

The Highland Council

Community Safety, Public Engagement and Equalities Committee – 5 December 2013

Agenda Item	11
Report No	CPE 53/13

Progress Report of Review Policy and Monitoring of Bullying and Prejudice-based Incidents in Schools

Report by Director of Education

Summary

This report provides Members with an update on progress on work to review the policy and monitoring mechanisms for bullying and prejudiced based incidents in schools.

1.	Background
1.1	<p>The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on public bodies to give due regard in all their work to the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate unlawful discrimination • Advance equality of opportunity, and • Promote good relations
1.2	<p>The public sector equality duties apply to Education Authorities as “listed bodies”, as well as to Local Authorities and other public bodies. The legal and policy framework also includes the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child; the national outcomes to tackle significant inequalities and improve the life chances of children, young people and families at risk, GIRFEC and Curriculum for Excellence.</p>
1.3	<p>The Highland Council’s equality priorities during 2012 – 2017 are presented in "A Fairer Highland". Actions relating to bullying in schools are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 - Pupils and school staff have a greater understanding of prejudice based bullying and its impact and • 6 - Pupils and school staff feel more confident in reporting prejudice based bullying incidents that they have experienced or witnessed • 15 - Staff and pupils have a greater awareness of how they can support equality through delivery of curriculum for excellence and wider school approaches following the principles of the Highland Practice Model and SHANNARI.
1.4	<p>It was agreed at this committee on the 5th of December 2012 that the ECS Equalities Working Group would review the effectiveness and scope of the current guidance and reporting form, continue to monitor reported incidents on a regular basis and investigate opportunities for work with others on the wider impact of hate incidents and crimes, develop and roll out training and look at good practice from elsewhere. In addition it was agreed that schools would</p>

	continue to enhance the building of trust and openness between staff and pupils and provide opportunities to discuss issues within Personal and Social Education (PSE) and more widely through the opportunities created by the Health and Wellbeing strand of Curriculum for Excellence.
2.	Definitions
2.1	Bullying is apparently a simple concept, but in practice it is difficult to define or to quantify clearly. Appendix 1 is a graphic which attempts to illustrate these difficulties. Adults and young people can have different ideas as to what constitutes bullying, and this can be very dependent on context. Also, adults are not always in a position to notice or become aware of many incidents, and young people do not always report events for various reasons. Relying solely on school managers' collated reports, even if these could be perfect, does not therefore necessarily capture important aspects of young people's experiences and other sources of information are needed. Three different definitions of bullying are detailed below.
2.2	Bullying is an unacceptable form of behaviour through which an individual or group of individuals are or feel threatened, abused or undermined by another individual or group of individuals. Bullying can be expressed through physical, verbal or intimidatory behaviour or in the form of marginalisation (HC current schools procedures).
2.3	Children and young people can experience (prejudice based) bullying for a variety of reasons; where they live, their sexual orientations, gender, disability, the colour of their skin, what clothes they wear or what team they support. The one thing that these have in common is difference or perceived difference – some children and young people don't see or understand diversity, they still only see difference. (RespectMe).
2.4	Homophobic bullying describes when someone is bullied because they are lesbian, gay or bisexual, or because people think they are – perhaps because they look or act a certain way that other people think means they're gay. It's also when homophobic words are used during bullying (Stonewall).
3.	Levels of Bullying in Highland Schools
3.1	So far for academic year 2013-14 Education Performance Management Unit statistics have collated 6 racist incidents, 6 bullying incidents and one incident classed as both racist and bullying. It is anticipated that the number of reported incidents will increase and reflect a wider range of protected characteristics when the revised policy and associated training are in place (see section 4 of this report).
3.2	Another way to measure levels of bullying is through self-reporting using the Highland Lifestyle Survey. Every two years it asks primary 7 and secondary 2 and 4 pupils' questions about bullying. Preliminary results from the 2013 survey are set out in appendix 2. 20% of P7, 25% of S2 and 17% of S4 pupils reported feeling bullied either a few, some or lots of times during the last week.

	Further analysis of the Survey responses will be carried out and reported to Adult and Children's Services Committee in January 2014.
3.3	There is little information on the extent and impact of homophobic bullying in Highland schools, while at the same time the international literature shows that this form of prejudice based bullying has universal impact on school ethos and pupil well-being. The Psychological Service has been working with Highland Youth Voice Executive to produce a survey that can address this gap in knowledge. Invergordon Academy has piloted the survey as a whole school. Full results will be made available to members in the New Year after analysis; however the early indications are of data that will be very helpful in guiding actions to address homophobia in schools and community. It is intended to extend the sampling to cover a variety of Highland locations.
3.4	Preliminary results suggest that up to 36% of secondary pupils reported themselves to be affected in some way by homophobic bullying, with 71% identifying earliest incidence as being in Primary school. Further data will be available in the New Year.
4.	Progress
4.1	Work to review the current Anti-bullying and Anti-racism Guidelines and Procedures and Cyberbullying Guidance has commenced. The reporting form was reviewed first. It was significantly reduced in size with a view to getting embedded into electronic recording systems. This process has slowed down due to the changes from the use of Phoenix e1 to a new electronic records system. The main sections of the documents are currently being reviewed and an updated and streamlined version will be available, following consultation, by spring/summer 2014.
4.2	Curricular activity is crucial in tackling prejudice based bullying. Schools are being surveyed to clarify what anti-bullying programmes are being used to identify good practice and gaps and which schools currently carry out a bullying survey as part of PSE, with a view to introducing standard questions to enable possible collation of information to add a new dimension to analysis of levels of bullying.
4.3	Alongside this review work has been undertaken to address Outcome 15. The first stage of this work is to Develop standard policy with integral checklist. This activity will ensure that schools have considered all aspects of equalities including tackling bullying and links to Curriculum for Excellence. The document also provides guidance on cross curricular activities that cover equalities issues and therefore promote diversity and address bullying.
4.5	Other activities that contribute to tackling bullying that schools have participated in include the national 'Show Racism the Red Card' events and resources which raise awareness of racism and promote race equality and work with HUG, a local advocacy support group for people with mental health problems who have worked with schools to raise awareness of the associated stigma and prejudice. Highland Youth Voice maintains a focus on inclusion

	and fairness and discussions have just commenced with the Youth Convener to explore how this activity can be built upon.
4.6	Equalities training for school staff will be rolled out from February 2014. Specific training on the revised bullying policy and guidance will be developed and rolled out alongside the introduction of the new policy during 2014.
4.7	In addition to the Highland Lifestyle Survey and in line with best practice across the UK, it is intended to establish an annual, suitably light touch, survey of young people across Highland schools to provide information on the extent, forms and impact of bullying, including with reference to protected characteristics. This will supplement and shed light on “top down” reporting, provide a meaningful baseline and intelligence as to where and what intervention might be needed, as well as the means to monitor impact. Some schools do this already, and so a pilot form of this will be in place, with data available, by summer 2014.
4.8	The Working Group is working on the best way to involve partners. A meeting has taken place with Stonewall, regarding the Education Champions Scheme http://www.stonewallscotland.org.uk/scotland/at_school/ . Council staff delivered a workshop on the development of Council Equality Outcomes and bullying in schools at an LGBT Youth Scotland event https://www.lgbtyouth.org.uk/yp-bullying . This organisation has developed relevant teaching materials which they have indicated can be shared with Highland schools. Documentation produced by Respectme http://www.respectme.org.uk/ has been referred to throughout this review and the organisation will be contacted to discuss how they can assist going forward.
5.	Implications
5.1	<p>Resources There are no resource implications resulting from the content of this report as all training and resources will be provided from existing budgets.</p> <p>Legal and Risk The implementation of the actions detailed in this report will reduce the risk of legal challenge to the Council.</p> <p>Equalities The content of this report contributes to the implementation of the Council’s Fairer Highland Action Plan. The actions detailed will contribute to the reduction in inequalities across all protected characteristics.</p> <p>Climate Change There are no climate change implications arising from the content of this report.</p>

Recommendation

Members are asked to note:

1. The progress in reviewing the policy and monitoring of bullying and prejudice-based incidents in schools;
2. That an updated and streamlined version of the Bullying Policy and Guidance and associated training will be available, following consultation, by spring/summer 2014; and
3. That equalities training will be delivered to all schools commencing February 2014.

Designation: Director of Education

Date: 25 November 2013

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All the things that happen

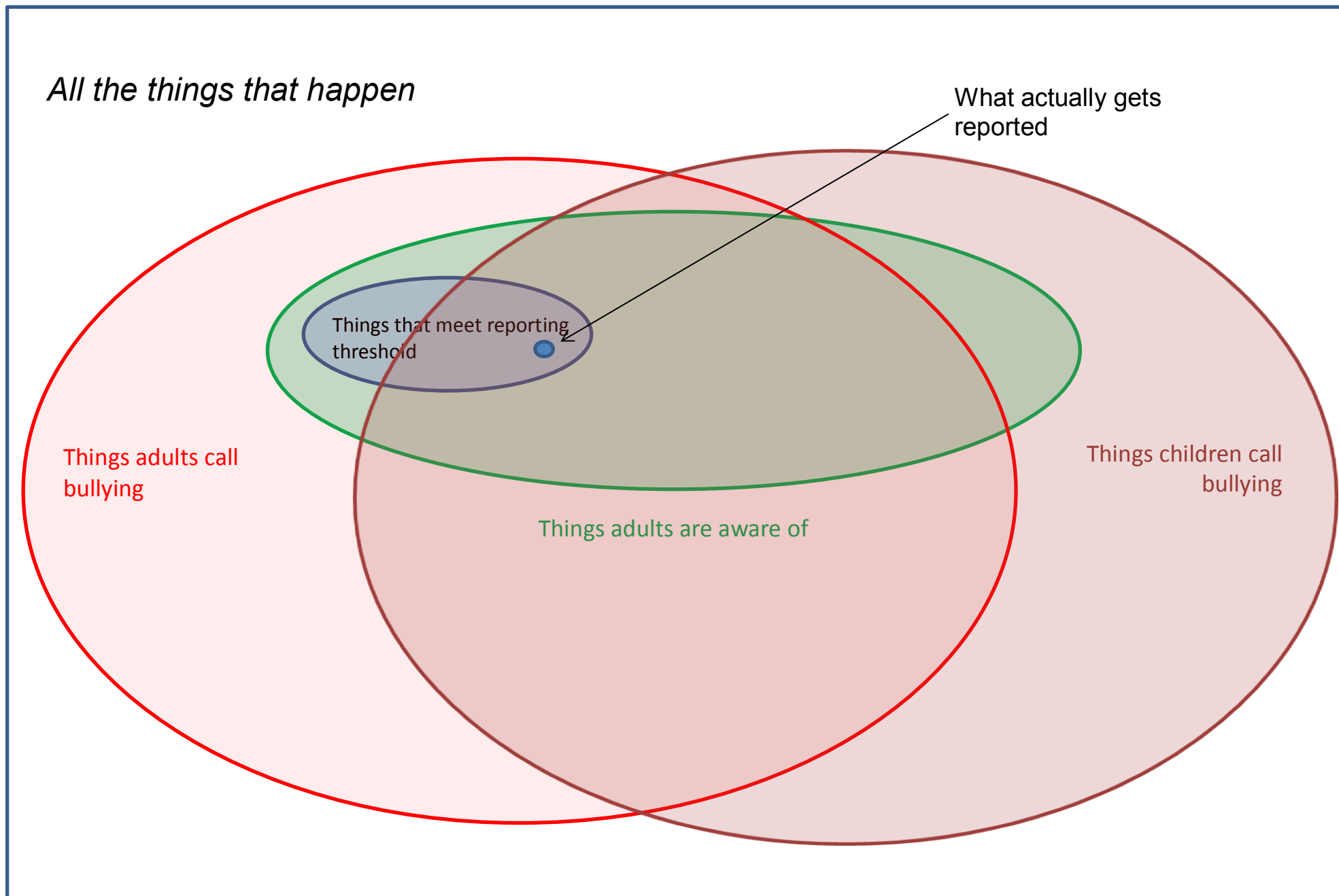
What actually gets reported

Things that meet reporting threshold

Things adults call bullying

Things children call bullying

Things adults are aware of



2013 Highland Lifestyle Survey

Last week were there times when you felt bullied at all?

Age - Responses	None	A few	Some	Lots
P7 1664	79.69%	14.18%	3.97%	2.16%
S2 1697	74.96%	17.38%	4.60%	3.06%
S4 1731	82.84%	11.03%	3.35%	2.77%

(Note - base total 5092)

If you did feel bullied, where did this take place?

Age - Responses	Home	Online	School	Elsewhere
P7 627	10.69%	6.06%	63.16%	20.10%
S2 600	6.67%	7.17%	71.00%	15.17%
S4 448	6.25%	10.04%	65.85%	17.86%

(Note – base total 1675)

If you were bullied would you tell someone?

Age - Responses	Not sure	No	Yes
P7 1621	15.18%	10.43%	74.40%
S2 1644	24.39%	17.40%	58.21%
S4 1659	25.50%	23.51%	50.99%

(Note – base total 4924)

Do you know where you can get help from?

Age - Responses	Yes	No
P7 1649	93.21%	6.79%
S2 1672	91.93%	8.07%
S4 1695	88.08%	11.92%

(Note – base total 5016)