

Consultation On
Bullying Related Education
In Rhondda Cynon Taf 2006

REPORT

RHONDDA CYNON TAF • TACKLING BULLYING TOGETHER ACROSS RHONDDA CYNON TAF

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Children & Young People Strategic Planning Group
Partneriaeth Cynllunio Strategol Materion Plant a Phobl Ijainc



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Abstract

237 young people and 106 adults were consulted on their views on bullying and education through questionnaires, focus groups and interviews. Discourse analysis and descriptive statistics were employed to analyse the data. A range of strategies currently used in schools were identified and 3 case studies illustrate strategies in action. Needs were identified in relation to training for all school staff and in awareness of and access to strategies and resources. The major concern arising was communication between parents and schools. It was not possible to comment on the standard or application of anti-bullying policies across schools. Examples of good practice, existing strategies and approaches and partnerships with LEA teams and outside agencies with the ability and willingness to support policy development were identified.

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Aims of Consultation

- To establish current anti bullying strategies and education provision in RCT schools
- To identify good practice and to identify areas for future development.

1 Context and Background

This consultation report was requested by the Director of School Support and Improvement in order to provide an overview of current perceptions of and responses to the issue of bullying in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Bullying is an important issue that affects the lives of many young people today. Both the Office of the Children's Commissioner (2006) and the Office of the Children's Commissioner for Wales (2005) reported that young people had identified bullying as a major theme. It can affect the mental health and well being of the child or young person and this can have long-term detrimental effects lasting well into adulthood. Such effects may present in a number of different ways such as: low self-esteem and confidence; poor emotional development and mental health issues; poor academic performance and attainment; future substance misuse. It is important to note that some survivors of bullying will escape the tragedy of such circumstances and will fulfil their potential in life. However, the importance of support, both preventative and reactive, is paramount to address the issue of bullying, both for the victim and the perpetrator (Oliver & Candappa 2003:19).

The Welsh Assembly Government circular Respecting Others: Anti-Bullying Guidance states clearly "Head teachers and governing bodies must, by law, have a policy to prevent all forms of bullying among pupils". The recent media interest in the topic has forced the issue to the forefront of discussion and the focus of comments has been on the role of schools.

Jane Davidson, Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning said at the launch of Respecting Others Week "We know that bullying happens in all schools to some degree". The responsibility of schools goes beyond reacting to incidents, however.

The Respecting Others document specifies that the policy should include strategies which are both preventative and reactive and schools are required to include educational components as well as incident management components (2005:3). Preventative measures include skills for life such as sharing, mixing with others, assertiveness training, listening skills and conflict management. The document advises that education reflects these skills from pre-school age upwards. It is appropriate for all organisations working with young people to tackle the issue making anti-bullying education a matter of lifelong learning.

At a local level the issue is crosscutting and meets the key priorities within a number of strategic plans of Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council. The Community Plan identifies five key areas of focus within the Council: regeneration; learning; our health; our caring society; and our shared identity. By addressing the issue of bullying, we are meeting the broad challenges that are identified within the Community Plan. The LEA's broad response to the Community Plan of "ensuring that the leadership and ethos in our schools supports our values and key priorities" would clearly be underpinned by tackling the bullying issue. The Supplementary Education Plan 2006 "Our Vision" again upholds the necessity for children, young people and adults to be supported throughout their development and to become full and active citizens; the debilitating nature of bullying clearly undermines this process.

The Community Safety Strategic Plan 2005-2008 includes commitments to youth safety, bullying has strong links to both the actual and the perceived safety of the young people of Rhondda Cynon Taf.

A Key Action within the Health Social, Care & Well-being Strategy 2005-2008 is to ensure that young people are equipped with the skills necessary to prevent them from becoming victims or perpetrators of abuse and crime. Indeed, schools and the LEA are identified as being two of the partnership leads within this strategy. The outcomes for young people within the strategy are broadly identified as young people feeling safe within their community; being able to address conflict through skills development, improving self-esteem and confidence; and the recognition of the impact of positive or negative behaviour within the community.

The final report of the Welsh Assembly Government Evaluation of Anti-bullying Policies in Schools in Wales reported a low submission rate for RCT schools when asked to provide copies of their anti-bullying policies. There is therefore no coherent picture of the current quality and equity of RCT schools' approaches to bullying.

A total of 106 adults and 237 young people participated in this consultation. 52 schools returned electronic questionnaires. In order to maximise participation anonymity was assured and the identity of schools was not requested. Some schools did provide identity details however, and the sample includes primary and secondary schools, welsh medium schools and schools from the Rhondda, Cynon and Taf areas.

Focus group discussions and brief structured interviews were held with children and young people aged between 10 – 18 years in both school and non-school settings. Non-school settings included forums and voluntary sector youth provisions. The total number of young people in the focus group sample was 30 from schools and 8 from non-school settings. The total number of young people in the brief interview sample was 188 from schools and 11 from non-school settings. Focus groups were also held with parents, grandparents, childminders, school governors. The total number of adults in the parental and community sample was 27.

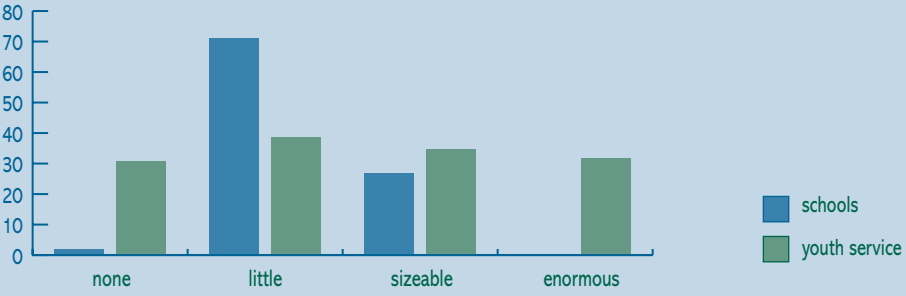
Questionnaires were distributed to youth workers in the statutory service including teams and centre based staff. A total of 17 questionnaires were returned. Discussions were held with NSPCC, VALREC and Stonewall representatives. Contact was made by other means with Barnardos and the NCH.

2 Results: Schools and Youth Service

The questionnaires focused on the extent to which bullying was rated as a problem; what education provision is currently in place, the methods, evaluation and effectiveness of bullying education; training and support needs; future developments desired and the existence and effectiveness of current policy. Not all respondents answered all questions, percentages represent the percentage of the total school sample (52) and the total youth service sample (17).

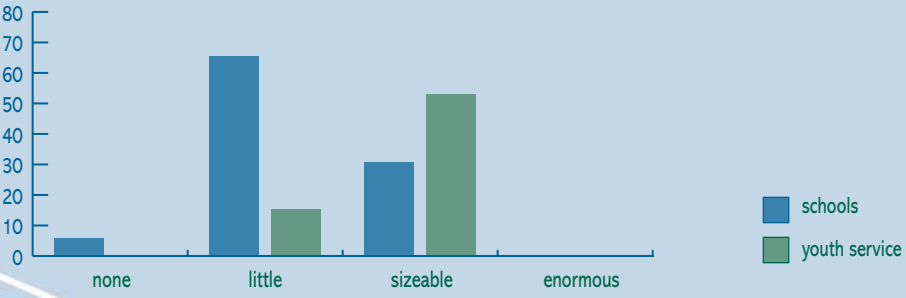
Q.1 How much of a concern is bullying for your school / youth centre?

Neither schools nor the youth service felt that bullying was an enormous issue. The youth service rated the issue as of no, little or sizeable concern in similar proportions. The majority of schools rated the issue as of little importance for the school.



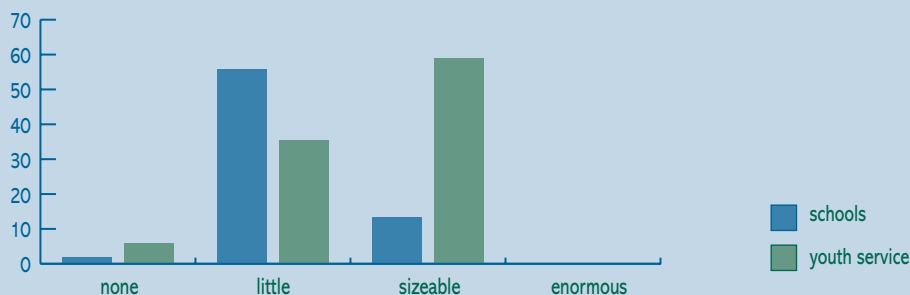
Q.2 How much of a concern is bullying for your young people?

The chart shows that there were notable differences in the perceptions of schools and youth service with regard to how much of an issue bullying was for the young people they worked with but in both cases answers clustered around the ratings little to sizeable.



Q.3 How much of a concern is bullying for the parents of your young people?

As for question 2, answers clustered around the ratings little to sizeable.



Q.4 Do you currently deliver education relating to bullying? Who is it delivered by? What is the method of delivery?

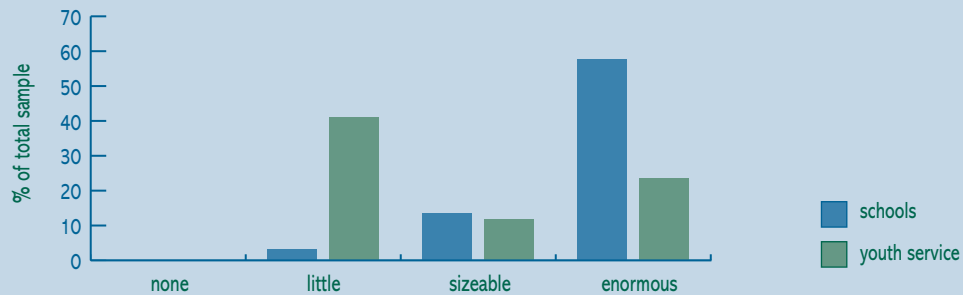
All school responses and over 88% of youth service stated that some form of bullying related education was delivered. In schools the most common responses to the question of who delivered it were the head teacher or teacher followed by the police and then invited speakers. In the youth service responses youth workers were the most commonly reported deliverers. In schools more than half of responses included bullying education as part of the PSE curriculum. Circle time was the next most commonly reported method of delivery followed by input from the police. Drama was also cited. In the youth service responses groupwork was the most commonly cited method of delivery, however the responses showed that different approaches are adopted by different respondents, with only one or two using each method of delivery.

Q.5 Are there any differences in education relating to bullying for those with special educational needs?

There was consistency between schools and youth service with regard to differentiation with fewer than 30% stating that there was differentiation. This was most commonly described as being adjusting the level of explanation or the way material is delivered depending on the individual pupil.

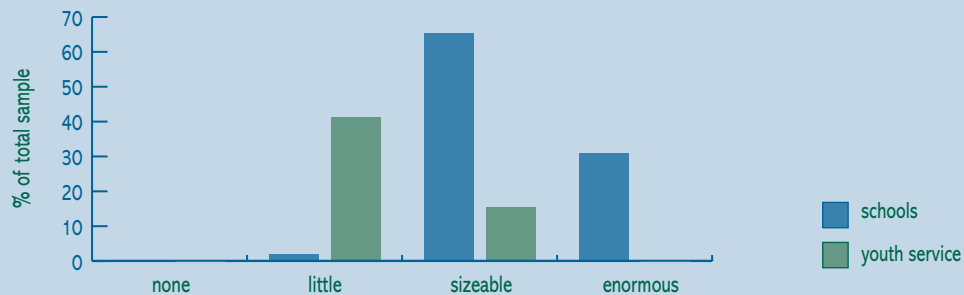
Q.6 How would you rate current frequency of education relating to bullying?

The majority of schools reported delivering bullying related education every year. The majority of respondents for the youth service reported delivering bullying related education when incidents occurred. It should be noted that this may be due to the large number of responses from the detached youth work team.



Q.7 How would you rate current effectiveness of education relating to bullying?

The majority of school responses rated impact of current bullying education as some to measurable. The majority of youth service responses rated effectiveness as little.



Q.8 Is education related to bullying currently evaluated? How?

Both schools responses and youth service responses showed that in the majority of cases education relating to bullying is not evaluated with both samples reporting yes in around 34 – 35% of cases. In the youth service the most commonly reported methods were informal evaluation and feedback from young people. In schools the most commonly reported methods were through review of the PSE curriculum, incident monitoring and policy review.

Q.9 What support needs have been identified by staff with regards to education relating to bullying?

School respondents' answers fell into three main categories. Training needs were identified in areas of policy, strategies for dealing with bullying and dealing with parents.

Youth service respondents highlighted the need for training around rights and responsibilities and the need for financial support for training. Clear support systems were also requested.

Both groups highlighted the need for training from induction and then on an ongoing basis with a "rolling programme" or frequent updates.

Q.10 Are there any future developments in education relating to bullying that you would like to see in either your youth centre / school or the council?

Responses from schools fell into the categories: support in dealing with and communicating with parents; strategies to prevent and respond to bullying; resources including posters, leaflets, drama productions; training including training for supervisors.

Youth service responses highlighted the need for clear, practical policy; resources; peer to peer schemes and partnership working.

Q.11 How can the council support education relating to bullying in your youth centre/ school?

School responses could be categorised as requests for resources and financial support; training for staff including supervisors; support for schools in dealing with parents.

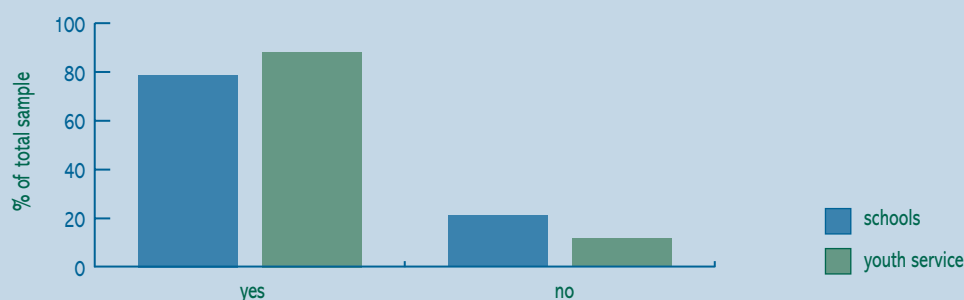
Youth service responses requested financial support and training.

Q.12 Do you have up to date policies and procedures relating to bullying incidents? Who is responsible for implementation? In your view, is current policy useable?

The chart below shows that the majority of both samples reported having policies in place

All school respondents named either the head teacher and staff or “all school” as responsible for implementing and over 88% felt the policies were useable. Two stated that the policies were due for modification.

Youth service answers were more varied with 25.53% naming the senior worker and 29.41% all staff as responsible for implementing the policy. One respondent stated that the policy needed to be more practice based.



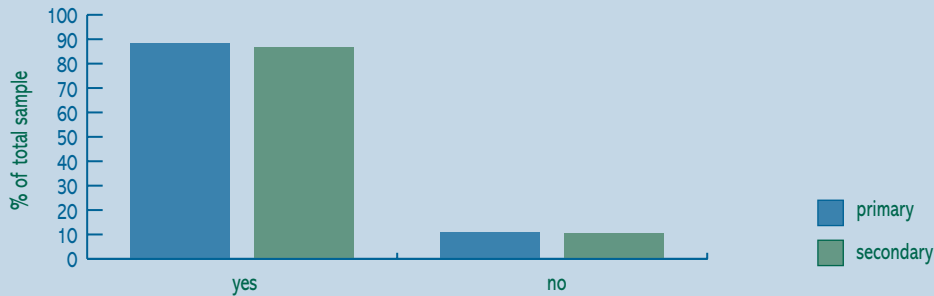
Q.13 Do you have any other comments you would like to make?

Both samples included additional comments that reflected the beliefs that bullying is an issue “that will not go away”. School comments included suggestions for positive and effective strategies such as pastoral care and encouraging positive behaviour.

3 Results: Young People

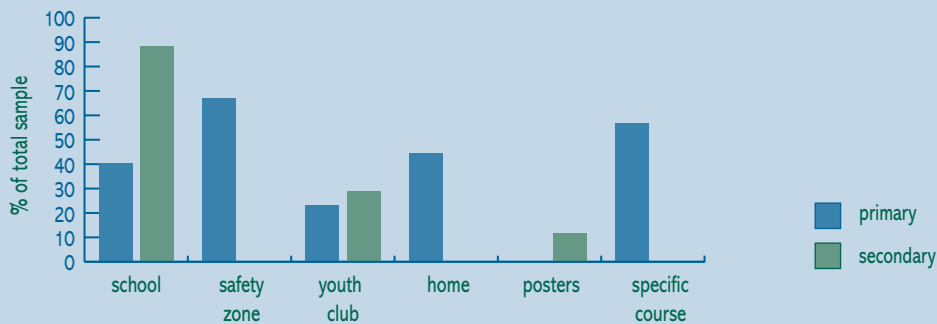
Have you ever had education relating to bullying?

The overwhelming majority of pupils involved in the brief interviews stated that they had received education relating to bullying and the proportion was similar across the primary and secondary samples.



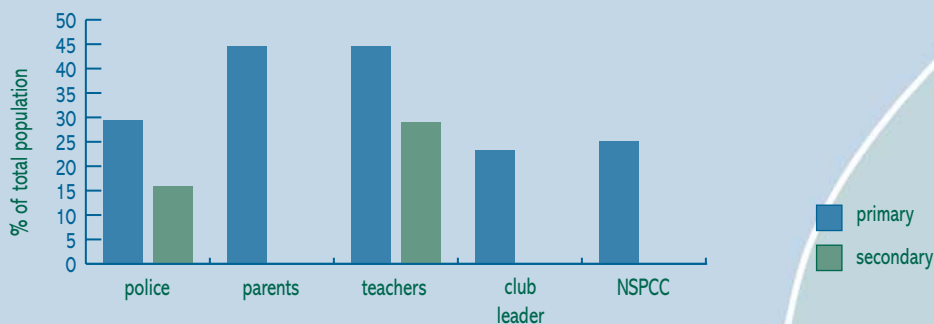
Where did you receive it?

There was however considerable variation between the primary and secondary school responses to the question of where they had received that education. As the chart shows primary school pupils reported receiving bullying education both in and out of the school setting whereas secondary school pupils cited school as the main source.



Who delivered it?

A similar pattern was evident with regard to who delivered the education.



4 Results: Focus Groups

The following is the result of Discourse Analysis carried out on the combined data from 1:1 interviews and focus groups with young people in schools and the Blue Print Forum, parents and community members. Interviews were non directive and during analysis of the data a number of recurrent themes emerged.

Main Themes:

Nature of incidents.

Who does it.

Definitions and examples.

How schools react to the issue.

Prevention measures negative perceptions.

Prevention measures positive perceptions.

Reactionary measures negative perceptions.

How schools should react to the issue.

Communication with parents.

Evaluation.

How young people experience bullying.

Resource and training needs.

Network support.

Identifying the issue.

What messages should be taught.

What is acceptable.

What to do.

Specific topics.

Personal experience of the speaker.

Personal experience expressed by young people.

Vulnerability.

Lack of confidence in school reaction.

Emotional/social impact.

5 Case Studies

Three schools kindly allowed access to staff and pupils in order to develop pictures of the spectrum of approaches to the issue of bullying currently implemented in RCT schools.

The case studies demonstrate that there are examples of schools taking a whole school approach to bullying and employing a broad range of preventative methods and reactionary strategies.

In all of the featured schools young people were heavily involved: from the development of school policy to the delivery of preventative measures and through involvement in the processes that followed an incident.

Examples of partnership working were evident in all the schools and all schools that took part proved open to sharing their ideas and learning.

Case Study 1

Case Study 1 is a secondary school.

The school's approach to the issue of bullying involves a diverse range of projects and activities that extend beyond the school itself. The whole school is involved and communication between teachers and the pastoral team is seen as key to the success of the approach.

Year five pupils and their parents are contacted by the pastoral team at open evenings. This enables the team to establish a relationship with pupils and means that pupils will arrive at secondary school recognising a friendly face. Display boards shown at open evenings list the issues dealt with by the team and bullying is listed as one of these issues, leaflets are available for parents to take home. Parents are able to discuss any concerns they may have about their children and the team offer advice on what the school's policies and responses to bullying are.

Pupils are also contacted in Year six during visits to the primary schools. The pastoral team works with groups of pupils to identify and address concerns. Bullying is usually raised and the team are then able to discuss what bullying is. As well as sharing the school's definition of bullying, the team are able to reassure pupils about their concerns and focus on some of the things the pupils are looking forward to.

PSE lessons are used as a forum for addressing issues such as bullying with the pupils once they are at the school. Bullying education begins in Year seven when pupils re-identify the school's definition of bullying and the school policy is shared with pupils.

In addition to PSE lessons, issues arising are dealt with with individual registration groups and through assembly. The school encourages pupils to report incidents of bullying and has a reporting form for pupils to use. The form asks for details of who is doing the bullying, a description of what is happening and other details that help to provide a full picture of the incident. Who reported the incident does not have to be revealed when the person carrying out the bullying is approached. In cases where bullying is reported the school works with both the victim and the person carrying out the bullying and the focus is very much on finding solutions.

Pupil packs are used with the bullies and the pastoral team support the work. Differentiated packs are available for pupils. The packs remind the pupil of what the school policy states and explicitly say that it is the behaviour that is problematic, not the person. The first pack identifies what has happened and who it has affected. The pupil is encouraged to think about the victim and to suggest ways they could make the situation better. The second pack moves away from the individual and works on bullying in general, helping the pupils to think about what bullying is.

The third pack asks pupils to think about whether bullying happens in the school and what they can do to help the situation.

Where possible the victim and the person carrying out the bullying are brought together. The meetings are mediated by the pastoral team and both parties are allowed to ask a friend to support them. The victim is asked to share their interpretation of the bullying and how it made them feel. The bully is asked what they can do to make it better and the victim is asked whether the suggestion is acceptable. An agreement is made

based on the discussion. In some cases pupils request a verbal apology, in others a letter of apology requested. Staff are able to give sanctions and if the situation is serious or persists the school contact parents and exclusion is a possible outcome in some cases.

The approach is positive and forward thinking with an emphasis on pupil involvement. The impact of the approach extends beyond the school into the primaries and the home and the school policy is promoted at all levels.

Case Study 2

Case study 2 is a secondary school.

The school uses a variety of approaches to tackle the issue of bullying. The school policy underpins all activities related to bullying and is available to every pupil. A summary of the policy is printed in the pupils' planners, which they are required to carry every day. The policy was written in consultation with the school council and includes definitions and examples of what is meant by bullying, the rights of pupils and the procedures that may be followed if there are incidents of bullying, available support and how the policy will be monitored, evaluated and reviewed.

The Peer Counsellors Project

Volunteers from the school's Year 12 group attend a three-day training course with Eye 2 Eye to prepare them for their roles as peer counsellors. Following their training they introduce themselves to pupils during the Year 6 induction programme and are well known to pupils in the lower school. Pupils are able to approach peer counsellors if they want to discuss a problem or concern and feedback to staff suggests that simply having somebody to talk to is sometimes enough to resolve the issue. Peer counsellors are clear that there are boundaries to confidentiality and in serious cases or where there is a conflict of interests they refer the case forward to a member of staff. The peer counsellors reported that they feel they are well supported by the school staff including year heads and the member of staff with designated responsibility. The school has secured funding for a counsellor to support pupils including peer counsellors. The staff and counsellors report that pupils often feel more confident approaching a peer counsellor and that pupils across the school are more likely to discuss problems before issues such as bullying escalate.

The School Council

The school council are actively involved in tackling the issue of bullying in the school. Inspired by the peer-counselling project, members of the school council have made themselves available to lower school pupils during lunch breaks and are supported by key staff in the lower school. The school council has been proactive in preventative education and have worked with Cynon Valley Crime Prevention to develop songs, poems, posters and games that address the issue of bullying. The council are currently planning visits to the associated primary schools in September, where they will promote anti-bullying messages. A key message identified by peer counsellors and members of the school council is: "to show that it does occur and to make sure everybody knows that it does occur. Some people do live in shadows and in such a big school it does get scary. To look around and see what is going on can be daunting but it can also help".

Pastoral Care

The school has a designated member of staff with responsibility for pastoral care that works closely with the coordinator for PSE. Issues of bullying are first addressed with pupils and parents at transition evenings in associated primary schools. The school policy on bullying is outlined and any fears and concerns parents have are addressed at this time. On arrival at the school all pupils are provided with a planner, which includes a summary of rights and responsibilities on the issue of bullying, this is discussed with them by the form tutor. Assemblies are used to define bullying and outline consequences with the wider school community. Where there are known incidents tutor groups are used as a forum to tackle the issue.

The P.S.E. curriculum includes bullying as a stand-alone issue but throughout Years 7 to 9 bullying is included in parts of the curriculum such as friendship and relationships. P.S.E. lessons are supported by pupils' booklets which encourage discussion and consideration of the feelings and rights of others.

Communication is seen as the key to a successful whole school approach to bullying and the senior management meet daily to report on any incidents that have occurred during the day on specific topics including bullying. Staff report that this means that the whole team is made aware of ongoing situations and it is felt that this is helpful in managing problems and preventing escalation. Incidents are also logged and tracked on the LISOL system and relevant staff members are automatically prompted if they need to take action.

Communication with associated primary schools is also considered important and primary schools notify staff at the school if they are concerned that difficulties may arise at transition. Primary schools notify staff if they feel that a particular pupil may be a victim of bullying or may be displaying bullying behaviour or both. This alerts the school staff to monitor the situation but staff are keen that the system is not used to label or judge pupils.

The school has a good relationship with parents and encourages parents to contact the school with any concerns they have. The ethos of the approach to bullying is to encourage pupils, parents and staff to talk.

The Nurture Room

The school includes a nurture room which provides support for pupils identified as vulnerable by associated primary schools prior to their entry into Year 7. The room is used as a base for identified pupils and there is always a member of staff available in the room. Although the pupils are all in different classes, they are encouraged to work as a team and to support one another in the schoolyard. The staff in the nurture room provide support to identified pupils and work through behavioural and emotional issues that arise with the pupils. The reasons for identifying pupils as

vulnerable may be social or emotional and the nurture room supports pupils with conditions such as Asperger's Syndrome. Often the first task is to help the pupils calm down and explain what has happened. The staff aim to be as consistent as possible and this is seen as being valuable for pupils. The staff do not automatically "take their side" but are careful to ensure that the pupils understand both points of view. Due to the fairness and consistence of the approach there is a trusting relationship between pupils and staff in the nurture room that extends to the home, relationships with parents are generally reported to be open and supportive. Prior to transition the SENCO attends the associated primary schools, providing a link and opening a network of communication between pupils, staff of the school and parents. If necessary, the staff from the nurture room will accompany pupils to classes and subject teachers feel that it is useful to have a person who understands the ongoing situation and can help with classroom management.

The Peer Mentoring Scheme

The school has been working in partnership with Coleg Morgannwg to provide a scheme which is beneficial to students of the school and students of the college. Volunteer mentors are introduced to pupils who staff feel would benefit from mentoring. Mentors and pupils meet privately and the conversation is private unless there are issues of significant concern. Pupils are responsible for managing their own schedule giving them ownership of the scheme and a sense of achievement as they manage their own time. The aim of the scheme was to improve the academic performance of pupils but staff report that issues such as bullying and other issues affecting attendance have also been addressed by mentors. Staff feel that there has been a positive impact from the programme.

Case Study 3

Case study 3 is a primary school.

PSE and Circle Time

Every Friday the head teacher leads PSE lessons which pupils report often deal explicitly with the issue of bullying. During this time the pupils have circle time, which they say is good because “you can see everyone”. The sessions are a time when pupils can voice their opinions but there is a ground rule that names will not be used in discussions, which allows for freedom in what pupils can say but at the same time protects individuals. Pupils work in small groups sometimes, which develops their self reliance. According to pupils, they work on what bullying is, that anybody can behave in a bullying way and why people behave in a bullying way.

Role play is used with pupils to help explore strategies to use when faced with bullying behaviour and pupils said that they particularly enjoy lessons that make the learning fun or “comical”.

Teacher Involvement

Pupils at the school reported that a teacher being actively involved with pupils beyond the formal lesson context was an important factor in preventing bullying. Pupils gave the example of a teacher joining in with football games at break times and said that this helped the pupils to play together in a cooperative way.

Pupil Involvement

Pupils at the school are involved in every aspect of school life including planning how the new playground will look. The head teacher feels that this will recognise the needs of pupils including having quiet spaces where they can have conversations.

For the last two years the NSPCC have worked with year 6 pupils in the school on peer counselling training and it is hoped that they will be able to spend time in the infants, supporting younger pupils and contributing to a happy transition to the junior school.

Playground Pals

Pupils are involved in a Playground Pals scheme. Benches around the playground are labelled to indicate that pupils that feel left out or want to talk can go there for support. Playground Pals are pupils who will then spend time with them. Playground Pals wear vests and hats to mark them out so children know who to approach. The scheme was established as an action under the Healthy Schools scheme.

Responding to Incidents

The pupils are all aware of the location of a suggestion box that can be used to report incidents. The head teacher actively encourages pupils to report what has happened either directly to the head teacher or through use of the box. The head teacher is committed to responding to every incident and the pupils are aware of this. Both the head teacher and the school council stated that there is very little bullying in the school.

The school's approach is centred on pupil involvement and the creation of an environment in which pupils can play and develop the skills to interact in a positive way.

6 Discussion

A wide range of participants provided the data for this consultation. In order to carry out the consultation in a cost effective manner and to complete the data collection prior to the end of term it was not possible to select participants on a rigorous scientific basis nonetheless it is felt that the sample is representative of the geographical area and the range of education provision within it. The views of young people are well represented and parents, grandparents, childminders and school governors add scope. The range of sources, the variety of methods of data collection and data analysis provide both reliability and validity to the consultation.

In spite of the diverse range of participants, a number of recurrent themes emerged during the consultation process.

Both schools and the parental/community participants raised the lack of communication between schools and parents with regard to the issue of bullying. Furthermore, schools felt that they were not sufficiently supported in this area. Communication was seen as crucial with parents asserting that they expected to be informed of issues and that communication would pave the way to the school and parents cooperating fully. Schools felt that parents were sometimes unclear of what was bullying and the lack of a common understanding of what constitutes bullying appears to be the source of dissatisfaction and at times tension between parents and schools. The recent Children in Wales survey Listening to Mothers, Fathers and Carers (2005) found that 45% of parents and carers rated bullying as a major concern with regard to their children. The responses from the youth service in this consultation reflected the high level of parental concern but it is surprising that the majority of school rated the level of parental concern as little.

A lack of communication could also be at the root of the discrepancy between the restricted range of approaches to bullying in schools that parents and community members appear to be aware of and the range of strategies reported on school questionnaires, by pupils and in the case studies. Although a wide variety of approaches were described there is no evidence to say that all schools use all strategies and a number of school responses expressed an openness to discovering strategies and approaches used by other schools. A range of strategies in every school would be in line with the advice in the Anti Bullying Guidance (2005: 3) and is supported by research (Oliver and Candappa, 2003:19 Macleod & Morris, 1996) previously described. All participants were able to suggest ideas for strategies they would like to see developed and these included peer led initiatives (see Root, 2006, for a discussion of peer strategies) drama based resources, electronic materials, DVDs, posters and increased parental involvement in decision making. Such resources could be centrally sourced which would allow the LEA to signpost schools to the resources they require and promote equity across schools. There was evidence of pupils taking responsibility for preventing others from bullying and in some cases reporting bullying when observed and Bystanders has been identified as the major theme for the WAG Respecting Others Week to be held in November 2006. No schools identified strategies for responding to bullying incidents, which take place between pupils but outside of the physical boundaries of the schools, which Professor Ken Reid claims to be commonplace (2006). Cyber bullying, including bullying through text messaging has been identified as a significant problem and one which often occurs beyond the physical boundaries of the school. Participants in the consultation identified text messages as a specific problem and their perceptions are mirrored in a recent survey carried out on behalf of the Anti-bullying Alliance which made the following claims:

20 students, or 22%, had been victims of cyber bullying at least once, and 5, or 6.6%, had experienced being cyber bullied more frequently, over the last couple of months. Phone call, text messages and email were the most common forms of cyber bullying both inside and outside of school, while chat room bullying was the least common (Smith, Mahdavi et al, 2006).

This data is backed up by a survey carried out online by the NCH in partnership with Tesco (2005).

The quality of education related to bullying that is currently being delivered in RCT is unclear. Pupils expressed a balanced view representing both positive and negative aspects. Parental/community contributions questioned the effectiveness of both policy and education. The responses from schools and the youth service showed that on the whole, education related to bullying is not formally evaluated. Discussions with VALREC revealed that outside agencies dealing with the equality agenda also share concerns that work carried out on homophobic and racist bullying is not currently monitored, there were particular concerns that the delivery of material could undermine the message if the teacher delivering was not modelling pro-social and anti-bullying attitudes.

The support and development needs highlighted by schools included training, preventative and reactive strategies and dealing with parents. Parental/community group perceptions shared the view from schools that all school staff including supervisors require training. Pupils further backed up this point suggesting a number of times that pupils do not always feel confident approaching a teacher. The Estyn survey of effective practice "Tackling bullying in schools" includes recommendations that all school staff are provided with relevant training and the DfES bullying pack for schools reports that up to $\frac{3}{4}$ of all primary school bullying incidents take place in the playground. The pack underlines the value of input from supervisors in tackling bullying.

All schools all reported having anti-bullying policies. A small number of school responses highlighted that their policies required modification and training on policies was requested in some cases. Again the view from ESIS suggests that there is no evidence at this time of the degree to which school policies on bullying are applied and there was a poor response rate to the WAG for schools to submit policies for evaluation (24.2% in RCT). A number of participants from the parental/community and pupil groups expressed the belief that pupils were not always confident in reporting incidents as they were not confident that the response would be satisfactory or helpful. It is therefore not possible to say whether anti-bullying policies in RCT schools are in line with the guidance in Respecting Others. A draft policy was prepared some time ago for the LEA but was not implemented. The draft would require minimal modification in order to be in line with the WAG Anti Bullying Guidance 2005.

Schools, parental/community groups and professionals agreed that there is a need for further support for schools from the LEA. Coordination appeared to be a key theme: the coordination of referrals to internal support systems and the coordination of access to a wider range of support were mentioned.

Throughout the consultation there was little mention of the equality agenda and discussions with Stonewall and VALREC reflect the fact that there is a need to support schools in developing policy to sufficiently cover equality and to provide training, resources and monitoring of delivery. Both organisations are able to offer services that would help schools to effectively address racist and homophobic bullying and would be willing to work in partnership with the LEA.

7 Conclusion

The report has evidenced that there is a great deal of activity in school and the youth service of RCT in addressing the issue of bullying. There were areas where it was not possible to draw concrete conclusions, such as the equity of the standard and application of policy, due to a lack of available data.

The report has also evidenced the fact that there is a need for support from the LEA to support the sharing of good practice and to promote school improvement.

It would appear to be feasible for the LEA to address some of these recommendations through sourcing of resources, promotion of existing good practice and promotion of good practice in policy development. Target audiences for signposting and promotional activities should include parents and the community, as communication between schools and parents was the major emerging area of need for development. The need for improved coordination of resources and support could be addressed alongside sourcing and promotion of resources and services. Partnerships with Stonewall, VALREC and the NSPCC would be welcomed by those organisations and could identify existing resources, develop new resources and offer advice and guidance to school staff as well as policy development and capacity building training initiatives.

Training needs have been clearly identified for all school staff and the need for training for non-teaching staff is supported by Estyn and DfES sources. It is beyond the scope of this report to set down which organisation should be responsible for providing training but options could include a rolling programme of workshops with multi-agency providers (a one off training event delivered in the Safety Zone using a carousel model proved highly successful in delivering training for care taker staff) and in school training provided by the school or by an outside agency. Training, resource and support are available from outside agencies willing to work in partnership with the LEA such as the NSPCC, Stonewall and VALREC.

Although there are a number of development needs with regard to the issue of bullying there are also many examples of innovative and inclusive practice. The development needs that have been identified do not appear insurmountable and could be tackled in a cost effective way if a sustainable capacity building approach linking schools with existing resources and providers were to be taken. Such an approach would also give the LEA the opportunity to take a lead in the area without requiring excessive resources.

8 Recommendations

The following recommendations would address the issues raised in this report:

- The LEA should produce an action plan clearly setting out how it will support schools in preventing and responding to bullying and taking into account the equality agenda.
- Publicity should promote a definition of bullying to schools, youth centres, children and young people and adults in order that there can be a shared understanding of bullying.
- WAG guidance should be promoted within schools.
- There should be co-ordination of resources and services from a central point in order to maximise the range of responses available to schools and to reduce the frustration experienced by head teachers trying to access them.
- There should be an expert employed or seconded to ensure that the LEA's response is appropriate, meeting the needs of children and young people and does not compromise the safety and well-being of those children and young people.
- The range of services and resources available should be actively promoted and forums for schools to communicate ideas should be established.
- There should be an exemplar policy and schools should be offered support in updating or creating policies that meet WAG standards.
- There should be training available for all school staff including supervisors.
- The LEA should nurture stronger partnerships with key providers such as Stonewall, the NSPCC and VALREC.

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