

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1	Meeting:	Children and Young People’s Scrutiny Panel
2	Date:	Tuesday 26th April 2011
3	Title:	Anti-Bullying Strategy
4	Directorate:	Children and Young People’s Services

5 **Summary**

This report looks at the current situation in schools regarding support from the Children and Young Peoples Services Anti Bullying Strategy and Anti Bullying Development Officer. The strategy supports schools to develop systems and policies where learners feel safe and able to report any concerns regarding bullying.

6 **Recommendations**

- **That the report is received and accepted**
- **Consideration is given to the long term financial implication of further developing the anti bullying strategy in Rotherham**

7 Proposals and Details

The Anti Bullying strategy was developed in 2006 with the main strategic aims and objectives being:-

- To ensure that Children and Young people feel safe and secure in school and other service areas
- That parents and carers have trust and confidence in schools policies and practices to address bullying
- All staff strive to create a culture and ethos where bullying is not acceptable.
- That staff across Children and Young Peoples Services have the appropriate training and support to resolve incidences of bullying
- To develop Multi-agency approaches to resolve complex issues resulting from bullying
- To raise the profile of bullying and its effects on Children and Young People's well-being and how this in turn affects self esteem.
- To establish a culture and ethos where bullying is not tolerated through the promotion of the strategy, policies and practices

Scrutiny Panel and Rotherham Youth Cabinet

Key recommendations regarding the Anti Bullying Strategy were first introduced by the scrutiny panel and Rotherham Youth Cabinet in November 2006. These included:-

- That the draft anti bullying strategy is fully supported and implemented across Children and Young Peoples Services
- In particular support is given to the Anti Bullying Standard awards
- That the effectiveness of the strategy is monitored by the Children and Young Peoples Services Scrutiny Panel
- That school councils and other student bodies are fully involved in the development and monitoring of school policies and whole school approaches to tackling bullying
- That school governing bodies are encouraged to nominate a designated governor for bullying

What has been implemented as a result of the scrutiny audit?

- The Rotherham Anti Bullying Standard has been developed after looking at similar award systems in other local Authorities. The Rotherham version is a Gold, Silver and Bronze award and the standard seeks to recognise and encourage progress towards the Gold standard. The Gold standard is achieved where the school has an Anti Bullying policy that actively addresses bullying and includes a reporting data base to monitor incidents. The standard encompasses three separate areas of moderation these being, Policy, Whole School Involvement and Support. 54 schools are now committed to the Anti Bullying Standard with 14 out of the 16 Secondary schools working towards the Standard.

- 48 Schools now have a nominated Anti Bullying Governor and all schools have a designated person who deals with Anti Bullying issues.
- Although the interest in Sentinel initially increased following promotion by the Anti Bullying Development Officer the system was only used consistently by 2 schools therefore funding of the system could not be justified
- Anti Bullying Development Officer provides:-
 - Advisory service to both schools and parents
 - Mediation for Schools/family/young people
 - Peer Mentor Training
 - Various group/whole class workshops covering – what is bullying?, role of the bystander, E Safety and Cyberbullying
 - Anti Bullying Awareness Assemblies
 - Parent Awareness Sessions
 - Ongoing joint project work with Families and Schools Together, Carnegie Project, Risky Business
 - Supports schools in gaining the Rotherham Anti Bullying Standard
 - Deals with complex cases of bullying following referrals from schools, young people, parents
- Rotherham has had an Anti Bullying model policy since 2005 and this was distributed to all schools; the policy was updated in 2009.
- All schools have signed up to Healthy Schools Scheme which links in with the Anti Bullying Standard.
- Rotherham MIND have worked closely with the Anti Bullying Development Officer and have developed and made available to all Children and Young Peoples Service various training around Dealing with Bullying: Roles, Strategies and Tactics

Measuring the impact of the Anti Bullying Strategy

- In March 2010 Anti Bullying work in Rotherham was considered as enhancing by the National Strategies Behaviour, Attendance and Seal Programme and judged to be outstanding; the Anti Bullying Alliance also recommended Rotherham to other Local Authorities as a site of excellent practice
- 44% of all Rotherham Schools are committed to the Anti Bullying Standard
- The number of complex cases reported to both the Children and Young People's Service Complaints and the Anti Bullying Development Officer has decreased with only 15 cases being referred from April 2010 to April 2011, compared to 34 cases from April 2006- April 2007 when the strategy first began.
- The ethos and culture in Rotherham schools continues to change with the majority of schools recognising the importance of anti bullying work. All Rotherham Secondary schools work well with the Anti Bullying Development Officer and all take part in Anti Bullying Week.

What our customers say about the Anti Bullying Service:

- *“Sue’s support has been invaluable in updating our Anti Bullying Policy. She has experience in dealing with a wide range of issues and is always an excellent source of advice; we value this support from the Local Authority”.*
Theresa Dixon Saint Pius X Catholic High School
- *We recently had a difficult case where a family was concerned for the welfare and safety of their child (Y6) and they put the problems down to ‘bullying’. The LA Officer, Sue Horton, became a key player in supporting the family and school. She was able to offer independent reassurance to the family that the school was acting responsibly – she offered a referral for counselling support; strategies for a group of friends to strengthen relationships (Circle of Friends); ran a parental workshop on relationships, and supported the Y6 through a focussed series of lessons in PHSE. The troubled waters were calmed and we are now working towards policy reviews which involve all stakeholders. A very positive, supportive approach from a knowledgeable office who was able to draw on a wide bank of experiences.*
Gail Atkin Headteacher Wickersley St Alban C of E (A) Primary School
- *Sue has supported Safe Havens greatly in expanding from Wath Comprehensive School to an additional seven Rotherham secondary schools and always speaks highly of our work wherever she goes in order to raise the profile of Safe Havens. Sue has provided us with many relevant contacts including National Strategies and the Anti-Bullying Alliance and supported all of our participating schools in first establishing Safe Havens. Furthermore, Sue has helped Safe Havens on numerous occasions in organising very successful, thought-provoking conferences, which have had a great impact on delegates. We will also be working with Sue in order to develop a training programme for Safe Havens in order to improve the quality of service unconditionally across the Borough. The working relationship between Safe Havens and Sue has been both stupendous and essential, and I look forward to it continuing.”*
George Foster (Save Havens Project, Wath)
- *“In my role as the Anti-Bullying Alliance's Regional Adviser for Yorkshire and Humber (funded by DCSF) I have worked with and hopefully supported all the fifteen local authorities in the region. With recent changes made in my role by the DSCF I have now to focus on working with "target" local authorities and because of the success of the approach taken by Rotherham LA I will no longer be able to make any significant contribution to its anti-bullying work. At this point in time I want to recognise the achievement of the local authority in its approach to challenging bullying.*

Over the four year's in this role I have seen Rotherham develop as a model for other local authorities. It was one of the first to address the issue of bullying and to develop an anti-bullying strategy and action plan, and to develop this in partnership with its schools and a wide range of agencies both statutory and voluntary. I well remember attending and addressing

some of the earliest meetings and the enthusiasm and commitment of those involved. It has consulted with and involved its children and young people. It was one of the first to have a dedicated Anti-Bullying Officer, and the benefits of the appointment are clear.

In the last couple of years with the development of "Praise Pod" and its "Anti-Bullying Accreditation Scheme" Rotherham has received national recognition for its anti-bullying work. I very much hope to be able to attend the awarding of the first gold standard to a school later this month.

Rotherham has been well-served by the leadership offered by Cath Ratcliffe and the commitment and dedication of Susan Horton.

I hope to be able to continue to provide advice to the local authority and I do hope that the local authority will continue to attend and contribute to the regional network meetings and events. I also hope that I will be able to use Rotherham's anti-bullying work in case studies and to point other local authorities in the direction of Rotherham".

John Stead -ABA Regional Adviser

Future Developments:

- To encourage all schools to commit to the Rotherham Anti Bullying Standard
- To encourage schools to maintain their commitment to the Anti Bullying standard when they reach gold status
- To encourage schools to access the anti bullying training available from the Anti Bullying Development Officer and Rotherham MIND.
- Anti Bullying Development Officer and MIND to maintain and to continue to develop training opportunities for Schools, Young People and Parents
- Anti Bullying workshop for the Rotherham Parents Forum
- To continue to encourage schools to record and report bullying incidents, currently many of Rotherham schools use SIM's
- To ensure that the Anti Bullying Strategy acknowledges that bullying can occur anywhere and encompasses settings other than schools.
- To update the Rotherham Anti Bullying Model Policy

8 Finance

In spite of the reduction in funding, there is a commitment to ensure that this post continues into 2011/12.

9 Risks and Uncertainties

It is still very difficult to quantify and evidence our work to reduce bullying and racist incidents in schools; currently as an authority we have a system for recording racial incidents but we don't have a system for recording bullying. This therefore makes it very difficult to establish baseline information and thus setting targets is unrealistic. We need to therefore improve systems and look at developing SIM's as a way of collecting data.

10 **Policy and Performance Agenda Implications**

Children and Young people need to be safe both in their community and in school so that they are able to concentrate on their learning and achieve their full potential.

Tackling bullying will also help our children and young people to have equality of opportunity and freedom from prejudice and discrimination.

11 **Background Papers and Consultation**

Anti Bullying Strategy update report submitted to Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Panel, 12th January 2009

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