

~ Case Study ~

'Are We Tackling Bullying in the SW?'

Consultation with UK Youth Parliament South West and representatives of Equalities South West

Rhiannon Prys-Owen (Regional Anti Bullying Coordinator) and Fiona Phur (Regional Youth Work Unit) conducted a consultation and workshop with members of Youth Parliament called 'Are We Tackling Bullying in the SW?' The session commenced with a presentation around the different types of bullying and some national and regional statistics. This was followed by a group discussion about what was happening in the 16 local authority areas and how much involvement the MYPs had with anti bullying work.

Key Messages from the young people:

1. There needs to be greater awareness of what bullying is and the real impact on children through effective campaigns, leaflets and publicity.
2. People need to be clear and know about the different types of bullying e.g. cyber bullying; homophobic
3. There needs to be consistency and nationally agreed procedure for responding to bullying that is understood by everyone
4. Children need to have a say in how incidents are managed when they are reported to adults
5. Support and guidance for children who are accused of bullying that is constructive and helps them to address and change their behaviour
6. Building children's confidence and skills to deal with bullying when it occurs, will protect them in any situation
7. We all need to take responsibility for our own actions and behaviour, including bullying behaviour.
8. A range of support provided through telephone; texting and on-line support to ensure equality of access. There was confidence in the connectivity of service providers across the region which would ensure 24 hour on-line services
9. Face to face contact with a trusted adult was felt to be of particular importance for some children who were uncomfortable with anonymous on-line or telephone help-lines
10. Employment of people to support children in schools and wider communities
11. UKYP could branch out to include community support
12. Promoting more peer support methods that build up the confidence of children to support younger children and to deal with incidents perpetrated against them
13. Virtual tutoring can provide support systems for younger children

14. Older pupils to support children in transition from primary to secondary schools as this can be a difficult time for many children
15. Transition to FE for final year pupils also needs to be addressed
16. Pupils in their final year could support community clubs and youth services to address bullying, using the skills and experience gained through peer support/mentoring schemes
17. Use of external and community agencies to support schools in dealing with bullying. Schools don't know where to get support
18. Tackling the issue at its source by recognising that children model the behaviour of adults and celebrity role models. If they witness racist and homophobic incidents that are unchallenged they will behave in the same way.
19. Regular Anti-Bullying Conferences led by UKYP to raise awareness and involve young people across the region.

The group were then showed a powerful DVD about Cyber bullying (Let's Fight it Together) and discussed the different impacts this type of bullying has upon the victims, their friends and families, schools and communities. There were some participants who felt that cyber bullying was a significant issue for schools with one young person commenting that 50% of pupils in his school had experienced cyber bullying.

The MIPS were asked 'What Next?' via a set of 4 questions set out on bulls eyes around the room – the MIPS marked up their responses on each of the 4 bulls eyes. The results are shown below. Finally, the workshop finished with a round up of what support might come from this session and what would be most beneficial. Thanks from Rhiannon and Fiona to everyone for giving them the opportunity to work with them and for their great enthusiasm and support for the issues raised.

Bulls eye evaluation results: (Top answers are highlighted)

How much awareness is there in your area around getting bullying support for young people - 32 responses

1 – We're really good at it; our young people are fully informed – Swindon; Dorset; South Somerset; Cornwall; Gloucestershire (5 responses 16%)

2 – *Its quite good in my area; young people are aware of the support available – Somerset; Poole; Dorset x 3; South Gloucs; Bournemouth; Devon; Bristol (9 responses 28%)*

3 – I don't know enough to answer this accurately – Plymouth; Wiltshire; Somerset; Dorset (4 responses 12%)

4 – I'm sure there is something but its not too visible – Bristol x 2; South Gloucs; B&NES; Devon x 2; South Somerset; Somerset; Wiltshire; Swindon; Gloucestershire; Dorset; Plymouth (13 responses 41%)

5 – There is none at all – Gloucestershire (1 response 3%).

How much would you be prepared to support a regional Young Equalities/ Anti Bullying Network? – 32 responses

1 – *Count me in – it would be invaluable – Cornwall; Devon; Swindon x 2; Dorset; Somerset x 2 ; Plymouth x 2; Wiltshire x 3; Gloucestershire x 2; South Gloucestershire x 2 (16 responses 50%)*

2 – Yes I would like to see this happen – I’m sure it would help – Dorset x 3; Bristol x 2; South Gloucs; Bournemouth; South Somerset; B&NES; South Somerset; Gloucestershire (11 responses 34%)

3 – Not sure – I would need to know more about what it would do for us – Poole; Dorset x 2; Devon; Bristol (5 responses 16%)

4 – A bit – it might occasionally be useful – 0 responses

5 – Not at all – 0 responses

Comments: I think it would be difficult getting young people to volunteer to help.

How confident are you about your ability to challenge a bullying incident? 34 responses

1 – Yes I can and will safely challenge bullying when I’m aware of it – Plymouth; Dorset x 5; South Somerset; South Gloucester; B&NES x 2; Gloucestershire; Devon; Wiltshire x 2; Swindon x 2 ; Cornwall (17 responses 50%)

2 – I’m reasonably confident; in a safe and sensible way – Poole; B&NES, Somerset x 3; Bristol x 2; South Gloucs; Gloucestershire x 2; Bournemouth (11 responses 32%)

3 – I would need to know more about the situation before answering – Devon x 2; South Somerset; Dorset; Plymouth (5 responses 15%)

4 – Some forms but not every type – No LA specified (1 response 3%)

5 – I’m not! – 0 responses

Comments: We are very aware and involved in these things already; normal young people wouldn’t know I don’t think – we are older – younger people don’t know (South Gloucs/ B&NES)

Which type of bullying needs more awareness raising? (1 answer only please) 29 responses

1 – Cyber bullying – Bristol; Cornwall; Bournemouth; Gloucestershire; Dorset (5 responses 17%)

2 – Racist bullying – Cornwall (1 response 3%)

3 – Homophobic bullying – Cornwall; Swindon (2 responses 7%)

4 – Disabilities bullying – Poole; South Somerset (2 responses 7%)

5- Not one more than all the others – Plymouth; Bristol; Devon x 3; Wiltshire x 2; South Somerset; Dorset x 3; Gloucestershire x 3 ; Cornwall; South Gloucestershire; Somerset x 2; Swindon (19 responses 66%)

Comments: You need to look locally, not try to implement top down targets (S Gloucs and B&NES)

Follow up. To devise a survey to be circulated around the SW region asking people's views on whether an anti bullying network including young people should run and how it should operate.

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