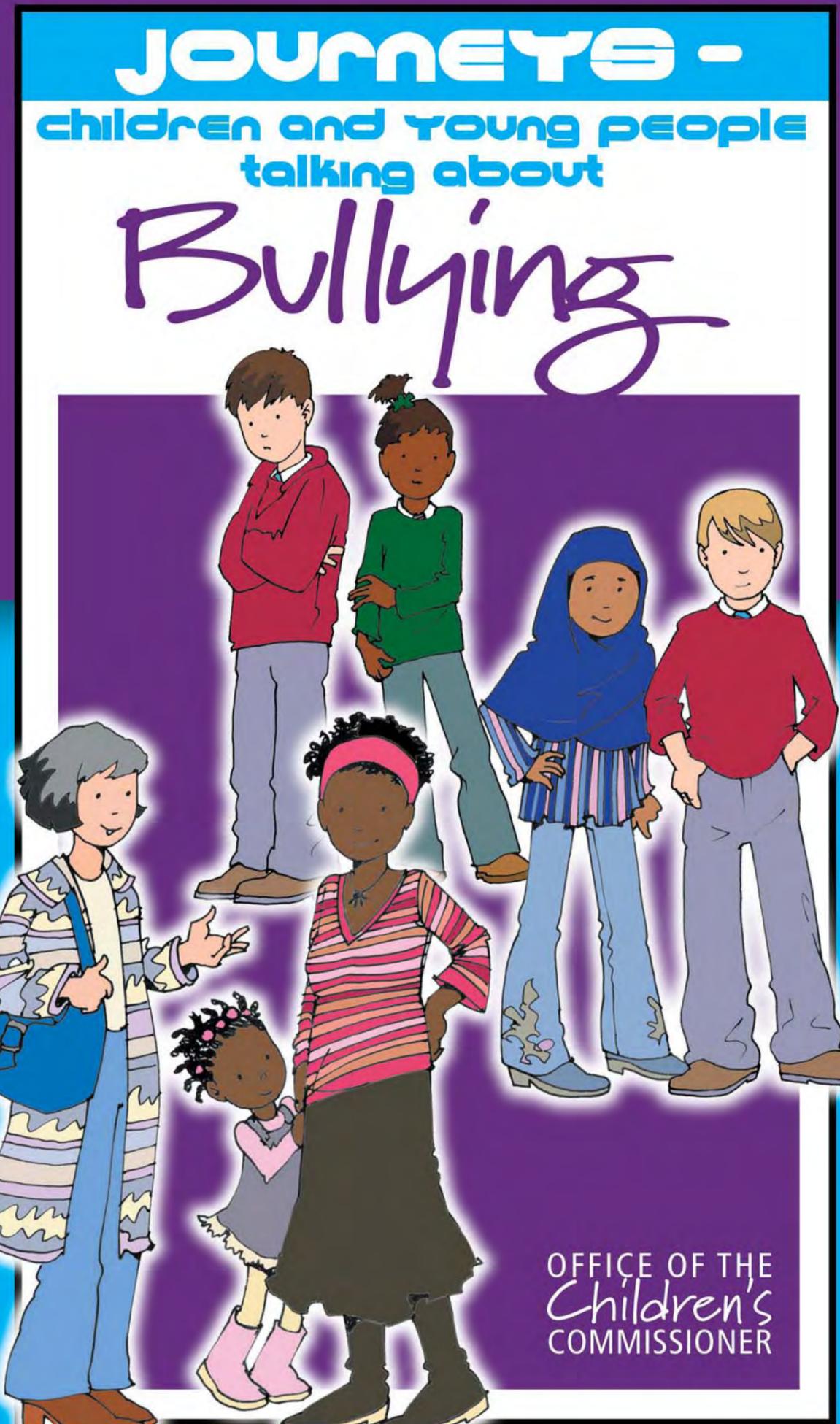


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2006/ver2



Professor Sir Albert Aynsley-Green
Children's Commissioner for England

welcome

I am pleased to introduce this exciting booklet produced by my office in collaboration with children and young people.

I am committed to enabling the voice of children and young people to be heard in public debates and discussion. Here children and young people tell us about bullying.

Children and young people continually tell me that bullying hurts them on a day-to-day basis. They want adults to work with them to help solve the problem.

I want to thank everyone involved in the production of this. First and foremost, thank you to all the children and young people who were willing to be interviewed, and those who helped to advise me on the issues arising from the stories.

I hope you enjoy it and look forward to further dialogue and action to ensure that we all work together to radically reduce bullying and the harm it causes.



Why bullying?

Bullying may have touched all of us at some stage of our lives. We've seen it happening or known someone it's happened to. We may have been bullied, and some of us would have to admit having bullied others. Sadly, some children and young people have to learn to put up with the misery of being bullied. Some, of course, get the help they need and the bullying stops. For a few, the results are more tragic.

Bullying blights the lives of too many of our children and young people. Working together to stop bullying in schools and communities is crucial - the difference it could make to just one child or young person's life is a difference worth making.

About this booklet

The stories in this booklet are real. They are told by children and young people whose experiences offer us an insight into how painful bullying can be for children and young people in our schools and communities.

Their courage, their resilience, their honesty and their commitment to change is inspiring. Their voices and their stories remind us above all that bullying is not an issue for a few - it is an issue for all.

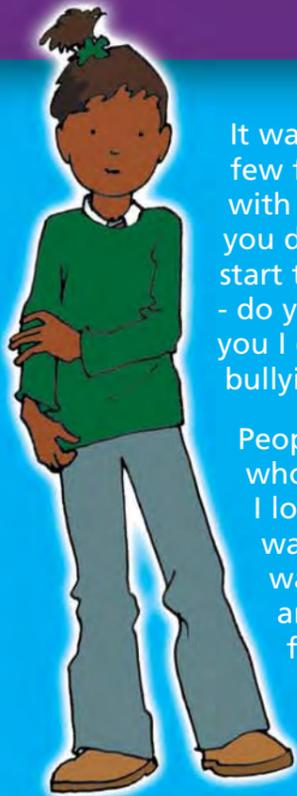
These 'Journeys' do not aim to be representative or to cover the wide spectrum of experiences children and young people have of bullying and its resolution. We are committed to continuing to hear the stories and track the journeys of more children and young people, those who bully, are bullied and those who watch and encourage bullying.

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Gemma's Journey



It was in year 7. I had quite a few friends but I just got in with a few nasty people and you don't know when you first start they're going to bully you - do you? To be honest with you I didn't realise it was bullying at first.

People were calling me a whore, because apparently I look like one. They said I was fat, a slut and that I was ugly. I never told anyone until year 8. At first there were four girls and then it spread around the class. I wasn't the only one but I was being singled out the most.

I wanted help! I didn't know what I wanted them to do - at least say something to make the bullies know they're aware,

but they did nothing. I felt like the teachers were scared of them.

My friends told my form tutor. The bullies had stopped bullying them and were just doing it to me. It seemed like everyone was picking on me and I was having quite a bad time at home.

My Dad had an interview at school. The teachers had words with the bullies, but they just denied it.

That was when I started getting depressed and making myself dangerously ill. My sister talked to the bullies as well as the teachers. My sister threatened them and said if it carries on then blatantly something's going to be done about it. She's quite popular at school.

I started to see the Anti-Bullying Supporter at school, the form tutor arranged it. But I didn't know whether or not to trust her at first. She just asked me questions. I decided

to open up and tell her what happened. I was so depressed and had such low self-esteem. She helped me, not just about bullying. We did games on paper and group work where she got other people who were being bullied together. She made me feel so comfortable and loved to be honest.

The bullying lasted about four years, right through school. In year 10 I was asked to be a Peer Supporter, they help children who are being bullied. I didn't think I could do it at first. But then all of a sudden I got the confidence to stand up for myself. Through my training my mum finally realised I was being bullied and I could talk to my sister about it. Talking helps - it helps so much.

I finally turned around one day and told the bullies to shut up. They were the two, like ring leaders.

Now I would totally stand up for myself and won't let anyone push me around.

The COMMISSIONER'S VIEW



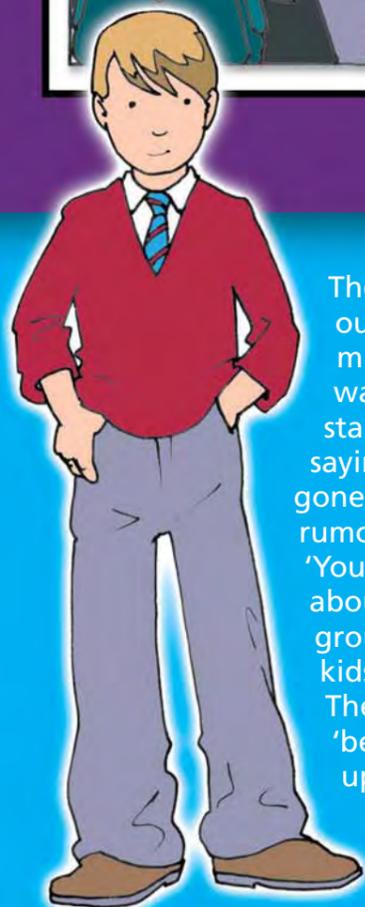
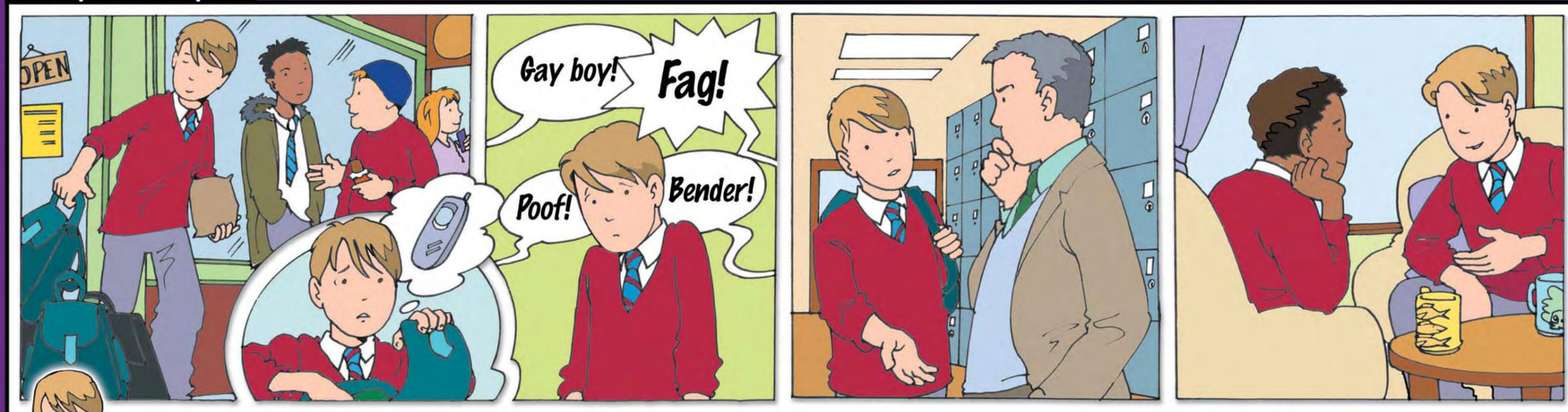
Gemma's journey finally ends when she confronts her tormentors. Not uncommonly, it takes her time to recognise she is being bullied. Her school intervenes and offers some positive, additional support but it is the development of Gemma's own emotional resilience and confidence that leads to her resolution.



- Young people need support to understand and define bullying behaviour;
- Reported bullying need to be closely monitored until adults are sure that initial interventions have been successful;
- Schools need to identify Anti-Bullying Strategies that will lead to long-term changes in behaviour.

Did you know? Technology is bringing new ways of bullying including hate websites, texting and photo messaging.

Danny's Journey



The insults started after our identical bags got mixed up and my phone was taken. This boy started it. They were saying I shouldn't have gone to the teachers. The rumours were spread: 'You're gay'. It spread to about half of the year group. There are 200-300 kids in the year group. They called me 'poof' or 'bender' - it really upset me.

I told my Mum, who said get the teachers to do something. But I didn't.

I ignored it at that stage.

Counselling could have helped me at that point. It was really hard for me to be called things, such as gay, knowing I wasn't.

It made me angry and I felt people were spreading lies and others believed them. But I wasn't able to talk the problems through with anybody independent. The counsellor had left the school the year before.

At the parents' evening, mum spoke to my tutor and asked about the bullying situation. He said 'What bullying situation?' She told him. They changed my form group, but I was the only one changing so everyone wanted to know why I had changed. It was better until PE. At the lesson a couple of kids from the old form spoke to kids in my new form and told them. It all started again.

At swimming they'd hold me under the water until I thought I was going to drown, then let me go as I was going limp. The PE teachers didn't seem to care. It was now widespread - it happened everywhere. At break I'd sit in front of the security camera and pray they were watching. The school was on two sites, the path was dark,

dingy and overgrown. I was pushed into the ditch, I was muddy, wet, and upset.

Teachers asked me who did it. I said it happened on the path. I can't say who did it. They didn't do anything because I couldn't identify them. In the end I moved schools.

At my new school they do a lot, the teachers sort it out instantly. It is stopped then and there. When I first got there I was weak and feeble and felt completely washed out after what had happened to me for years.

Now I'm a buddy and I'm part of a local strategy group. I've been able to input the methods that I think work.

One of my teachers put me forward to do some national work. That is what gave me my confidence back at school. The hardest part was getting my confidence back around my home. I can only thank my home life for that. I was on the bus with a bully just yesterday. I wasn't scared anymore.

The COMMISSIONER'S VIEW

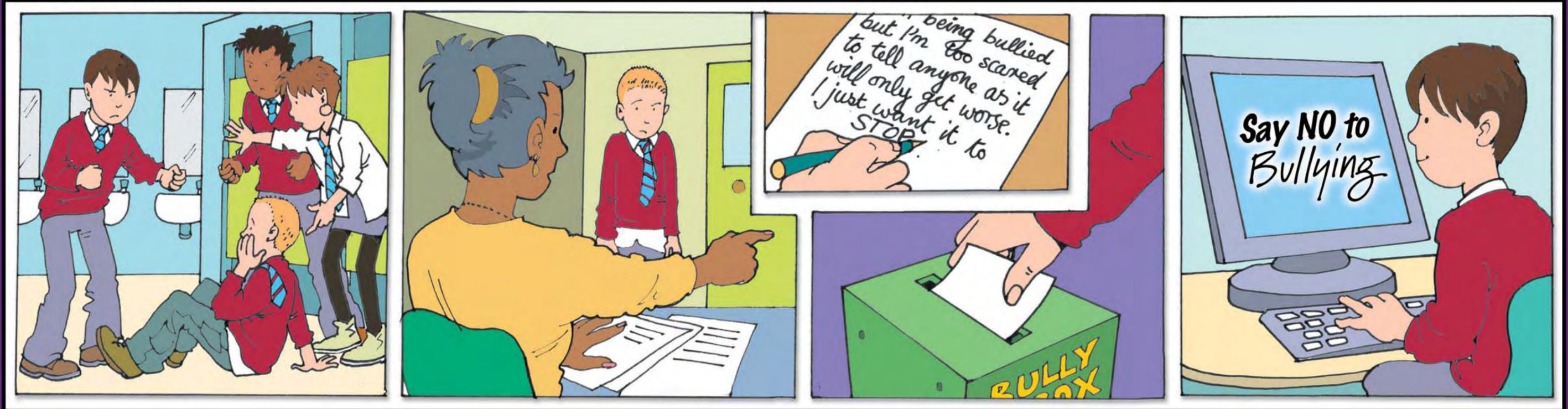


Danny's journey is one of prejudice, rejection and isolation. By not challenging homophobic language, Danny's school colludes with the bullying and the violence escalates. His journey resolves with a change of schools, not with a change in his school.



- As well as targeting those who may be gay or lesbian, homophobic bullying is also often aimed at those perceived as not conforming to traditional gender roles or stereotypes;
- A whole-school commitment to promoting equality and challenging all forms of bullying is needed;
- Teachers need support and training in challenging homophobic bullying.

Antony's Journey



You learn to live with people in your class.

It started right from the start at Primary school (when I transferred into mainstream from a speech and language unit). People started to get at me. The school told people to stop and it stopped for a week or so. Gradually it went up and up. My junior school didn't have any scheme, like putting people to look after you. You could tell the teachers but they didn't have much time and they said ignore it and don't give them a reaction.

It wasn't so much my class, but people from other classes all mixed up at break.

A year 6 teacher tackled name calling - he talked about it and said it must stop. If I was a teacher I'd probably talk to my class and do an assembly. I'd say it's totally unacceptable. I think they should say I have a problem and say why other people are different.

In Secondary school there were people I had known since junior and infants who welcomed me, but there were people who came from other schools and didn't know me.

A couple of people from my junior school have continued to do it. One teacher was very good at dealing with it in year 7. The person was excluded for a week and didn't do it again. You should really get the bullies to talk about their previous experiences because they've often been bullied and never told anyone, so that's why they're doing this.

The vice principal is quite good at dealing with it. I have a teaching assistant. The head of year - she's dealt with the bully before - she knows they're also bullying others.

There is a bullybox and you put in reports of the incident. It's anonymous. If one particular name occurs more than three times they should be told off and punished.

In year 7 reps from each class got together about bullying. We had a video. It was interesting to see other people's experiences. I'm a rep. I didn't really used to speak, now I'm quite confident.

My advice is: go to your teacher or head of year. Serious bullying happens at break. Write an incident report and date it and sign it, it goes in the person's folder. You have a record of the incident, when they look at the incident report and they see this person is lying (if they deny it).

There are peer mentors in year 11 and I hope to be one of these.

They are going to do a workshop on why bullying happens and I'm going to help with that. We really do hear different people's sides of the story - it's good to know. I found that really helpful.

The COMMISSIONER'S VIEW

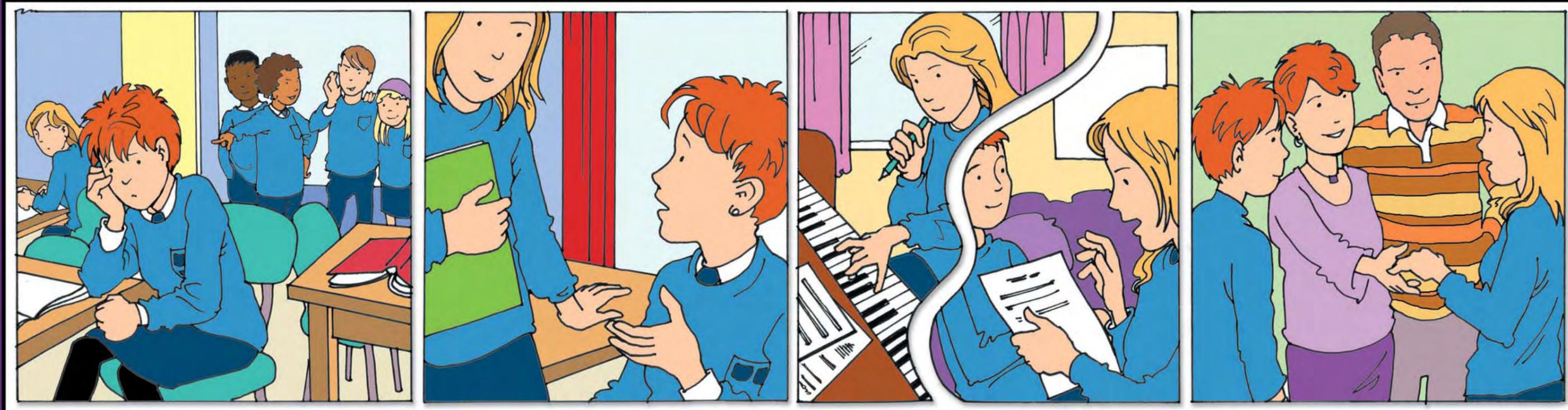


Antony has lived with bullying and discrimination for almost all of his school life. Children and young people with disabilities or special needs are often at greater risk of being bullied, both directly and indirectly, and usually about their disability or special needs. Antony's journey is still continuing.



- Schools can train lunchtime supervisors in managing bullying at break and lunchtimes;
- Raising awareness of disability issues alongside other equalities issues within the curriculum is a key preventative strategy;
- Children and young people can be supported to share their own ideas on how to challenge bullying behaviour.

Leanne's Journey



My friend was bullied at school, she was really sad all the time and she couldn't go out of the house or anything, and I wanted to do something to help. I thought the best way to get to people and make them listen was to write a song. It says, 'Don't let them get to you, you're not on your own, and it's not your fault.' It also says to the bullies it's wrong and stuff like that.

She was scared if she told anyone it would get worse, and I think that's the case with most people that are bullied. It took her a while to tell me because at the time we were in different lessons. Then she didn't go to school. I didn't know what to say to her. I wanted her to know she wasn't on her own and that there were people there to help her.

When I'd written the song and recorded it, she said that was the best thing because it made her stand up for herself. Her mum also said thank you so much, you don't know how much it means to the parents. I was really happy.

In the end it was mainly through hearing the song, she realised she wasn't on her own and if she didn't tell someone it could get worse and the best thing to do was to get it sorted out.

She said it helped her realise she could be strong in herself, that there were other people there for her, that it wasn't her fault, and that it happens to other people. She also realised she had to stand up for herself or it wouldn't stop.

I think part of the reason she was bullied was through jealousy, because she was a model. She started to think, 'I shouldn't do the modeling.' She became a lot quieter and wouldn't go out the house much because she was scared of them. Now she's a lot better and more confident in herself.

I'd seen her being bullied and read about bullying (it happens everywhere) in different papers and magazines about children and older people who'd been bullied in the past and how it affected them later on. With my friend, because that was close I wanted to do something to help - all that inspired me to write the song.

The COMMISSIONER'S VIEW

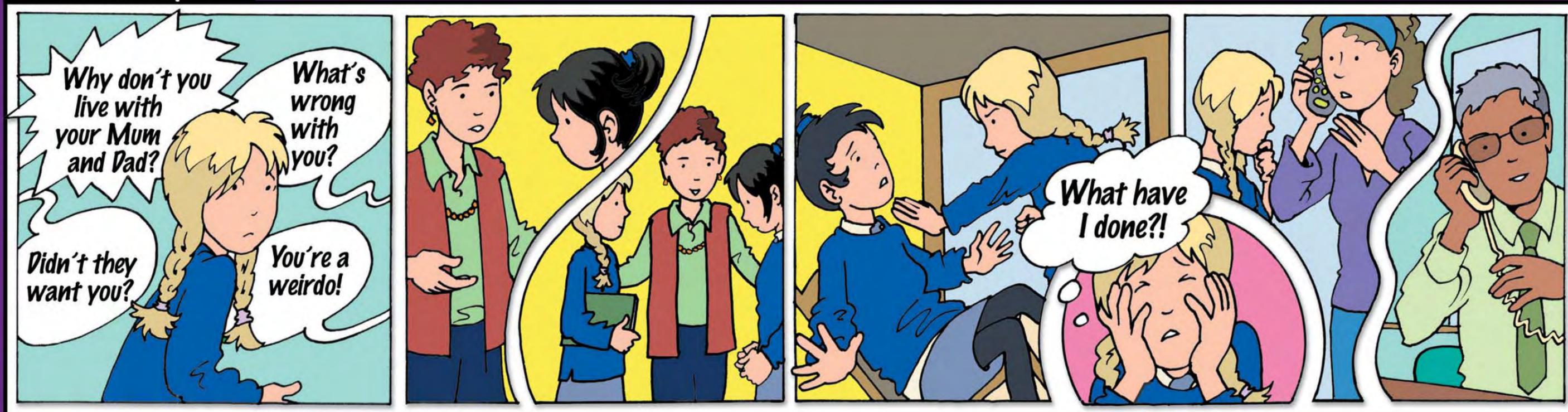


Leanne's support makes the difference to her friend. She shows just how important friends are. The impact of her bravery and support is felt widely by the school, her friend and the whole family.



- Many young people are 'bystanders' in bullying situations;
- Schools and young people can work together to create cultures where bullying is seen by all as socially unacceptable behaviour;
- Peer support projects focus on encouraging young people to become safe 'interveners';
- Vigilant peers and teachers can ensure bullying is identified and challenged early.

Sara's Journey



I was bullied from year 9 to year 11 basically because I was in care. I'd just come into care. People had the wrong ideas about people in care, like they're in the wrong and they said nasty things when I came to the school.

They should have covered it earlier in education so that children understand, because people often tell them wrong things about children in care, like keep away from them. That's what their parents tell them.

The girl who started it was the main person in the class. Everybody followed her. The teacher saw it and didn't really comment.

It got worse and eventually I didn't want to come to school.

If teachers aren't going to say anything, the children end up having all the power. The girl that started the bullying had actually been bullied herself before I came to the school. The teacher was shocked because of that.

They got her to apologise but she tried to make it look like I had made a big thing of it. The next day it was back to square one.

Some people said she was getting beaten by her Dad at home. She might have made it up but it might have been true.

I've never been brought up to stand up for myself. I come from a strict Christian background. You don't hit back but turn the other cheek. I just kept quiet and thought if I said something they'd take the mick, make fun of my name, or anything I said. They probably thought it was funny. But my grades got affected.

The bullying went on for two years and it drove me so far in the end that something just triggered - it wasn't me. There were people chucking something at me and I asked them to stop; then I had no control, I pushed a girl back on her chair. I was scared of myself.

I couldn't concentrate after this, I felt sick each time I had to go to school. My stomach hurt. My foster carer didn't believe me. But then she rang the school and negotiated they'd give me the revision to do at home. I was predicted 'E's and 'U's and I got my grades up to four 'C's and three 'E's even though I didn't turn up for two GCSE exams.

If I hadn't been bullied I'd have better grades. It has made me a stronger person. I am now a befriender for other children in care and I can see that bullying is a common experience. People have to understand that children are in care, because just maybe their parents have some difficulty in coping and they need some time out.

The COMMISSIONER'S VIEW

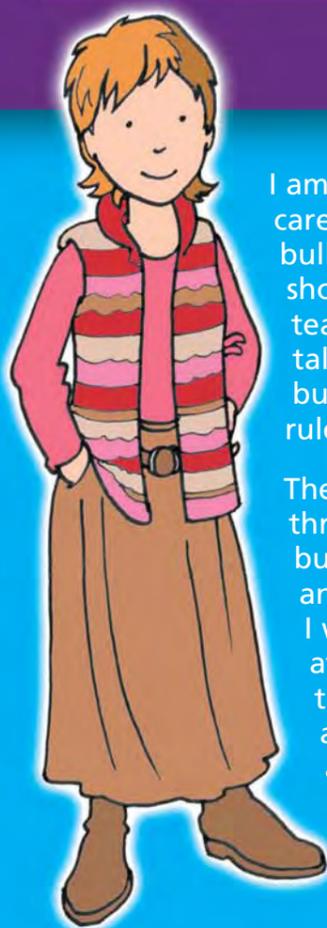
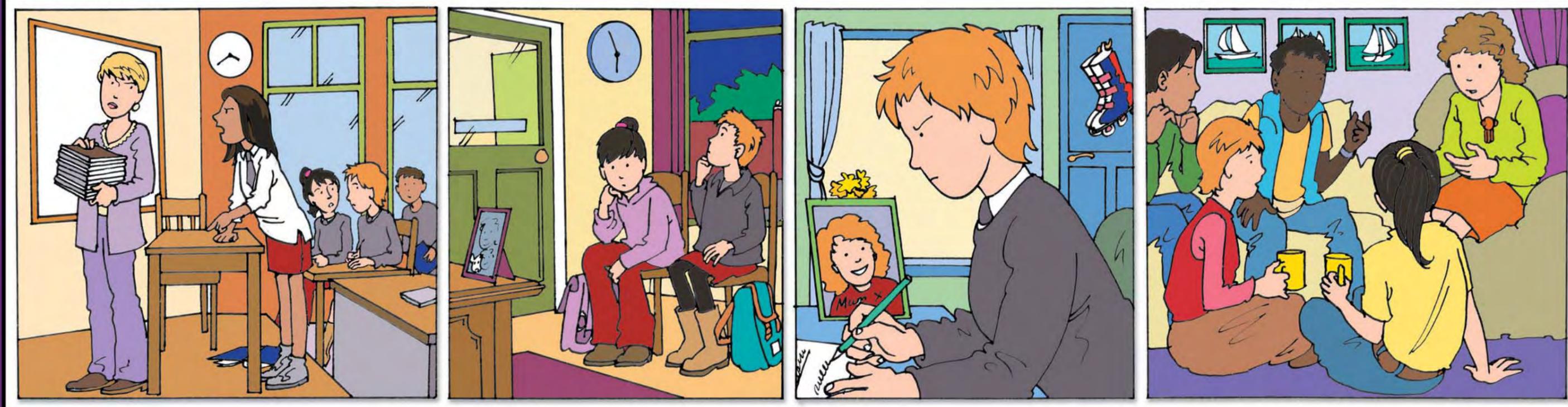


Sara's journey reflects unwelcome levels of ignorance and hostility towards young people in care. It shows bullying damaging an already vulnerable young person, affecting her health, well-being, school attendance and attainment. Sara sees her resolution in her own ability to cope, to survive and to move on.



- Young people need to be engaged in learning about difference and social diversity;
- Some young people eventually lash out under the pressure of constant victimisation;
- For some young people the intervention of adults does not resolve the bullying they experience.

Jo's Journey



I am eleven years old and a carer. A girl had been bullying me for months. She shouted and swore at teachers and when they talked to her about the bullying she denied it. She ruled the whole year.

They punished her and threatened to exclude her but it made no difference and it spread to our street. I was afraid at school and at home. I'm friends with this other girl in my street and she tried to take her away and gang up against me. She started spreading rumours about me.

One day she came looking for me and said 'wait at the gate after school and I'll batter you'. I told a teacher, who let me stay in his office after school with a friend for about half an hour and then go home later.

The school spoke to her mum but she denied it. Her mum said the school are persecuting her and its racist. Some days she left us alone and I'd think it had stopped. It would stop and start. We were once best friends. She bullied other people too, other parents complained about her.

I used to rollerskate or swim but I want to stay home. I don't do any after school activities. Mum had a big operation - I was so worried about her. I worry about her when she goes all quiet. She's the only person I can speak to and she'll always put me first. When I was small my mother got an electric shock and I thought she might die. That's twice she's nearly died. My Dad

left years ago. I visit him. I don't really know him, what he likes or anything. He has a new family and I babysit when I go round and they go shopping.

It all got too much. I just wanted it to stop. They did this questionnaire about bullying in school and I wrote a note on it because I was feeling desperate. I stayed away from school the next day. The Anti-Bullying person came to see me because she saw the note. What I needed was to talk to someone and get someone to help me. I felt like I was screaming 'Help!' but no-one could hear me. I now feel like she finally heard me and helped me.

The Anti-Bullying person talked to the teachers and got a counsellor who's really helped. It's stopped now and it's great this term. I don't think the bully needed help, she just had to be stopped. I think she realised what she was doing to me.

The COMMISSIONER'S VIEW



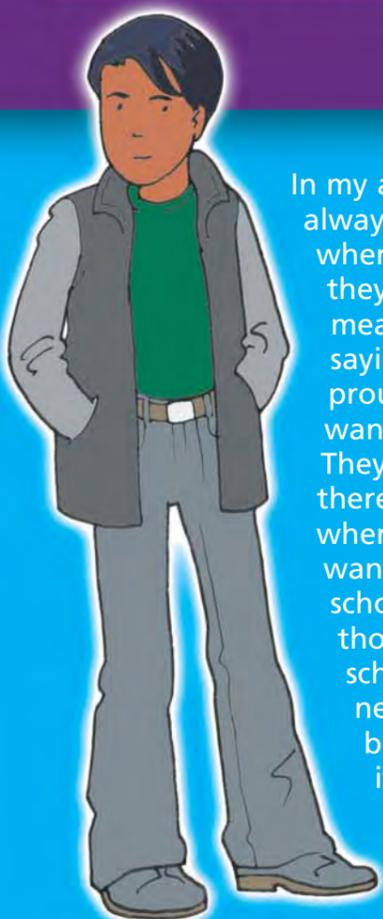
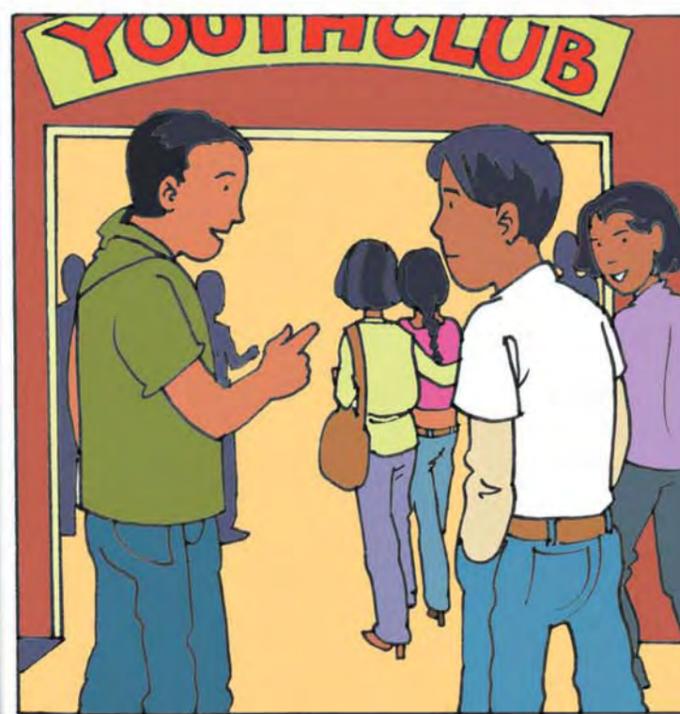
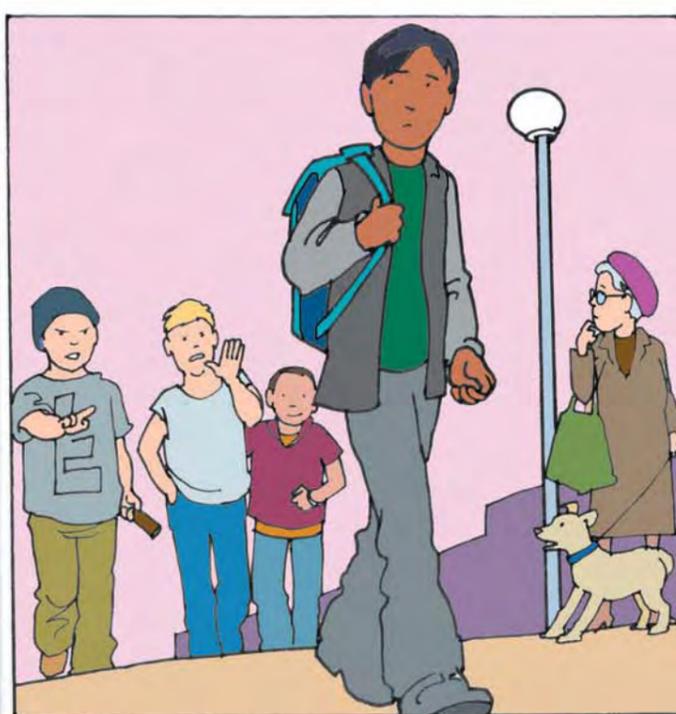
Young people know they may be taking a risk when telling. Jo's school took firm action, but this only displaced the bullying. Jo's journey is resolved through her own tenacity and the school's attempts both to support her and to act on bullying generally.



- Telling is a risk but talking always helps;
- The school's actions may seem un-coordinated, but Jo receives the support she needs and the bullying stops;
- In Jo's view it is empathy that changes the behaviour of the young person bullying her.
- Regular surveys help identify whole-school issues but may also encourage some young people to seek help.

Did you know? A 1999 study found nearly 90% of people with a learning disability have been bullied.

Kabeer's Journey



In my area people are always sort of asking you where you're from, like they have another meaning. I don't mind saying I'm Asian - I'm proud of it. But they want to make you say it. They take the mick. But there are places here where you can't go. I wanted to go to another school. My parents thought it was a better school. It's not the nearest one but it has better results. I liked it too.

But the problem is I'd have had to walk there or get a bus and I was being bullied by these people on the estate I'd have to walk through. They were following me and shouting racist names and even on the bus they'd make me scared. We haven't got a car. It went on for months. It got so bad my mum started to walk with me but they still shouted at us. Sometimes she waited at the bus stop. They'd hang about and always look around for me. I felt desperate. I was scared in the lessons thinking about how to get home. I liked the school. But there are bad streets here.

The other Pakistani families here - their kids all went to the local school which my parents didn't really like. But they were getting worried about me. They wanted me to get good grades. So in the end I changed to this local school nearby which is nearly all Asian. The grades weren't as good. But I felt safer there and I've made lots of friends.

We can walk together and we don't have to cross that estate. I've done well. I joined this youth group and we help each other and they even take us on outings to Blackpool and we went to London.

They take us to the countryside and we have to organise it ourselves. They've got this youth worker and we've got a website. Sometimes they even take the mothers out without us. They do gardening and plant things like vegetables. Now I'm thinking of going to Uni but I'm not sure. Some of the others have gone to Uni. They keep in touch with each other and with the group on this website and they come and talk to us when they come home. There are families who don't want their children to go away. Some people feel they'll never get out of here. There's so much racism. But I'm stronger now so I think if I went to Uni I could be OK.

The COMMISSIONER'S VIEW

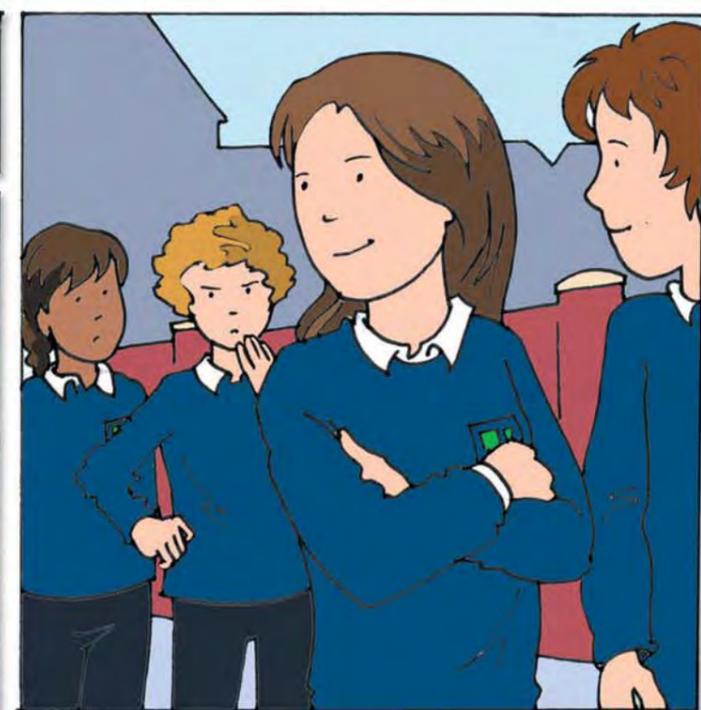
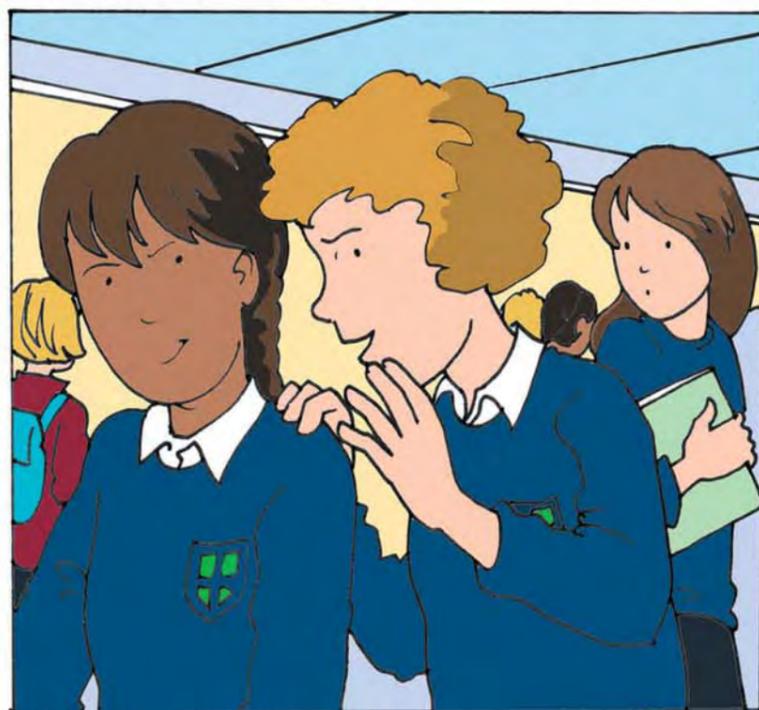


Kabeer's experiences of racism dominate his journey. Repeated questioning of his identity, racist name-calling and harassment undermines and compromises Kabeer's self-esteem, security and education.



- Racist insults impact on the individual, the family and on members of the same and other ethnic groups;
- Bullying and racial harassment can be criminal behaviour;
- Cohesive communities share a common vision and sense of belonging. They value and respect diversity and challenge discrimination and inequality;
- Adults working in schools and communities need support and training in tackling racism and promoting equality.

Alison's Journey



At the start of Secondary school my best friend started fighting with me and calling me names. She used to whisper to my other friends and say horrible things about me and make them fall out with me.

I used to get really upset about it. I tried to sort it out. I was quite weak at first and kept trying to get back and be friends with her and she kept breaking up with me. She would switch on and off. So after about five times I decided I didn't want to be her friend anymore.

My mum just said to try to make friends and if that doesn't work don't bother because she is just going to upset you.

We've got these Learning Mentors at school, they talk to you about your problems and try to help you sort them out. Some girls took the mickey out of me and my teacher, because she was trying to stick up for me.

My friends didn't help. I'd known them for four to five years but when Rosy was nasty, one would go on her side and then they would all go on her side and I'd be left on my own. It felt lonely because I didn't fit in with anyone else in my class.

I just didn't think the form tutor could help because I didn't find her friendly.

The head of year got the girls in with me to discuss it with us all and ask them why they were being horrible. They didn't take it seriously. I didn't know what to do.

In a way it made it worse, when I got out of there they laughed at me and called me

a snitch. That hadn't happened before I tried to sort it out. They used to prank call my house and text my phone.

They stopped after a while because I was ignoring them, but then they started calling me a swot because I was working hard.

After she broke into my locker and stole all my things I thought I've had enough, so I went to the head of year and said that the best way to stop this would be for me to move class. They said I could choose which class.

So I picked a class with a best friend from Primary school in it and now we're really good friends - she started sticking up for me, and she'd say stuff back to them if they were being horrible.

It did work because the bullying completely stopped.

Yeah I still see them a lot. I argue with one of them sometimes but they've grown to know that I can stand up for myself.

The COMMISSIONER'S VIEW



Young people who lead bullying are often dominant individuals. They may get a fulfilment of sorts from the status their dominance brings. In girls this dominance is often gained by creating and dissolving cliques. Alison's journey is the story of a friendship group that becomes a bullying group.



- Bullying within changing friendship groups is very hurtful and is not uncommon;
- Proactive peer mentoring can support the transition from Primary to Secondary school;
- Removing the target of bullying does not challenge or modify the behaviour of the group.

Did you know? Primary school children who are bullied are more likely to wet the bed, feel sad and have head and stomach aches.

top 10 tips from children and young people

1

Pick it up early, act before it spreads and becomes entrenched.

"It spread across the year group. I think something that could have really helped me would have been counselling at this point. It was really hard for me to be called things, such as gay.

"They should take notice, they should have listened to me, they really should have, they ignore us. I hoped it would go away, but it was happening out of school as well, I didn't feel safe going home. I would make an excuse to stay behind at school."

2

Teachers and Inspectors need training to ensure they do not collude with bullying.

"You say Ofsted will inspect what is done about bullying, but the Ofsted inspector was sitting in the class when I was being picked on. The bully was sitting on a table saying 'Oh don't talk to him, he's gay, and laughing. The inspector laughed too and the school passed the inspection!"

3

Teach about diversity and equality.

"I don't think they should have said something just when I came to the school that would have singled me out more, but they should have done it before in general education.

"People have to understand that children are in care because just maybe their parents have some difficulty in coping and they need some time out. People have to understand more about care generally.

"If I was a teacher I'd probably talk to my class and maybe do an assembly. I'd say it's totally unacceptable to call people names. I think they should say I have a problem and say why I and other people are different."

4

Do not rely solely on the target to identify who is bullying them before intervening. Consider support groups, buddies or peer supporters or a bullybox.

"My mum asked to see the school's Anti-Bullying Policy. It said what would happen to someone who was a bully. But even when I was badly bruised and we showed the school, they did nothing because I didn't name the person.

"I didn't want to tell anyone, I thought they'd call me a snitch. I told my English teacher that my work was stolen but I didn't want to say by who."

5

Use the experience of young people in peer support programmes.

"I decided to become a buddy because I wanted to help, and to be the counsellor that I never had. It feels good to see the year 7s develop into year 8s and to see them no longer worrying about bullying, to talk to them and see them happy. In my school, there is a real bystander problem which is starting to dissolve. I did a presentation last week to a year 7 form on bystanders and afterwards a bullying issue was reported.

"It's one-to-one, so we create a personal bond and can focus more attention on them and it gives them a friend. It doesn't go all round the school if you tell a teacher. So you're not seen as a grass if you talk to us." (Peer supporter)

6

Teach techniques for calming down and develop resilience.

"Last year I got upset when it happened, but this year, if I get annoyed, I do heavy breathing and calm down and also I write it down and give it to a teacher or member of staff."

7

There are risks for children in telling someone. Adults should handle this information with care.

"They used to call me a snitch and everything, and that hadn't happened before I tried to sort it out."

"No Way! They don't have time and teachers always make things worse. They tell other teachers, then everyone knows and no-one does anything. It only makes it worse."

"Because they're scared - if they tell someone they get picked on even more."

8

Work with children and young people to change bullying behaviour.

"A lot of the time policies don't work. There are different types of bullies. You have to work out who's a bully for the hell of it and who's a bully because they have problems. You have to teach the bystanders that it's not right to laugh - they should have stopped them laughing. Sometimes the bullies are just looking for attention and the teachers give them attention.

"It is interesting to see it from another point of view, the bullies - I had to talk to one the other day and went in feeling all angry at him, but he burst into tears and

admitted he had been forced to say those things to someone. Bullies have often been bullied too." (Peer mediator)

9

Being part of a group outside school can help build confidence and friendships.

"Out of school I've been in the Woodcraft Folk since I was young. Everyone knows me. It's been really good. It's like a rest. I'm the only one in it from my school." (Bullied for years in school)

10

Involve children, young people and their parents in finding solutions and resolving bullying.

"I'd tell them what it's like for people who've been struggling and how to overcome it. They should ask us. Children know what's happening.

"Adults shouldn't have all the say in an Anti-Bullying Strategy because we are the people of the future and need to be mature enough to listen and give advice from experience."



Listening to children and young people and their stories is the most important aspect of my new post as Children's Commissioner. Hearing them describe the 'journeys' that they make through various stages of their lives and as they tackle particular problems enables us to analyse the responses that we put in place to help them.

In my first few months as Commissioner, bullying has frequently been raised by children and young people themselves, with a plea that I find someone for them to turn to locally and do something to make it stop. The causes of bullying are far from straightforward and there is insufficient evidence and consensus about what is most effective in tackling it. We should also bear in mind that bullying is endemic in our society and not confined to young people. We see evidence of it in adult life - in the workplace, in sport, politics and the media. The way in which bullying is tackled in childhood will therefore have repercussions for them throughout their lives.

What we have done in this booklet is to draw some messages from what individual children told us and reach some conclusions, which may be of benefit to others. In the following paragraphs, I set out:

- What we can learn from these journeys.
- What I think schools should be doing in partnership with children, young people their families and communities.
- What my Office will be doing next to play our part in reducing bullying and the harm it causes.

What we can learn from these journeys

Reflecting on the journeys, I am reminded of and struck by, the emotional resilience and resourcefulness of children and young people and their ability to cope with and manage tremendous pain and bad behaviour. Often they do this alone. Clearly this is not acceptable, but, significantly, many of the young people told us how their situation was improved through being supported and given the tools to be able to stand up for themselves.

I am also reminded that most adults do want to and try to help stop the bullying once they learn about it. What prevents this from happening so often is not apathy, or a lack of recognition by adults about the need to stop children and young people from being hurt, but rather a lack of understanding about what can be done without making things worse. All professionals working with children and young people need training to develop their skills, competence and confidence to put in place preventive strategies and manage incidents effectively.

Perhaps above all, these journeys highlight for me the complexity of bullying and the risk of oversimplifying it. Too often, we see knee-jerk reactions which, even if they provide a quick fix such as placing some distance between the person being bullied and the person bullying, fail to tackle the long term causes or to put in place long term solutions. It is this complexity that makes Anti-Bullying work a priority for

further policy dialogue, research and practice development and a major concern to me as Children's Commissioner. It is only through tackling the whole culture and the environment in which children and young people live that we will be able to reduce the impact of bullying and make sure that children see it as unacceptable and something that should not be tolerated.

The harm, misery and pain caused to children and young people who bully or are bullied daily in schools and communities throughout England is challenging to us all. As these young people told us, bullying can happen for no reason at all, or because the person being bullied is perceived as 'different' or in some cases weaker than those who bully them. But it is not this simple - often the same people who bully, have been bullied themselves. And those who bully may often have suffered abuse in other aspects of their lives; they too, need help and support to manage and address this positively, rather than simply retaliate by behaving aggressively towards their peers.

Having reviewed the evidence, I want to emphasise that there is no one quick fix and that there are many different approaches, each with a part to play. Based on the evidence from research, practice, children, young people and their families I recommend that effective Anti-Bullying Strategies are put in place which will:

- Demonstrate a visible commitment to addressing bullying and adopting a whole school approach with strong leadership and a range of preventative measures, including building emotional resilience, empathy and self esteem, as well as having clear procedures for identifying and managing bullying; this

applies equally to settings other than schools such as youth clubs, early years and residential settings

- Be based on clear, up-to-date knowledge of the local issues within the school and community, for example when, where and how bullying happens, and whether any peer groups are particularly responsible. This should be collected through a range of sources including an annual survey of children and young people.
- Recognise the distinction between bullying and other types of conflict and aggressive behaviour.
- Ensure the active involvement of children and young people, their families and community partners and promote a culture of respect and valuing diversity.
- Identify vulnerable children and young people, and those critical moments and transitions when they may become vulnerable and provide additional support when needed.
- Support the ongoing development of empathy, emotional resilience and a sense of responsibility for behaviour, from early years through to adulthood and beyond.
- Apply clear and consistent rewards and sanctions policies that are understood by all members of the school community and are suitable for the age, maturity and understanding of the child or young person.
- Ensure that all members of staff are trained and supported and model positive relationships with each other and pupils.

- Encourage and promote strong links between all community partners including those providing activities outside the school gates.
- Create an environment in which young people can talk to a trusted adult and will be listened to, their concerns taken seriously and addressed.
- Reflect on what works, is open and honest about what doesn't work and when things go wrong and regularly reviews challenges, successes and opportunities, taking account of the views of children and young people themselves.
- Recognise the valuable contribution made by specialised services and outside agencies.

How can you use this booklet?

It can be used in many different ways to stimulate discussion and action - on your own or in a team, as part of a staff meeting, private reflection or formal training, I would encourage you to read the individual case studies and consider:

- What does this story tell me about bullying that I had not considered before?
- What does it mean for me and my colleagues?
- Would our current Anti-Bullying Policy and Practice enable us to resolve this situation if it were to happen in our school?
- What could we change in our practice as a result of reading this and what training and support do we need in order to do this?

What will my Office do next?

Based on the learning from this project my Office will:

- Work with children and young people to use the material gathered during this project to develop a cartoon booklet for children and young people celebrating their resilience, promoting a culture of empathy and responsibility, raising awareness of the harm bullying causes and encouraging children and young people to talk to adults they trust, until it stops.
- Prepare a policy statement setting out my Office's beliefs about effective approaches to addressing bullying. We will use this to continue dialogue with key stakeholders including government.
- Continue a dialogue with children, young people, their families and organisations working with them to ensure the profile of the issue is maintained; good practice is shared; the evidence base strengthened; and the resources needed to address this issue are made available.
- Advocate for a significant programme of research to understand more about what works in reducing bullying and the harm it causes.

I look forward to working with you and with children and young people on this most important issue and with the government to represent the views that young people have expressed so articulately in this project.

The role of the Children's Commissioner in England was established in law under the Children Act 2004 to provide an independent, national voice for all children and young people, especially the disadvantaged and the vulnerable. Professor Sir Albert Aynsley-Green was appointed in June 2004 as the first Commissioner.

The Children's Commissioner has the general function of promoting awareness of the views and interests of children in England. This is a broad and strategic remit that gives him flexibility over which matters he wishes to consider during his term of Office. In carrying out this function, he works within the framework of the five outcomes described in the Green Paper, 'Every Child Matters'. These are being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being. He must also have regard to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Where the Children's Commissioner considers that the case of an individual child in England raises issues of public policy of relevance to other children and young people, the Commissioner can hold an inquiry for the purposes of investigating and making recommendations about the issues.

The Office of the Children's Commissioner will support the Commissioner in developing and achieving these objectives. The Office of the Children's Commissioner is currently being established as a non-departmental public body.





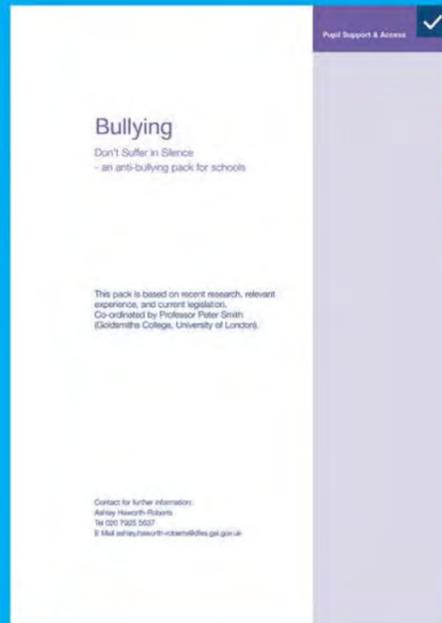
The Anti-Bullying Alliance is a unique collaboration of over 60 organisations who work together to influence national and local policy and practice with the aim of ensuring children and young people experience safe and positive environments free from bullying and harm.

The Anti-Bullying Alliance website provides a gateway to a range of resources and links to useful websites including those of member organisations.

www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk



“ Thank you to all the young people who participated in the project and told their stories so willingly. Thank you also to the young people and adults who helped us make sense of the issues during the consultation phase. Thank you to Adrienne Katz, Lisa Brook and David Stockdale who carried out the interviews. Thank you to Simon Blake and Fergus Crow for managing the project. Finally thank you to Tracey Anderson for administrative support. ”



DfEE (2000) Bullying - Don't suffer in silence: An anti-bullying pack for schools. Ref: DfEE 0064/2000 London: Department for Education and Employment.

Available from 0845 6022260

This pack from the Department for Education and Skills provides advice and guidance for schools about their responsibilities in relation to bullying prevention and management.

www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying

