



Buckinghamshire County Council
Select Committee
Children's Social Care and Learning Select Committee

Report to the Children's Social Care and Learning Select Committee

Title:	Preventing Bullying in Schools
Committee date:	Tuesday 5 th December 2017
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Purpose of Agenda Item

*This item is for: **information** to update the Committee with regards the latest work being done across Bucks schools and to inform Members of the Committee of any emerging issues*

Background

There has never been a statutory obligation on schools to report bullying incidents to the Local Authority and therefore there has never been a duty for Local Authorities to report on the number of bullying incidents in each County. There was a statutory duty to report racist incidents but this duty was removed after 2010. However there is a moral and statutory imperative to keep children and young people safe therefore as a Local Authority (LA) we have continued to support schools to report discriminatory incidents to the LA up to the present time. Schools have been able to report discriminatory incidents including bullying (based on a protected characteristic) as set out in the Equalities Act 2010. Over the past seven years we have seen a steady decline in schools reporting any incidents to the LA due to the statutory duty being withdrawn. Schools are expected to hold this information on their own recording systems and if required to present them to Ofsted during an inspection. We therefore as a Local Authority rely on schools and relevant partners to share their concerns and work with us to reduce the number of bullying incidents across Buckinghamshire. We have reminded schools via the Schools bulletin that despite no statutory obligation to report to the LA, it is still good practice to do so for the purpose of transparency and to enable support to be offered if required.



The work of the Local Authority on anti- bullying across schools in Buckinghamshire has been longstanding and has in partnership with relevant agencies continued to evolve. We have developed strong ties with the Bucks Safeguarding Children's Board (BSCB), the Stronger and Safer Partnership Board (SSPB) and the Emotional Well Being Board as well as Thames Valley Police and work in collaboration with our partners to address support for schools in Buckinghamshire as detailed later in the report.

Summary

Is Bullying an Issue in Buckinghamshire?

- In 2016 we conducted a survey with pupils in Yrs 5-13 in schools across Bucks including Special Schools. (See 2016 Anti bullying Survey Headline Data power point in Appendix).
- We are not able to draw comparisons with the 2014 Anti-bullying survey due to: more year groups participating in the 2016 survey compared to the 2014 survey and the use of revised questions for the 2016 survey which means they do not necessarily correspond with questions on the 2014 survey.
- We are pleased however to report that we saw an increase in the numbers participating in the survey from 1500 plus students to just over 5000 participants
- This is a positive indication that schools take this matter seriously and want to support the work of the LA by engaging with such a survey.
- Over the last three years Thames Valley Police has seen a 43% increase in reported hate crimes. The vast majority of incidents have been racially motivated but people are also being persecuted because of their religion, sexual orientation or disabilities.
- Between July and September last year 14,000 hate crime incidents were documented nationally, the highest level recorded since reporting began in 2012. (Huffington Post 2017)
- Amnesty launched an urgent campaign on racism in the UK amid a rise in reported hate crime in June 2016.
- In 2016/17 based on Thames Valley Police records, the Anti-bullying survey and soft intelligence from a cross range of officers and professionals working in schools across the County we can see there are parallels to be drawn with national data linked to key local regional or international events e.g. Terrorist attacks, after the EU referendum and after the US elections.



- It is important to note that we are not complacent and have continued to support schools to tackle all forms of discrimination and bullying and acknowledge the local and national increase in hate crimes and the anecdotal information from schools about the increase at certain key times in bullying and discriminatory incidents that they have recorded at school.

Resource implications

- Funding for all of the work on this agenda comes from a variety of sources including base budget, along with income generation and support from the Bucks Safeguarding Children's Board and the Safer and Stronger Bucks Partnership Board. This has enabled us to have a series of events to raise awareness and support schools with the development of strategies to reduce bullying in schools
- The total budget-spend to date between 2016/17 and current financial year 2017/18 has been approximately £20K. We have spent £10K on Show Racism the Red Card workshops and approximately £10K on 2 multi agency conferences for professionals on E-Safety (including Cyber bullying) and Anti Bullying, 2 Conferences for Secondary School Student Council Representatives, covering the same themes and 3 Primary Anti bullying workshops.

Outcomes and Impact

With the funding we have been able to do the following

- Biennial Anti Bullying Conference for Professionals organised in collaboration with the BSCB. Each year we have up to 100 attendees and our partner agencies using a market stall format give out information on the services they can provide and how to access their service.
- Biennial Anti Bullying Conference for Secondary Student Council Reps sees over 100 students participating from on average 15 Secondary schools along with students from the FE colleges. Again we use a market stall type format for partner agencies to share information with the participants.
- We also hold biennial E Safety Conferences for both Professionals and Secondary students which always have as part of the day an agenda item on Cyber bullying.
- We have a number of Child Exploitation and On -Line Protection (CEOP) trained colleagues, who work in schools delivering training to pupils and parents and they also do training sessions for those working with children and young people developing their knowledge of how to keep safe on line.
- In collaboration with the BSCB we held for the first time (September 2017) 3 Primary School workshops on Anti bullying. Based on the results of the survey we focussed on addressing the key themes emanating from the results. A workshop was held in High Wycombe, Aylesbury and Amersham for ease of access for schools and to increase the potential numbers who could attend. Each event was oversubscribed.



We aim to run these conferences again. There was much local media attention see below various reports on the primary events

<http://www.equaliteach.co.uk/events/agents-change-anti-bullying-events-buckinghamshire/>

- <https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/news/buckinghamshire-youngsters-become-agents-for-change-to-help-reduce-bullying/>
- <https://www.mix96.co.uk/news/local/2400985/pupils-from-bucks-schools-pledge-to-help-stamp-out-bullying/>
- With the support of the Stronger and Safer Partnership Board (SSPB) we were able to commission once again the Show Racism the Red Card Team to work with us to deliver workshops mainly to Primary aged pupils across the County. Each year they surpass their target of 1000 pupils to whom they have delivered workshops.
- We have seen a high level of satisfaction with the events we have run with an approval rating of over 90% Good and above
- Teachers have recorded in their reports on work completed or on evaluation sheets pupils and students returning to school invigorated to tackle bullying in schools. Examples of work to date include – special assemblies and presentations to Year groups. Discussions with Headteacher and the Senior Management team requesting support for activities the group wish to organise. Schools have reported that they have procured Anti-bullying Notice boards in school where key information is shared with the school community, the setting up of safe spaces where young people who are the victims of bullying can go for additional support from their peers along with a range of resources purchased relating to Anti bullying e.g. posters.
- The Youth Service received over 600 referrals to provide individual support for young people since the launch of 'Bucks Youth' in June 2016. Requests have been to support a range of issues related to young people's well-being. In the case of 14.5% of referrals, the most prominent issues requiring support was related to peer relationships.
- The Youth Service takes a holistic approach to the support provided. Building up the confidence and self-esteem of individuals is often a key focus to the intervention. This links closely to increasing young people's personal resilience and the ability to cope with difficult situations and relationships. The Youth Service also supports young people to consider how they communicate with others, build positive relationships and to express their opinions in an appropriate way. This bespoke



approach has enabled us to work with many young people affected by bullying and to bring about change to these difficult circumstances.

Next steps

To continue this work constantly looking at ways to offer value for money without impacting the quality of the service we provide. Discussions with schools continue about how to ensure they are mainstreaming this agenda in their schools and developing school to school support including sharing good practice. The Public Health Team are recruiting a PSHE lead to support schools and this officer will support some of the work we do on anti-bullying through helping schools to strengthen and firmly embed PSHE into the curriculum . The work on ant- bullying sits within our Education and Skills strategy - one of our priorities is to work with particularly vulnerable groups including those at risk of exclusion. Although the reason for an exclusion whether fixed term or permanent is multi-faceted; bullying is a factor contributing to a school making the decision to exclude. It is anticipated that the work on anti-bullying will help not only reduce bullying incidents but also reduce the need for exclusions to take place.

