

Cross Party Group on Children and Young People
Thurs 31 January 2013
13:00-14:30
Committee Room 2
Scottish Parliament
Chair: Kezia Dugdale MSP

Attendees

Marco Biagi MSP
Roderick Campbell MSP
Kezia Dugdale MSP
Alison Johnstone MSP
Joan McAlpine MSP
Jeni Bainbridge, Children in Scotland
Margaret Barclay, The Alliance
Katie Brown, SCCYP
Ben Christian, George Heriots
Alex Cole-Hamilton, Aberlour
Sara Collier, Children in Scotland
Alastair Cooper, National Autistic Society
Grant Costello MSYP, Scottish Youth Parliament
Kathleen Deacon, Scottish Marriage Care
Rory Dohery, George Heriots
Graeme Donald, Church of Scotland
Brian Donnelly, *respectme*
Liz Ely, Zero Tolerance
David Ferrier, Includem
Barry Fisher, DofE Scotland
Chrissie Fullerton, George Heriots
David Gaughan, Ypeople
Emilia Georgiou, University of Edinburgh
Eilidh Gimour, George Heriots
Lorna Goodwin, The Princess Royal Trust for Carers
Rob Gowans, Scottish Youth Parliament
Alan Jones, Scottish Division of Educational Psychology
Nico Juetten, SCCYP
Martin Hunt, Tartan Silk
Catriona Laing, Perth and Kinross Council
Cath Logan, Big Lottery Fund
Nancy Loucks, Families Outside
Robert MacBean, National Autistic Society
Johnpaul McCabe, LGBT Youth Scotland
Sharon McCluskie, Play Scotland
Cathy McCulloch, Children's Parliament
Robert McGeachy, NSPCC Scotland
Margaret McLeod, Youthlink Scotland
Lesley McNab, CHAS
Carrie Manning, The Prince's Trust
Lisa Marshall, Children 1st
Richard Meade, Barnardo's
Paul Mullan, Quarriers

Dorothy Neriah Muraya, University of Edinburgh
Alison Newlands, SCIS
Mandy Powell, University of Loughborough
Eileen Prior, SPTC
Susan Robb, Scottish Borders Council
Keith Robson, ATL Scotland
Tracy Rodger, CLIC Sargent
Marsha Scott, West Lothian Council
Neil Seaton, George Heriots
Leyah Shanks, Youthlink Scotland
Tania Smith, SCIS
Stefan Stoyanov, SCCYP
Kay Tisdall, University of Edinburgh
Jamie Tosh, Kibooku
Leli Tsai, University of Edinburgh
Sarah Vernon, Children 1st
Alison Wales, Childline Scotland
Linda Whitmore, Enable

Apologies

Alison McInnes MSP
Kim Atkinson, SSA
Derek Bannon, Common Thread
Leah Benson, Circle
May Chamberlain, Relationships Scotland
Rozanne Chorlton
Mo Colvin, RNIB Scotland
Helen Davis, West Lothian Youth Action Project
Jennifer Drummond, Children in Scotland
Maurice Frank
Juliet Harris, Together
Kim Hartley, Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists
Louise Hill, CELCIS
Fiona Jones, CI@n Childlaw
Charlene Kelly, Relationships Scotland
Lesley Kelly, CRFR University of Edinburgh
Louise Marryat, Glasgow University
Louise Morgan, The Princess Royal Trust for Carers
Andy Mount, West Lothian Youth Action Project
Muriel Mowat, Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance
Agnes Mullen, Church of Scotland
Sarah Paterson, Youthlink Scotland
Helen Reilly, BMA Scotland
Lisa Ross, Mindroom
Chris Wiles, British Psychological Society Division of Clinical Psychology in Scotland

13.15 – Welcome

Kezia welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted the MSPs in attendance - Joan McAlpine MSP, Marco Biagi MSP, Alison Johnstone MSP, and Roderick

Campbell MSP. There was also a representative from the office of Liam McArthur MSP.

Kezia reported that, following the meeting of the Cross Party Group in November 2012, a letter had been sent to the Scottish Government regarding the proposed tobacco control strategy and requesting that a Child Rights Impact Assessment take place on the strategy. A letter has also been drafted on behalf of the group to Scottish Government Ministers on opportunities to improve community planning for young people through the proposed Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill and the Children and Young People Bill.

On today's theme of cyberbullying the chair noted that Alex Johnstone MSP had led a debate in the Scottish Parliament on this issue and the Dr Alasdair Allan, had offered to meet with her to discuss cyberbullying. Kezia invited suggested action focused topics and asks for this upcoming meeting from the cross party group.

The speakers were introduced and a warm welcome extended to pupils from George Heriot's School in Edinburgh who were invited to participate in the question and answer session.

13.20 Brian Donnelly, Director of *respectme*

Brian introduced *respectme* - the Scottish Government funded anti-bullying service in Scotland, designed to build capacity to recognise bullying and deal with it. They deliver training, carry out campaigns and develop resources. Launched in 2007, the service is externally evaluated and has been a robust catalyst for influencing change.

Brian outlined what constitutes bullying and that anyone is capable of bullying. He stressed that all bullying, including cyberbullying, is to do with relationships not being formed or maintained properly and that we should be mindful not to isolate cyberbullying as distinct from other forms. They have done work on repetition and intent and it is important not to label people as 'bullies' and 'victims' but instead to talk about bullying behaviour.

He highlighted the need for adults to change the way they perceive the internet: from a 'thing' to a space where young people go. We need to start asking parents and policy makers to think about what kinds of behaviours are being conducted online. For many people, the internet is a place to buy products or search for information but this is not always the case for young people - they primarily use it as a tool to communicate and stay in touch through social media.

Brian stressed the importance of understanding the internet and technologies that young people use to stay in touch as the climate of fear and technophobia around cyberbullying that has developed is unhelpful in combating it.

Recent research, in which 29 Scottish local authorities participated, 25% of young people said they worry about cyberbullying when online and of those who were being cyberbullied, 63% knew their bully. There is strong evidence to suggest that online bullying spills into real life, for example at school, and is not the reserve of time spent online.

Catriona Laing, Perth and Kinross Council

As e-schools safety officer (the only one in Scotland), Catriona presented the work she has been doing on the 'cyber mentors' scheme. This is one of several measures being rolled out in Perth and Kinross Council to develop skills and strategies around anti-bullying.

Cyber mentors is a project run by Beat Bullying to deliver anti violence, anti bullying messages and is a peer mentoring programme, rather than a top down approach from adults. It is being trialled in Perth High before being rolled out across Perth and Kinross over the next year.

11-18 year olds are the target group and the programme provides real-time access to other young people via a social network in a highly moderated, safe and positive site where no derogatory language is tolerated. The young people get access to trained mentors and discuss and get support to move forward from online issues.

They have found that many young people do not want to go to adults for help and therefore, usually at the point when they tell professionals, the problem is huge and hard to unravel. Cyber mentors allow them to talk to someone their own age and the peer element has been very powerful. The mentors do not fix problems, but do provide a way to talk through issues with anonymity and try to build strategies for how to move forward which may or may not involve talking to adults.

The young people are supported by senior mentors and trained counsellors. The pilot saw Perth High School mentors blossom during their training, which involves reading body language, listening skills, child protection issues and bullying prevention techniques.

In England and Wales over 300 schools have Cyber Mentors and over 6000 mentors are involved. Currently in Scotland, the programme is only in Perth and Kinross. Any young person can access the site but having in-school mentors mean they can offer support after school too. Evidence shows that 70% of young people felt better after talking to a Cyber Mentor and evaluation from England and Wales shows a marked decrease in bullying incidents. Catriona welcomed anyone who would like to liaise with her about the work to get in touch.

Susan Robb, Scottish Borders Council

As a Youth Participation Officer, Susan presented the work she had conducted around the Youth Commission on Bullying in 2011 when young people made recommendations to Scottish Borders Council re anti bullying. Recommendations applied to pre-school, primary, secondary and training colleges.

The Commission enabled young people to gather information on issues locally and nationally to improve the strategy. The work was carried out with the support of partner organisations including Respectme, Young Scot and Lothian and Borders Police and the NHS.

The young people presented 33 recommendations and one result was that the Scottish Borders Council approved a Respectful Relationships Policy amongst all people within a learning setting, another was that cyberbullying was included in the anti-bullying policy where it hadn't been before. The Commission acknowledged the difficulty around cyberbullying in that the **impact** is happening at school, even when the bullying is not. The focus now is on implementation and getting the message to adults through CPD.

Alison Wales, Childline Scotland

Alison presented information on counselling interactions at ChildLine across the UK regarding Cyberbullying. In the (ChildLine) year 2011/ 2012 there were over 325,000 counselling interactions, 10% of which were on bullying (31,599). 8% of all counselling interactions on bullying were about cyberbullying (2,410), underlining that at present, ChildLine still hears mainly from children and young people about bullying in general. Whilst there was a 7% rise in counselling interactions last year about cyberbullying, this was smaller than the rise in contacts to the service across all problems.

Young people who talk to ChildLine about cyberbullying have a slightly older age profile than those who talk about all forms of bullying: bullying is the most common concern for younger children aged 11 and under contacting the service, however the majority of young people who talk about cyberbullying are aged 12 – 15, with older children aged 16 and 17 also contacting the service on this issue. Girls were proportionally more likely to have talked to ChildLine about cyberbullying than boys. Although proportionally small numbers of children and young people talk to the service about cyberbullying, the cyberbullying webpage is the second highest viewed page on the ChildLine website, second only to bullying. Alison highlighted a wide range of concerns that young people talk to the service about in relation to cyberbullying, including worry and anxiety (often on-going); anger, poor concentration, loneliness, low self-esteem; feelings of worthlessness and feelings of powerless. Some young people talk to the service about self-harming at times to relieve the pressure of feelings. In some cases, children feel like ending their lives because of what is happening. Unsurprisingly, it is also common for young people to talk about school and education problems in relation

to cyberbullying, as well as problems with friendships. These concerns are similar to the concerns expressed by young people who talk to the service about bullying in general.

Research has established some key differences in cyber-bullying which are reflected in contacts to the helpline. It can be anonymous, it can be rapid in its 'escalation' to involving others who might not otherwise join in and there is no escape from it. Young people have always told ChildLine that bullying 'gets inside them', however cyber-bullying can literally bring bullying behaviour into 'safe spaces' like inside the home, with no escape.

Alison stressed that by contacting ChildLine, young people are showing strong, help-seeking behaviour and at may be contacting ChildLine because of a need to talk confidentially. As with bullying, young people express a range of reasons for not wanting to tell others what is happening to them, including fear of those who are bullying them, concern about worrying parents and carers and fear of things getting worse as a result of telling. Young people are commonly afraid of, or have experienced, telling and things being taken out of their control and made worse. Specifically in relation to cyber bullying, some young people said they had told the school, but were told the school can't do anything because the bullying is happening on-line and is therefore out with the jurisdiction of the school. This parallels what some young people tell the service about school's responses to face to face bullying outside the school. ChildLine is clear that whole school anti-bullying/ respectful behaviour policies must address bullying behaviour no matter where it is taking place.

Alison stressed that young people contacting the ChildLine service are not a representative sample of young people. She also acknowledged the extent of good work that schools, education authorities and organisations are carrying out in this area. Nevertheless, some young people continue to raise issues about the way schools deal with bullying.

Reinforcing the point made by Liz from Zero Tolerance in her briefing, Alison mentioned the gendered aspect of 'sexting' in contacts to ChildLine, with a ratio of 9:1 girls to boys contacting the ChildLine service about the issue, often feeling under pressure to do things they are unhappy with. She stressed it was most helpful to set young people's experiences of sexting, as told to ChildLine within the wider context of relationship issues, where there is a clear theme of pressure, coercion and violence within girl's contacts to the ChildLine service about their 'partner relationships'. In relation to sexting, Alison noted that young people are often offering each other advice on the on the ChildLine message boards.

Liz Ely, Zero Tolerance

Liz highlighted the gendered aspect of cyberbullying, in particular the practice of 'sexting'.

NSPCC recently completed a study, which found that girls were being most adversely affected by this practice with many cases of 'naming and shaming' girls considered to be 'sluts' including sharing personal details such as addresses. Liz drew attention to the training that Zero Tolerance provides around prevention of dating abuse and exploitation during which youth workers have found young people exchanging inappropriate pictures and texts. Furthermore, they have found that boys are often under pressure to circulate images or otherwise be called 'gay' so there is clearly a homophobic element to the bullying.

Liz pointed out that the practice of gendered cyberbullying is not exclusive to young people: Zero Tolerance maintain that responsibility should lie with the wider society and internet trends amongst adults and that our focus should be on education around relationships generally.

Liz requested that there be more Scotland specific research carried out on this gender issue – a point which was noted for Kezia's meeting with Dr Allan.

Kim Smith, YWCA

Kim highlighted that YWCA have been working closely with Zero Tolerance on issues related to sexual harassment via digital technology. She acknowledged that technology has moved quickly and it is difficult to keep up with this. Studies only months apart showed marked differences in how young people were using technology. All adults with young people in their lives have a responsibility to have an awareness of this serious issue as cyberbullying behaviour is not distinct from what happens in real life.

Because cyberbullying is a wider feature of relationships and how young people interact and relate, it is important to look at cyberbullying within the equality, Human Rights and diversity aspect of the work we do. Kim stressed that ignoring how technology is used or appearing to tolerate its use in sexist or homophobic harassment normalises the behaviour whereas we need to be examining and challenging our own behaviours as practitioners. She highlighted that now is a good time to be looking at policies and procedures overall.

On 27 March, YWCA will be running training on mobile technology and young people managing their use on it to which Youth Workers are very welcome. The training will be free for any volunteers and low cost for others and more information is available on their website.

Vikki Nash – Director of OFCOM

Vikki introduced Ofcom as the body that regulates communications media, broadband TV and radio amongst others. They recently undertook a piece of research around media literacy and published a report in October 2012 on media use and understanding amongst parents and children. The key emergent message for the Minister is the need to bridge gaps between what parents and young

people are concerned about as there is a wide discrepancy. There is a skills and knowledge gap around social media currently and Vicki welcomed liaison on this topic and offered to set up a sep session on more research, funds allowing.

13.50 – Group discussion

Kezia asked the pupils from Heriot's if they all had 3G mobiles and facebook pages, all did.

Alex Cole-Hamilton, Aberlour said there was a public health dimension to this discussion. There is a link between bullying and mental health. In the inquiry into the Erskine Bridge deaths bullying was highlighted as a critical factor. Cyberbullying is another front where mental health can come under attack. The nation still faces issues in dealing with mental health problems eg 23 weeks for 1st consultation with CAMHS. This is troubling. The Government is working on the Mental Health strategy and this should be a new front for the sector and government to look at.

Marco Biagi MSP noted that cyberbullying is a form of bullying – often an extension of existing practices. When we consider Cyberbullying do we need to isolate what is distinct about it – eg that it spreads quickly. Also the nature of communications – not face to face – does this dehumanise – make it more severe? If that is the case it does make it different to other forms of bullying.

Alison Johnstone MSP posed a question to Catriona and Susan. At Linlithgow Academy there had been a case where young people were sharing images of self-harm and eating disorders. Teachers asked for action to be taken and how to deal with this eg pupils having access to their mobiles during school day. Teaching unions may be looking at this issue.

Joan McAlpine MSP questioned the use of the term bullying. Should we use term bullying behaviour instead? Young people accusing each other of bullying – the 'victim' can also be a 'bully' – issues of labelling. Not best way to find solutions. How many schools have policies on internet use that everyone signs up to? She had spoken to young person who said that every boy she knew had porn on his phone – it was normal behaviour. Internet gives access to this and normalises it. We need to talk about why porn is wrong and damaging.

Grant Costello MSYP said one important thing is that young people are ahead of curve in technology. It is not just about the bully and victim but there will be others who know and have concerns. There needs to be a strategy/guide on how to give these neutrals with concerns the ability to raise it – how can they help, they might currently see it as not their job but it should be. They need help with this – an avenue to inform confidentially as this doesn't happen enough. Identification is key as self confidence can be affected.

Brian said there were a number of approaches in place in Scotland – Mentors in Violence Prevention programme that the Violence Reduction Unit are using looks at the cultural issue of grassing. Some areas have an email address or mobile number for reporting. This is not done nationally but work is taking place.

Catriona said Mentors in Violence Prevention work is taking place in Perth and Kinross – another peer education strategy. Seniors work with Juniors to look at sexting, cyberbullying and gender based violence. They look at strategies and how they can help - what could they do if confronted by this situation. Strategies are there to help them so they don't sit back and do nothing. A pilot has taken place with the VRU in 4 Local Authorities in Scotland – hope it will be further rolled out.

Brian said they were helping by giving this American programme a Scottish context. Kezia questioned whether the Scottish Youth Parliament could pick up on this work.

Rory from George Heriot's noted that one of controlling factors is cyberbullying is anonymity. Often the last person you would expect is doing it. How can you tackle this anonymity and remove it?

Catriona said it is about teaching responsible behaviour and relationships early on, this will help the receiver manage it. BY starting in early primary with looking at respectful behaviour however you communicate and learning what is appropriate. Not all Cyberbullying is anonymous – often young people know who it is and who is involved.

Brian said their most research and work suggests around 60% knew or suspected who it was.

He questioned whether we should pick out what is different about cyberbullying. His answer is no. We should evolve our approach to bullying overall – can't carve pieces of it off.

Kezia asked Neil Seaton from Heriot's about their bullying policies. He said they have strict policies on mobile phone use – if it goes off in class you get a detention. This seems to have worked, there is no big problem with use in school. There is probably use going on – but not overt use going on. They deal a lot with issues around internet use and Cyberbullying – websites such as formspring and ask.fm where you can anonymously post things online – rude, bullying without any consequences. These are real issues and can be harmful. They are evolving with changes in technology.

Marsha Scott, West Lothian Council said talking about cyberbullying not being a different phenomenon and something which can cross over into school and social space is good way to frame it. Bullying is not homogenous phenomenon – young people don't all experience it in same way. There are gender service design and impact issues – this is needed from the beginning to be efficient use of resources.

The gender dimensions are important and we must consider the public sector equality duties.

She also convenes Engender. A 20 year old intern made a comment that discussions about cyberbullying were like discussions about sexual assault years ago – eg stranger rapes out of bushes – these are not the majority but the focus on strangers and predators, but real harm is people you know.

Richard Meade, Barnardo's said they are interested in cyberbullying but also the specific aspect of online abuse and using technology to sexually exploit, groom and target children. They are working with partners on this and calling on the Scottish Government to improve guidelines in this area. The ones currently in use date back to 2003 when facebook was not even invented. They want more robust guidelines on the technologies available, how they are used to target and organise action.

Rory from Heriots said he felt cyberbullying and bullying are the same – but for Cyberbullying you need the platform – technology. You can't censor the internet but you can target places and sites that can be used for Cyberbullying – for example anonymous sites.

Eileen Prior, Scottish Parent Teacher Council said they run regular parent voice surveys. This helps get a sense from parents about their understanding of technology and interactions of their children. This showed that a real lack of understanding of the technologies and how they are being used. There are concerns about children and young people accessing porn – it is rife. They are also contacted with worries over children being bullied and that 'outside school – not our problem' happens a lot. There are concerns over how to engage with schools to tackle this and implement policies which are not being enacted. They worked with Brian on the current parent voice survey to look at experiences of bullying.

Alison Wales said lots of work is going on, but that ChildLine still hear from some young people that say they don't know if their school has an anti-bullying policy, that they are not aware of policies or have not been involved in developing them. ChildLine School's Service staff commented recently that an anti-bullying policy needs to be as overt as the school uniform policy - this is what we wear; this is how we treat each other. Policies need to be obvious and not gathering dust on a shelf. There is an extent to which young people advise each other on this - they can be really helpful to each other. Social networking sites have a responsibility. Young people on ChildLine message boards regularly comment and advise each other that this really needs taken up with the site.

Brian said the Scottish Government internet safety group oversees work and is developing guidance. The internet watch foundation plays a role too. We need to be careful when talking about bullying online and drift into talking about sexual exploitation. Bullying is different to this – we must be careful in the way we talk

about this. There are dangers in conflating sexual violence and bullying. We don't want to play this down but not all sexting is abuse. Experimentation cannot be demonised. We're talking behaviour not grooming and rape etc. We can't lump all online behaviours and concerns together.

Catriona said that we do need robust policies in place and put into action about mobiles in schools. It is the job of the classroom teacher to manage this in the way they do other behaviour. Phone use is part of responsible online behaviour.

Susan said Borders has an authority wide policy on social media. This applies to all adults within the school not just teachers. The new policy is clear on not always recording as a bullying experience – it is about the view and experience. We are behind the times in tackling the platform - we can do buses and corridors (eg widen corridors for less confrontation).

Laura from Zero Tolerance said they have been working with the Women's Support Project on young people's experiences of porn culture.

Kezia said she had plans to do some work later in the year to look at some of these issues as part of the everyday project.

Kim said we should look at the importance of working early on about respect for themselves and others. This cuts across areas - racism, homophobia etc. It is a continuum rather than separately defined. Prevention early on will be important factor.

14.25 Action points and date of next meeting

Kezia asked meeting participants to please put ideas for direct action on the flipcharts to take up with Alasdair Allan when she meets him. She thanked the speakers and noted that the next meeting would take place on Thursday 14th March.