

SUMMARY OF SUNDERLAND'S ANTI-BULLYING STRATEGY

August 2007

“In Sunderland we are working towards a society where children and young people have the right to be safe and be able to walk among all without fear, where people are kind, helpful and friendly.”

Sunderland's vision

CONTENTS

	PAGE NO
1. PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY?	3
2. OUR VISION	3
3. OUR PRINCIPLES?	3
4. DEFINITION OF BULLYING	4
5. CURRENT PRIORITIES	5
6. CONSULTATION	7
7. RESOURCES	8
8. IMPLEMENTATION OF ANTI-BULLYING ACTION PLAN	9
9. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REPORTING	10
10. CONCLUSION	11
Appendix 1 – Useful contact details	12

1. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY?

In the Every Child Matters: Change for Children (2005), the government identifies as an aim in its Outcomes Framework that:

“Children and young people should be safe from bullying and discrimination”.

Sunderland Children’s Trust recognises that everyone has the right to live in an atmosphere free from bullying.

The Anti-Bullying Strategy is aimed at the whole community and seeks to develop a joined-up approach to tackle bullying wherever it occurs, in order to better understand the causes of bullying and to implement effective anti-bullying strategies.

It will take time for the Strategy to impact on the lives of children and young people. However, there is confidence that by sharing the aims and objectives in this document, a substantial difference will be made.

2. WHAT IS OUR VISION?

- We will be focussed on prevention and early intervention
- Services will be planned around the needs of the family
- Children, young people and their families will be involved in the planning and delivery of services
- Services will be based in local communities, where they are needed
- Information will be presented clearly and free from jargon

3. WHAT ARE OUR PRINCIPLES?

Our vision and strategy is underpinned by a set of key principles that provide the foundation of our priorities and our targets:

- The rights of children and young people should be upheld in accordance with United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Bullying is an unacceptable form of behaviour.
- Bullying has an adverse effect on the development of children and young people’s personal, social and emotional health, wellbeing, life chances and achievement.
- Children and young people should have a right to feel safe, secure and valued and that creating a safe environment and dealing with bullying is everyone’s responsibility.
- Children and young people should actively participate in decisions that affect them and should be supported in taking responsibility for their choices and subsequent actions.
- We value diversity in order to create and maintain safe and supportive environments for children and young people.

4. DEFINITION OF BULLYING

The intention is that this document will give anyone working with children and young people an insight into what bullying is, but that organisations should develop their own definition, taking these guidelines into consideration when developing their own Anti-Bullying strategies and policies.

DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Physical – for example: pushing, punching, kicking, hitting “accidentally” bumping, spitting, taking money or other things or damaging them, stopping from leaving a room or building by getting in the way, face pulling, gestures and other forms of violence

Verbal – such as name calling, spreading rumours and making things up to get someone into trouble, verbal threats, nasty teasing or jokes, or writing nasty things about someone and leaving hurtful notes

Indirect/Emotional – Such as excluding, not talking, leaving out, tormenting, being deliberately unfriendly, making fun of someone because they find some things difficult or just to get at them because they are better than most people, maybe because they are cleverer than others, or by making them do things they don't want to do, possibly by getting others to get at them as well until they do it

Bullying: Third Report of Session 2006 – 07, House of Commons Education and Skills Committee, quotes that DfES informed them that: “The Government defines bullying as:

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

Cyber-bullying – this is where new technology is used, such as text or video messages, hate web sites, chat rooms or instant messaging or emails and generally needs to be repeated, or a threat of bodily harm, or a public posting designed to hurt or embarrass

Sexual – for example, unwanted physical contact or abusive comments, sexual innuendoes, looks and comments about appearance, attractiveness or lack of emerging puberty

Prejudice-based bullying – for example:
Racist – including being picked on because of their skin colour, nationality, cultural or religious background or ethnic origin
Homophobic – such as hostile actions that can be physical or verbal, against lesbians, gay or bisexual or those perceived to be lesbians, gay or bisexual
Disability – including those with special educational needs
Faith/religion

5. CURRENT PRIORITIES

- **To ensure that children and young people have the opportunity to participate in strategy and policy development**
 - Schools, services and community settings will be encouraged to ensure that children and young people, as well as their parents / carers, have the opportunity to participate in anti-bullying strategy and policy development, so that their voices are heard.

- **To ensure that bullying is picked up early and that “low level” harassment is challenged**
 - Minor, low level acts of bullying can escalate into more serious or sustained campaigns and adults need to take all incidents seriously.
 - Support needs to be available to victims of bullying and they should not be expected to change their behaviour, such as exclusion on the grounds of health and safety.
 - Those who bully also require support to understand the effects their bullying has on others and to develop more appropriate communication and social skills to change their behaviour.

- **To coordinate partnership working across Children’s Services**
 - Children’s Services need to work in partnership to address bullying across the city and within communities
 - Partners will be encouraged to sign up to this strategy and include anti-bullying targets in their service plans.

- **To ensure that robust anti-bullying policies are in place and children and young people are offered different options to report incidents, as well as understand what response they can expect**
 - All organisations which provide services to children and young people will ensure that robust policies are in place, are acted upon, are monitored and evaluated across the authority and that anti-bullying practices are embedded within school and community locations. These should be reviewed and updated annually.
 - Children and young people can best advise on which options of reporting and recording incidents they prefer and how these should be implemented in practice.
 - There should be a robust complaint handling system in place. Where the matter is not resolved, independent mediation might be considered.

- To ensure that a practical method of establishing baseline information is put in place in line with the ECM outcomes
 - Priority 6 of the Children and Young People's Plan, 2007 – 2009, identifies that baseline data needs to be collated on the percentage of children and young people who state that they have been bullied in the past 12 months, in line with the Every Child Matters agenda.
 - A pilot is running in a number of schools and other settings during '07 – '08, using software called "Sentinel" to record incidents to see how effective this method is.
 - As more options are available to children and young people to report incidents of bullying, awareness is raised and it is expected that baseline figures will rise over the next two years.
 - Procedures to enable children and young people to report bullying incidents must reflect the principles set out in current confidentiality policies.
 - All incidents of bullying should be recorded in sufficient depth so that analysis of patterns can inform policy and practice at whole school / Service level.

6. HOW DID WE CONSULT?

The Strategy was produced by representatives from Children's Services, Connexions, Health and the Voluntary and Community Sector, (represented by the Anti-Bullying Service, which is part of Impact).

They received input from the children and young people from a number of schools, including a special school, as well as from more vulnerable groups such as Black Minority and Ethnic, Looked After Children and disengaged groups, working with a Sub Group of Practitioners, as well as from other consultees from primary, secondary and special schools.

7. WHAT RESOURCES DO WE HAVE OR NEED?

- The Anti-Bullying Strategic Group and Sub Group of practitioners have been established to develop and deliver the Anti-Bullying Strategy.
- The focus of the strategy is to ensure that resources are used effectively and efficiently to deliver a coordinated approach across the city.
- The identification of a Lead Officer and how that post will be resourced is currently under negotiation.
- The Anti-Bullying Service (ABS), which is part of Impact, from the voluntary and community sector, can offer training, support, advice and mediation to schools and Services across the city.
- Funding for the software package “Sentinel”, for the pilot, will be met from Children’s Services, ABS and Connexions for 2007 – 2008.
- The Charter Mark is already established in 29 schools across the city and other schools will be encouraged to commit and schools are being supported to achieve the new Healthy Schools programme.
- The SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) programme is available for all primary schools from the DfES.. From September 2007, there will be a Key Stage 3 SEAL equivalent available, which will follow on from the work of the primary programme.

8. HOW WILL WE IMPLEMENT THE ANTI-BULLYING ACTION PLAN?

A lot of good work that has already taken place in Sunderland, however, it is now time to build upon what has been achieved and monitor and evaluate services, to assess which strategies are effective and share best practice.

All services are encouraged to use “whole community” involvement when developing policy. This approach is encouraged in Sunderland’s Charter Mark and is also reflected in the national Healthy Schools programme. Ways of adapting the Charter Mark for use in a variety of settings, including Early Years, Youth Groups, Colleges and Children’s Homes, is already underway.

Policy guidelines will be drawn up for professionals and in December 2007 an audit of training needs pilot, will look at what the different levels of training are required.

Services should ensure that all incidents of bullying are reported and recorded. This will feed into citywide baseline figures required in Priority 6 of the Children and young People’s Plan ’07 – ’09.

The Sentinel pilot has been commissioned for one year to operate in a number of schools across the city, to assess whether an electronic system of recording incidents is beneficial.

Children’s Homes are also carrying out a pilot of reporting and recording bullying incidents and a report will be produced on this in May 2008. An Annual Anti-Bullying Survey is planned for November, to coincide with Anti-Bullying week and funding will also be sought for an Annual Anti-Bullying Conference.

The Complaint System will be reviewed in line with national guidelines by March 2008.

The Anti-Bullying Strategic Group will identify funding for an officer to coordinate and drive this strategy forward by March 2008.

9. WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REPORTING?

The Anti-Bullying Strategic Group will monitor the implementation of the action plan and will report on a monthly basis to the Local Safeguarding Board.

Where the strategy is included in the strategic plans of partners, these will be monitored and reported by the accountable bodies, consistent with the management and governance arrangements of these partners.

Information from surveys that identify aspects of bullying will be collated and analysed for baseline analysis and an annual report will be made available.

10. CONCLUSION

The overall aim of this strategy is that children and young people in Sunderland will feel safer, will be able to make positive contribution to life in Sunderland and will develop positive relationships if all services promote a zero tolerance culture in regards to bullying.

The full Strategy can be accessed on the Children's Trust website at:

www.sunderlandchildrenstrust.org.uk/content/anti-bullying-strat07.pdf

APPENDIX 1
Useful contact details

Helplines for children and young people		
Organisation	Phone	Times
<p>Childline</p> <p>FREE 24 hour telephone line for children and young people.</p> <p>www.childline.org.uk</p>	0800 1111	24 hours
<p>Connexions</p> <p>For young people aged 13-19.</p> <p>Calls from a landline are free so they won't show on a phone bill. Calls from a mobile are charged but if you ring them on your mobile – they will call you back.</p> <p>www.connexions-direct.com</p>	080 800 13219	8.00am – 2.00am
<p>NSPCC</p> <p>Helpline</p> <p>www.there4me.org.uk This site is for 12 – 16 year olds. It provides confidential, one-to-one online advice or you can send a private message to an adviser and receive a personal reply.</p>	0800 800 5000	24 hours Children are recommended to contact Childline.
<p>The Hide Out – (DOMESTIC VIOLENCE) An information site.</p> <p>www.thehideout.org.uk The Hideout provides help, information and support for children and young people – where you've experienced domestic violence or if you know someone else going through it and you're looking for help and information. You can hide your visit.</p>	It suggests contacting Childline directly to talk to someone	

Helplines for parents and carers		
Organisation	Phone	Times
<p>ACE (Advisory Centre for Education) Independent advice for parents on all issues relating to state education in England and Wales www.ace-ed.org.uk</p>	0808 800 5793	2pm – 5 pm Monday to Friday
<p>Sunderland Anti-Bullying Service This is a voluntary organisation that offers support and advice to those affected by bullying They also offer training and different ideas and strategies to individuals, schools and organisations, to help them deal with bullying. They can also offer an independent mediation service.</p>	Direct Line: 0191 566 0622 Impact Service Number: 0191 567 8282	Monday to Friday 9 – 5pm
<p>Child Contact Centre This is a voluntary organisation, which offers safe and neutral venues where children of separated families can spend time with one or both parents and sometimes other family members. Fathers and mothers workers offer support to families using the centre.</p>	Direct Line: 0191 566 0624 Impact Service Number: 0191 567 8282	Monday to Friday 9 – 5pm
<p>Kidscape Helpline for parents, guardians or concerned relatives or friends of bullied children. Children are recommended to contact Childline. www.kidscape.org.uk</p>	08451 205 205	10am – 4pm Monday to Friday
<p>ParentlinePlus Offers a free confidential helpline to parents and carers on all aspects of parenting. Also provides secure email helpline via the website. www.parentlineplus.org.uk</p>	0808 800 2222 Textphone: 0800783 6783	24 hours
<p>Youngminds Parents Information Service A free, confidential telephone service providing information and advice for any adult with concerns about the mental health of a child or young person. www.youngminds.org.uk</p>	0800 018 2138	Monday and Friday 10am–1pm Tuesday, Wednesdays and Thursday from 1-4pm Wednesday evenings from 6-8 pm
<p>The Wearside Domestic Violence Forum will challenge and prevent domestic violence by ensuring the provision of appropriate services for the protection of women and children experiencing domestic violence. www.sunderland.gov.uk. Under “Life Events” and “Dealing with Domestic Violence”.</p>	0800 066 5555	24 hour help line