



Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council
Services For Children And Young People Scrutiny Panel
Review Of Bullying In Schools

Contents

	<u>Paragraph</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
<u>Chair's Introduction</u>	1	1
<u>Summary</u>	2	2
<u>Membership of the Scrutiny Panel</u>	3	3
<u>Terms of Reference</u>	4	4
<u>Background</u>	5	4
<u>Methodology</u>	6	5
<u>Legislation and Responsibilities</u>	7	6 – 7
<u>Tameside Council Policy</u>	8	8 – 10
<u>Services and Support available from the Council</u>	9	10 – 17
<u>Monitoring and Recording Bullying</u>	10	17 – 29
<u>Anti-bullying Activity in Schools</u>	11	29 - 38
<u>Text and Online Bullying</u>	12	38 - 41
<u>Support for Parents</u>	13	41 – 45
<u>Tackling Bullying – other organisations</u>	14	46 – 49
<u>Borough Treasurer's Comments</u>	15	50
<u>Borough Solicitor's Comments</u>	16	50 – 54
<u>Recommendations</u>	17	54 – 55
<u>Appendix - Project Plan</u>		56 - 58

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1. Chair's Introduction

Bullying can be a major blight on children's lives and cause untold misery to its victims.

This review considered how effective the Council's policies are in addressing bullying, the level of resources available for anti-bullying activities in schools and good practice preventing and monitoring incidents of bullying and engagement with pupils, parents and staff.



Bullying is identified in the outcomes for Every Child Matters and the Children Act 2004. The Children Commissioner's first report was on this subject. Earlier the School Standards and Framework Act 1999 gave schools a specific duty to combat bullying and have an anti-bullying policy. During the course of this review, the Scrutiny Panel has met with many people who have provided information and members of the Panel are very grateful for this assistance. Special mention must go to those school pupils met or visited by Panel members and have made real progress in dealing with bullying themselves through various initiatives. It proves that by concerted action and working together, bullying can be overcome.

The Scrutiny Panel also encountered good practice elsewhere and this has been included in the report. Members were especially concerned that schools should record all incidents of bullying. The worrying modern practice of so called "cyber bullying" using text and online contacts is especially pernicious and this report makes several recommendations aimed at helping to address this problem. A number of schools provide help for parents and again these services are outlined in this report.

The Council is preparing a new policy to deal with bullying that should be available at the end of 2006 and this should also contain examples of good practice that can be a model for all schools.

Finally, I cannot let this pass without mentioning the sad death of Paul Flindall who had been a co-opted member of the Lifelong Learning and Cultural Services Scrutiny Panel and this Panel since their inception. He was a stalwart supporter of scrutiny often recently in poor health and was a tireless worker on scrutiny reviews. He will be sadly missed.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'VR', written over a horizontal line.

Councillor Vincent Ricci

Chair, Services to Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel

2. Summary

The review reports on efforts being made to combat bullying in Tameside schools and provide support for victims of bullying and parents and how perpetrators of bullying are addressed.

The Scrutiny Panel considered the views of key stakeholders including school pupils and parents as well as those responsible for delivering policies to deal with bullying. Bullying is regarded as a very significant issue by Every Child Matters and the Children Act 2004, and is referred to twice in the five outcomes.

The Council currently has a model policy on bullying and the Anti Bullying Steering Group is developing a more comprehensive policy that will include examples of good practice.

The responsibility for school anti bullying policies lies with the school governing body and the Panel was keen that governors were aware of their responsibilities and were involved in the formation and monitoring of policies. The Anti Bullying Steering Group has regular links with the North West Anti Bullying network to learn from good practice elsewhere and the Council wanted to provide a clear lead on anti bullying activity.

The majority of support for schools is provided by the Education Psychology Service and work was also taking place to promote positive behaviour in schools and share good practice. In Tameside anti bullying measures had been mainstreamed into a variety of services although Education Psychologists generally led this work. This contrasted to a number of authorities where anti bullying work was the responsibility of a dedicated officer or team. The Steering Group, however, felt that any additional resources should go to improving services rather than fund a new post and that mainstreaming gives a sense of shared ownership of the problem.

Some authorities also have high profile incentive and reward schemes. Tameside does not follow this practice but instead is developing a set of Inclusion Standards that will encourage all pupils to feel that they are useful members of the school community. Although schools are not statutorily obliged to monitor and collect bullying data, it was considered to be recommended good practice and was supported by the Panel.

The Panel was informed about the national anti bullying strategies that promoted positive behaviour and achieving higher standards. This was also dealt with in Personal, Social and Health Education and Citizenship lessons.

There were also many other agencies that promoted anti bullying work and support. Schools themselves had their own strategies for tackling bullying. Learning mentors and peer tutors were also active in anti bullying work and worked with especially vulnerable pupils. The report contains several examples where pupils themselves have taken positive action to prevent bullying such as the Anti Bullying Club at Astley High School.

A more recent problem is text and on line bullying often referred to as "cyber bullying". Text and online bullying is recognised as a growing problem and are offences under the Telecommunications Act 1984 and the Protection from Harassment Act 1997. Agencies, mobile phone and internet companies are becoming more aware of this problem and users can be protected from this abuse.

The Panel found good examples of support for parents in both primary and secondary schools and support was also available from the Education Welfare Service and voluntary

organisations such as Off The Record. There were also examples in other authorities that provide direct support and advice to those affected bullying and their families. The Panel commissioned consultations with parents of both primary and secondary pupils and it was felt that dealing with secondary schools provided the greatest challenge. It was suggested that a form of web based portal should be made available for children to register their concerns. Parents also felt that in dealing with bullying both the target and the perpetrator should be supported.

3. Membership of the Scrutiny Panel

2005/06

Councillors Ricci (Chair), Baines (Deputy Chair), A L Gwynne, P Harrison, W Harrison, Highton, Meredith, Shepherd, Warrington, Walsh, Welsby and Wild

Mrs Susan Marsh (Church of England)

Rev Father Walsh (Roman Catholic Church)

Mr Stephen Howse (Parent Governor)

Mr Paul Flindall (Advisory Group)

Mr Nisar Ahmed (Representative of the Muslim Faith)

Mrs Taramati Sharma (Representative of the Hindu Faith)

2006/07

Councillors Ricci (Chair), Ambler (Deputy Chair), Beeley, Bray, W Downs, Etchells, W Harrison, Highton, Sullivan, Warrington, Wild

Mrs S Marsh (Church of England)

Rev Father Walsh (Roman Catholic Church)

Mr Stephen Howse (Parent Governor)

Mr Nisar Ahmed (Representative of the Muslim Faith)

Mrs Taramati Sharma (Representative of the Hindu Faith)

4. Terms of Reference

Aim of the Scrutiny Review

To evaluate the effectiveness of the Council's anti-bullying policy and practices for achieving the outcomes of Every Child Matters. A copy of the Project Plan is appended to this report.

Objectives

- A.** Assess the development of the Council's Anti-bullying Policy.
- B.** Identify services, training and other resources available from the Council to schools and the school community (teaching staff, pupils, governors and parents) and consider the level of take-up of this provision.
- C.** Consider good practice in Tameside and in other local authority areas.
- D.** Consider how the Council monitors the extent of bullying in Tameside and how individual incidents of bullying are recorded and monitored in schools
- E.** Gather feedback from teaching staff, pupils, governors and parents about Council policy and provision for tackling bullying in schools.

5. Background

- 5.1 Almost 140,000 children and young people in the UK called Childline between April 2004 and March 2005 – one in four called because they had been bullied.
- 5.2 The Services for Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel (previously the Lifelong Learning and Cultural Services Scrutiny Panel) began the review of bullying in schools in January 2006. This was a direct suggestion from a Member of the Scrutiny Panel. Members of the Panel were aware of recent bullying incidents in schools, including Tameside schools, some of which had been covered by the local and national media.
- 5.3 The Panel agreed to focus on the role of the Council in supporting anti-bullying activity, rather than the role of individual schools. The aim of the review was to "evaluate the effectiveness of the Council's anti-bullying policies and practices for achieving the outcomes of Every Child Matters".

6. Methodology

- 6.1 The Scrutiny Panel met with two Education Psychologists and a teacher from the Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties Outreach team to receive background information which was used to identify areas to be included in the Scrutiny Review.
- 6.2 The Head of Inclusive Services (previously the Head of Special Educational Needs) and Principal Education Psychologist attended a Scrutiny Panel meeting to discuss the development of the Council's Anti-Bullying Policy.
- 6.3 The Scrutiny Panel received information about services and support available from the Council to schools and anti-bullying activity in schools.
- 6.4 The North West Regional Coordinator for the Anti-Bullying Alliance attended a Scrutiny Panel meeting to discuss national, regional and local approaches to tackling bullying.
- 6.5 The Scrutiny Panel received information about organisations in Tameside and elsewhere in the UK which provide help to children and families affected by bullying.
- 6.6 Information was gathered from other local authorities about approaches to tackling bullying in particular, levels of officer support, methods of reporting and monitoring incidents and ways of gathering the views of children and young people.
- 6.7 The Learning Mentors' Group provided information about the role of Learning Mentors.
- 6.8 The Scrutiny Panel received information about how incidents of bullying and the views of children and young people are recorded by Tameside schools and Tameside Council.
- 6.9 Pupils from Mossley Hollins High School, Astley Sport College and Pinfold Primary School attended a Scrutiny Panel Meeting to discuss their views and experiences and the anti-bullying activity in their schools.
- 6.10 Members of the Scrutiny Panel visited Hyde Technology School to see the school's anti-bullying pledge and mural and to receive a demonstration of the school's confidential messaging system.
- 6.11 The School Council at Alder High School was consulted about their views and experiences and the anti-bullying activity in their school.
- 6.12 Parents were consulted through discussion groups about their views, experiences, role and support needed.
- 6.13 The Cabinet Deputy for Services for Children and Young People, the Head of Inclusive Services, the lead Education Psychologist for anti-bullying activity and the Equalities Officer for Education attended a meeting of the Scrutiny Panel to answer final questions before the Scrutiny Panel concluded the review.

7. Legislation and responsibilities

- 7.1 Every Child Matters and the Children Act 2004 launched a radical new agenda for children and young people's services and for achieving better outcomes for all children and young people. Five outcomes were identified and tackling bullying is mentioned specifically in two of these – bullying is mentioned specifically within the outcomes 'Stay Safe' (ensure children and young people are safe from bullying and discrimination) and 'Make a Positive Contribution' (ensure children and young people develop positive relationships and choose not to bully or discriminate).
- 7.2 The Office of the Children's Commissioner was created as a result of the Children Act. The first report of the Children's Commissioner has been on bullying, which underlines the significance of the issue.
- 7.3 The School Standards and Framework Act 1999 gave schools a specific duty to combat bullying and have an anti-bullying policy. Schools are also legally required to have an up to date anti-bullying policy which complies with the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Race Equality Act 2000.
- 7.4 Schools' anti-bullying policies are the responsibility of the Governing Body. The Scrutiny Panel were concerned about the level of engagement of Governors and Governors' awareness of their responsibilities.
- 7.5 The Council can monitor schools' policies through the work of Behaviour Advisors and the Healthy Schools Teams. A survey is also being carried out by the Anti-Bullying Steering Group to verify the existence of anti-bullying policies and to establish who was involved in the development of the policy (see 8.10 for more information about the Anti-Bullying Steering Group and 9.2.11 for more information about the survey).
- 7.6 Tackling bullying is part of the Department for Education and Skills' strategy for improving behaviour and attendance. The DfES has produced guidance for schools on tackling bullying and also sponsors the National Anti-Bullying Alliance.
- 7.7 The Anti-Bullying Alliance (hereinafter 'the ABA') is an independent body sponsored by the DfES and launched in 2002 by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (hereinafter 'the NSPCC') and National Children's Bureau (hereinafter 'the NCB') which hosts and runs the ABA.
- 7.8 The aim of the ABA is to combine the expertise in the public, private, voluntary and academic sectors to create better outcomes for children and young people.
- 7.9 The ABA has established nine regional networks made up of local authorities and other organisations operating at a regional or local level which can add value to the network. Each network has a part time Regional Coordinator. In Tameside's case this role is shared by two people based at Rochdale Council and the Children's Society. The role of the Coordinators is to plan and deliver anti-bullying activity amongst the regional members which supports the work of LEAs and schools, to share best practice between local authorities within the region, and to disseminate information from the national body. The Coordinators also help to identify priorities for the region. The North West

Network has established two working groups to examine racist and homophobic bullying. There has also been a particular focus on promoting Peer Support programmes for pupils and on establishing a programme of support for parents.

- 7.10 The Coordinators work at various levels and with different groups – local authorities, schools, pupils, the media and general public. Support can take various forms including conferences and training, media campaigns, award schemes and events and projects for children and young people.
- 7.11 Regional Coordinators link with local authorities, agencies and organisations in their region. At Tameside the link is made primarily with the Education Psychology Team (although other officers have attended from the Education Welfare Service, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties Outreach team, and Behaviour Advisors) which then disseminates information to the Tameside Anti-Bullying Steering Group.
- 7.12 The Coordinators have offered to work in Tameside schools. The schools identified for proposed work in 2006/07 are Hyde Technology School, Leigh Primary and Flowery Field Primary. Work will be targeted at Year 6 and 7.

Conclusions

1. The Panel is not fully confident that all schools have an up-to-date anti-bullying policy and therefore welcomes the efforts being made to identify where schools may require assistance with their anti-bullying policies and activities.
2. The Panel is concerned that Governing Bodies may not be fully involved in the development of schools' Anti-Bullying Policies.
3. The Panel welcomes the input from the Anti-Bullying Alliance Regional Coordinators directly in to Tameside schools.

Recommendations

1. That all schools be strongly encouraged to participate in the current survey of anti-bullying activity being carried out by the Anti-Bullying Steering Group and that the Steering Group continues with the survey until all schools have responded.
2. That the Council ensures all schools have an anti-bullying policy.
3. That Governing Bodies be reminded of their responsibilities for ensuring schools have an effective anti-bullying policy and that a Link Governor for Anti-Bullying be identified at each school.
4. That, if successful outcomes are achieved, the Council should negotiate further input from the Anti-Bullying Alliance Regional Coordinators directly in to Tameside schools and that the work carried out be used as a model for use in other schools.

8. Tameside Council Policy

- 8.1 The first objective of the review was to assess the development of the Council's Anti-bullying Policy.
- 8.2 Tameside Council is currently developing a new Anti-Bullying Policy. To date the Council has included bullying in its policies for promoting positive behaviour in schools and has provided a specimen policy for schools to adopt. The Council has not previously had a stand alone, corporate anti-bullying policy. In an informal survey carried out by the North West Regional Coordinators, eight Local Authorities of the thirteen which responded said that they had a borough-wide anti-bullying policy. This reflects the response from the Head of Special Education Needs and current lead on policy development at a previous Panel Meeting, that Tameside is not unusual in not yet having a borough-wide anti-bullying policy.
- 8.3 This new policy will be a 'Policy for Educational Establishments' in recognition of other areas which could have a role, in tackling bullying, for example the youth service.
- 8.4 Tameside's new policy will be a formalised Council policy on bullying in schools and will set out the Council's position on bullying. The aim of the policy will be to support schools in tackling this issue and help strengthen strategies by sharing ideas.
- 8.5 Work on the new policy is in the very early stages and a draft document is not yet available for circulation. The timescale for completion is December 2006.
- 8.6 The Panel's review is very timely as there may be an opportunity for the Scrutiny Panel to make recommendations which contribute to the development of the Council's new anti-bullying policy.
- 8.7 The new policy will be a resource for schools to use in tackling bullying. The Scrutiny Panel was informed that the new policy will cover bullying of and by any member of the school community. The policy will be entirely web-based in order to make it accessible and for updates and additions to be made and shared more easily. It will form part of the Safeguarding Children webpages on the Council's website.
- 8.8 The policy is expected to include the following:
- Definitions and guidance on identifying bullying
 - Information about proactive and reactive resources available from the Council and other sources
 - Good practice in monitoring
 - Roles and responsibilities of everyone in the school community (pupils, teachers and parents)
 - A model school policy to help schools adopt and implement the ideas in the Council's policy.

- 8.9 The Scrutiny Panel was informed that the policy would be targeted at schools in Tameside. Children resident in Tameside but attending schools outside the borough are subject to the policies of the school they attend.
- 8.10 A Steering Group has been established to develop the Anti-Bullying Policy. Membership includes Educational Psychologists, Education Welfare Officers, Behaviour and Attendance Consultants, Education Equalities Officer, Mental Health Nurse (Child and Family Services), Emotional, Behavioural and Social Difficulties Outreach Officer, and an officer from the Equality Multi-culturalism and Access Team.
- 8.11 The group meets regularly and links with the North West Anti-Bullying Network to learn from other local authority anti-bullying policies.
- 8.12 Work on the new policy is progressing alongside the development of the Council's Behaviour Strategy. The Head of Inclusive Services is keen to ensure that tackling bullying behaviour is seen as part of the promotion of positive behaviour in schools.
- 8.13 The Panel queried how stakeholders would be consulted about the new policy. Consultation about the new policy will include an impact assessment, discussion at the Head Teachers' Conference, the Tameside Consultative Committee and Learning Support Unit Network, and consultation with a lead behaviour specialist. The involvement of pupils and parents in the development of the new policy has not yet been determined.
- 8.14 When interviewed by the Scrutiny Panel, the North West Regional Coordinator for the Anti-Bullying Alliance felt that policy development should involve young people. The Children's Commissioner recommends that strategies are based on the views of children and young people.
- 8.15 Pupils' awareness of this and other policies was raised by a member of the Panel at a previous Scrutiny Panel Meeting attended by the Head of Inclusive Services. As a result consideration will be given to how children and young people are made aware of the new policy, including the potential for a young-people friendly version of the policy.
- 8.16 In addition, the Scrutiny Panel's concern that parents are provided with information about how to recognise bullying has also been acknowledged by the lead Officer.

Conclusions

4. The Panel welcomes the development of a Council Anti-Bullying Policy for Educational Establishments which will provide a clear lead from the Council on anti-bullying activity as well as useful guidance for schools.

Recommendations

5. That school policies be reviewed in light of the new Council policy.
6. That a young person and parent-friendly version of the new policy in leaflet form be produced and made available to Elected Members and School Governors.
7. That all stakeholders, including children and young people, parents and governors, are involved in the continued development of the Council's Anti-Bullying Policy.

9. Services and support available from the Council

9.1 A further objective of the review was to identify support available from the Council to schools including teaching staff, pupils, governors and parents, and to consider the level of take-up of these services.

9.2 Services and support

9.2.1 As mentioned above, the lead officer for anti-bullying work in Tameside is the Head of Inclusive Services.

9.2.2 The Educational Psychology Team, along with Behaviour and Attendance Consultants and the Healthy Schools Team, provides the majority of support to schools around tackling bullying. Education Psychologists disseminate research and provide practical support in schools including staff training on non-violent communication and training for peer mediators (one of the most popular methods of promoting positive behaviour and resolving issues).

9.2.3 A Senior Education Psychologist leads the Anti-Bullying Steering Group, mentioned above. As well as developing the new policy, the Steering Group was partly established to promote better communication between the range of services with a role to play in tackling bullying and agree a common purpose around tackling bullying.

9.2.4 Scrutiny Support Officers were informed by the Steering Group that an action plan was being developed by the Education Psychology Service and Equalities Officer which would greatly benefit the work of the group and provide better direction for anti-bullying work in Tameside. The action plan is expected to include:

- Completing the new Anti-bullying policy
- Raising awareness around specific issues
- Holding the Anti-Bullying Week Tameside Conference
- Developing monitoring and evaluation practices
- Delivering proactive work particularly around supporting non-teaching staff and junior teaching staff

- Establishing a consultation group with children and young people
- Examining the role of parents and support
- Carrying out a needs assessment in schools

9.2.5

There are a number of services working to promote positive behaviour in schools and provide support to pupils, parents and schools. Many of these are part of the Steering Group. Anti-bullying work features to a greater or lesser extent in the work of these services. The Educational Psychology Service provided information about these services which includes:

- Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties Outreach Team promotes positive behaviour in schools on an individual, group and whole class level.
- The School Improvement Service supports schools in achieving the Healthy Schools Standard, part of which includes work around positive behaviour and bullying, and also in delivering effective Personal Social and Health Education. The Ethnicity Multi-culturalism and Access Team (previously the Ethnic Minority Achievement Team) is also based in the School Improvement Service and helps schools raise the attainment of pupils from ethnic minorities which can include addressing racism and bullying.
- The Behaviour and Attendance Teacher-coach from the Curriculum Development Unit helps schools implement the Primary Strategy which supports schools in the implementation of some strands of the Primary Strategy including Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL). The Secondary Strategy Behaviour and Attendance Consultant also supports secondary schools in developing good practice in this area. SEAL will be published in the secondary phase some time next year.
- Behaviour and Education Support Teams (BESTs) are multi-agency teams that work with groups of schools where children have, or are at risk of developing, behavioural problems which can lead to poor attendance and exclusion. BESTs support schools and pupils through whole school activities group work and on an individual basis. There are two BESTs in Tameside supporting nine schools in Ashton, Hyde and Hattersley.
- Learning Mentors are employed by schools to help pupils address barriers to learning through one-to-one work, group work and peer meditation projects. Learning Mentors will help resolve bullying issues where appropriate. There are around 48 Learning Mentors in 10 High Schools and 29 Primary Schools in Tameside.
- The Education Welfare Service is concerned with pupil attendance. The Service works with pupils who have poor attendance. The service works with pupils, parents and schools to address the reasons for non-attendance. The service provides information about dealing with bullying in the Council's webpages, leaflets for parents and delivers sessions to a range of audiences on the problems children may encounter at schools.
- The Parent Partnership Service works with parents and carers of children with Special Educational Needs. Parents and carers may contact the service about tackling bullying.

- The Governor and Management Support Service delivers a training session on 'Safeguarding Children in Education' which briefly covers bullying.
- The Domestic Violence Forum, Community Cohesion Coordinators, and the Traveller, Refugee, Asylum Seeker Support Team (TRASST) also have an interest in tackling bullying and were present at the Anti-Bullying Conference in Hyde in November 2005.

9.2.6 Take-up and evaluation of these services is considered a major task and would demand a more extensive Scrutiny Review of each service. It is anticipated that the current survey being carried out by the Anti-Bullying Steering Group will help gauge schools' opinion of the services provided by the Council and where further support is required.

9.2.7 The Scrutiny Panel was interested to know what other opportunities existed for sharing good practices amongst service providers and schools. This is said to be done in a variety of ways including through the Behaviour Advisors visits to schools, through the Healthy Schools Team, through the Behaviour and Education Support Teams, by the Emotional and Behavioural Outreach Team and through the Learning Support Unit Network.

9.2.8 The Steering Group has the role of coordinating local activities as part of National Anti-Bullying Week. In 2005, a half-day conference (repeated in the afternoon) was held at Hyde Town Hall. The conference was attended by schools, Council services and other agencies. Schools displayed their work on bullying and pupils talked to delegates about tackling bullying. Pupils and delegates were involved in discussion groups about what makes a happy and healthy school. Pupils from Mossley Hollins had been exploring bullying issues through drama and performed short sketches which they had prepared. Pupils had also nominated adults they were able to talk to about bullying and awards for both adults and pupils were presented at the conference.

9.2.9 The Steering Group is currently designing the conference for this year's National Anti-Bullying Week which will have the theme of the role of bystanders. The group has learned a lot from the first conference and is making improvements where appropriate by building on elements that worked, such as the drama performances, awards (this year around proactive bystanders and receptive teachers), and to have a morning and afternoon session. A more appropriate venue will be found and there will be a longer lead up to the event and more far-reaching publicity. Other potential changes will be to run workshops on specific issues and invite a guest speaker.

9.2.10 The Steering Group will attempt to maintain the momentum around Anti-Bullying Week over a longer period to ensure that anti-bullying activity is not confined to one week a year.

9.2.11 The Steering Group is also in the process of gathering information from schools about anti-bullying activity, specifically around the existence of an anti-bullying policy, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and training needs. The questions will be open ended allowing schools to submit unprompted information which in itself will send useful messages to the service. The original deadline for this survey was the end of July and information will be used to draw

a more accurate picture of anti-bullying work in schools and highlight areas of need.

- 9.2.12 At a Scrutiny Panel Meeting on 25th July 2006, the Panel was informed that 25 primary schools and 11 high schools had responded to the survey. The deadline for the survey has therefore been extended and schools which had not yet responded will be contacted by telephone.

9.3 Officer Support for Anti-Bullying Work

- 9.3.1 During the review, the Scrutiny Panel considered approaches to anti-bullying work in other local authorities. One of the issues that has been discussed by the Panel was the level of officer support given over to anti-bullying work.

- 9.3.2 In summary, there are a number of models of officer support including a strategic lead without any dedicated officer time, a single dedicated officer or a team of officers and working/task groups. The effectiveness of dedicated resources is often measured by the impact on levels of bullying. This is often done through pupil opinion surveys and feedback from schools.

- 9.3.3 In Tameside, as in other local authorities, support for schools comes from a variety of services. However, Tameside does not have a dedicated full-time lead Officer for anti-bullying work in the borough. Anti-bullying work is 'mainstreamed' into a variety of services and Education Psychologists have a general overview of work, lead the Anti-Bullying Steering Group, and represent Tameside on the ABA North West Network. This compares to other local authorities, such as Leicestershire (team of two full time and three part-time officers), County Durham (Service Manager, Team Leader, a Senior Coordinator and 11 Anti-Bullying Coordinators) and Lancashire (the post of Teacher Advisor for Anti-Bullying was one of the first of its kind in the country when it was created in 2003) and Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (Anti-Bullying Support Officer previously in post for 3 years being replaced by an full time Anti-Bullying Development Worker with administration support).

- 9.3.4 The Anti-Bullying Strategy Manager from Leicestershire County Council feels that recent improvements in the level of bullying in the county, shown in the annual survey of 32,000 pupils, are due to more effective practices in schools and also the result of having dedicated officer support. Dedicated officer support in Leicestershire has increased from one officer five years ago to two full time and three part time officers at present. Additional funding for these posts was secured because the project had been seen to be having a positive effect.

- 9.3.5 Following feedback from a young people's conference in 2003 East Sussex County Council identified a Lead Strategic Officer for Anti-Bullying. Following increased demand for more active involvement in case work and preventative activities, in 2006 the Council created the post of Anti-Bullying Case Worker. Since January 2006, the Case Worker has supported 63 pupils.

- 9.3.6 Few of the Metropolitan Borough Councils contacted for the purposes of the review currently employ a dedicated Officer to work on tackling bullying. Of those contacted only Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council has a specific post. For approximately three years, Rotherham Council has had an Anti-

Bullying Support Officer. The post-holder recently moved on and the Council has taken the opportunity to alter the role slightly. The Council is about to advertise for an Anti-Bullying Development Worker which will be a full time post with admin support.

- 9.3.7 There is a great deal of support at Rotherham Council for the dedicated resources for bullying. Most recently the Council's Scrutiny Panel Members met to review anti-bullying activities and concluded that this type of support is very important if the Council is to make a difference in this area. The Council plan to do an impact assessment in two years time using base-line data currently being gathered. This baseline data will include any available information on the level of bullying (including complaints received by the Council) and also the level of school activity. The Council will use this information to evaluate the effectiveness of the policies in place and the level of officer support dedicated to tackling bullying.
- 9.3.8 Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council is considering funding a dedicated post. This has arisen out of an existing commitment by the Council to tackle bullying and the increased workload of recent months around data collection, strategy development and coordination, which is anticipated to grow as the Steering Group and Anti-Bullying Forum pursue further aims including support to parents, and addressing text and online bullying in particular.
- 9.3.9 Wigan MBC has a similar model to Tameside for anti-bullying work. The Head of the Personal, Social and Health Education and Citizenship Team provides the strategic lead of anti-bullying work in Wigan and leads a Task Group of associated services.
- 9.3.10 The Anti-Bullying Steering Group was asked for an opinion on the level of officer support at Tameside. There is a feeling that the Steering Group works well as an approach to tackling bullying. The group was described as democratic and that it was not a 'stitch-up' with issues already decided.
- 9.3.11 The Steering Group felt that bullying as an issue would benefit from more resources but these should be used to increase the resources within existing services rather than providing dedicated officer support. There may also be opportunities for funding one-off projects to carry out some of the work needed for example to complete an audit of parents' needs.
- 9.3.12 There is also a feeling that whilst there are a lot of people 'on the ground' doing good work and the message from the top of the Council is clear, there is perhaps a gap in between these two levels. More operational direction may be needed, although support has always been forthcoming if requested. It is felt by members of the Steering Group that the new Action Plan being developed by the Education Psychology Team will provide greater cohesion, focus and direction.
- 9.3.13 There is a view that mainstreaming anti-bullying activity into a variety of services provides a sense of shared responsibility which could be weakened if others came to rely on a single named Officer or team. Additional resources may be better spent on the range of services already available rather than dedicated support.

- 9.3.14 When consulted by the Scrutiny Panel, the North West Regional Coordinator for the Anti-Bullying Alliance felt that the importance of tackling bullying is not to be under-estimated and requires a great deal of work. The Regional Coordinator was positive about the current arrangements in Tameside and the work of the Steering Group.
- 9.3.15 The Regional Coordinator noted however, that additional support does not have to be provided directly by the Council and an external organisation could provide this support. For example Rochdale Council contracted the Children's Society to produce an anti-bullying policy for the area and subsequently contracted the Society to deliver the anti-bullying strategy.

9.4 Area-wide accreditation and award schemes

- 9.4.1 Some other local authorities have high-profile area-wide accreditation and award schemes.
- 9.4.2 Derbyshire County Council first piloted the 'Anti-Bullying Commitment' (hereinafter 'the ABC') scheme 1996. According to the promotional material for the scheme, the ABC was established to provide a "structured yet accessible scheme, which would enable participating schools to follow a pathway through a succession of awards and in doing so, develop a clear framework for anti-bullying work and celebrate good practice". The scheme was included in the authority's Scrutiny Committee report on bullying. The Report recommended further officer support for the ABC scheme and that it be promoted to other Councils as a way of sharing the initiative and generating income. The scheme is about to be published as a package to be sold to other areas.
- 9.4.3 An Anti-bullying Accreditation Scheme which recognises and celebrates work in schools has been running in County Durham for two years and is now being extended to all schools in the North East. To achieve accreditation each year, schools must fulfil set criteria which include having a working group, completing an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy, running a peer support scheme and providing information to parents.
- 9.4.4 Tameside does not have a scheme similar to those mentioned above. However, Tameside is currently developing a set of Inclusion Standards which schools will work to in order to become fully inclusive of all children. Achievement of these Standards will help ensure that everyone in the school feels that they are a valuable member of the school community. In terms of tackling bullying, an inclusive environment is expected to promote positive behaviour and good relationships. The Inclusion Standards will cover twelve aspects of school life including promoting a welcoming environment, professional development, access, community partnerships, and the curriculum. Each aspect will have ten or twelve ways in which this can be demonstrated. Schools carry out a self-evaluation and can request an assessment of this evaluation from the Council. Schools will be encouraged to use the outcome of the self-evaluation to inform the School Improvement Programme which will also be beneficial to Ofsted inspections. The Inclusion Standards are currently being piloted with a view to full launch in January 2007.
- 9.4.5 When asked about this issue, the lead Educational Psychologist at Tameside for anti-bullying activity felt that there is potential for schools which have

received such an accolade to be subject to even greater criticism should bullying be reported at the school. This could also undermine the award/accreditation scheme itself. However, it is important to celebrate good practice when it is found. This is a view shared by the North West Regional Coordinator for the Anti-bullying Alliance. In Tameside schools are encouraged to apply for the Princess Diana Anti-Bullying Award; currently, two schools hold the Award. Some examples of good practice have been covered in the local press (Astley and Hyde Technology schools).

9.4.6 Tameside, as with all other local authorities, supports schools to achieve the National Healthy Schools Standard which is a nation-wide scheme launched by the DfES in 1999. The Healthy Schools Scheme is an important tool for schools to use to work towards national priorities, including the anti-bullying agenda. It is also a useful way for Councils to gauge schools' progress in these areas.

9.4.7 There are 4 core themes to the Healthy Schools Standard:

- Personal Social and Health Education
- Healthy eating
- Physical activity
- Emotional health and well-being (including bullying)

9.4.8 Tameside has targets set down by government for schools participating in and achieving the Healthy Schools Standard. These are as follows:

Target	Current position
100% of schools to be recruited to the scheme by 2009.	Of all 102 schools (including Pupil Referral Units), 75 (74%) are signed up to the scheme.
50% of schools to achieve accreditation by April 2006 (Accreditation scheme changed in September 2005)	44 schools (43%) achieved the standard under the previous accreditation scheme – these schools have until 2007 to demonstrate they can achieve the new criteria and it is very likely that this will happen. The remaining 7% of schools within the target will work towards achieving the new scheme of accreditation by April 2006.

9.4.9 Schools with greater than 20% free school meal entitlement receive targeted support to achieve the Healthy Schools Standard. Of the 44 schools with greater than 20% free school meal entitlement, 42 are signed up to the scheme.

Conclusions

5. The Panel welcomes the progress that has been made in to establishing an Anti-Bullying Steering Group, in particular the development of an action plan for the group.
6. The Anti-Bullying Policy has an ambitious action plan and the effort required is not to be underestimated.

Recommendations

8. That the Council consider creating a temporary seconded post or commissioning support to deliver on some pieces of work on the action plan developed by the Anti-Bullying Steering Group.

10. Monitoring and Recording bullying

- 10.1 The Scrutiny Panel was keen to explore how the Council monitors the extent of bullying in Tameside and how individual incidents are recorded and followed-up. The Education Psychologists also felt that it would be helpful to the work of the Council for the Scrutiny Panel to consider effective and consistent monitoring practices.
- 10.2 This section includes:
 - Information collected by the Council
 - Information collected by schools
 - Information collected in other local authority areas
 - Comments from the Tameside Anti-Bullying Steering Groups on recording and monitoring bullying.
 - Recording racist incidents
- 10.3 In summary:
 - Some data exists which could indicate the level of bullying, and bullying has been included in some borough-wide consultation. There is currently no borough-wide recording mechanism or method of collecting pupil views from across age groups which gives a clear picture of the extent of bullying in Tameside.
 - Schools are not required to record incidents of bullying or pupils' views although it is best practice to do so. There are examples of this in Tameside.

- Some other Councils have introduced area-wide recording mechanisms, carry out borough-wide surveys and/or provide schools with models for recording incidents and pupil views.
- Schools must record racist incidents. Tameside Council produced new guidance and a revised form for this purpose in September 2005.

10.4. Information collected by the Council

- 10.4.1 The Council currently does not have a system in place for collecting borough-wide information about bullying which covers a wide age range of children and young people.
- 10.4.2 Schools which voluntarily collect this information do not have to provide it to the LEA.
- 10.4.3 Below are a variety of sources of information which may help to paint a picture of the extent of bullying in Tameside.

10.5 Concerns and Complaints

- 10.5.1 Parents cannot make an official complaint about a school to the Council. Formal complaints can only be made to individual schools through a four stage process. The Council will only become involved if, after the completion of the process, parents are still dissatisfied with the outcome. At this point the Council can agree to verify that schools followed the correct procedure.
- 10.5.2 The Council does not receive information from schools about the number of complaints received from parents, which may include complaints about bullying.
- 10.5.3 However, some parents initially contact the Council wishing to make a complaint about a school whereupon the formal procedure is explained to them and they are directed to their school. The Council voluntarily keeps a record of these contacts and any patterns which cause concern are followed up by the Executive Director for Children's Services. These complaints are not recorded on the Council's corporate complaints system.
- 10.5.4 Below are the top three reasons parents contacted the Council over two twelve month periods. It appears that it is not unusual for parents to contact the Council about bullying at their child's school. *Please be aware that this does not represent all complaints received by schools from parents. Some parents may have chosen not to pursue the issue having contacted the Council, whilst others may have contacted the school directly without ever contacting the Council.*

Sept 2003 to Sept 2004		Sept 2004 to Sept 2005	
Attitude of teaching staff	34	Bullying	27
Bullying	33	Attitude of teaching staff	23
Pupil behaviour	18	Pupil behaviour	16
All issues	14	All issues	13
	7		7

10.6 School transfers

10.6.1 The number of school transfers where bullying is cited as the reason may also give an indication the level of bullying in Tameside. Anecdotal evidence suggests that schools are unwilling to cite 'bullying' as the reason for the transfer due to the negative impact this might have on the school. The following information has been provided by the School Appeals Service at Tameside Council. Bullying is logged as a reason for transfer request in very few cases.

Primary Schools September 05 to April 06		Secondary Schools September 05 to April 06	
Total requests for transfer	498	Total requests for transfer	224
Transfers logged as 'bullying issues'	8	Transfers logged as 'bullying issues'	3

10.7 Schools' Ofsted Reports

10.7.1 Although Ofsted reports may not refer to bullying specifically, the Head of Inclusive Services reviews Tameside schools' Ofsted reports to identify any schools in which behaviour is deemed to be a cause for concern and which therefore may experience more incidents of bullying.

10.7.2 In 36 Ofsted reports for 2004 and 2005 the behaviour of pupils in only two schools was found to be 'not good enough' or 'satisfactory overall'. Behaviour in the remaining 34 schools inspected in 2004 and 2005 was felt to be 'good', 'very good' and in one case 'outstanding'.

10.8 Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership Audit 2005

10.8.1 The Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (hereinafter 'the CDRP') Audit for 2005 included consultation with young people. A consultation event was held in conjunction with the Tameside Youth Services and Greater Manchester Police. Around 75 young people, including disabled young people, aged between 14 and 17 attended the event.

10.8.2 Participants were asked to put in order the three main crimes they had been a victim of in the last three years. The first was violence, the second was being bullied at school, and the third was robbery (after 'other').

10.8.3 Overall 57% of participants said they had been bullied at school in the past three years.

10.8.4 Bullying was not included in the top three concerns of participants (these were drugs and alcohol, gangs of youths on the street, and being assaulted).

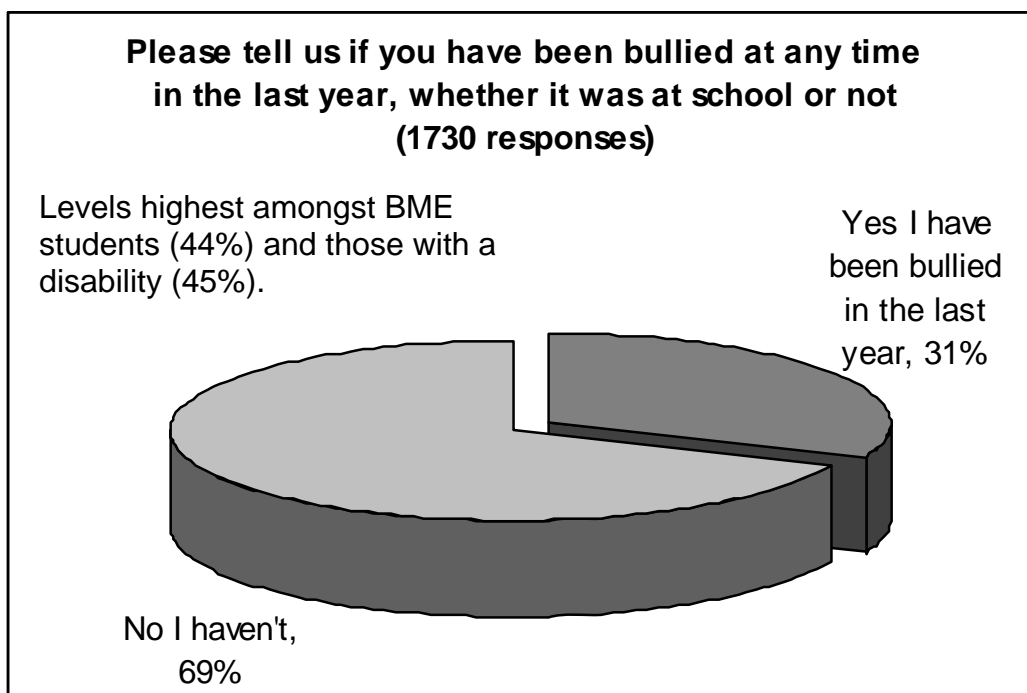
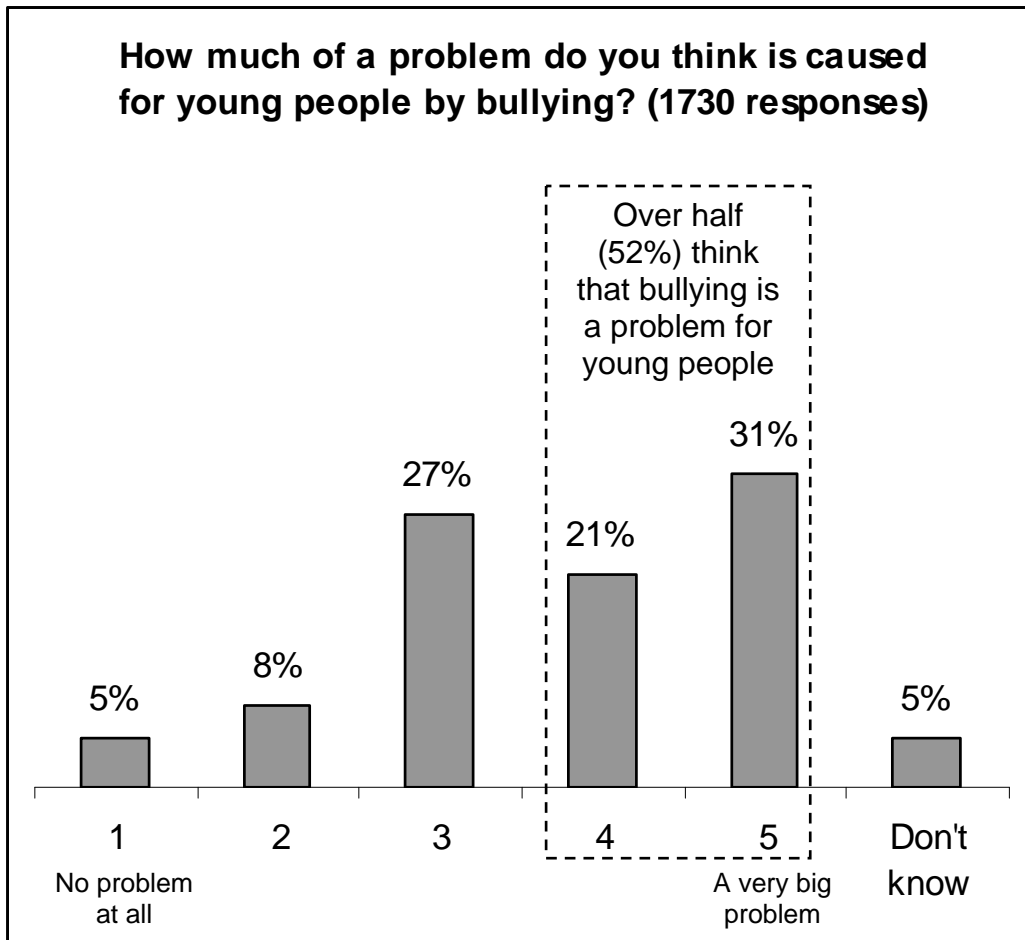
10.9 The Tameside Youth Online Survey

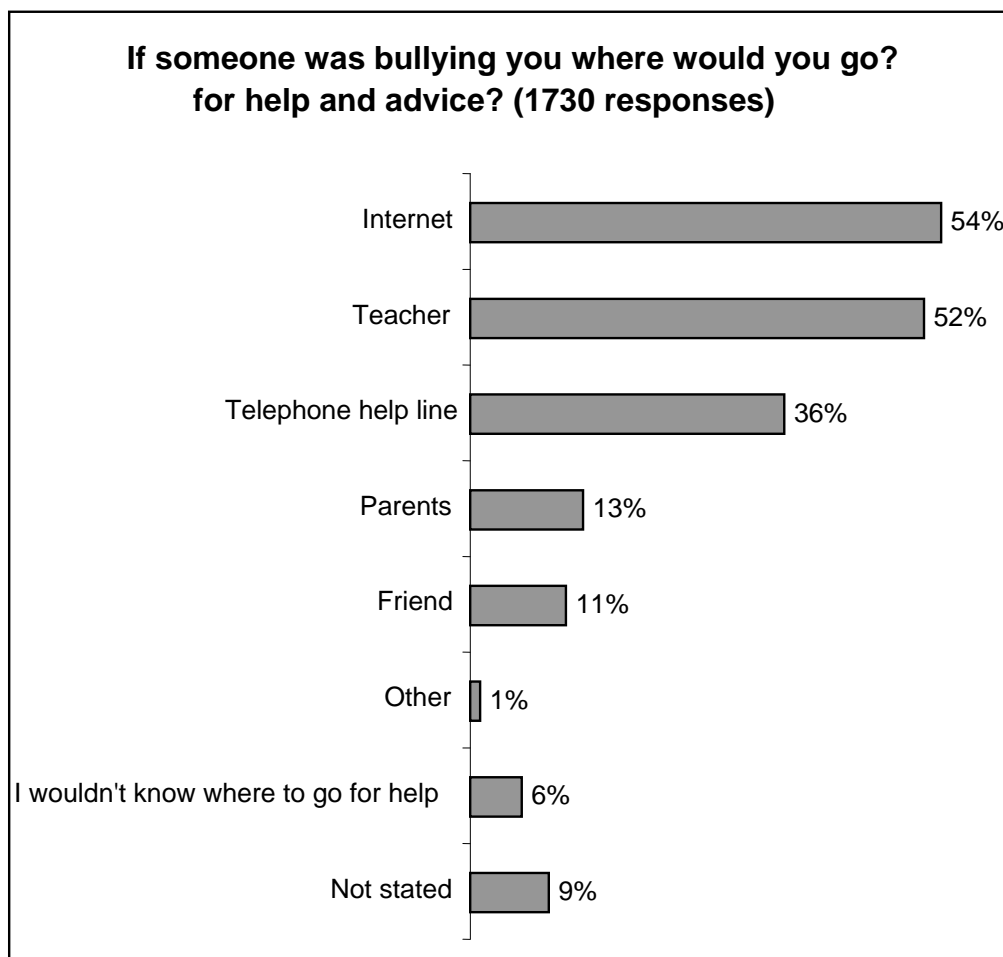
10.9.1 The Tameside Youth Online Survey is an electronic survey completed by Year 10 pupils in schools. The survey gives young people the opportunity to tell the Council what is good and bad about the borough, and give their views on a

range of issues including the appearance of the borough, crime, information and advice services, and healthy lifestyles.

10.9.2 This is the second year the Council has carried out the survey and the first time questions about bullying have appeared.

10.9.3 Results in relation to bullying were as follows:





10.9.4 Members of the Scrutiny Panel were concerned that these figures show higher levels of bullying reported by pupils from the ethnic minority communities and by pupils with a disability. The Scrutiny Panel was informed by the Head of Inclusive Services and the lead Education Psychologist that the Council is proactive in promoting new guidance produced by the DfES around tackling racist bullying and also support schools in addressing bullying on the grounds of prejudice for any reason.

10.10 Information collected by schools

10.10.1 Schools are not statutorily obliged to record incidents of bullying or collect pupils' views although it is considered best practice to do so by Ofsted and the Children's Commissioner. When consulted by the Scrutiny Panel, the North West Regional Coordinator for the Anti-Bullying Alliance also felt that it is good practice to monitor bullying not only in the interest of pupils but also in the event of any legal proceedings which may result from a case of bullying.

10.10.2 The Regional Coordinator also felt that schools can be reluctant to record negative incidents and risk being labelled as a bad school. However, the Regional Coordinator was of the view that schools which record incidents are seen to be more proactive and parents are often reassured if there are effective monitoring systems in place. The Regional Coordinator also felt that schools should be made to monitor incidents of bullying however this is difficult to enforce as schools are increasingly autonomous.

- 10.10.3 Although many examples of schools' monitoring and recording systems are known to officers in the Council, comprehensive information is not currently available from the Council about the proportion of schools which have systems in place for recording and monitoring bullying, how these systems function, and how effective they have been. As is mentioned above (9.2.11) the Anti-Bullying Steering Group is in the process of gathering information from schools about anti-bullying activity which will include monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. This will hopefully provide a more accurate picture of monitoring systems in place in schools and identify where further work may be needed.
- 10.10.4 The Scrutiny Panel was made aware that part of the definition of bullying is that it is persistent negative behaviour which occurs over time. Members of the Panel felt that it is important to record the first incident as these could lead to bullying behaviour. This would be particularly important if a pupil were to report incidents to different members of staff in the school as these incidents may be treated as isolated, one-off cases.
- 10.10.5 Members of the Scrutiny Panel and a Scrutiny Support Officer visited Hyde Technology School and received a demonstration of the school's new online system for recording pupils' concerns.
- 10.10.6 The online system replaced the 'problem box' in which pupils could post their issues and receive a response from a member of staff. The idea for the new system was originally developed by the School Council to enable pupils affected by bullying to contact a teacher. The system is however promoted as a resource to be used for any issue as it was felt that pupils may not wish to be seen using the system by other students.
- 10.10.7 Messages are retrieved by the nominated teacher who responds as soon as possible. Responses and the actions taken are stored on the system to allow for continuing monitoring. The system can provide information about the number of messages about different issues, including bullying, so that the school can use the system to evaluate the extent of bullying in the school.
- 10.10.8 At the time of the visit, the system was still under development and being piloted by the School Council. The program had been designed by a student from Manchester University on temporary work placement at the school.
- 10.10.9 This system is used alongside the school's pupil database. This shows all relevant information about each pupil including academic achievement, attendance and records of events including being involved in bullying. Schools can use the pupil information to identify any worrying patterns such as being a victim or perpetrator of bullying. It is also a useful tool for dealing with bullying as the events can be used as evidence of bullying.
- 10.10.10 Other examples of recording and monitoring mechanisms were found:
- Stamford High School record bullying on incident slips.
 - Fairfield High School carries out an annual survey of the views and experiences of Year 8 and 10 pupils and records bullying on a bullying incident monitoring form.
 - Waterloo and St Peters primary schools both run pupil surveys.

10.10.11 Greater Manchester Police School Liaison Officer is currently exploring a system which allows pupils to register concerns over bullying with their schools by text or email. This system is already being used in a school in Stockport.

10.11 Information collected in other local authority areas

10.11.1 Anti-Bullying Alliance Regional Coordinators were contacted for examples of data collection systems in local authorities in their region.

10.11.2 The 'Beyond Bullying Team' at Leicestershire County Council carries out a County-wide annual Student Attitude Survey (there are two versions of the survey for primary and secondary school pupils which includes sixth form students). The survey, which has been running for four years, comes in paper form and covers a variety of aspects of school life including lessons, appearance of the school, homework, teachers, parental support and personal safety which includes bullying.

10.11.3 The survey is created, administered and analysed in house by Leicestershire County Council. Schools contribute to the cost of the survey and in return receive detailed information for their school upon which they can base their own anti-bullying strategies.

10.11.4 Almost two thirds of all schools in the County (of which there are around 290) took part in the 2005/06 and over 32,000 pupils from Years 3 to 13 completed the survey.

10.11.5 Pupils are asked if they have been bullied in school in the last year. The 2005/06 survey shows that bullying has reduced in the area, especially in Years 5 and 6.

10.11.6 The Service would like to make participation from schools in the survey compulsory.

10.11.7 Brighton and Hove Council evaluates the effectiveness of anti-bullying work through an annual electronic survey in schools with Years 4-11. The 'Safe at School Survey' is completed online by pupils. Schools receive results for their school which helps with future planning. The Council uses the authority-wide data to monitor progress and target resources.

10.11.8 In the survey, as well as general questions about school and friends, pupils are asked if they have been bullied, how, when, where and by whom in the last school term and whether they sought help. They are also asked if they have seen someone else bullied, or if they have ever bullied anyone themselves. They are asked about how much bullying there is at their school and if their school is good at dealing with bullying.

10.11.9 Schools are also required to record incidents of bullying in a standard reporting form developed by the Council and to produce summary information to the Council along with the termly racist incident reports. Schools provide basic information to the Council about the types of bullying (general, homophobic, linked to disability) and the form it has taken (physical, verbal, non-verbal).

10.11.10 Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council has recently piloted a recording system for schools. The system was piloted in nine schools and developed over 8

months based on schools' experiences of using the system. The Anti-Bullying and Harassment Form is used to record homophobic and racist incidents and bullying and also general bullying incidents.

- 10.11.11 As a result of the pilot, the Council is aware that having an agreed definition of bullying is important for collecting accurate and standard data across the borough. Training around this issue is being introduced to raise awareness of bullying and the Council's agreed definition.
- 10.11.12 The Council considers schools' returns and encourages schools to access more support in this area if necessary. Schools' data is confidential to the school and the Council.
- 10.11.13 The Council considers the data from across the area to inform the borough-wide strategy.
- 10.11.14 The Council carries out an annual survey with 0-18 year olds which cover a range of issues including satisfaction with the area as a place to live, suggestions for improvements and issues affecting children and young people such as bullying (the results of the first survey were used to form the Council's Anti-Bullying Strategy).
- 10.11.15 Following a successful pilot, East Sussex County Council will be introducing an electronic Bullying Incident Form to be completed by schools alongside the Racist Incident Form. Schools will send termly reports to the Council. The Council hopes to see 40% of schools returning Bullying Incident Forms in 2006/07. This will be a challenge as not all schools are returning the Racist Incident Form which is a statutory requirement. To help encourage returns, the Council employs staff two days per week to make contact with schools and check on progress.
- 10.11.16 The form will also be used by other professionals including Education Psychologists and Connexions. The Council is also hoping that the School Liaison Officers from the Police will also use the same form. This will mean that the Council has a more accurate picture of bullying in the area based on standard data. A data sharing protocol is currently being developed to enable greater joint-agency cooperation.
- 10.11.17 Data collection is a key activity in East Sussex County Council's Anti-Bullying Strategy 2005-2008. Activities include the development and use of common reporting and recording mechanisms, as described above, whereby data is collected and analysed centrally in order to create accurate baseline data used for future community planning.
- 10.11.18 The Council is currently collecting baseline information which will inform more specific targets. The Council currently has the following aims around anti-bullying work:
 - Awareness-raising and publicity will lead to an increase in referrals to the Case Worker as more agencies become aware of the support available.
 - The provision of timely and appropriate support will lead to an increase in the proportion of cases having a positive outcome.

- 40% of schools to be using the Bullying Incidents Form in 2006/07.
 - Focussed support to lead to a 20% reduction in requests for school transfers due to bullying (based on 93 requests in 2004/05)
- 10.11.19 As part of guidance and support information for schools, some local authorities contacted produce model recording and monitoring forms and surveys for schools to use for their own purposes if they choose to do so. Examples include the monitoring forms and surveys produced by Birmingham City Council and the monitoring form produced by Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council.
- 10.11.20 In Anti-Bullying Week in 2005, Wigan Council launched a new support pack for schools. The pack highlights monitoring and recording as best practice and provides a model for recording and following-up incidents. The Council introduced the model because it recognises that the extent of bullying needs to be monitored in order to measure the success of anti-bullying policies and activities.
- 10.11.21 Some local authorities are also using 'Sentinel', a web-based software package. The software enables a range of agencies to collectively record and analyse various incidents through a single database. The package is available in three parts which cover different information – bullying, anti-social behaviour and hate crime. Data can be inputted on to the system by schools (including pupils), the police and the LEA. Statistics which highlight hot spot areas can be produced based on the information collected. The package is intended to standardise and improve the quality of data collection.
- 10.11.22 All or parts of the package are already used in some areas (North East Lincolnshire, Knowsley and a pilot in Rotherham). The Assistant Executive Director for Education Services at Tameside MBC is currently considering the software.
- 10.11.23 The Chief Education Welfare Officer at Rotherham Council (and the strategic lead for anti-bullying work in Rotherham) said the pilot scheme has been very successful. Although many schools kept records in the past, the Council was unsure how accurate these were. The Sentinel system helps to standardise this information.
- 10.11.24 The package is relatively expensive and would either be hosted and managed by the company at an additional cost, or in-house which would require additional resources for officer support.
- 10.11.25 The Community Cohesion Officer in the Community Safety Unit feels that the police already have robust mapping systems in place for recording hate crimes and that schools are increasingly good at reporting racist incidents to the Council which are then shared with the police.
- 10.11.26 There is some scepticism about whether the system of collecting data will provide a clear picture as it does not account for the culture of schools which may make it more or less likely for people to report bullying behaviour and the different perceptions of bullying between schools.

10.12 Comments from the Tameside Anti-Bullying Steering Group on recording and monitoring bullying.

- 10.12.1 The feeling is that most schools have some way of recording behavioural issues including bullying. The current survey of schools will give an idea of the arrangements in place in schools as well as the policies in place.
- 10.12.2 The voice of the child is very important which is why consideration of a children and young people's consultation group is included on the group's action plan.
- 10.12.3 It is felt that some sort of borough-wide survey of a sample of young people repeated every year would be useful.
- 10.12.4 A general Behaviour Audit is carried out in primary schools and schools can then opt to look at some issues in more depth, including bullying. Behaviour Audits are also carried out by the Behaviour Advisors and any patterns of bullying causing concern are acted upon.
- 10.12.5 There is an issue with collecting numbers, as with Sentinel, as this will say more about the culture of the school in terms of how far pupils tolerate this type of behaviour before reporting it, and how bullying is defined. This may not give a realistic picture of bullying levels, either by under or over representing bullying.
- 10.12.6 The tool promoted by the Educational Psychology Team is "Life in Our School" (Peter Smith and Tiny Arora, Sheffield) which looks at a range of behaviours and does not specify bullying, only bullying behaviour, for example pupils are asked to agree or disagree with the statement "someone was horrible to me today". With greater resources, the Council could promote this tool across the borough in all schools.

10.13 Recording Racist Incidents

- 10.13.1 Tameside LEA 2003 Ofsted report identified a gap in support for schools around handling racist behaviour and reporting incidents; at the time less than 40 schools had ever reported an incident and there was no follow-up of schools not returning any forms. Changes in legislation made it a statutory duty for schools to record racist incidents in schools and to report these to the LEA. As a result, the Council introduced new guidance and a revised monitoring form in September 2005.
- 10.13.2 Racist incidents are reported to and collated by the Equalities Officer, Lifelong Learning. The Equalities Officer was on a temporary contract until August 2006; this post has now been made permanent.
- 10.13.3 Schools must report incidents to the Council even if this means reporting that there have not been any incidents (a nil return). Schools not returning forms and those returning nil returns are followed-up at the end of the academic year. The Scrutiny Panel queried the implications for schools that do not return forms and whether there are any sanctions imposed by the Council. The Head of Inclusive Services and the Equalities Officer informed the Scrutiny Panel that there are no sanctions. The ability of the Council to help schools meet their statutory obligations is largely dependent on developing positive relationships with the school and to continually remind schools of their duty in this area.

- 10.13.4 As the new guidance and form are fairly new to schools (some of them have not yet recorded more than 6 incidents) it is felt to be too early to ask for feedback.
- 10.13.5 Anecdotal evidence suggests that some schools may be unwilling to return forms because they do not wish to be identified as having a problem with racist incidents. However, there is also a view that schools which do report incidents are demonstrating that they are taking a proactive approach to tackling racism.
- 10.13.6 Schools can seek help and advice about racist incidents from the Equalities Officer and the Community Cohesion Officer in the Community Safety Unit.
- 10.13.7 The data collected from these forms is compiled to identify any trends which may emerge. For example, last academic year data showed that there was an increase in racist incidents amongst Year 6 pupils. As a result the last 'Crucial Crew' project (a joint project with the Police targeted at disengaged children and young people) included a racism element for the first time.
- 10.13.8 De-personalised data is also provided to Tameside Police statisticians and is used along with other statistics to identify hate crime "hot spots". The police will focus resources on these areas.
- 10.13.9 From September 2005, training has been provided to school governors by the Equalities Officer and the Ethnicity Multi-culturalism and Access Consultant to school governors on racism and racist incident reporting. Two sessions are held each term and are relatively well attended (around 8 governors at each session). The Council is considering including this training in the new governor induction training.
- 10.13.10 The Ethnic Minority Achievement Officer delivers lessons on equality and diversity and can deliver refresher training on multicultural issues to teachers.
- 10.13.11 In mid-2005 the Council was considering introducing a 'Charter Mark for Anti-Racism'. Under the proposed scheme, schools would progress through 3 levels of award to demonstrate good anti-racist policies and ethos. This scheme, which has so far been welcomed by schools, would form part of the Inclusion Standards for the proposed Inclusion Charter for Schools currently being developed.
- 10.13.12 Work on the Charter Mark for Anti-Racism has been put on hold until the Inclusion Charter and the accompanying Inclusion Standards have been further developed to avoid duplication of effort. The Inclusion Charter is being developed alongside Council's new Behaviour Strategy which is due for publication late 2006.
- 10.13.13 As mentioned above the Assistant Executive Director for Education Services at Tameside MBC is currently considering the Sentinel software which could record racist incidents in schools and in the community.
- 10.13.14 The Equalities Officer sends an annual monitoring report to the Community Cohesion Partnership, Tameside Racial Harassment Multi-Agency Panel (TRHMAP), the Multi-Cultural Education Review Group (MERG), the Senior Management Team for Education, the School Improvement Team and Head teachers.

10.13.15 The latest report for August 2004 to September 2005 contained the following figures:

- 138 incidents were reported in 2004-05, compared to 136 the previous year. The majority were from primary schools (89, compared to 42 from secondary schools).
- Schools have a statutory duty to report racist incidents to the LEA even if this is to report that there have been no incidents (a nil return). In the period August 2004 to September 2005:
 - 48 schools out of 102 in Tameside reported incidents to the LEA.
 - 25 schools reported a nil return
 - Therefore the remaining 29 schools did not comply with their statutory duty.
- Ashton-under-Lyne and Droylsden reported the most incidents (27 each) and Hattersley/Hyde and Longendale the least (6 each).
- The targets of racist incidents were Pakistani (28), Bangladeshi (18) and Indian (17). The majority of perpetrators were white British (115).
- Most targets were male with 78 reports; 46 targets were female. Most perpetrators were male with 106 reports; 25 perpetrators were female.
- Most targets came from Years 4, 5 and 6. Perpetrators were from the same years and also slightly later years.
- Teachers were also victims of racist incidents particularly in secondary schools.
- Most incidents were verbal abuse.
- Police were informed of 5 incidents and 11 incidents resulted in temporary exclusions.

Conclusions

7. The Council does not appear to have a clear picture of the views and experiences of children and young people in Tameside in relation to bullying.
8. Monitoring is particularly important if a pupil decides to approach different teachers – if previous incidents are not recorded this may look like an isolated incident.
9. Any monitoring tools which are considered for implementation in schools should be manageable and not cumbersome.
10. There are some schools which are not meeting their statutory obligation to return Racist Incident Monitoring Forms to the Council.

Recommendations

9. That the Council establishes a picture of the scale of the problem of bullying as soon as possible to act as a benchmark for future anti-bullying activity.
10. That monitoring and recording incidents of bullying and surveying pupil experiences should be recognised in the new Council Anti-Bullying Policy as good practice in tackling bullying in Tameside.
11. That Local Authorities which have successfully developed monitoring arrangements with their schools be visited by the Steering Group and possibly school staff to learn from their experiences.
12. That the Council contact Governing Bodies of those schools which do not return Racist Incident Monitoring Forms and remind them of their duties.

11. Anti-bullying activity in schools

- 11.1 A further objective of the review was to highlight good practice in schools and in the Council. Bullying is dealt with in the formal curriculum and through other activities in schools.
- 11.2 **National Primary and Secondary Strategies for School Improvement**
 - 11.2.1 At the heart of the Primary Strategy is the promotion of positive behaviour and attendance as the route to raising educational attainment. These improvements are to be achieved through the implementation of the SEAL programme (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning). Tameside was part of the original pilot of the SEAL programme which teaches self-awareness, managing feelings, motivation, empathy and social skills in order to promote positive behaviour and more effective learning. The issue of bullying is included as a module in the SEAL programme.
 - 11.2.2 The Secondary Strategy focuses on improving teaching and learning and recognises that positive behaviour is often key to achieving higher standards. The Secondary Strategy includes a module on behaviour and attendance and promoting anti-bullying behaviour is intrinsic to this.
 - 11.2.3 The Secondary Strategy recommends that Behaviour Audits, which include pupil consultation, are carried out and Ofsted inspectors often use these in their assessment of schools. The Behaviour and Attendance Consultant for Tameside is confident that secondary schools in the borough are carrying out effective behaviour audits.
 - 11.2.4 A programme for secondary schools similar to the SEAL programme in primary schools is currently being piloted and is due to be rolled out to schools nationally in September 2006.
 - 11.2.5 The Behaviour and Attendance Consultant has noted an increase in demand for teacher training on behaviour, particularly since the launch of Every Child

Matters which highlighted the need to be aware of pupils' needs and experiences.

11.3 Personal Social and Health Education and Citizenship lessons

11.3.1 Personal Social and Health Education and Citizenship (hereinafter referred to as 'PSHE' provide children and young people with knowledge and understanding of a range of subjects and the skills needed to make decisions, have positive relationships and be a responsible and active citizen.

11.3.2 PSHE covers a wide range of subjects. Citizenship is included in PSHE at Key Stages 1 and 2 and becomes a separate subject in Key Stages 3 and 4.

PSHE covers the following subjects:	Citizenship at Key Stage 3 and 4 includes:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco • Emotional Health and Wellbeing • Nutrition and Physical Activity • Personal Finance • Personal Safety • Sex and Relationship Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge and understanding about becoming informed citizens • Developing skills of enquiry and communication • Developing skills of participation and responsible action

11.3.3 Each topic is taught so that pupils can develop the following skills:

- Developing confidence and responsibility and making the most of their abilities
- Preparing to play an active role as citizens
- Developing a healthy, safer lifestyle
- Developing good relationships and respecting the differences between people
- Understanding the breadth of opportunities

11.3.4 The following are examples of ways in which bullying is tackled in the PSHE curriculum. These are the most obvious examples although other subjects and skills can contribute to young people's attitudes towards each other and to their ability to challenge bullying.

11.3.5 Pupils are taught:

- to realise the consequences of anti-social and aggressive behaviours, such as bullying and racism, on individuals and communities (Key Stage 2)
- challenge offending behaviour, prejudice, bullying, racism and discrimination assertively and take the initiative in giving and receiving support (Key Stage 3)
- to recognise how their behaviour affects other people (Key Stage 2)

- to identify and respect the differences and similarities between people (Key Stage 2)
- that there are different types of teasing and bullying, that bullying is wrong, and how to get help to deal with bullying (Key Stage 2)
- about the effects of all types of stereotyping, prejudice, bullying, racism and discrimination and how to challenge them assertively (Key Stage 4)

11.4 Anti-bullying activity outside of the curriculum

11.4.1 Below is a table showing examples of how schools in the borough are tackling bullying. Some points worth noting from these and other schools contacted by the Scrutiny Support Unit are:

- Peer support (under different names e.g. Peer Pals, Peer Mentors, Peer Counsellors) is popular in both primary and high schools. Training is available from the Council's Education Psychologists as well as external groups including Off the Record and Childline.
- Childline has worked with a number of Tameside schools to deliver staff training, training for peer mentors, session for pupils, sharing good practice and helping schools evaluate their work. Stamford High School is hosting the Childline Annual Conference this summer
- In a number of high schools, pupils can record incidents in a bullying diary to help them communicate more subtle forms of bullying over a longer period. A model diary is produced by Childline. Schools find that they do not often use these diaries as bullying is usually tackled swiftly
- A number of schools record pupil feedback in regular surveys
- Some schools have mapped safe and unsafe areas in and around the school building
- There are some examples of schools attempting to involve parents in preventing and tackling bullying (e.g. meetings and surveys) as well as on an individual basis when bullying occurs.
- A number of High Schools said they focused on Year 7 pupils as problems are more likely to occur following the transition from primary to secondary school
- Alder High School and Hyde Technology School are good examples of how pupils have been involved in developing the school's position on bullying thus potentially creating better ownership.

11.4.2 Here are examples of how schools in the borough are tackling bullying.

School	Initiatives
Waterloo Primary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Anti-Bullying Week (involved High School pupils as well as LEA Advisory teachers; talks and drama) • Parents meetings and questionnaire – highlighted work needed on defining bullying • School Council • Peer Mediators • Pupil questionnaire
St Peters Church of England Primary School, Ashton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-curricular – issue addressed through a range of subjects e.g. books on bullying, art work • Anti-bullying songs, posters • ‘Lunchbunch’ play activities • ‘Peer Pals’ • Survey to be completed by parents and pupils together • Pupils awarded the Princess of Wales Memorial Award for Young People and Anti-bullying
Flowery Field Primary School, Hyde	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of work to promote positive social interaction including supervised team games at play times • Particularly using ‘SEALS’ programme • Peer Mediators underemployed due to effective preventative work which means there are few problems • Supervised playground team games • Audit of parents views included bullying – positive feedback • Anti-bullying leaflet
Hyde Technology School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About to launch web-based problem page for pupils • Active School Council • Anti-bullying pledge • Anti-bullying mural
Fairfield High School,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer Mentors host a Drop-In centre at breaks and lunch time; received confidentiality training

Droylsden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullying Survey to Yr 8 and 10 • Peer mediators and counsellors Yr 7 • Pupils mapped safe and unsafe areas in the school • Form tutor team meetings return to bullying annually and work on definitions and responses • Childline bullying diaries for long-term bullying • Inclusion Unit runs courses for groups of victims and perpetrators to raise self-esteem and understand effect of actions
Alder High School, Hyde	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 8 classes and School Council started to rewrite school anti-bullying policy last term. Designing covers and rewriting the content. • Draft will go governors and School Council will make any amendments • Anti-bullying week – defining bullying, looked at where it happens in school, ways to deal with it, staff or people to ask for help, racist and homophobic bullying • Assemblies on bullying, posters around the school and sold anti bullying wrist bands.
Stamford High School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information contained in school planners (diary for pupils) • Peer mediators • School hosting Childline National Conference in June (BTEC drama students preparing piece to present at the conference) • Following this there will be a 2 week rolling programme for pupils by Childline plus 2 days training for pupils at Childline offices • Student Support Office • Bullying recorded on incidents slips • Bullying diaries for pupils experiencing long-term bullying • Parents made aware of incidents (both victim and perpetrator) • Information through the Head Master's Newsletter • Copy of anti-bullying policy available to parents and information contained in school planners

- 11.4.3 There are 48 Learning Mentors in 10 High Schools and 29 Primary Schools in Tameside. Learning Mentors provide support to pupils experiencing barriers to learning which prevent them achieving their full potential. Pupils receiving support from Learning Mentors may be causing concern for a variety of reasons including unfulfilled academic potential, low attendance and truancy, poor or disruptive behaviour, low motivation, homework concerns, problems at home, or major life changes e.g. bereavement.
- 11.4.4 Learning Mentors agreed that in general bullying is being successfully tackled in Tameside schools. Some raised concerns over the 'Support Group Approach', the effects of a policy of inclusion on support staff particularly where pupils display violent behaviour, instances where teachers' and Learning Mentors approaches have differed, and the role of parents in promoting positive behaviour in general.
- 11.4.5 Bullying is amongst the problems Learning Mentors may be asked to help tackle. The following examples of prevention activity in which Learning Mentors have been involved were provided:
- Whole class Circle Time
 - Display material
 - Bullying survey
 - Peer mentoring
 - Anti-bullying box for reporting or sharing problems
- 11.4.6 A specific example of involvement by a Learning Mentor in a case of bullying was provided by the Learning Mentor and pupils from Astley Sports College whereby the Learning Mentor helped stop the bullying through different methods including a diary of incidents shared with the class.
- 11.4.7 The Scrutiny Panel met with pupils from two secondary schools and one primary school to discuss anti-bullying activity in their schools. These schools were Mossley Hollins High School, Astley Sports College, and Pinfold Primary School.
- 11.4.8 Pupils from Mossley Hollins High School described the peer tutor role. Peer tutors have been trained by Education Psychologists from the Council over a 6 week period. Peer Tutors in Year 11 meet with Year 7 pupils every Friday to talk about the week and raise any problems, including bullying (Year 7 pupils are felt to be particularly vulnerable during the transition from primary school). Pupils have also worked with a drama company to help address bullying issues.
- 11.4.9 The two pupils and a Learning Mentor from Astley Sports College have been particularly instrumental in developing anti-bullying activity in the school. The initiatives were developed out of the personal experiences of one pupil who was bullied since primary school. With the support of the Learning Mentor the pupil and a friend also affected, kept a diary of incidents. The pupils' class were read extracts from the diaries to show the effect of bullying. The perpetrator wrote a letter apologising for her actions. The school was careful to ensure that the bully did not become the bullied.

- 11.4.10 The two pupils launched an Anti-Bullying Club. The club meets twice a week at lunch times and pupils often bring other pupils they know have been involved in bullying to talk to peer mentors.
- 11.4.11 Peer Mentors are recruited through interview and receive training. They are available at the Anti-Bullying Club, drop-in sessions all week, by email, and can be approached at any time. The Peer Mentor programme is oversubscribed but all volunteers are kept involved in supporting pupils in some way.
- 11.4.12 The support available from the school's Learning Mentors, the Anti-Bullying Club and the Peer Mentors is seen to be effective and more pupils come forward as a result.
- 11.4.13 The pupil at the centre of anti-bullying work at the school received the Princess Diana Award for young people coping with bullying and the 'Hall's Heroes' award from Stuart Hall. She has acted as an ambassador at national events and has appeared in the Manchester Evening News, the Tameside Advertiser and on Channel M.
- 11.4.14 Pupils from Pinfold Primary School also talked about anti-bullying work at the school. The pupils said that the Learning Mentors did a lot of work about anti-bullying. The school also has a resident artist who had produced playground art with the message of "Don't Suffer in Silence". A survey is also carried out and artwork and material are displayed around the school. The pupils thought that the Peer Mentors were especially good and provide confidential support although they will tell a teacher if they think a child is in danger.
- 11.4.15 The pupils were asked for their opinion on how perpetrators should be dealt with. Some felt that the perpetrator should be made to understand the effect of their actions and even be made to feel what the target feels. This has worked – in one example the perpetrator wrote to the target because she realised she had been hurtful and wanted to apologise. There was a general feeling however that the bully might also have problems in their own life and it is important to try to resolve these.
- 11.4.16 The pupils felt that there is also an important role for bystanders who are encouraged to intervene or tell an adult.
- 11.4.17 There was also some discussion about bullying through text, email and internet. Pupils felt that young people need to be educated about the dangers of passing on mobile or email details to other people, especially strangers.
- 11.4.18 Pupils felt that their schools were dealing with bullying well and that this was largely due to good teacher-pupil relationships, although it can be difficult to tackle bullying outside of school. Another problem mentioned by the students is that a pupil's reputation will mean they are more or less likely to be found guilty of bullying (it was felt that those bullies with a good academic record less likely to be identified by teachers, and vice versa). In addition, it can be difficult to determine who is the victim and who is the bully – a pupil may go to a teacher to accuse another of bullying, whilst they are in fact carrying out bullying behaviour themselves.

11.4.19 One head teacher felt that most schools in Tameside have an ethos of respect and most are doing something about bullying; but children are only at school some of the time and the Council should be more concerned with what is happening in the wider community. The concept of respect was discussed and it was felt by one student that although increased mutual respect will result in less bullying it cannot be forced respect and has to be genuine.

11.4.20 Scrutiny Support Officers also visited Alder High School to meet with the School Council which is in the process of producing an updated version of the school's anti-bullying policy. The School Council was asked about their understanding of bullying, its effects, how it is dealt with and suggestions for preventing and dealing with bullying. The main views were:

What does bullying look like?

- Bullying is both verbal and physical, and prolonged; it is carried out by groups on a single target; girls bully in different ways from boys; the bully and victim are usually of the same sex; it can take the form of malicious text messages or online (pupils said text and online bullying is not currently included in the school's anti-bullying policy)

How does bullying make the victim feel?

- Bullying has a negative effect on the victim's social behaviour and self-confidence both short-term and long-term; victims of bullying were also felt to be very angry

What makes people bully?

- It was felt that bullies get some kind of enjoyment out of what they do because it makes them feel confident and they get a lot of attention from others; bullying can be a way of expressing anger over a personal issue and a way of gaining control over something – this does not justify bullying but it affects the way we should deal with bullies.

How is bullying dealt with?

- There is a strong message given to pupils that targets should not keep it to themselves. Some do not want to tell a teacher straight away and so the school has Peer Mentors who are trained to make suggestions about how the situation can be dealt with – this is thought to be very effective.
- Teachers talk to the bully and discipline them if necessary (this can be detention or suspension for example); discipline is not always effective because teachers have less authority and some pupils are generally badly behaved. Some felt that the school is not able to put in strong enough deterrents and "threats" in place; bullies can feel that they have "nothing to lose".
- Incidents are recorded in student files, but the school doesn't have a specific bullying log.

- There is often greater emphasis placed on dealing with “physical bullying;” by contrast they felt “calling” and “lower level” bullying is felt to be overlooked.

Suggestions for dealing with bullying

- More severe discipline is needed than at present; being suspended is “like a holiday”; bullies should be given more work to do whilst they are suspended; bullies could be placed in “isolation” or permanently expelled.
- They should be made to understand how the victim is feeling (perhaps even being made to confront the victim)
- More violent options were also suggested (this could reflect the anger that pupils feel towards bullies).
- After school sessions for victims to discuss their experiences and methods for tackling bullying and for bullies to talk to each other about why they bully (but some may not want to come forward)
- Better training for peer mentors

Preventing bullying in schools

- Work done in school included a video about text and online bullying, assemblies and a film (powerful hearing victims’ experiences)
- The Head of PSHE could give a lot more examples of what is happening in the school.
- A lot happens in school and the school was working hard to stop it happening.

The role of bystanders

- Bystanders should not ignore bullying when they see it happening but many people are afraid to become involved because they might become the target of the bully themselves.
- Peer mentors and prefects have a special duty to help; more training needed on how to deal with these situations.

The role of parents

- Parents sometimes do not back up the messages that pupils are getting at school and do not reinforce any disciplinary action the school may take (suspension can be made to be a holiday)
- Some parents might refuse to accept that their child is a bully and not co-operate with the school to try and stop it from happening.
- Parents of bullies should be shown CCTV footage of bullying incidents if available (the teacher present informed them that this already happens in certain cases)

Conclusions

11. The Panel recognises that there is already a lot of effective work being done in schools by staff and pupils to tackle bullying.

Recommendations

13. That more opportunities are found to share and celebrate good practice in tackling bullying in Tameside and that consideration be given to a local award for excellence in anti-bullying activity.

12. Text and online bullying

12.1 As the scrutiny review progressed, the Panel became more aware of text and online bullying.

12.2 Text and online bullying, often referred to as 'cyber-bullying', is particularly worrying because it means that victims of bullying can potentially be targeted all the time, even in their own homes which in the past have been places of sanctuary.

12.3 This type of bullying includes abusive and threatening text message and emails, hurtful 'blogs' (web-logs or posted entries on websites) and chatroom entries, use of websites to post abusive information including photographs, and using a victim's online identify who is then blamed for the bullying.

12.4 Latest figures

12.4.1 It is estimated that 97% of 12-16 year olds have a mobile phone (from 2004 research by 'Mobile Youth', a market research company established by the Wireless World Forum). Almost 4 million young people in the UK have a camera-phone and this is set to double by 2007 (Wireless World Forum, 2005).

12.4.2 A 2005 survey of 770 young people aged 11-19 by NCH (the Children's Charity) in conjunction with Tesco, found that:

- 1 in 5 respondents had experienced bullying or threat via email, internet chatroom, or text compared to 1 in 4 in 2002. Of these, text was the most common form.
- 1 in 10 (11%) admitted sending bullying or threatening messages.
- Over a quarter (28%) did not tell anyone

(from "Putting U in the picture – mobile bullying survey 2005" NCH/Tesco Mobile).

- 12.4.3 A four year study of over 11,227 pupils from Years 7-10 has recently been published. The survey found that:
- More than 1 in 10 (15%) of participants had been a victim of bullying by text or email.
 - The proportion of participants reporting being bullied in this way increased over the four years of the study from 14% in 2002 to 17% in 2005.
 - In every year of the study, more girls than boys reported being a target in this way (15-21% of girls, and 11-14% of boys).
 - The proportion of girls receiving malicious texts or emails increased over the course of the four year study from 15% to 21%.

(from a study by Nathalie Noret, York St John University College & Ian Rivers, Queen Margaret University College, 2006).

- 12.4.4 MSN, part of the Microsoft company, has just published the results of it's survey of over 500 young people aged 12-15 and their parents. The study found that:
- More than 1 in 10 (11%) said they had been a victim of 'cyberbullying' and almost a quarter (24%) knew someone who had.
 - 1 in 20 admitted bullying someone in this way.
 - 1 in 8 (13%) said cyberbullying felt worse than physical bullying.
 - 1 in 6 (17%) did not tell anyone that they were being bullied in this way
 - Half of parents (48%) were unaware of the concept of cyberbullying.

(from a survey by YouGov on behalf of MSN, 2006)

12.5 **Tackling text and online bullying**

12.5.1 Text and online bullying is an offence under the Telecommunications Act 1984 and the Protection from Harassment Act 1997.

12.5.2 Awareness of text and online bullying is growing and help and advice for children and young people, parents and schools is available from a number of sources including the DfES resource pack 'Don't Suffer in Silence', children's charities (including Childline, Bullying Online and Kidscape), and Connexions. Mobile phone networks and internet companies also produce advice.

12.5.3 Common advice includes:

- Do not respond to the bullying
- Tell an adult
- Keep a record of incidents as evidence
- Block the bully's email address from your email account

- Change mobile number and email address
- Print off the abusive web-pages or chatroom entries, or email them to webpage and chat room hosts because they can sometimes exclude the bully
- Inform the mobile network or internet provider because they can often trace the account holder
- Tell the police

12.5.4 Mobile phone and internet companies can protect users, especially children and young people, from abusive and threatening communications using the technology available (tracing calls, parental controls, excluding chatroom users etc) and offering advice to customers.

12.5.5 The Children's Charity, NCH, has joined forces with Tesco mobile to tackle text and online bullying. Together they launched www.stoptextbullying.com in 2005 which contains help and advice about text and online bullying. Children and young people can also text 'bully' to 60000 to receive the website address.

12.5.6 East Sussex County Council has produced guidance for schools in educating pupils about text and online bullying.

12.5.7 A senior Police Officer in Tameside recently visited two Tameside High Schools to talk about bullying. The Police Officer explained that text and online bullying is a criminal offence and could potentially lead to prosecution.

12.5.8 In consultation with pupils, the Scrutiny Panel heard that young people were aware of the growth of cyber-bullying and many knew people who had been a target. Pupils were concerned about the threat of cyber-bullying although they were aware of how this threat can be reduced (e.g. being careful about who they provide their details to, telling parents or teachers about abusive messages).

12.5.9 Parents consulted by the Scrutiny Panel were also aware of the dangers but felt concerned about their ability to protect their children from this form of bullying.

Conclusions

12. Cyber-bullying is a growing concern but there is little evidence of high-profile work in Tameside to deal with this problem.

Recommendations

14. That the Police be requested to give the same presentation about cyber-bullying to pupils and parents at other schools as that given to pupils at two high schools in Tameside.

15. That the Police take the opportunity to help raise awareness of cyber-bullying and bullying in general at suitable public meetings such as District Assembly Meetings.
16. That tackling cyber-bullying be included in the new Anti-Bullying Policy for Tameside.
17. That, in line with recently published government guidance, schools include cyber-bullying in their anti-bullying policy.
18. That the Council take a lead on tackling text and online bullying as a community issue.
19. That guidance is produced for parents about how to help protect their children from text and online bullying.

13. Support for parents

- 13.1 The Scrutiny Panel was keen to consider the role of parents and the level of support available to parents of targets and perpetrators of bullying. This is also a priority for the Anti-Bullying Steering Group which sees this as a potential gap in Tameside and research on the issue has been included in a new action plan currently being developed for the group.
- 13.2 The Steering Group feels that an audit of parents' views and needs would be the first step, however additional resources for such an audit would have to be identified. The opinion of the Steering Group was that ideally schools should be empowered to support parents and in most cases this is likely to happen. However, there are occasions when the relationship between parents and school is not positive. There is also a formal process for parents to raise concerns and make complaints to schools should informal mechanisms fail to resolve the issue.
- 13.3 **Support for parents in schools**
 - 13.3.1 Many schools provide information to parents about bullying. Examples found by the Scrutiny Panel were:
 - Hyde Technology School produce a welcome pack for parents which includes information on bullying.
 - Waterloo Primary School have held parents' coffee mornings (including one in afternoon) and produce a questionnaire for parents. The latest survey showed that it would be helpful to more clearly define bullying.
 - In the audit of parents' views carried out by Flowery Field Primary School, parents are asked for their views on the school's approach to tackling bullying. Latest feedback has been positive.

- Stamford High School provides information to parents about bullying through the Head Master's Newsletter
- Copley High School has held a parents' evening on bullying

13.4 **Support for parents outside of school**

13.4.1 Outside of schools, parents can receive support from the following:

- If the child is not attending school, the family will receive support from the Education Welfare Service (EWS). The service provides advice on the process for raising issues with the school and can signpost families to specialist support relating to bullying should this be an issue. The service includes information about tackling bullying on the Council's webpages and produces a leaflet which is distributed to parents via schools and during home visits to parents in touch with the service. The Head of the EWS feels the leaflet and also the webpage on the TMBC website require updating.
- Part of the role of the Governor and Management Support Unit is to ensure that the correct procedure for handling complaints is followed and provides support to both parents and schools. The Unit can explain to parents the process for making a complaint to a school, although formal complaints about schools cannot be made to the Council. Information about the process is provided on the Council's website (no leaflets are available; Derbyshire County Council produces a leaflets for parents)
- The Tameside branch of Victim Support can provide support for the victims of bullying and their families if the bullying takes the form of a criminal offence e.g theft or physical harm. Anyone affected by crime can contact the service directly. Victims and families are automatically contacted by Victim Support if an incident is reported to the police. The service provides advice on the options available to clients and can signpost to specialist support services. Literature produced by other organisations, including Kidscape, is available for young people and parents.
- The Parent Partnership Service works with parents and carers of children with Special Educational Needs. Parents and carers may contact the service about tackling bullying.

13.4.2 A number of national organisations provide support for parents around bullying. These include children's charities such as Childline and Kidscape. The Department for Education and Skills has also developed a website for parents called 'Parentscentre' where parents can find help with their child's learning, including how this can be affected by bullying. The website for the DfES anti-bullying strategy – 'Don't Suffer in Silence' – includes advice for parents. Parentline Plus is a national charity which provides support for parents on a full range of issues relating to parenting including all aspects of dealing with bullying advice for parents of children who bully.

13.4.3 Examples of organisations which can help parents operating at a local level across the UK have also been found.

13.4.4 Bully Free Zone (BFZ) is a leading anti-bullying organisation based in Bolton. The agency exists to help young people, their schools and families prevent and

deal with bullying (more detail is provided about BFZ in section 11 below). Amongst the services provided by BFZ is a Family Support Project to provide tailored support to individuals and their families affected by bullying.

- 13.4.5 The 'Anti-Bullying in Cornwall' project, or ABC project, provides support to those affected by bullying (more detail is provided about the project in section 11 below). Families are automatically referred to the service if they make a complaint to a school about bullying. Referrals are also made by parents and pupils themselves, the Education Welfare Service and the LEA. The service feels that it benefits from being an independent party from the Council and schools which parents can go to for help.
- 13.4.6 The Anti-Bullying Project in Sunderland is a small voluntary group funded by the Children's Fund (more detail is provided about the project in section 11 below). The service provides one-to-one support for young people aged 5-13 (although they are hoping to expand this age range) and their parents if needed.
- 13.4.7 'Off the Record' in Tameside currently does not provide support for parents, although this is often requested both by parents who are aware their child is being supported by Off the Record and by clients who wish for their parents to be involved. The organisation is however, considering how such a service could be provided and has visited an organisation in Cheshire which is already doing this successfully.

13.5 **Consultation with parents**

- 13.5.1 A letter from the Chair of the Scrutiny Panel was published in a local newspaper calling for views on tackling bullying in Tameside. One parent and one grandparent contacted the Scrutiny Support Unit about their experiences. Both had children at secondary school who were being bullied. Both were frustrated by the lack of progress and communication from the school. Neither were aware about the formal process for making complaints to the school. One resident was in contact with the police whilst the other did not feel this would help matters. Neither felt they could access other sources of advice independent from the school. Both wanted the bullying to stop so that their child could return to school and enjoy their education.
- 13.5.2 The Scrutiny Panel arranged a consultation evening with parents from the Tameside Citizens' Panel. The event was attended by seven parents (four with children of secondary school age and three with children of primary school age). Parents received a presentation from the Head of Inclusive Services and the lead Education Psychologist on anti-bullying before discussing their experiences, the role of parents and suggestions for improving support to parents. Parents were divided in two groups – those of primary school age children and those of secondary school age children.
- 13.5.3 All parents found the presentation very informative and felt it was useful to consider definitions of bullying, targets and perpetrators.
- 13.5.4 The key issues emerging from consultation were that both groups recognised a big difference between levels of communication with parents between primary and secondary schools. Parents felt more aware of anti-bullying policies and activity in primary schools. Primary schools were found to be more able to

communicate more regularly and in more detail with parents than secondary schools. Parents recognised the challenges secondary schools feel in communicating with parents – the larger size of the secondary schools, the greater demands on secondary school teachers particularly timetabling and varying classes.

- 13.5.5 Secondary schools were regarded as facing bigger challenges in tackling bullying – the range of levels of maturity amongst students which demands a greater variety of approaches and levels of support, more challenging issues around discipline, less continual supervision of pupils, and less consistent contact with teachers.
- 13.5.6 Parents of secondary school age children felt strongly that children should have as many different outlets for communicating problems, including bullying. There are felt to be more opportunities for this in primary schools especially as teachers see the same pupils for the entire day and may find it easier to build positive relationships. The suggestion was made for some form of email or web-based portal for children to use to register their concerns, or some kind of arrangement for a designated person and place for pupils to discuss their issues. This may help meet the needs of children and young people who find it difficult to come forward. The various forms of peer support were felt to be useful.
- 13.5.7 Despite the challenges faced by secondary schools, parents of secondary school age children felt that when bullying occurs it is generally dealt with effectively by schools.
- 13.5.8 Both groups discussed the importance of monitoring bullying. Some parents were partly aware of how bullying is recorded in schools and all agreed that it was important to be able to identify patterns in behaviour
- 13.5.9 Parents of primary school children felt that tackling bullying is strongly linked to the school's general ethos and the promotion of positive behaviour, respect and good manners. Teachers must also set an example and children should be able to learn from the behaviour of staff.
- 13.5.10 Participants felt that the role of parents in terms of prevention was to encourage their children to talk about their problems and also to build their child's self-esteem so that they are not negatively affected by bullying behaviour. Coping with bullying could also be taught as a life skill. Parents should also have the opportunity to have an input in to schools' anti-bullying activity through small meetings or whole class meetings with parents and pupils. Surveys of parents' views were also felt to be valuable providing feedback was given. A greater role in Anti-Bullying Week for parents was also suggested.
- 13.5.11 In terms of dealing with bullying when it occurs, parents felt that the target and the perpetrator should be supported, with the latter being made aware of the effects of their actions and being given the opportunity to make amends for their behaviour. Parents of primary school age children felt that support should be tailored to the specific needs of the child and their family.
- 13.5.12 Participants felt that the role of parents when bullying occurs is to support the child and liaise with the school, although some parents of perpetrators are not

willing to accept their child's behaviour and some may not recognise a change in behaviour if their child acts differently at home than at school. Also, parents should reinforce any discipline carried out by the school. Parents of perpetrators were felt to require as much support as parents of targets and not to feel that they are being punished.

- 13.5.13 All parents felt that the role of the Council was to enforce consistent standards across all schools (it was explained to parents that schools are increasingly autonomous). Parents of secondary school age children felt that it would not occur to them to approach the Council for help and would expect this to come from the school. They felt the role of the Council was to prescribe policies to schools.
- 13.5.14 Parents of secondary school age pupils felt that parents of new students would benefit from more information about tackling bullying and that schools could provide more short-term progress reports on new pupils in order to identify any problems sooner in the transition period which is seen as a particularly vulnerable time. Special parents' evenings on bullying were felt to be potentially beneficial. Parents of children about to start secondary school receive a booklet called 'Moving On'; it was suggested that information about bullying could be included in the booklet. Information for parents about what to do and who to contact should their child be involved in bullying would be helpful.
- 13.5.15 Text and online bullying was discussed by parents of secondary school age children. Parents were aware of the dangers but were concerned that not all parents fully understand the technology and how best to protect their children.
- 13.5.16 Both groups discussed the value of independent mediation and support from organisations other than schools and the Council. Support of the kind which could be offered by a charity organisation, other agency or even other parents was felt to be potentially valuable and worth exploring.
- 13.5.17 Parents of secondary school age pupils felt that parenting classes would be helpful if they were available at time appropriate to working parents.

Conclusions

- 13. Parents of secondary school age children may be less aware of anti-bullying activity in their child's school.

Recommendations

- 20. That the Council consult parents about their role in tackling bullying and the support that could be offered by the Council and other organisations.

14. Tackling bullying – other organisations

- 14.6 It was considered useful in evaluating the Council's approach to tackling bullying, to consider organisations other than the Council and schools which can help to tackle bullying.
- 14.7 The following are services in the community, both in Tameside and elsewhere, which contribute to tackling bullying by working with children and young people and their families, both inside and outside school. These do not include the vast array of sources on the internet and the large children's charities.
- 14.8 **In Tameside**
- 14.8.1 The organisations mentioned below are accessible to all children and young people living in Tameside (and beyond in some cases) including those who may attend a school outside the borough; support for children and young people resident in Tameside but attending a school outside Tameside was a particular query of the Scrutiny Panel.
- 14.8.2 Off the Record is a free and confidential counselling service for young people aged 13 to 28 (although there is also a specialist service for 10-13 year olds called 'RU10-13'). Off the Record provides face to face counselling on a range of subjects including bullying, group work in schools with a focus on positive relationships and anger management, and peer mentoring/mediation training for pupils who are then able to support other pupils if they are being bullied.
- 14.8.3 The organisation is supported by core funding from the Youth Service, Social Services, the Health Authority and the Children's Fund, as well as funds raised from charitable sources including the Lottery Fund.
- 14.8.4 There are 17 volunteer counsellors in training, 5 qualified counsellors, and 4 sessional counsellors who are employed on an ad hoc basis. 'Off the Record' is able to meet demand through careful scheduling, but could expand to meet further demands if funding were available.
- 14.8.5 Off the Record have been working in schools for a number of years (in Droylsden High for at least 7 years). The organisation has developed good relationships with a number of schools who regularly seek input from Off the Record. An Off the Record Counsellor is based at Hyde Technology School. The organisation delivers targeted group work sessions in schools with pupils identified as likely to benefit from support. Off the Record has set up a number of peer mentoring schemes in local schools.
- 14.8.6 The Tameside Children's Fund was established in 2000 to work with 5-13 year olds. The intended outcomes of the fund are, improved educational performance, reduction in youth crime and conviction, improvements in health and social care, more involvement of users in service delivery and more use of existing services by excluded groups.
- 14.8.7 The Tameside Children's Fund project has delivered some anti-bullying activity in the past – an arts-based project at Bradley Green Primary School with Yr 5 pupils 2-3 years ago and training of 'Playground Pals' responsible for

playground equipment and welfare of pupils at Russell Scott School Primary school. The project has also helped set up School Councils, delivered projects looking at prejudice through drama at St Peters and Holy Trinity primary schools, and will carry out early intervention work on request based on need, which may include bullying issues.

- 14.8.8 The purpose of the Connexions service is to help young people aged 13-19 make decisions about their lives and help them prepare for the future. The ultimate aim of Connexions is to remove any barriers to education, training and employment. Every young person aged 13-19 has a Personal Advisor. The role of the Personal Advisors is to provide an opportunity for young people to discuss these barriers confidentially and to be signposted to any specific support services.
- 14.8.9 In the case of bullying young people are encouraged to make contact with someone at their school if they have not already done so. Connexions can also arrange for the young person to meet with Off the Record. Training for Personal Advisors on bullying is not mandatory although many of the education PAs have accessed training provided in-house. PAs are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the schools anti-bullying policy and a copy is requested as part of the Partnership Agreements between schools and Connexions. Incidents of bullying encountered by PAs are not formally recorded at present.
- 14.8.10 The Tameside branch of Victim Support can provide support for the victims of bullying and their families. Although bullying is not strictly a crime in itself, how it is carried out can be e.g. theft, physical harm. Anyone affected by crime can contact the service directly. Victims and families are automatically contacted by Victim Support if an incident is reported to the police. The service provides advice on the options available to clients and can signpost to specialist support services. Literature produced by other organisations, including Kidscape, is available for young people and parents.
- 14.8.11 Victim Support are currently developing a project with the Young People's Forum to visit schools to talk about various types of crime related issues which can include bullying and harassment. Funding is currently being sought for a Young People's Worker to support this work.
- 14.8.12 Tameside's Youth Service delivered a joint project with Mossley Hollins High School, Greater Manchester Police Youth Officer, and the Information Shop for Young People, which arose out the school expressing an interest in more anti-bullying work. The Youth Service was already doing some work in the school and invited other agencies to take part in this one-off project. The project ran from May 2005 to June 2005 and included work around defining bullying, building self-esteem, understanding rights and responsibilities, and learning about the police. Eight pupils took part in the project and met once a week for six weeks at a venue outside of the school. The participants went on to become peer buddies for pupils affected by bullying.
- 14.8.13 Childline has worked in some Tameside schools delivering anti-bullying messages (St Damien's RC High School, St James Church of England Primary School, and St Mary's RC Primary School). The charity has also worked with the Tameside Learning Mentors' Group and contributed to the Tameside Anti-

Bullying Conference during National Anti-Bullying Week in November 2005. Funding permitting, Childline is able to deliver training to pupils, teachers and Learning Mentors and has helped schools evaluate their anti-bullying work. The NSPCC has also delivered some support in Tameside and the two organisations ensure that they complement each others work.

14.9 **Elsewhere in the UK**

14.9.1 Bully Free Zone (hereinafter referred to as 'the BFZ') is a leading anti-bullying organisation based in Bolton. The agency exists to help young people their schools and families prevent and deal with bullying. BFZ has just produced its 9th Annual Report (2005).

14.9.2 The project receives funding from various sources including Greater Manchester Connexions, Children in Need, and though income generated through training and consultancy.

14.9.3 BFZ delivers the following:

- Training in schools for Peer Supporters and 'buddies'
- Workshops in schools with perpetrators and sessions for those affected by bullying
- Family Support Project to provide tailored support to individuals and their families affected by bullying
- Support for Millennium Volunteers to deliver anti-bullying work in schools and the community
- A training and consultancy service for children and young people, teachers and other professionals working in the field.

14.9.4 The 'Anti-Bullying in Cornwall' project, or ABC project, was formally established in Cornwall by the Victim Support service following a successful pilot funded by Connexions. The project provides support to those affected by bullying as well as delivering preventative work in schools. Support is provided in the form of a telephone and email helpline and one-to-one counselling for children and young people and their families. Families are automatically referred to the service if they make a complaint to a school about bullying. Referrals are also made by parents and pupils themselves, the Education Welfare Service and the LEA.

14.9.5 The work in schools includes:

- Training for 'mini buds' (early years training on positive relationships), playtime pals (primary school children)
- Peer buddies (training takes place in Year 7 and pupils become buddies in Year 8 for new Year 7 pupils)
- Peer supporters (Year 9-11 students). The service can also deliver seminars to parents on identifying and dealing with bullying.

- 14.9.6 The ABD project has a Service Level Agreement with the LEA to provide the service. The LEA funds one Project Worker and part funds a second (the remaining funding for this post comes from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund). The Service provides anonymised statistical data to the LEA about the level of bullying known to them through case work. The service feels that it benefits from being an independent party. There has been a growing demand from schools for the service.
- 14.9.7 The Anti-Bullying Project in Sunderland is a small voluntary group funded by the Children's Fund. The project team is made up of one full-time worker with administration support, a mediator, and two part time volunteers. The service provides one-to-one support for young people aged 5-13 (although they are hoping to expand this age range) and their parents if needed. The project can support around three clients at a time in this way.
- 14.9.8 Clients can be self-referrals or referrals from schools, the LEA or Social Services. The project works with the majority of schools in Sunderland to deliver anti-bullying messages in lessons, and can also help to resolve bullying by using the Support Group Approach.
- 14.9.9 The Project is monitored by the Head of the Council's Youth Offending Team. Evaluation of the project includes a three monthly review with every client receiving one-to one support and feedback after each school session.
- 14.9.10 The Tameside Anti-Bullying Steering Group was asked about the potential for a greater role for the voluntary and community sector to contribute to tackling bullying in Tameside. Although there are concerns over how to ensure professionalism, shared aims, and credibility the Steering Group recognises the positive contribution external organisations can make to tackling bullying and will identify and share good practice across the authority.

Conclusions

14. There may be opportunities in the voluntary sector to provide further support outside of school to children, young people and parents affected by bullying.

Recommendations

21. That the Council explore opportunities in the voluntary sector for the provision of support to children, young people and parents affected by bullying.

15. Borough Treasurer's Comments

Schools which currently adopt an anti-bullying policy are addressing the resource implications from existing delegated budgets. This will also apply to those schools that are yet to implement a policy.

Schools are advised and assisted by associated agencies together with existing effective support networks. The Council provides professional advice and support to ensure the policy is implemented and maintained.

Council support and guidance to ensure schools and stakeholders participate and effectively implement the policy will need to be sustained from existing resources.

The Council will also need to ensure effective procedures are maintained by schools and stakeholders when monitoring bullying incidents.

The financing of associated IT developmental and software costs that may arise will also be required from existing resources.

16. Borough Solicitor's Comments

This report raises a number of legal issues, which I shall address individually:

- 16.1 Legal duty of Governing Body regarding bullying
- 16.2 Unlawful discriminatory bullying, namely racial, religious or relating to sexual orientation
- 16.3 Criminal offences regarding bullying
- 16.4 Cyber bullying
- 16.5 Complaints

16.1 Legal duty of Governing Body regarding bullying

The governing body has duties to agree a statement of general principles from which the school's discipline policy is drawn up by the head teacher. The Governing body may include principles of bullying prevention in the statement. **The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 Section 61 (as amended)** requires head teachers to determine measures to prevent all forms of bullying. All schools must draw up compulsory anti-bullying policies using detailed information packs, videos and online resources developed by the Department for Education and Skills.

The Government has launched 'Make the Difference' a national campaign against bullying in schools. As part of the campaign, Heads and Governors are invited to adopt an anti-bullying 'Charter for Action' in which they commit the whole school community to a culture where bullying is not tolerated and actively tackled. Drawn up with a wide range of professional and voluntary organisations, including the Secondary Heads Association, the National Association of Head Teachers and the Anti-Bullying Alliance, the charter recommends a key set of actions for schools to take to prevent and deal with bullying.

Ofsted inspectors have now been issued with new handbooks for inspection which reinforce aspects of good anti-bullying practice in schools. Ofsted inspectors are required to obtain pupils' and parents' views on bullying as part of their evidence on school discipline. The new handbooks alert inspectors to the range of evidence that they can look for during a school visit to see whether an anti-bullying policy is being implemented effectively.

16.2 Unlawful discriminatory bullying, namely racial, religious or relating to sexual orientation

The **Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000** which amended the Race Relations Act 1976, requires schools and LEAs, from April 2001, to have “*due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity and to promote good relations between persons of different racial groups*”.

Schools are expected to comply with specific duties, which focus on methods that will help identify and address racial discrimination, and promote racial equality and good race relations. These specific duties are:

- to have a written race equality policy, which should identify the action to be taken to tackle racial discrimination, and to promote racial equality and good race relations across all areas of school activity;
- to assess the impact of all policies (including the race equality policy) on pupils, staff and parents of different racial groups, including, in particular, the impact on attainment levels of pupils;
- to monitor the impact of all policies (including the race equality policy) on pupils, staff and parents, including, in particular, the impact on the attainment levels of pupils from different racial groups;
- to take such steps as are reasonably practical to publish annually the results of the monitoring.

It is the governing body of a school that is responsible for drawing up the race equality policy and keeping it up to date. Ofsted will inspect and report on whether or not schools are meeting the general duty and the specific duties. Ofsted will also look at incidents of bullying, and in connection with racist bullying, governors should note that following the publication of the Macpherson Report of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, they are also required to record all racist incidents that take place in the school, and report them to their LA at least annually. Each LA determines its own procedures for recording, reporting and following up racist incidents. Detailed guidance on dealing with racist bullying in schools was published in March 2006 and is available on the DFES website (www.teachernet.gov.uk/racistbullying).

The Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) has written a Code of Practice that provides practical guidance to public bodies, including schools and LEAs, on how to fulfil the general and specific duties to promote race equality (Code of Practice on the Duty to Promote Race Equality). It has also produced a non-statutory guide to the Code called *The Duty to Promote Race Equality: A guide for schools*. The CRE also has powers to enforce the specific duties by issuing a compliance notice to order the school to meet the specific duties within a certain timescale.

In addition new legislation introduces a specific duty in respect of disability, secondary schools will need to publish a disability equality scheme by 4 December 2006 and primary and special schools will need to do so from 3 December 2007. From April 2007 a duty to promote gender equality is expected to come into force. Detailed guidance on the disability and gender duties will be provided for schools by the DfES. It is intended that the necessary monitoring and reporting can be done as part of existing work in schools – the aim of the new duties is to achieve greater equality rather than to impose bureaucratic burdens on schools. Accordingly, any bullying policy will need to ensure that it addresses discrimination relating to race, gender, disability religion or sexual orientation.

16.3 Criminal offences regarding bullying

Under **Section 1 of the Malicious Communications Act 1998** it is an offence to send an indecent, offensive or threatening letter, electronic communication or other article to another person and under **Section 43 of the Telecommunications Act 1984** it is a similar offence to send a telephone message which is indecent offensive or threatening. In both cases the offence is punishable with up to six months imprisonment and/or a fine of up to £5000. Because the **Malicious Communications Offence** is wider ranging than the Telecommunications offence it is more likely to be used by the Police than the Telecommunications Act offence.

In most cases involving malicious communications or cyber stalking however there will be more than one offensive or threatening letter or telephone call and therefore the police will often choose to charge the offender with an offence contrary to either **Section 2 of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997** also punishable with up to six months imprisonment. Part of the reason for using this charge is that when someone is convicted of an offence under the **Protection from Harassment Act 1997** the court can make a Restraining Order preventing them from contacting their victim again. Breach of a Restraining Order is punishable with up to five years imprisonment.

A Restraining Order cannot be imposed for a conviction under the Malicious Communications or Telecommunications Acts.

If the e-mails, cyber stalking etc. causes the victim to fear that violence will be used against them then the police can choose to charge the offender with an offence contrary to **Section 4 of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997** which is punishable with up to five years imprisonment and also allows the court to make a Restraining Order.

If the e-mails, cyber stalking etc. is racist in nature or motivated by religious hostility then charges could be brought of Racially or Religiously Aggravated Harassment contrary to sections 32(1)(a) or 32(1)(b) of the **Crime and Disorder Act 1998**. If convicted offenders could face up to 7 years imprisonment.

In many situations the recipient of malicious messages knows who the sender is. Where such matters cannot be resolved informally through school, pupils and their parents would always advise informing the police especially if the messages are in any way threatening. Even if the police decide not to prosecute they may give the offender a formal warning which could be used in evidence if they repeated their behaviour in future.

The **Protection from Harassment Act 1997** also covers general bullying whereby Section 1 prohibits harassment and provides that:

1. - (1) *A person must not pursue a course of conduct-*
 - (a) *which amounts to harassment of another, and*
 - (b) *which he knows or ought to know amounts to harassment of the other.*
- (2) *For the purposes of this section, the person whose course of conduct is in question ought to know that it amounts to harassment of another if a reasonable person in possession of the same information would think the course of conduct amounted to harassment of the other.*

However, like all legislation the difficulty of resolving such matters through law is that we are dealing with young people and in some cases children below the age of criminal responsibility. Nevertheless, the legislation can be useful in engaging the Police to

discuss the matter with the perpetrator and his parents/guardians, with a view to controlling the behaviour.

16.4 Cyber bullying

Schools have a duty to ensure that:

- bullying via mobile phone or the Internet is included in their mandatory anti-bullying policies, that these policies are regularly updated, and that teachers have sufficient knowledge to deal with cyber bullying in school
- the curriculum teaches pupils about the risks of new communications technologies, the consequences of their misuse, and how to use them safely
- all e-communications used on the school site or as part of school activities off-site are monitored
- clear policies are set about the use of mobile phones at school and at other times when young people are under the school's authority
- Internet blocking technologies are continually updated and harmful sites blocked
- they work with pupils and parents to make sure new communications technologies are used safely, taking account of local and national guidance and good practice
- security systems are in place to prevent images and information about pupils and staff being accessed improperly from outside school
- they work with police and other partners on managing cyber bullying.

16.5 Complaints

Section 29 of the Education Act 2002 requires all governing bodies to have in place a procedure to deal with complaints relating to aspects of the school, and to any community facilities or services that the school provides. The procedure must be publicised.

Local Authorities (LEAs) are required to set up a procedure for dealing with certain limited types of complaints, for example complaints about the curriculum or collective worship in a school. The governing bodies' complaints procedure will not replace the arrangements made for those types of complaint. In addition, there are certain complaints that fall outside the remit of the governing bodies' complaints procedure, for example staff grievances or disciplinary procedures, and for these, separate procedures should be in place. Complaints to the LEA are limited as a consequence of the separate corporate body status from LEA.

In dealing with complaints and in making provision for complaints procedures, the governing body should ensure that the person complaining is given fair treatment and in particular, a chance to state their case either in person or in writing. Decisions and reasons for them should be given in writing and the person complaining should be informed at the same time of any rights of appeal they have if they wish to take the matter further. Timescales should also be set for completing actions so that the process does not take too long. Governing bodies can get advice on dealing with complaints from the LA. A toolkit document containing key messages to help schools to draw up a complaints procedure or modify an existing procedure is also available at www.governor.net.co.uk

Anyone can complain to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if s/he believes that a governing body is acting "unreasonably" or is failing to carry out its statutory duties properly (**Sections 496 and 497 Education Act 1996**). However, intervention can only occur if the governing body or the LEA has failed to carry out a legal duty or has acted "unreasonably" in the performance of a duty. Intervention would have to be expedient in

the sense that there would have to be something that the Secretary of State for Education and Skills could instruct either party to do to put matters right.

The Local Government Ombudsman can only look at complaints made against schools in relation to admission policies and LEAs in respect of Schools Admission Appeals and exclusion panels and whether they have been undertaken properly; whether a Council is providing adequate and suitable education arrangements for an excluded pupil; delays in producing a SEN Statement and whether the provision identified in the SEN statement is being provided.

17. Recommendations

1. That all schools be strongly encouraged to participate in the current survey of anti-bullying activity being carried out by the Anti-Bullying Steering Group and that the Steering Group continues with the survey until all schools have responded.
2. That the Council ensures all schools have an anti-bullying policy.
3. That Governing Bodies be reminded of their responsibilities for ensuring schools have an effective anti-bullying policy and that a Link Governor for Anti-Bullying be identified at each school.
4. That, if successful outcomes are achieved, the Council should negotiate further input from the Anti-Bullying Alliance Regional Coordinators directly in to Tameside schools and that the work carried out be used as a model for use in other schools.
5. That school policies be reviewed in light of the new Council policy.
6. That a young person and parent-friendly version of the new policy in leaflet form be produced and made available to Elected Members and School Governors.
7. That all stakeholders, including children and young people, parents and governors, are involved in the continued development of the Council's Anti-Bullying Policy.
8. That the Council consider creating a temporary seconded post or commissioning support to deliver on some pieces of work on the action plan developed by the Anti-Bullying Steering Group.
9. That the Council establishes a picture of the scale of the problem of bullying as soon as possible to act as a benchmark for future anti-bullying activity.
10. That monitoring and recording incidents of bullying and surveying pupil experiences should be recognised in the new Council Anti-Bullying Policy as good practice in tackling bullying in Tameside.
11. That Local Authorities which have successfully developed monitoring arrangements with their schools be visited by the Steering Group and possibly school staff to learn from their experiences.
12. That the Council contact Governing Bodies of those schools which do not return Racist Incident Monitoring Forms and remind them of their duties.

13. That more opportunities are found to share and celebrate good practice in tackling bullying in Tameside and that consideration be given to a local award for excellence in anti-bullying activity.
14. That the Police be requested to give the same presentation about cyber-bullying to pupils and parents at other schools as that given to pupils at two high schools in Tameside.
15. That the Police take the opportunity to help raise awareness of cyber-bullying and bullying in general at suitable public meetings such as District Assembly Meetings.
16. That tackling cyber-bullying be included in the new Anti-Bullying Policy for Tameside.
17. That, in line with recently published government guidance, schools include cyber-bullying in their anti-bullying policy.
18. That the Council take a lead on tackling text and online bullying as a community issue.
19. That guidance is produced for parents about how to help protect their children from text and online bullying.
20. That the Council consult parents about their role in tackling bullying and the support that could be offered by the Council and other organisations.
21. That the Council explore opportunities in the voluntary sector for the provision of support to children, young people and parents affected by bullying.

Lifelong Learning And Cultural Services Scrutiny Panel

Review of Bullying in Schools

Project Plan

January 2006

Aim Of The Scrutiny Review Exercise

To evaluate the effectiveness of the Council's anti-bullying policy and practices for achieving the outcomes of Every Child Matters.

Objectives

- A.** Assess the development of the Council's Anti-bullying Policy.
- B.** Identify services, training and other resources available from the Council to schools and the school community (teaching staff, pupils, governors and parents) and consider the level of take-up of this provision.
- C.** Consider good practice in Tameside and in other local authority areas.
- D.** Consider how the Council monitors the extent of bullying in Tameside and how individual incidents of bullying are recorded and monitored in schools
- E.** Gather feedback from teaching staff, pupils, governors and parents about Council policy and provision for tackling bullying in schools.

Timescale

To fully involve schools and the education service this review should be completed before the end of the summer term in July 2006.

Equality And Diversity Issues

The Council's policies for tackling bullying for reasons of prejudice will be included in this review.

Detailed Action Plan (in broadly chronological order)

Action	Objective met	Timescale	Lead Scrutiny Panel member(s) and/or Scrutiny Support Officer(s)	Monthly update
(1) Meet Cabinet Deputy(ies) responsible to discuss the Council's Anti-Bullying policy and service provision.	All	Scrutiny Panel Meeting 31 st January 2006	Alison Davies – Coordination Sarah Challoner – Research	✓ Cllr Cooney attending Cllr Wilkinson unable to attend Claire Bibby and Jim Taylor attending
(2) Receive information about the continuing development of the Council's Anti-bullying policy.	A	Scrutiny Panel Meeting 31 st January 2006	Alison Davies – Coordination Sarah Challoner – Research	✓ As above
(3) Map provision available from the Council to teaching staff, pupils, governors and parents	B	Scrutiny Panel Meeting 31 st January 2006	Alison Davies – Coordination Sarah Challoner – Research	✓ As above
(4) Assess the level of take-up of provision by schools.	B	Scrutiny Panel Meeting 14 th February 2006	Alison Davies – Coordination Sarah Challoner – Research	Not achieved?
(5) Meet with a representative from a relevant national organisation to explore issues, national guidance, and best practice in preventing and dealing with bullying	All	Scrutiny Panel Meeting 14 th February 2006	Alison Davies – Coordination Sarah Challoner – Research	✓ Pupils and staff from schools attending NW Regional Coordinators for the ABA attending meeting of 21 st March
(6) Receive examples of best practice in Tameside and in other local authority areas.	C	Scrutiny Panel Meeting 21 st March 2006	Alison Davies – Coordination Sarah Challoner – Research	✓ NW Regional Coordinators for the ABA attending
(7) Identify and assess monitoring arrangements by the Council and by individual schools and assess extent of bullying	D	Scrutiny Panel Meeting 21 st March 2006	Alison Davies – Coordination Sarah Challoner – Research	✓ Covered in previous meetings

Action	Objective met	Timescale	Lead Scrutiny Panel member(s) and/or Scrutiny Support Officer(s)	Monthly update
(8) Collect and evaluate any recent feedback from stakeholders about Council policy and provision.	E	Scrutiny Panel Meeting 11 th April 2006	Alison Davies – Coordination Sarah Challoner – Research	Meeting cancelled
(9) If necessary gather additional feedback from stakeholders or identify where further consultation needs to take place.	E	May-June 2006	Alison Davies – Coordination Sarah Challoner – Research	✓ Pupil and parent consultation May and June 2006

