



## **Anti-bullying consultation response February 2010**

### **Question One – view on the draft vision, aims and approach**

Both the draft vision and aims are aspirational in outlook and as such are fine although the practicalities of fully realising them may prove difficult- key to achieving success is not only "a co-ordinated and co-hesive approach" but also a consistent one. Children access various services, statutory and non-statutory, during the course of a day, week and month and they need to know, and be confident, that there will be a consistent approach in the way that they are listened to and supported.

Although this approach is focussing on children and young people, to fully achieve the stated vision and aims, a change must occur in society as a whole- children often mirror bullying behaviour displayed by adults, therefore the Scottish Out of School Care Network (SOSCN) would suggest that an overall anti-bullying culture for all has to be promoted.

Regards the presentation of the document, this being a "national approach to anti-bullying for Scotland's children and young people" SOSCN would question why there is not a child-friendly version? Specifically as this "approach focuses on children and young people" and directly mentions anti-bullying in relation to the UNCRC SOSCN would expect that under article 12 children are able to express their views freely on this topic and for these views to be given weight in keeping with the child's age and maturity.

### **Question Two – what do you think are the strengths, gaps and priorities for future development?**

#### **Strengths**

This consultation is a starting point for discussion and action and as such is a stated commitment to anti-bullying.

#### **Gaps**

Little or no mention of the key role that childcare services in general and out of school care services in particular play in a)creating positive experiences and opportunities for children and young people, and b)supporting children and families experiencing bullying in other services, such as in schools.

There are currently nearly 1,100 out of school care services in Scotland providing spaces for approximately 33,300 children on a weekly basis\*. Out of school care services provide play, care and learning opportunities for children and young people before and after school, and all-day during school holidays. Out of school care services are inclusive child-centred services committed to equal opportunities. The out of school care sector is one of the largest sectors directly supporting children young people and families and as such anti-bullying policies, procedures and strategies are already a major focus of our work.



From consultation with members and work conducted in partnership with RespectMe, SOSCN knows that many children are able to discuss with, and receive support from, out of school care staff about bullying which takes place in other external services such as schools. Due to low staff to child ratios (1:8/1:10), and the informal nature of the service, out of school care staff and children have positive and lasting friendships.

Children are able to relate to out of school care staff not only as professionals but also carers and friends to whom they can turn if in difficulty.

SOSCN as the national organisation for out of school care in Scotland would like to see the important work already developed and delivered by out of school care services being recognised and acknowledged in future developments.

In general terms we see little evidence of children and young people, and families affected by bullying behaviour, being consulted or being encouraged to participate in this consultation paper.

For a document which specifically relates to the UNCRC we would hope to see the office of the Scottish Commissioner for Children and Young People (SCCYP) in membership of SABS.

## **Priorities**

- Include the Scottish Out of School Care Network (SOSCN) and out of school care services in all aspects of the development of the anti-bullying approach.
- Out of school care and schools must provide a fully integrated and consistent approach to the way that children and young people are treated with respect to bullying over the course of a school day. For example, "X" out of school care may be based within "X" school, however, as the out of school care is run by a voluntary management committee and not a statutory service, there is currently no requirement for the anti-bullying policy or procedure for the school to be the same as the out of school care, or vice versa. As it is the same children in both services, the same anti-bullying policy and approach should apply. The anti-bullying policy should be the best for the child and developed in partnership with the out of school care, the school and the children.
- Clear evidence of the direct involvement of children and young people and families in developing a national approach to anti-bullying.

## **Question Three – what more needs to be done:**

- at a national central level of co-ordination and support?  
Creation of better links and relationships between schools and out of school care services in order to support children and families throughout the course of the school day. (This is in general and specifically in relation to an integrated and consistent approach to anti-bullying.)

- at local level?  
Creation of better links and relationships between schools and out of school care services in order to support children and families throughout the course of the school

# Scottish Out of School Care Network (SOSCN)

*"supporting play, care and learning"*



day. (This is in general and specifically in relation to an integrated and consistent approach to anti-bullying.)

- by your organisation?

The Scottish Out of School Care Network shall continue to develop anti-bullying training, resources and practice in partnership with other organisations. We have already worked in partnership with RespectMe to deliver training to the out of school care sector and also develop guidance on developing and implementing anti-bullying policies and practice within out of school care services.

Question Four – What more can SABS do to support this?

Ensure the inclusion of out of school care in all future developments of this national approach.