intent or behaviour in the recruitment process and beyond.**

ADDRESSING NEW THREATS TO CHILDREN'S SAFETY

3.65   The internet is now integral to children and young people's lives. They use it to learn, communicate and have fun. Greater numbers of children and young people have faster, easier, and more immediate delivery of online information than ever before. Children and young people use the internet for meeting new friends, making and sustaining relationships and for social networking. For young people going online can be the primary means of socialising with peers outside the classroom In short, their online activities mirror their offline life – the internet is part of their 'real' world.

3.66   Whilst children and young people are generally more knowledgeable in their use of new technologies than adults, they do not always understand the inherent risks. At the same time, adults are not always aware of the negative experiences that could occur as a result of children and young people's activity online. There is a need for raised awareness for both children and young people, and their fathers and mothers.

3.67   To help parents to understand the risks faced by their children online, we propose to:

- **work with CEOP, Becta and other partners to inform parents of potential risks online and help them to get involved with their children to help them stay safe.**

Know IT All

Childnet International launched the Know IT All multi-media CD-Rom in May 2007 aimed at helping parents better support their children's positive and safe use of the internet. The CD Rom will be available to all maintained schools in England, who can order copies for parents free of charge.

A summary of the guidance in Know IT All is also available in Arabic, Bengali, Gujarati, Polish, Mandarin, Punjabi, Urdu and British Sign Language.

The information is available in themes including shopping, downloading, chatting and finding things out, and a separate section covers safe use of mobile phones.

3.68   An important aspect of keeping children safe on the internet is joint work between Government, law enforcement agencies, child protection experts and online technology providers. The Home Secretary's Task Force on Child Protection on the Internet was formed in 2001 to bring together all of these organisations. The Task Force has made good progress, including:

- highlighting good practice for providers of various online services;

- developing training for professionals; and

- raising public awareness.

3.69 CEOP also works closely with industry, including encouraging pre-set controls on PCs, and other 'safer by design' initiatives. Where industry is responsible for creating online environments where children can be put at risk, industry should also take responsibility for reducing those risks where possible. Microsoft was one of the first industry partners to adopt the CEOP report abuse function within the MSN Instant Messenger environment. This allows children and young people to report abuse directly to CEOP as and when it happens. This has resulted in a significant increase in reports to CEOP from children and young people.

3.70 Becta works with local authorities, schools, industry and the Government to set standards, accredit products and services, and to develop policies for children's services. Becta is working with LSCBs to support them in their development of e-safety policies across all children's services.

3.71 Because of the availability of the internet on mobile phones, mobile social networking is growing in popularity and allows children and young people to access the internet wherever they are – with less opportunity for supervision from adults. This potentially increases the risk of children and young people being targeted. Mobile phones are also increasingly being used to distribute child abuse images.

3.72 As new technologies and services, such as online gaming and internet-based virtual worlds, continue to develop it will be important to see what threats they might pose to children, and take action to reduce these.

HELPING LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARDS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

3.73 Keeping children safe from harm is not something any one group of professionals can do on their own. It needs well-planned co-operation between a whole range of organisations and between professionals that have different roles and expertise. We have seen in the past what happens when organisations do not work together to improve children's safety – harm to children can go unnoticed until it is too late.

3.74 LSCBs are the most important mechanism for ensuring that local services think about how they can help to improve children's safety, and build this into plans for their services. LSCBs were established in every local authority from April 2006 to ensure that local organisations co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, and that the work carried out is effective. Regional Government Offices have been providing support to LSCBs in establishing their remit and involving local partners.

Local Safeguarding Children Boards

The role of Local Safeguarding Children Boards is to:

- co-ordinate what is done by each person or body represented on the Board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area of each local authority; and

- ensure the effectiveness of work to safeguard children and young people in the local area.

Some local organisations have to be members of the LSCB by law – including local authorities, health services, police, probation, youth justice organisations and Connexions. Other partners, such as schools, FE colleges, NSPCC, and other voluntary and community sector bodies should be involved in the LSCB.

3.75 LSCBs draw in partners who were not always previously involved in local arrangements for children's safety – including the voluntary sector, housing, culture and leisure services, drug and alcohol misuse services and key sector bodies such as the NSPCC. The number of organisations involved is allowing LSCBs to move from a narrow child protection role to actively prevent harm to children. For example, many LSCBs have started to provide child protection training for a wide range of people in their local area who work with children and young people. This means a larger number of people working with children and young people will be able to recognise and take action where they identify risks of harm for children, or have concerns about a particular child. LSCBs also have a role in raising awareness of children's safety issues in the local area.

3.76 While it is still early days for LSCBs, a recent DfES review found that there is already good reason to be optimistic about their potential to make a difference. The launch of LSCBs has given local co-operation on safeguarding a new energy: the statutory footing for LSCBs is raising the profile and ownership of safeguarding across local agencies in some areas. It is also being used locally as a lever to ensure statutory partners provide resources and attend board meetings. There is better understanding of the wider safety agenda and more partners than ever before are working together on improving children's safety.

3.77 Following on from the review of LSCBs, the DfES published *Local Safeguarding Children Boards: A Review of Progress* in June 2007[68]. This identified several actions we will take, working with LSCBs, to help to make a difference to the safety of children in every local area, including:

- **publish non-statutory practice guidance for LSCBs in summer 2007 that will provide best practice case studies and further clarify some of the guidance on LSCBs as set out in *Working Together to Safeguard Children* guidance;**

- **emphasise the importance of participation in LSCBs for a range of local agencies;**

- **define the framework for measuring LSCBs' progress – understanding what a 'good' LSCB looks like;**

- **clarify the place of LSCBs in the local area performance cycle;**

- **trial the development of national templates for local protocols; and**

- **undertake a further LSCB stocktake in 2008.**

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68 Available from http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/socialcare/safeguarding/lscb/

Children and Young People's Safety Strategy – Brighton and Hove

Following a full *Children and Young People's Safety Audit* carried out in 2004, Brighton and Hove developed a *Children and Young People's Safety Strategy*, which is being co-ordinated by the LSCB. The Strategy identified 13 areas for action, across the range of safeguarding issues, including accident prevention, support for children and young people who are victims of crime, child exploitation, domestic violence and safe parenting.

Two early outputs from the strategy and action plan have been:

- the Safe Zone website has been developed to provide information and advice about crime and safety to young people, parents, carers and professionals. The site, which supports the PSHE curriculum, includes advice and information about keeping safe, taking risks, reporting crime, support services available and key local data on children and young people's safety. Young people in the area helped with the design of the website. See www.thesafezone.co.uk; and

- a Child Safety Home Equipment scheme is currently being developed. It is anticipated that the scheme would start with a full risk assessment where children aged under 5 are thought to be at risk of harm or injury. Equipment to make their homes safer would then be provided if it is not available elsewhere (for example smoke alarms from the Fire Service) and installed by a trained fitter.

Questions for consultation

Are the areas we have identified for new action right? What other areas could be considered and what more could we do?

Would parents welcome a communications campaign and information on play and positive activities in their local area?

What more should be done to enable children and young people to play safely and explore the outside world?

Are children and young people taught enough in school about how to manage risks and stay safe?

Is teaching safety education in PSHE a good way to increase children and young people's resilience to harm? Are there other ways we could do this?

How can e-safety be promoted to all professionals who are responsible for children's safety?

What information would parents welcome about risks of harm faced by their children and how to manage them? What areas mentioned here would parents like more specific information about?

What more could be done to help Local Safeguarding Children Boards to make a difference?

4. Protecting vulnerable children and young people

Summary

Some groups of children and young people are more vulnerable to harm than others. Work already underway to protect vulnerable groups includes better support for children in care, new investment in short breaks for disabled children, improved support for young people at risk, procedures for protecting young people serving in the armed forces and better protection for children involved with the courts.

To reinforce this existing work, we are proposing new actions in four areas – improving practice in children's social care, reducing numbers of accidents, addressing parental problems which impact on children and young people's welfare, and improving safety on the streets.

Our proposals for new action include:

● launching a new national safeguarding children awards scheme to celebrate and highlight individual contributions to improving children and young people's safety;

● communicating to parents in high risk households about the causes of accidents and how to prevent them;

● proposing a new theme for the local authority beacon awards scheme to showcase good practice in reaching families whose children may be at risk of harm;

● extending bullying policies used in schools to other settings, including children's homes, extended schools services, FE colleges and youth groups; and

● identifying good local and international practice in addressing the risks of harm to children and young people involved in gangs.

4.1   Certain groups of children and young people are more vulnerable to harm than others. We have seen that children from lower socio-economic groups are at greater risk from accidents. Children who do not live at home for one reason or another may be at higher risk of harm. There are also overlaps between the types of harm a child might face, for example maltreated children and young people are more likely to be bullied at school.

Targeting children in need

4.2   Some children will have additional needs which would not be addressed through universal services, such as schools or health services. To help identify what those needs might be, professionals working with children can now use a Common Assessment Framework (CAF).

A CAF is a simple process looking at the child's additional needs and how these might be met. Where a child needs extra help from different services, a lead professional may be appointed to co-ordinate this support, and make sure the child's needs are being met. Sometimes, professionals working with the same child or family will need to share information about the child's needs and circumstances. We have given clear guidance for practitioners about when it is appropriate to share information, and what types of information can be shared. In future, professionals will be able to use ContactPoint, a basic online directory, where they will be able to see who else is working with the same child or family.

4.3 Through using the new tools, professionals can save time they might have previously spent trying to work out what other support the child might be receiving, and making contacts with people in other services. They can then spend more time addressing the needs of the child and his or her family.

Integrated working – views from professionals working with children

Midwife Deb Hughes, from Coventry, says 'these new processes are helping to share the responsibility for addressing the needs of children and families. I feel like a huge weight has been lifted from my shoulders as prior to this I would have tried to manage everything myself.'

Suzanne Bunt, a Specialist Officer with Deaf People from Streatham, is 'delighted to see the emphasis *Every Child Matters* puts on joint working. I can't see how else I could manage if I wasn't in regular touch with schools, doctors and other professionals. I've relied until now on the informal networks I've built, but going forward, I'm pleased to see multi-agency working becoming the norm.'

Children in care

4.4 Some children are looked after by the state where their own families are not able to do so. We generally say that these children are 'in care'. Children in care are at a high risk of harm, even after they enter the care system. They are over-represented in a range of vulnerable groups including teenage parents and young offenders, and are more at risk of developing substance misuse problems. *Care Matters: transforming the lives of children and young people in care*, published in October 2006, set out a radical package of proposals for transforming the lives of children in care. These proposals included strengthening the 'corporate parenting' role of local authorities; creating high quality placements which meet children's needs; ensuring a first class education; helping children in care to have a positive life outside school; and providing support for transition into adulthood. *Care Matters: Time for Change* was published in June 2007, and sets out the next steps for improving the lives of children in care.[69] These include a £500 annual education budget for each child in care at risk of falling behind in their education to spend on books and after school activities, and a £2,000 university bursary. Children in care will also have their education overseen by a 'virtual school head', who will take responsibility for all the children in care in their area, working with school staff, local authorities and carers to monitor their progress and improve their educational prospects. Pilots of 'social work practices'

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69 See *Care Matters: Time for Change*, June 2007, available from http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/timeforchange/index.shtml

will be established to test whether partnership with external agencies can improve the child's experience of care.

4.5   Children in care are sometimes adopted to become part of new families. Adopted children can still be vulnerable, even though they have a new family. Because of early trauma, adopted children can find it hard to make secure attachments to adults, and may have low self-esteem. Adoptive children and parents can seek help from adoption support services and groups.

4.6   A small group of children, around 3,000 each year, arrive on their own in the United Kingdom to seek asylum. Some of this group are at particular risk of harm from traffickers and others who would exploit them, or because they are suffering from trauma or persecution experienced in their countries of origin. The Border and Immigration Agency (BIA) set out a number of proposals to improve the immigration and care processes for the group in a consultation paper published on 1 March 2007, *Planning Better Outcomes and Support for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children*. The consultation period closed recently. A summary of the responses will be published in the summer and the BIA will set out how it will implement the changes shortly afterwards.

Disabled children

4.7   Disabled children can be at increased risk of harm, including abuse and neglect, as well as bullying. Like all children, disabled children can benefit from being enabled to take risks in safe environments. We have made good progress on improving the life chances of disabled people, including for disabled children and young people. A standard of service for disabled children and those with complex health needs has been included in the *National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services*. Since December 2006, all public bodies have had a duty to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people. Local authorities and schools are required to produce disability equality schemes showing how – across all their activities – they will improve outcomes for disabled children.

4.8   In May 2007, the Government published *Aiming High for Disabled Children: Better Support for Parents* which committed an extra £280 million between 2008 and 2011 to provide more short breaks for disabled children and their fathers and mothers. We will ensure that the safety of disabled children and young people is a fundamental part of all short break provision.

Young people at risk

4.9   Certain groups of young people in each local area are at particular risk of being harmed, and of not reaching their potential. For these young people, *Youth Matters* set out a vision of targeted youth support.[70] This would offer young people at risk:

- a single point of contact for support – a lead professional;

- a support package from mainstream and specialist services;

- a single route of referral for extra support if necessary;

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70   For more information about *Youth Matters* see www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/youthmatters

- help to access support as early as possible; and

- support to live in a stronger family environment.

Pupil Watch – Birmingham

Pupil Watch is a joint working partnership between the Education Welfare Service and West Midlands Police. As part of the Education Welfare Service, Pupil Watch has a commitment to:

- reduce absence from school and promote regular school attendance;

- reduce crime and anti-social behaviour during school hours;

- protect children and young people from becoming the victims and or perpetrators of crime;

- raise parental awareness of the importance of their legal responsibilities;

- reduce the incidence of parentally condoned absence;

- raise community awareness of the damaging effects of short-term absence and truancy;

- promote the safety of children and young people; and

- promote and engage with the local community and businesses.

In one case, an anonymous call was taken by Pupil Watch about two children who appeared not be attending school. During a patrol of the relevant area, the team made contact with both children and returned them home. The children's mother reported a complex range of circumstances affecting the children's school attendance including bereavement, mental health, housing issues and a general lack of local support. Pupil Watch team members were able to signpost the issues to other services as necessary. At a subsequent meeting of professionals concerned, the children's support needs were confirmed and an action plan agreed and implemented.

4.10 Findings from 14 Targeted Youth Support pathfinders indicate that effectiveness of joint agencies working with young people at risk has improved. For example, the South Tyneside Early Prevention Panel now includes professionals covering substance misuse, children in care, youth offending, mental and sexual health. This has improved the identification of young people at risk at an earlier age, enabling comprehensive services to be provided to improve their outcomes.

4.11 Young people who run away from home can be at increased risk of harm. In 2006 DfES began working jointly with The Children's Society to look at the scope and need for runaways provision across local authorities and the police in England. The final report is due out this summer, but some good practice has already been identified. DCSF is also considering how runaways guidance to local authorities could be updated and re-issued.

4.12 Targeted Youth Support reforms will help to ensure that young people at risk, including young runaways and those who are homeless or at risk of becoming so, receive a co-ordinated package of support that is tailored to their needs. This may include counselling and mediation to find long-term and family solutions. A lead professional can co-ordinate a package of support when multiple needs require help from various sources.

Addressing the needs of young runaways

- **Birmingham** – the LSCB has developed a Missing Sub-Group to develop solutions for children who go missing from universal services;

- **Lancashire** – a multi-agency partnership has been established (including police, local authority and The Children's Society) to improve outcomes for children missing from care, including reducing repeat running and supporting underlying issues;

- **South Yorkshire** – 'Safe at Last' is a project involving the police and local authority to provide preventative outreach, and propose emergency accommodation for young runaways;

- **Plymouth** – a police-led focus on runaways and missing children is in place, with emphasis on proactive and preventative work, and reducing linked offending behaviour and crimes committed against young runaways; and

- **Darlington** – a project led by Barnardo's is providing lead professional and multi-agency approaches to address running and missing incidents, with an outcomes monitoring approach.

Young people in the armed forces

4.13 Some young people may choose to start a career in the armed forces and therefore be living away from home. The Ministry of Defence (MoD) has put specific safeguarding procedures in place to protect 16 to 17 year olds serving in the armed forces, and to ensure they have a safe and appropriate start to their careers. Under the new vetting and barring scheme, the MoD will be able to check and continuously monitor the suitability of those working with service personnel who are under the age of 18. In addition, the MoD has released policy guidance for Commanding Officers on under 18s, including material on health and safety at work, arming/guarding, initial briefings, mentoring and contact with parents.

4.14 An order was placed before Parliament in June 2007 to allow the MoD to conduct CRB checks on personnel whose normal duties involve caring for, training, supervising or being solely in charge of persons under 18 serving in the armed forces. It will also allow checks on those who supervise personnel in those positions. If staff were found to be unsuitable to work with young people, they would not be allowed to do so. We anticipate that this order will become law in July 2007.

Young carers

4.15 Some groups singled out for bullying, harassment, or discrimination, have in common personal circumstances that may increase their vulnerability. Children and young people who undertake significant caring responsibilities for sick or disabled parents or siblings are one example. We are already committed to ensuring that the issue of ignorance and bullying that young carers' experience at school is tackled through our revision of the current anti-bullying guidance *Don't Suffer in Silence*. The revised guidance, *Safe to Learn,* will be published later this year.

4.16 The needs of young carers will be further considered in the context of the review of the cross-Government strategy on carers, which is currently underway. Part of this work will focus on equality and rights for carers, including the right of young carers to be free from harassment.

Young people in custody

4.17 Young people remanded in custody or given a custodial sentence can be more vulnerable to harm. The Youth Justice Board and Prison Service have agreed standards for establishments where young people are located. The Prison Service aims to meet the Youth Justice Board's aim of preventing offending by young people by:

- having a child-centred approach, in the spirit of the Children Acts 1989 and 2004;

- emphasising safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people;

- providing a safe environment for young people at all times;

- paying special attention to every young person's physical, mental and social health, including promoting healthy lifestyles;

- involving young people in daily activities in keeping with individual needs, abilities and potential – with education and training a key part of this; and

- ensuring staff receive appropriate training and act as role models for young people.

Children involved with courts

4.18 Children and young people who have been harmed may be involved with court cases, whether the case concerns their care arrangements, or if they are appearing as witnesses. To ensure that care cases proceed through the courts as quickly as possible statutory guidance will be revised to support local authorities in preparing a case and to improve the quality of applications. In addition, new case management procedures are being introduced nationally from spring 2008. These will ensure the timetable in each case is focused around the needs of the child involved.

4.19 For criminal cases, the Judiciary have made clear in their principles of sentencing that priority should be given to the listing of cases involving child witnesses. The Ministry of Justice is also working to improve the safety of children who appear as witnesses in criminal cases, by providing special measures, through the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999, to help young witnesses give their best evidence in court, with as little stress as possible, including:

- video-recorded statements admitted as evidence;

- giving evidence by live link from outside the court room;

- screens around the witness box so the young witness does not see the defendant;

- giving evidence in private where cases involve sexual offences or intimidation; and

- use of communication aids and intermediaries to assist with communications in both police interviews and in court.

4.20 To ensure child witnesses are physically safe in the court building, we are working towards a Government target that by the end of 2008 all Crown Courts and 90% of Magistrates' Courts will have separate waiting facilities. This will enable child witnesses to wait away from the opposing

party before giving their evidence. Over the past two years funding has been spent on improving safety facilities within waiting rooms, such as installing secure locks and window blinds.

4.21 We are increasing the amount of live link equipment in courts. 77% of Magistrates' Courts and all Crown Court centres have live link equipment. To ensure children have safe access to and from court buildings, at the pre-trial visit, or separately, arrangements can be made with the Witness Service for child witnesses and their parents, guardians or supporters to be met at the front entrance at a pre-arranged time to be escorted through to the waiting room. If the facilities allow, arrangements can be made to meet them at a separate entrance away from the public entrance. A pre-trial visit enables the child witness to get an idea of the layout of the court building as well as the court room and live link room from where they will be giving their evidence.

4.22 Child witnesses should feel supported during the court process. NSPCC produces a young witness pack to provide support for children giving evidence in court in child abuse proceedings. The pack has been designed especially for 5–17 year old young witnesses, their parents, carers and young witness supporters. The material helps to familiarise young witnesses with the court process and their role within it.

4.23 Children attending court should not be placed at further risk, particularly from those who work in the courts. We are applying CRB checks to court staff who accompany children, including ushers who would accompany the young witness in a live link room.

4.24 Where the most vulnerable young people appear in court as defendants themselves, we have legislated to protect them, by allowing them to give evidence by live link. A Practice Direction has been issued for Crown Court trials involving young, vulnerable defendants, and the general principles should apply in all courts.[71] Young defendants should be able to follow and participate in any court hearing – they may have difficulty following the proceedings because of their age. The rights of a young defendant under Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights should be respected and protected at all times during the trial.

4.25 Children can also be involved in court proceedings when their mothers and fathers are separating and cannot agree contact or residence arrangements for them. The court should make decisions that are in the best interests of the children involved. Where there is an allegation of domestic violence or abuse between the parents the court will consider whether the child has suffered any harm as a result. In January 2005 the definition of 'harm' in the Children Act 1989 was amended to include children seeing or hearing violent behaviour. New court forms were introduced to identify early on in the court process allegations of domestic violence so that decisions can be made to protect children who may be at risk of harm. The forms are being evaluated and any necessary changes will be made to increase their effectiveness and ensure that children at risk are identified and protected.

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71   For more information, see http://www.dca.gov.uk/ypeoplefr.htm#part1

Areas for new action

4.26 Although there are specific and effective programmes of work with particular groups of vulnerable children, we have identified some areas where we propose further action is taken to reduce the risks of harm for children and young people.

IMPROVING PRACTICE IN CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

4.27 Many children who are particularly vulnerable and at risk of harm will come into contact with children's social care services. Social care plays a lead role in improving outcomes for the most vulnerable children. Social care works in partnership with a range of agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people, as well as having specific statutory responsibilities for intervening to protect children from harm.

4.28 Despite the excellent work done by social workers to protect children from harm, some people have a very negative view of social services. Children and young people who had come into contact with social services wanted much more attention to be paid to their views and feelings. When carrying out enquiries into possible concerns, children and young people wanted social workers to listen to the circumstances as the child sees it, rather than sticking to procedures. Children who had experienced visits from social workers thought that professionals needed to be taught how to check things were not being covered up, so that the child felt able to tell the visitor about abuse.[72] Children and young people recommended that social workers should always see the child alone, somewhere away from the building and from their parents or carers, where they feel comfortable and able to speak freely about how they are being looked after.[73] They also wanted what they said was happening to be taken as seriously as what adults say.[74]

4.29 Parents we spoke to were wary of social services for two main reasons. They associated children's social care with a few high profile cases where things had gone wrong for children at risk of harm, and they also thought that social services tended to over-react, and were prepared to take children into care at the slightest hint of trouble. Some parents though, who had received help from children's social care, had a generally positive opinion of the support provided.

4.30 Too often, the only time social workers are mentioned in the press is when a case has gone wrong. Most social workers do excellent work with children and families, providing not only protection for the child but also support for the family so that the child can live safely with their parents.

4.31 Children's social care has a framework of legislation and guidance which governs how concerns about children's welfare should be dealt with, including clear child protection procedures. The guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children* sets out the duties of social care and other children's services in responding to and making enquiries about children's safety. The *Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families* provides a systematic way of analysing, understanding and recording what is happening to children and young people within their

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72 Children's Rights Director for England, *Safe From Harm*, p.26
73 Dr Roger Morgan, Children's Rights Director for England, *Policy by Children: A Children's Views Report*, March 2007, p.28
74 Children's Rights Director for England, *Policy by Children*, p.11

families and the wider context of the community in which they live. This Framework sets out clearly that the child should be seen and kept in focus throughout the process, and that the child's perspective is always taken into account. Guidance is provided for professionals on how to communicate with children, including with disabled children.[75]

4.32   Our framework for safeguarding children is respected by professionals not only here but also in other countries, including those who are looking to improve their child protection procedures. We do not propose to unpick this framework, but in order to help social workers to carry out assessments effectively, we will:

- **look at ways that social work training, both qualifying and post-qualifying, could better prepare social workers to work within the new Integrated Children's System[76], the guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children* and the *Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families*; and**

- **carry out further work with the Children's Workforce Development Council to improve management and supervision in children's social care.**

4.33   Inspection is a key way that we can assure whether children's social care services are providing the support and protection for children in the local area, and gain leverage to prompt improvement if they are not. Currently, Annual Performance Assessments and Joint Area Reviews of children's services assess how these services contribute to outcomes for children and young people, with joint area reviews always including inspection fieldwork of safeguarding services. The National Minimum Standards for children's social care are currently being revised, taking account of *Care Matters: Time for Change*, and any new legislation. LSCBs also provide a key mechanism for audit and challenge locally.

4.34   From 2009, Joint Area Reviews and Annual Performance Assessments of children's services will be replaced by an annual Comprehensive Area Assessment measuring progress made against Local Area Agreements, and tailored inspection. We propose to:

- **consider the case for regular inspection of safeguarding services for children under the new inspection arrangements from 2009.**

4.35   The sometimes negative image of work carried out in children's social care may be one of the reasons for problems with recruitment and retention in the children's social care workforce. Currently, the vacancy rate for children's field social workers in England is 11.8% and 17.5% in London, whilst turnover stands at 11% in England, and 15.1% in London.[77] Through implementation of the proposals in the *Options for Excellence* review[78] and the *Care Matters: Time for Change*, we will seek to improve recruitment and retention in children's social care.

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75   See sections 17, 20, 47 and 53 (amended) of the Children Act 1989 – children's wishes and feelings should be ascertained and taken account of in decision making.
76   See www.ecm.gov.uk/ics for more information about the Integrated Children's System
77   Figures from *Social Care Workforce Survey*, July 2006
78   See www.ecm.gov.uk/optionsforexcellence for information about the review

Improving recruitment and retention in children's social care

A key aspect of improving practice in social care is to create a more positive public image of the social work profession, so it becomes an attractive career option. Concerns about stress and excessive workloads should be tackled, and the quality of supervision improved. In *Care Matters: Time for Change*, we highlighted our intention to:

● review with partners options for tailored recruitment campaigns for social workers that are more closely embedded in the context of the children's workforce and the ways of working set out in *Every Child Matters*;

● look at ways to make the profession more attractive, including developing a Newly Qualified Social Worker status, that would guarantee support, training and induction for children and family social workers;

● clarify the fit between social work career pathways and the post-qualifying awards available to support those pathways; and

● build on the common induction standards recently launched by the Children's Workforce Development Council so that they are adopted across the children's social care workforce.

We are talking to stakeholders about these proposals, and will set out our vision and next steps in the *Children's Workforce Strategy refresh*, which will be published in autumn 2007.

4.36 To celebrate successful front-line practice by both individuals and organisations in work to safeguard children and young people, we propose to:

● **launch a new national safeguarding awards scheme to celebrate success and highlight individual contributions to improving children and young people's safety. A panel of experts would be responsible for identifying individuals and organisations in all sectors who have excelled in protecting and promoting the welfare of children and young people. An annual awards ceremony would be held celebrating success in improving children's safety; and**

● **put forward for consideration in 2008 a theme for the local authority beacon award scheme, which would recognise different aspects of safeguarding, showcase good practice and help to share learning across local areas. This could include outreach to minority communities to ensure that all children are receiving the support they need to stay safe.**

REDUCING NUMBERS OF ACCIDENTS

4.37 Some groups of children, including those with parents who have never worked, or are long-term unemployed, remain particularly vulnerable to being injured or killed in accidents, despite overall numbers decreasing. More children are admitted to hospital for unintentional injury than any other cause.

Learning About Safety by Experiencing Risk (LASER)

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) LASER project was funded for three years from 1999 by the Department of Health to produce good practice guidelines for interactive safety education schemes, such as the Crucial Crew and Junior Citizens. The initiatives focus their effort on accident prevention and safety promotion, particularly for children aged 9-11 years old.

Emphasis is very much on the belief that children learn by doing, and the scenarios are made as interactive as possible. The children learn by experiencing risky situations for example an unsafe kitchen, a smoke-filled bedroom or the scene of a road traffic accident. The scenarios typically last for ten minutes. The children are split into small groups of about six and move round the different scenarios.

The LASER schemes are set up throughout the UK and most involve the collaboration of the emergency services, local authorities and other local partners. The majority are temporary schemes set up for a limited period each year, but there are also nine permanent centres around the country. The Department of Health is currently funding RoSPA to develop an accreditation process for safety centres, as a voluntary quality assurance programme, so that safety centres can demonstrate their credibility and educational value.

4.38 Children and young people themselves recognise accidents as a danger, and that there are practical steps they could take for themselves, even as simple as tying their shoelaces properly. They also thought that many children and young people might not go to hospital for minor injuries because of the waiting times at A&E departments.[79]

4.39 Parents we spoke to about accidents in the home thought that the main risks for younger children (up to 10 years old) were:

- kitchens, pans on cookers and cleaning materials;

- electrical sockets;

- stairs;

- baths – risks of drowning and scalding;

- falls, particularly from tripping over toys; and

- windows.

4.40 Parents thought there were solutions to these risks, such as stair gates and child-proof locks on kitchen cupboards. These precautions were seen as most relevant for children aged below 10, and also for children with disabilities, particularly mental health problems.

4.41 Accidents such as these are relatively simple to protect against, and often involve equipment being fitted in the home. Families in disadvantaged communities whose children are at higher risk of accidental injury can receive help from Sure Start children's centres, which can reduce the risks of accidents by offering advice and information.

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79   Children's Rights Director for England, *Safe From Harm*, p.10

Beaumont Leys and Stocking Farm area Sure Start Children's Centre – Leicester

In Leicester, the Sure Start Children's Centre for the Beaumont Leys and Stocking Farm area helps parents to make their homes safer for young children and more energy efficient. This includes providing and fitting safety equipment (stairgates and smoke alarms) and offering advice on general safety in the home, as well as specifics to individual houses. The programme reports that this has contributed to reductions in the number of accidents (down 35%) and respiratory difficulties amongst young children in the Sure Start area.

4.42 Reducing these numbers of accidents in the worst affected groups would be hugely beneficial, not only to children's safety, but also in reducing burdens on the health service, where accidents to adults and children costs the NHS £146 million a year for A&E visits alone.

4.43 To improve children's safety in the home, and reduce social inequalities in this area, we propose to:

- **launch communications targeted at parents in high risk households, advising them about the causes of accidents, and how to prevent them; and**

- **work with relevant partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors to provide both parents and professionals with improved support and information on common risks in the home, and the most effective forms of intervention to prevent accidents and injuries.**

PARENTAL PROBLEMS WHICH IMPACT ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S WELFARE

4.44 As shown in Chapter 2, some problems that mother and fathers face can impact adversely on their children's welfare. This is particularly the case where their parents have violent relationships, or are substance abusers. Children of parents with alcohol or drug problems, mental illness or domestic violence issues have an inability to concentrate at school and perform below their expected ability.

4.45 Parents who misuse substances, have mental health difficulties or are in violent relationships will often find it difficult to provide a stable home environment for their children. Parents we spoke to who misused substances said they had difficult relationships with their children, and parents with mental health problems were concerned about the effects of their own condition on their children's lives.

4.46 Parents in these situations can often feel reluctant to ask for help, for fear that their children will be taken away from them and put in the local authority's care. Asking children's social care for help was not an option according to parents we spoke to. Parents – fathers as well as mothers – thought that social services would take extreme action in response to problems, and had unlimited powers to do so. They thought that if they contacted social services about problems in their family, they would get either an over-reaction or the problem would be dismissed as trivial. Many believed that children's social care was the 'police service of parenting.'

4.47 Often parents with problems which impact on their children's welfare will be involved with services which aim to address their particular issue, such as substance misuse treatment programmes, mental health services or domestic violence intervention programmes. Professionals working in these services should ask about the impact of the problem on any children in the family, take account of this in the assessment process and ensure that support and help is given to these children.

4.48 This requires adult services and children's services to work in close co-operation, identifying need and providing integrated packages of support for the family. Failure to do so can lead to very serious consequences for the child. Both adults' and children's services should engage in work with minority communities to build up trust and develop services that will safeguard children and provide support for their parents where necessary.

> **Refuge integrated services for women and children affected by domestic violence**
>
> Refuge works with women and children affected by domestic violence to remove the guilt and responsibility which so many of them wrongly attribute to themselves, towards increasing self-esteem and positive coping strategies.
>
> Individual sessions are available for women where they can explore and begin to come to terms with their experiences of abuse and the impacts these might have had on them and their children. Individual sessions for children give them the opportunity to explore their thoughts and feelings in relation to the violence and their position as a child caught up in an adult problem. Sessions which focus on the removal of guilt, responsibility and blame, the expression of sadness, rage and loss, normalising feelings of fear and anxiety and the development of self-esteem and social and communication skills, can be helpful to children in these circumstances.
>
> Feedback for women relating to their child is essential and at Refuge this is achieved via either a system of parallel groups for women or written information such as home notebooks. One of the advantages of carrying out joint work with a woman and her children is that it gives them the opportunity to talk together about their experiences.

4.49 Equally, those working in children's services should be aware of the effects of parental problems on children's welfare, and able to work in partnership with services for adults where appropriate. This would address the family's needs as a whole, rather than focusing in on one particular issue, such as child protection, substance misuse or domestic violence.

4.50 We are investing £13 million of additional funding between 2008 and 2011 to support local areas in developing pathfinder projects, which will deliver intensive and tailored support for families with severe multiple problems. These projects will build on Family Intervention Projects and the Social Exclusion Task Force Families at Risk Review.[80] A key part of these projects will be parenting intervention and relationship support. We will work with the new National Academy for Parenting Practitioners to improve practitioner training, so that parenting support can be improved and coordinated better across local agencies.

4.51 To develop joint working models between adult treatment and children's services, 48 local authorities have been carrying out work to overcome barriers to joint commissioning, planning

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80 The first report from the Families at Risk Review, *Reaching Out*, was published in June 2007, and is available from http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_exclusion_task_force/families_at_risk/

and delivery of services to children living in families where there are substance misuse problems. A toolkit and training pack from this work will be available from October 2007.

4.52 Good practice already exists, including through midwifery services, where midwives routinely ask about alcohol consumption when booking ante-natal appointments. A woman who is suspected to be drinking excessive alcohol may, in some areas, be referred to a specialist substance misuse midwife or alcohol and substance misuse team. The midwife will also pass on her concerns to the Health Visitor when handing over care.

4.53 Much of the policy and guidance framework already aims to promote these links between children's and adults' services. To help strengthen these links, we propose to:

- **work with the relevant inspectorates and Departments to develop and deliver the new risk-based Comprehensive Area Assessment, and consider how issues around links between adults' and children's services should be reflected;**

- **work with local authorities and their partners to support targeted communication to parents with problems that may affect their children about the support available for them – including considering how these issues could be addressed through the development of local Parents' Charters and the implementation of Parents Know-How (a new multi-channel information service for parents); and**

- **put forward for consideration in 2008 a theme for the local authority beacon award scheme, which would showcase good practice in reaching families, including within minority communities, whose children may be at risk of harm, and help to share learning across local areas.**

IMPROVING SAFETY ON THE STREETS

4.54 One area where children and young people consistently say they feel unsafe is on the streets where they live – either travelling to and from school, or being outside with their friends in the evenings. Most children and young people said they felt vulnerable on the streets, but also had lots of ideas about how to improve the situation. Some recommended better street lighting, including in rural areas and in alleyways that people have to use after dark. Others thought that a more visible police presence would help, but only if the police had powers and were willing to do something to protect young people. Safer public transport was another idea, so that when young people do attend activities in the evening, they can get home safely, for example on night buses. Worryingly, one in 10 children in one survey said that the one thing that would make them feel safer is to carry a weapon so they could defend themselves if necessary.[81]

4.55 Bullying does not stop at the school gate, and often children and young people are bullied outside school. Children and young people told us that bullying often takes place in isolated places, including near to where they live or while playing sports. Parents may be unsure of who to turn to if their child is being persistently bullied outside school.

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81 Children's Rights Director for England, *Children and Safeguarding*, p.12

Anti-bullying event in Tyne and Wear

Connexions Tyne and Wear in Sunderland worked with their partners (On Track, Washington School, Youth Inclusion Project and Anti-Bullying Strategy) to organise an anti-bullying event. The event, held in November 2006, aimed to commend young people who have overcome bullying, or who have helped someone being bullied.

The event was opened by a local councillor, and a player from the Newcastle Eagles basketball team spoke about how he overcame bullying in his childhood. Young people at the event took part in activities including coaching sessions, anti-bullying interactive computer games and had the chance to talk to the local community police team and the Fire Service. Connexions organised a poster competition, with the theme 'don't be a bystander'. Young people from Washington School gave a presentation about the school's anti-bullying strategy and how it could be improved. Another group of young people from Shiney Row College presented two plays about bullying and the effects it can have on young people. Dr Helen Patterson, Director of Children's Services in Sunderland, presented awards and closed the event.

Those who attended the event found it both fun and informative about bullying, and partner agencies have agreed to organise a similar event for 2007.

4.56 There has been an increase in awareness of issues inner-city areas face with gangs, knives and gun crime. Recent tragedies have highlighted the need for government, local areas and communities to tackle this issue, to prevent more young people from being injured or killed.

4.57 Schools can play a vital role within communities to improve safety in the local area. In spring this year, DfES announced that new powers were being introduced to help schools to discipline pupils who cause trouble. This included the power for schools to punish pupils for unacceptable behaviour that takes place on the way to and from school, as well as within the school grounds. This power will aim to ensure that pupils are positive ambassadors for their school while travelling on buses or trains to and from school.

Safer School Partnerships

'We want to make the school a place where children feel they want to come to, rather than a place they feel they just have to come to.' – *PC Mike Ward, full-time Safer School Partnerships officer*

Safer School Partnerships, where police are based in schools, take a joined-up approach to crime prevention, school safety, behaviour improvement and educational achievement. This includes aiming to:

- reduce the prevalence of crime, anti-social behaviour and victimisation amongst young people and to reduce the number of incidents and crimes in schools and their wider communities;

- provide a safe and secure school community which enhances the learning environment;

- engage young people, challenge unacceptable behaviour, and help them develop a respect for themselves and their community; and

- ensure that young people remain in education, actively learning, healthy and achieving their full potential.

Some of the benefits from the Partnerships already established have been to:

- improve children and young people's safety and create a safer working environment;

- reduce rates of truancy and exclusion;

- improve educational attainment; and

- reduce rates of offending and anti-social behaviour.

Last year, the Government announced that the Safer School Partnerships programme would be mainstreamed, building on the success and achievements of the programme to date.

4.58 To help make children safer outside schools and on the streets, we propose to:

- **extend bullying policies and training used in schools to other settings, including children's homes, extended school services, FE colleges and youth groups;**

- **identify effective anti-bullying strategies for children's services and disseminate good practice examples that could be adopted by the children's trusts and LSCBs where relevant;**

- **identify good local and international practice in addressing the risks of harm to young people involved in gangs – including members of their family who may be affected and consider the scope for piloting and evaluating similar work in local areas in England; and**

- **consider the role that children's trusts and LSCBs could play in reducing knife and gun crime and the wider issue of safety on the streets.**

Questions for consultation

Are the areas we have identified for new action right? What other areas could be considered?

How could training and development for social workers be improved?

Would a national safeguarding awards scheme help to raise the profile of work to improve children's safety?

Will the beacon council scheme help to promote learning from good local practice?

How can we tackle inequalities in prevention of accidents? What role could national and local organisations play?

What problems do professionals face in trying to address the needs of both the adults and children in the family?

Do some parents need help to access support available to them?

How can local areas ensure that children's and adults' services work collaboratively to safeguard and promote the well-being of children and young people affected by substance misuse, domestic violence or mental illness problems within their families?

What is the best way to reach parents who might need help with problems that are affecting their children's health and development? Would national or local communications help?

Whose responsibility should it be to address bullying that happens outside school? How could local agencies work together to address this problem?

What role could LSCBs play in tackling gun and knife crime? Are there examples of good local or international practice which could be considered in more detail?

5. Responding when children and young people have been harmed

Summary

Some children and young people are harmed, and action should be taken to respond to this as quickly and effectively as possible. Work already underway to improve responsive work in this area includes setting up processes for reviewing incidents of harm (Serious Case Reviews and Child Death Overview Panels), improving support for victims of abuse, tackling exploitation of children, supporting victims of forced marriage and improving the way that sex offenders are managed.

To reinforce this existing work, we are proposing new actions in two areas – highlighting the role of the public in children and young people's safety, and better safeguards for children coming in and going out of this country.

Our proposals for new action include:

- providing additional support for listening services via ChildLine;

- launching a public education campaign to improve the public's ability to identify and report concerns about children's safety; and

- ensuring immigration staff dealing with children are alert to child safety issues and know how to refer on serious concerns.

5.1   Some children and young people are harmed, and it may be that this will not have a long-lasting effect, but where a child or young person has been harmed, action should be taken to respond to this as quickly and effectively as possible. Improvements have been made in this area in recent years, focusing on two main areas: processes to ensure lessons are learned from incidents of harm, and work to tackle specific types of harm.

Processes for reviewing incidents of harm

5.2   Where a serious injury or death to a child happens in a local area, and abuse or neglect is considered to be a factor, the LSCB should consider immediately whether other children are at risk of harm and take immediate steps to protect them. Following this initial action, the LSCB should consider convening a Serious Case Review to look at what lessons could be learnt – including looking at the involvement of local services with the child and family. The purpose of the Serious Case Review is to identify lessons and the LSCB should create an action plan to ensure that changes happen to address the findings of the Review.

5.3 In addition to Serious Case Reviews, from 2008, each LSCB will have put in place processes to review the deaths of all children. When a child dies unexpectedly in the local area, there will first be a rapid response by a group of key professionals who come together to look at the exact circumstances of the death, support the family and gather evidence as appropriate. A Child Death Overview Panel will take an overview of all child deaths (aged up to 18 years) in the local area. The panel would look at responses from professionals to each unexpected death, whether they were involved with the family before the child dies, and the background and family circumstances of each child. The panel will consider how such deaths might be prevented or avoided in future, and also look at trends or patterns and report these to the LSCB.

Support for victims of abuse

5.4 Where a child has been abused the long-term effects can be devastating for the child's health and mental health. To ensure that professionals in all sectors and settings are able to respond to the needs of victims of domestic and sexual violence, and to childhood abuse and exploitation, the Victims of Violence and Abuse Prevention Programme was established by the Department of Health in 2004, in partnership with the Home Office. The programme guide *Tackling the Health and Mental Health Effects of Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse* was launched in June 2006.

5.5 National service guidelines are being developed, based on research carried out under the programme. The guidelines will be published in April 2008 to inform policy development, improve practice, and ultimately to help people who have been abused to access the appropriate services. The aim is to improve outcomes for affected individuals by:

● reducing mental illness, self-harm, suicide and physical injury associated with victimisation;

● increasing safety and minimising victimisation;

● improving the quality of life of victims and survivors; and

● preventing new and continued offending.

5.6 The *Cross-Government Sexual Violence and Abuse Action Plan* published in April 2007 includes a clear focus on effective interventions for victims and prevention. This includes young people who sexually abuse, many of whom have themselves experienced sexual and other abuse. *A National Framework for the Development of Services for Young People who Sexually Abuse* is being drafted.

5.7 Stop it Now! is a campaign launched in 2001 which aims to prevent child sexual abuse by raising awareness and encouraging early recognition of problems by abusers themselves, and those close to them. Through regional and local projects, a national helpline and provision of information, Stop it Now! offers confidential advice and support to adults who have concerns about their own behaviours or those of others. Both callers and their adult friends and family are referred to information, support and advice which can protect children and prevent abuse.

5.8 Children who have been victims of abuse have often lived in violent households, where a parent has been a victim of domestic violence. As well as needing emotional support, those who have suffered from domestic violence first and foremost need a secure place to take themselves and

their children away from the perpetrator. Some local authorities have established sanctuary schemes to allow victims of domestic violence to remain in their own accommodation, where it is safe for them to do so, where it is their choice, and where the perpetrator does not live in the same accommodation.

Barnet Sanctuary Project

The Barnet Sanctuary Project was piloted in December 2003 and officially launched in May 2004 by Barnet Council's Housing Needs and Resources Section. The primary objectives of the project are simple – to keep families safe from domestic violence and prevent homelessness. The project provides an alternative to temporary accommodation. By providing additional security measures to homes of domestic violence survivors, it enables them to remain in their homes and feel safe. This means that families can avoid being uprooted from their community and can stay with the same schools, family, friends and support networks.

5.9 Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a collective term for procedures where all or part of the external female genitalia are removed for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons. FGM is medically unnecessary, extremely painful and has serious health consequences. We have tightened the law on FGM so it is now an offence for UK nationals or UK residents to carry out FGM abroad – even if it is legal in the other country.

Addressing exploitation of children

5.10 Despite the existence of a robust legal framework, some children are exploited for commercial purposes or trafficked, mainly for sexual exploitation, domestic service or other menial labour. If children are identified as having been trafficked, they may be taken into local authority care. However, recent research has highlighted how, even when trafficked children are taken into care, they are still at risk of exploitation, and often go missing.[82]

5.11 The Home Office has recently published the *UK Action Plan on Human Trafficking*, and the Government is consulting on the draft practice guidance *Safeguarding Children who may have been Trafficked*. This will provide good practice guidance to professionals and volunteers from all agencies in safeguarding children who are abused and neglected by adults who traffic them into and out of the UK in order to exploit them. The Home Office, together with CEOP and the NSPCC, has recently announced funding for a Child Trafficking Advice and Information Line. This will provide specialist advice to professionals who may have concerns about a child, such as social services, police or immigration.

5.12 Trafficked children may end up in prostitution. Other children and young people may also become involved in prostitution. In 2006 the Government published a co-ordinated prostitution strategy, to raise awareness of the realities of prostitution and to prevent individuals particularly children and young people, from becoming involved. The strategy signalled the Government's intention to update current guidance on *Safeguarding Children Involved in Prostitution*, sending out a clear policy direction on the way in which children and young people at risk of, or suffering, sexual exploitation should be supported or protected.

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82   See www.ecpat.org.uk for more information

Victims of forced marriage

5.13 Children and young people may be forced to marry against their will. This is not a religious or cultural issue, but a human rights abuse and child abuse where it involves a minor. It is different from arranged marriage, where both parties would consent to the marriage. British nationals may be forced to leave the UK to marry overseas. The Government's Forced Marriage Unit handles between 250 and 300 cases of forced marriage a year, one third of which involve minors – some as young as eight years old. Forced marriages occur across many different cultures and religions, and can not be justified on religious grounds. Every major faith condemns it, and freely given consent is a prerequisite of all Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh marriages.

5.14 Children forced to marry, or those who fear they may be forced to marry, are frequently withdrawn from education, restricting their personal development. They may feel unable to go against the wishes of their parents, and may suffer emotionally. These factors can contribute to impaired social development, limited career and educational opportunities, financial dependence and lifestyle restrictions. Contributory factors have been identified as a lack of self-determination, excessive control, weight of expectations about women's roles and concerns about marriage.

5.15 The Forced Marriage Unit provides a single point of contact for confidential advice and assistance on the issue, where skilled caseworkers can deal with cases on an individual basis. Specific guidance on forced marriage is available for social workers, police officers, and health and education professionals.[83]

Managing child sex offenders

5.16 Where someone has been convicted of offences against children, it is vital that they are prevented from carrying out further harm. By law, the police service, the prison service and the probation service have to work together, sharing information to manage known offenders. They are supported by various other agencies, including LSCBs and the NHS, who are also required to provide information about these offenders. These teams that work together are known as Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) teams in each local area. They use a range of methods to monitor offenders and reduce the risk of them committing further offences. These include:

- police visits and interviews;
- regular multi-agency meetings to share information, take action and to reduce the risk of harm;
- ongoing reviews of the level of risk each offender poses;
- surveillance of high-risk offenders;
- treatment to reduce re-offending;
- recalling offenders to prison for any serious breach of the conditions of their release;
- providing supervised accommodation where offenders can be closely watched, tagged and put under an appropriate curfew; and

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83   See www.fco.gov.uk/forcedmarriage for more information including copies of the Forced Marriage Unit's guidelines for professionals

- controlling how information about specific offenders is shared with the public or key community representatives.

5.17 The MAPPA system is one of the most developed offender management systems in the world. It is effective because it brings offenders to the notice of various agencies who can all help in their management. This makes them less of a risk to the public as they can be contacted by the authorities and monitored appropriately.

5.18 In 2006, the then Home Secretary launched a review of the current arrangements for managing child sex offenders with the aim of identifying how they could be better managed and monitored. This review has been broad-ranging. Its findings, which were published on 13 June 2007[84] make a number of recommendations, including:

- piloting a new process to allow parents and guardians to request details of possible sex offenders;

- requiring police and probation services to consider in each case whether a child sex offenders' conviction should be disclosed to protect children;

- reviewing the use of satellite tracking to monitor high-risk sex offenders;

- developing the use of drug treatment to reduce sexual drive in offenders;

- piloting compulsory polygraph tests for offenders;

- requiring more information from those on the Sex Offenders Register – including email addresses, and information about their relationships; and

- promoting community awareness campaigns to educate parents about ways to protect their children from sex offenders.

Areas for new action

5.19 Responding where children or young people have been abused has been the focus of much attention in recent years, since Lord Laming's Inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié. Progress has been made, but there are areas where there is potential to reduce the lifelong impact of harm to children and young people.

HIGHLIGHTING THE ROLE OF THE PUBLIC IN CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SAFETY

5.20 The vast majority of child abuse is carried out by someone the child knows, and often takes place in the home. Children trapped in violent and abusive households do not always know that what is happening to them is wrong, or where to turn for help. Research suggests that children who are being abused can wait a long time to speak out about abuse, although this is improving. In 1986-7 only 7% of children reported abuse within one month, whilst 28% waited 5 years or more. By 2006-7 46% reported within one month, and the number of those waiting 5 years or more had reduced to 7%.[85]

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84   For more information, see http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/CSOR/chid-sex-offender-review-130607?version=1
85   Statistics available from www.childline.org.uk

5.21 Children and young people said they felt that the media reinforced certain stereotypes of children who were likely to be victims of abuse. This might make it more difficult for children and young people who do not fit these stereotypes to speak out about abuse they have experienced.[86]

5.22 If abuse was happening, children and young people said they were most likely to tell their parents (60%), their best friend (13%), another member of the family (10%), a teacher (8%) a social worker or key worker (5%). If they did speak out, they would expect the problem to be sorted out straight away – 'don't just say "yeah" – actually do something.' They would expect the harm to stop, the person who had been harming them to be dealt with, and then extra support given to the victim if they needed it.[87]

5.23 Children and young people are encouraged to report online abuse through the 'Report Abuse' button which features on numerous websites. Since CEOP was established in April 2006, reports of abuse have risen from 40 reports a month to over 400.

5.24 Services which offer a confidential listening and advice service for children are essential if children and young people are to feel able to raise concerns. To ensure that children and young people have somewhere to turn if they are being harmed, we propose to:

- **provide additional support for listening services for children via ChildLine.**

Safeguarding Card – Connexions Cornwall and Devon

All Connexions staff in Cornwall and Devon receive safeguarding training, and cannot work with clients until they have been trained. There are clear safeguarding operational guidelines in place, including advice on confidentiality issues. To help staff on a day to day basis, a credit card size summary of actions to be taken if any safeguarding issues are disclosed has been distributed to all staff:

Safeguarding Guidelines

What should I do if I have evidence or concerns about neglect or abuse?

- if in school/college, talk to the designated safeguarding officer
- if working elsewhere, talk to your line/area manager
- if none of these is available and you feel you should act, contact social services for advice
- if there is clear evidence, call the police on 08705 777444 and record the log number
- keep the individual safe or tell them where they can go to be safe

What you should do in every case

- listen carefully, accept what is being said and take it seriously
- stay within the boundaries of the individual's story
- avoid cross-questioning, closed and leading questions, do not examine the individual
- remain calm and caring, avoid interpreting information
- record everything you have seen and heard as accurately as you can.

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86   Children's Rights Director for England, *Safe From Harm*, p.18
87   Children's Rights Director for England, *Children and Safeguarding*, p.9

5.25 Helping children and young people to stay safe is the responsibility of everyone in society – whether the child is known to them or not. Anyone who has concerns about a child's safety should discuss these with someone they know, or with children's services professionals.

5.26 Parents we talked to felt they would know what signs to look out for if they had concerns about a child or young person they knew – bruises, changes in mood, particularly from outgoing to withdrawn, sexually explicit language, and violent behaviour, for example. But attitudes of what to do next varied greatly:

- some parents said they would take swift, positive action: speak to the child's school, police or social services;

- others said they would tread very carefully: speak to the child, ask for advice, consult their own family or friends, and try to avoid confrontation; and

- several parents said they would do nothing, leaving it to the experts who are qualified and experienced.

5.27 Most mothers and fathers agreed that calling the social services or police was a big step to make, from which it would be difficult to retreat. Some talked about mistakes that have been made where either abuse hasn't been recognised and children were harmed, or where parents were wrongly accused of abuse. Many parents said they would find it difficult to feel confident that abuse was happening, unless they knew the child very well – it was seen as difficult to know what was really going on in other families.

Full Stop Campaign

The NSPCC Full Stop campaign was launched in 1999. The launch was backed by a four week national advertising campaign on TV, billboards, press and online features. The campaign aimed to help people see that they can help to end cruelty to children and young people. It set out to raise £250 million over and above normal fundraising to support NSPCC work to protect children.

To influence attitudes and behaviour, the NSPCC runs mass public awareness and education campaigns, using TV advertising, other media and a wide range of advice material.

The Full Stop appeal closed in March 2007 having met and exceeded its target fundraising level.

5.28 To reinforce the work of the NSPCC and other charitable bodies, we propose to:

- **launch a public education campaign to improve the public's ability to identify and report concerns about children's safety, and raise awareness of the need to take responsibility for safeguarding children and young people.**

5.29 Some communities may be less willing to talk about and report child abuse. Research by the NSPCC on reporting child abuse in the Asian community found that out of 500 British Asians interviewed for the study, over two-thirds said they thought reporting child abuse would have a negative effect on the 'honour' (known as 'izzat') of the child's family. 37% of the sample had suspected a child was being abused – 42% of those who had suspicions had done nothing

about it.[88] Any communications to encourage people to see children's safety as a collective responsibility will have to consider how best to reach minority communities.

BETTER SAFEGUARDS FOR CHILDREN COMING IN AND GOING OUT OF THIS COUNTRY

5.30 Some children who are at particular risk of harm may travel into and out of the UK. For example, children may be coming to the UK for private fostering, to claim asylum or as legal migrants. These children are experiencing great change in their lives for some the change may involve risks as well as challenges and opportunities. They could be coming into the UK against their will and may have been trafficked for sexual or labour exploitation or adoption. Children could also be leaving the country involuntarily, for example in cases of child abduction.

5.31 Most of these children will have to cross the UK border either coming into or going out of the country, and there are opportunities for professionals to have contact with the children and to be alert to welfare and safety issues at these points.

Border and Immigration Agency – Keeping children in the immigration system safe from harm

The newly formed Border and Immigration Agency (BIA) announced an overhaul of its policies concerning children in June 2007.

The Agency has taken the decision to place its responsibilities towards children on a statutory footing. In practice, this means that the Agency will include provision in the UK Borders Bill to establish a Code of Practice on how it will keep children safe from harm.

The Agency has also worked with staff and stakeholders to develop a simple and clear framework of principles to keep children in the immigration system safe from harm. The Agency recognises that it has a particular role to disrupt the activities of those seeking to expoit the immigration system by concealing and altering the identities of children.

Following on from these principles the Agency will structure a programme of work to develop and reform its arrangements to help keep children who come into contact with the Agency safe from harm.

5.32 The Border and Immigration Agency's work will help to:

● **ensure immigration staff dealing with children are alert to child welfare and safety issues, and refer information relating to child safeguarding issues quickly, carefully, and lawfully to appropriate parties.**

5.33 In addition to the work done by the BIA at ports, other agencies will come into contact with migrant children who are at risk of harm. To help these children, other agencies working with them and their families need to be aware of these issues.

5.34 To further work such as the Child Trafficking Information and Advice Line, we propose to:

● **raise awareness amongst professionals about cross-border issues including forced marriage, private fostering, trafficked children and child abduction.**

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88 See www.nspcc.org.uk for more information

Questions for consultation

Are the areas we have identified for new action right? What other areas could be considered?

How can we make sure children have somewhere to turn to if they are being harmed?

Does the Government need to communicate with the public to improve people's ability to identify and know how to act on concerns about children's safety? What effect would this have on local services, such as children's social care and the police?

How can we protect children crossing our borders from harm? How can immigration officers work best with others in their local area?

Would professionals working with children and young people welcome clear information about cross-border issues to help potential concerns?

6. How to get involved

6.1 This is an open consultation and we want to hear your views. As well as the specific questions in the text, we want to hear your opinions on children's safety. Do you think children are safe? If you are a parent, what concerns do you have about your children's safety, and how do you address these? If you are a child or young person yourself, are the views of children included here the same as those of you and your friends? And as a member of the public, do you feel a sense of responsibility for protecting children?

Here is a reminder of the questions where we would like to hear your views:

Questions for consultation

General

How safe do you think children are? How good are we at giving children and young people the opportunity to explore, understand risks for themselves and to learn the skills vital for their development?

If you are a parent, what concerns do you have about your children's safety and how do you address these?

If you are a child or young person yourself, are the views of children and young people included here the same as yours and those of your friends?

As a member of the public, do you feel a sense of responsibility for protecting children? How can we build this sense of responsibility in local communities?

If you work with children and young people, do you know what your role is in keeping children safe?

Have we got the right balance between keeping children safe and also allowing them the freedom to develop?

Are the roles and responsibilities set out in Chapter 2 correct? What should the role of central Government be, and what is the responsibility of local organisations and communities?

How can local and central Government do more to protect all children by reaching out to minority communities and those speaking minority languages?

Are the areas we have identified for new action right? What other areas could be considered and what more could we do?

Questions for consultation

Helping all children and young people to be safe

Would parents welcome a communications campaign and information on play and positive activities in their local area?

What more should be done to enable children and young people to play safely and explore the outside world?

Are children and young people taught enough in school about how to manage risks and stay safe?

Is teaching safety education in PSHE a good way to increase children and young people's resilience to harm? Are there other ways we could do this?

How can e-safety be promoted to all professionals who are responsible for children's safety?

What information would parents welcome about risks of harm faced by their children and how to manage them? What areas mentioned here would parents like more specific information about?

What more could be done to help Local Safeguarding Children Boards to make a difference?

Protecting vulnerable children and young people

How could training and development for social workers be improved?

Would a national safeguarding awards scheme help to raise the profile of work to improve children's safety?

Will the beacon council scheme help to promote learning from good local practice?

How can we tackle inequalities in prevention of accidents? What role could national or local organisations play?

What problems do professionals face in trying to address the needs of both the adults and children in the family?

Do some parents need help to access support available to them?

How can local areas ensure that children's and adults' services work collaboratively to safeguard and promote the well-being of children and young people affected by substance misuse, domestic violence or mental illness problems within their families?

What is the best way to reach parents who might need help with problems that are affecting their children's welfare? Would national or local communications help?

Whose responsibility should it be to address bullying that happens outside school? How could local agencies work together to address this problem?

What role could LSCBs play in tackling gun and knife crime? Are there examples of good local or international practice which could be considered in more detail?

Responding when children and young people have been harmed

How can we make sure children have somewhere to turn to if they are being harmed?

Does the Government need to communicate with the public to improve people's ability to identify and know how to act on concerns about children's safety? What effect would this have on local services, such as children's social care and the police?

How can we protect children crossing our borders from harm? How can immigration officers work best with others in their local area?

Would professionals working with children and young people welcome clear information about cross-border issues to help with potential concerns?

6.2 We will be running a series of events during the consultation period to discuss these issues. To submit your response to the consultation in email or writing, please send it to:

staying.safe@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk

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