



DEBATE PACK

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Anti-bullying week

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Summary

This House of Commons Library briefing has been published in anticipation of the debate on Anti-bullying week, sponsored by Gavin Newlands MP. The debate will take place on Thursday 23 November in Westminster Hall starting at 1.30pm. The briefing contains background information, parliamentary material, press articles, and further reading material, which Members may find useful in preparation for the debate.

Anti-bullying Week, organised by the [Anti-Bullying Alliance](#) and the [Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum](#) (both parts of the National Children's Bureau), took place between 13th and 17th November. According to its website, the event aimed to:

- empower children and young people to celebrate what makes them, and others, unique
- help children and young people understand how important it is that every child feels valued and included in school, able to be themselves, without fear of bullying
- encourage parents and carers to work with their school and talk to their children about bullying, difference and equality
- enable teachers and other children's workforce professionals to celebrate what makes us 'all different, all equal' and celebrate difference and equality. Encouraging them to take individual and collective action to prevent bullying, creating safe environments where children can be themselves.

The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

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1. Background

Education is a devolved policy area, and different policies relating to bullying are in place across the UK. This introduction provides an overview of relevant policies, the procedures in place for parents who have concerns, and information about support organisations.

England

Bullying: advice to schools

The gov.uk website provides information on the law as it relates to [bullying at school](#), and also information on reporting bullying to schools and (in some instances) to the police.

By law, all state schools must have a behaviour policy in place that includes measures to prevent all forms of bullying among pupils. This policy is decided by the school. All teachers, pupils and parents must be told what it is.

The gov.uk site also sets out the matters that should be [reported to the police](#):

Some forms of bullying are illegal and should be reported to the police. These include:

- violence or assault
- theft
- repeated harassment or intimidation, e.g. name calling, threats and abusive phone calls, emails or text messages
- hate crimes

The Department for Education has published non-statutory advice for schools on [Preventing and Tackling Bullying](#). This includes advice on prevention and intervention, cyberbullying, and makes clear that schools can discipline pupils for bullying outside of school.

Requesting Ofsted inspections and complaints about schools

The DfE guidance on [complaints about schools](#) also makes clear that parents can request Ofsted inspections of a school where there are worries about general problems, rather than individual cases:

You can [complain to Ofsted](#) if you think a school isn't run properly and needs inspecting. They won't look into problems with individual students, eg exclusions or not getting a place at the school.

You can only complain to Ofsted if you have already followed the school's complaints procedure.

You should get a response within 30 working days. It will tell you if Ofsted will investigate or not, and why.

Schools should deal with bullying issues in line with the policy they have in place. Parents should discuss their concerns with schools in the first instance and should make use of the standard schools complaints procedures if they are not satisfied with the response

General information on [how to complain about a school](#) is available on the Department's website.

Advice and support organisations

The DfE's [Preventing and Tackling Bullying](#) guidance includes links to further information and support organisations (see last section).

Coram's Child Law Advice centre provides [information for parents whose children have been bullied](#) (they also have an [advice line](#)).

The Anti-Bullying Alliance provide [advice for parents and carers](#), including further contacts for individual advice.

Scotland

All schools should have an anti-bullying policy.

Where a child is being bullied at school, advice on the Scottish Government website indicates that the best first course of action is to talk to a teacher – at primary school this is likely to be the child's class teacher and in a secondary school the child's guidance teacher.

If a parent is not satisfied with the action taken, and the child's school is under the control of a local authority, it would be best to contact local council's education department. If the school is not under local authority control, parents should contact those who run the school.

In such cases where the school is unable to act, or in cases of serious assault or harassment, then parents should contact the police.

Advice and support organisations

The Scottish Government's [Let's Stop Bullying: Advice for Parents and Families](#) provides further information.

[RespectMe](#) is an anti-bullying service funded by the Scottish Government that provides advice for children and adults.

[Parentline Scotland](#) is a free confidential and anonymous national helpline for parents, including for issues relating to bullying.

Wales

Schools must have a policy in place to prevent all forms of bullying among pupils.

The Welsh Government has published a series of documents providing guidance on dealing with particular types of bullying (such as cyberbullying, or racist or homophobic bullying), under the heading [Respecting others: anti-bullying guidance](#).

All secondary schools have access to a qualified, trained counsellor.

Parents who are concerned that their child is being bullied should first discuss the matter with a teacher.

The main [Respecting Others](#) guidance provides guidance on succeeding steps parents should take if their feel their concerns are not being addressed:

- check the school anti-bullying policy to see if agreed procedures are being followed
- discuss your concerns with the parent governor or other parents
- make an appointment to meet the head teacher, keeping a record of the meeting
- if this does not help, write to the Chair of Governors, explaining your concerns and what you would like to see happen
- contact local or national parent support groups for advice
- contact the Director of Education for your authority, who will be able to ensure that the Governors respond to your concerns
- contact the Parentline Plus helpline for support and information at any of these stages
- in the last resort, write to the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning.

Northern Ireland

All grant-aided schools are required to include, within their discipline policy, an anti-bullying policy which includes measures to prevent all forms of bullying among pupils.

Guidance for schools in developing effective anti-bullying policies is included in the Department of Education's publication '[Pastoral Care in Schools - Promoting Positive Behaviour](#)'.

The NI Direct website provides information on [complaints about schools](#), which constituents who are concerned about their child's welfare may follow. Systems may vary slightly depending on the type of school involved, but broadly the succeeding stages are:

- Complain to the school (a teacher and/or the principal)
- Complain to the governing body
- Complain to school management (where relevant – for example the local Education Authority or Council for Catholic Maintained Schools may provide an independent appeal stage)
- Raise the issue with the [Northern Ireland Public Service Ombudsman](#) (NIPSO)

Counselling services are provided in all post-primary schools.

The Department of Education provides funding to [Childline NI](#) to provide their helpline for children and young people who wish to talk to someone about any concerns or worries they may have, including fears about bullying.

The Department of Education website provides further information on [dealing with bullying](#), including:

- [What is Cyber Bullying - A Leaflet for Parents and Carers](#)
- [What is Bullying due to Race, Faith & Culture - A Leaflet for Parents and Carers](#)
- [Reporting Bullying Concerns to Your Child's School - A Leaflet for Parents and Carers](#)

2. Parliamentary material

2.1 Written Parliamentary Questions

- [Internet: Safety](#)

Asked by: Lord Alton of Liverpool | **Party:** Crossbench

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of Key Principle 1 of their Internet Safety Strategy Green Paper, published on 11 October, that standards of behaviour online should match those offline, and the proposal that there should be a common framework for media standards, what steps they are taking to ensure that equivalent definitions of prohibited material are applied across different media platforms.

Answering member: Lord Ashton of Hyde | **Party:** Conservative Party | **Department:** Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

We are currently consulting on the social media code of practice provided for by the Digital Economy Act (2017). The Act requires the code to address conduct that is bullying or insulting to users, or other behaviour that is likely to intimidate or humiliate. Through this code we hope to tackle some of the most pernicious, but legal, online behaviours, including trolling and abuse, that is often disproportionately targeted towards women.

Such abusive and threatening behaviour online is totally unacceptable. A number of criminal offences may be committed by those abusing others on social media and an action which is illegal offline is also illegal online.

Part 3 of the Digital Economy Act (2017) requires the Secretary of State to produce a report on the effectiveness of age verification measures 12 months after the powers come into force. This review will provide the opportunity to consider impact, identify gaps and consult on definitions used in this Part of the Act, including the definition of extreme pornography.

14 Nov 2017 | Written questions | Answered | House of Lords | HL2778

Date tabled: 01 Nov 2017 | **Date for answer:** 15 Nov 2017 | **Date answered:** 14 Nov 2017

- [Internet: Safety](#)

Asked by: Lord Alton of Liverpool | **Party:** Crossbench

To ask Her Majesty's Government how the Government's Internet Safety Strategy Green Paper, published on 11 October, addresses the issue of the anonymity of internet users.

Answering member: Lord Ashton of Hyde | **Party:** Conservative Party | **Department:** Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

The Internet Safety Strategy recognises that the Internet can facilitate abuse and harassment, and enables individuals to attack people anonymously and those they have never met. As part of the Strategy consultation, we are gathering information on users' experience of online abuse.

We are also consulting on the introduction of a code of practice, as laid out in the Digital Economy Act 2017. The Act requires that the code addresses conduct that involves bullying or insulting an individual online, or other behaviour likely to intimidate or humiliate the individual. Our online survey consultation specifically asks whether the code of practice should include steps to tackle those who use anonymous social media accounts to abuse others.

We will use the information gathered during our consultation to inform future policy development.

09 Nov 2017 | Written questions | Answered | House of Lords | HL2765

Date tabled: 31 Oct 2017 | **Date for answer:** 14 Nov 2017 | **Date answered:** 09 Nov 2017

- [Social Media: Bullying](#)

Asked by: The Marquess of Lothian | **Party:** Conservative Party

To ask Her Majesty's Government what actions they are taking, or are planning to take, to stop the rise in malicious communications via social media.

Answering member: Lord Ashton of Hyde | **Party:** Conservative Party | **Department:** Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

We are currently consulting on introducing a social media code of practice as part of the Internet Safety Strategy which was published on 11 October.

As laid out in the Digital Economy Act 2017, the code will seek to ensure that providers offer adequate online safety policies, introduce minimum standards and metrics and ensure regular review and monitoring. Government will continue to consult with stakeholders in the tech industry on the details of the code of practice before its introduction in 2018.

More broadly, the Government published the Hate Crime Action Plan in July 2016 to drive forward action to tackle hate crime. This action includes the recent announcement of the creation of a national online hate crime hub.

07 Nov 2017 | Written questions | Answered | House of Lords | HL2529

- [Internet: Bullying](#)

Asked by: Byrne, Liam | **Party:** Labour Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to evaluate the impact, effectiveness and sustainability of the anti-bullying training that Facebook is planning to fund.

Answering member: Matt Hancock | **Party:** Conservative Party |
Department: Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

We warmly welcome Facebook's digital safety ambassador scheme, in partnership with the Diana award and Childnet International which aims to provide anti-bullying training for one young person in each UK school. This scheme is a private initiative. The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport will not be making any evaluation or producing any sponsorship material for the scheme.

03 Nov 2017 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 109803

Date tabled: 26 Oct 2017 | **Date for answer:** 30 Oct 2017 | **Date answered:** 03 Nov 2017

- [Pupils: Bullying](#)

Asked by: West, Catherine | **Party:** Labour Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment she has made of trends in the level of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in schools.

Answering member: Nick Gibb | **Party:** Conservative Party |
Department: Department for Education

In July we published our omnibus survey of pupils and their parents. 17% of pupils said they had seen someone being bullied, at least monthly, because "they are, or someone says they are, gay, lesbian or bisexual". 5% said the same "because they are, or someone says, they are transgender".

We are not able to assess trends as this was the first time these questions were included. We plan to repeat this annually.

06 Nov 2017 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 901617

Date tabled: 31 Oct 2017 | **Date for answer:** 06 Nov 2017 | **Date answered:** 06 Nov 2017

- [Pupils: Bullying](#)

Asked by: Timms, Stephen | **Party:** Labour Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment she has made of trends in the level of bullying in (a) primary and (b) secondary schools since 2010.

Answering member: Nick Gibb | **Party:** Conservative Party |
Department: Department for Education

Our most recent assessments of the levels of bullying in schools were published in July this year within The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) Teacher Voice Survey and the Omnibus Survey of Pupils and their Parents / Carers.

Questions in the [NFER Teacher Voice Omnibus](#) and a senior leader booster survey found that for each type of bullying asked about, the majority of respondents said they had rarely or never seen them occurring amongst pupils over the previous 12 months. This ranged from 73% of respondents saying they had rarely or never seen bullying based on sexist or sexual language, to 94% of respondents who said they had rarely or never seen anti-Semitic bullying. The most commonly observed form of bullying was sexist/related to sexual language with 27% reporting seeing it 'sometimes', 'often' or 'very often'. For all types of bullying asked about in the survey, the proportion of respondents saying they had seen or received reports of them occurring in the last 12 months was higher in secondary schools than primary schools.

The Department's [Omnibus Survey of Pupils and their Parents/Carers](#) found that nearly half of pupils (45%) said they had been bullied at least once in the past year. This survey did not cover primary age pupils.

Although we plan to ask these questions on an annual basis going forward, this was the first time these surveys have asked about levels of bullying and so we do not have comparable data to assess trends.

However, a separate survey published in 2015 - [wave 2 results from the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England 2](#) (LSYPE 2) - compared bullying among two cohorts of 14 year olds (year 10) from 2004 and 2014. It found that 30,000 fewer people in year 10 said they had been bullied in the last twelve months - a drop from 41% in 2004 to 36% in 2014. The analysis of later LSYPE2 waves will also include bullying figures. These findings will be published when the analysis is complete and quality assured.

09 Oct 2017 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 10107

Date tabled: 12 Sep 2017 | **Date for answer:** 09 Oct 2017 | **Date answered:** 09 Oct 2017

- [Schools: Hate Crime](#)

Asked by: Siddiq, Tulip | **Party:** Labour Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what training is available for teachers to handle or report hate crime in schools.

Answering member: Nick Gibb | **Party:** Conservative Party |

Department: Department for Education

The Government's Educate Against Hate website, which aims to provide high quality resources to teachers, contains resources from the Crown Prosecution Service to help explore and challenge homophobic and transphobic bullying and hate crime.

http://www.cps.gov.uk/northwest/working_with_you/hate_crime_schools_project/.

The Teachers' Standards set out the personal and professional conduct expected of all teachers. These include; having regard to the need to safeguard pupils' wellbeing, showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others, not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

All providers of initial teacher training (ITT) must comply with the statutory criteria, and guidance accompanying these criteria makes it clear that ITT providers have a duty to have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism' (CTSA 2015). In exercising this duty, ITT providers will ensure that all trainee teachers are appropriately trained in the Prevent duty.

13 Sep 2017 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 7203

Date tabled: 04 Sep 2017 | **Date for answer:** 06 Sep 2017 | **Date answered:** 13 Sep 2017

- [Pupils: Bullying](#)

Asked by: Moran, Layla | **Party:** Liberal Democrats

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to tackle bullying in schools on the basis of (a) gender, (b) sexuality, (c) gender identity and (d) gender expression.

Answering member: Nick Gibb | **Party:** Conservative Party | **Department:** Department for Education

The Government is clear that all forms of bullying, for whatever reason, is unacceptable and should not be tolerated in our schools.

All schools are required by law to have a behaviour policy with measures to prevent bullying among pupils. Schools develop their own anti-bullying strategies and are held to account for their effectiveness through Ofsted.

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires public bodies, including schools, to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equalities Act. Public sector bodies must also advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

In response to the Women and Equalities Select Committee inquiry into sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools, we have collected additional data on different types of bullying through pupil, parent and teacher voice surveys. The 'Pupils and their parents or carers omnibus survey wave 2' and 'Teacher voice omnibus: November 2016 survey' results were published in July 2017. They can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupils-and-their-parents-or-carers-omnibus-wave-1-survey>.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teacher-voice-omnibus-november-2016-survey-dfe-questions>.

We have also published updated bullying guidance for schools, which makes it clear that incidents of sexual harassment should be covered by school bullying policies.

The Department acknowledges that individuals who are, or perceived to be, LGBT, are disproportionately affected by bullying. Bullying can have a negative effect on individuals, blighting their education and damaging their mental health.

In September 2016, the Government Equalities Office announced a £3.0 million programme from 2016-2019 to prevent and address homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in a sustainable way. This programme focuses on primary and secondary schools in England which currently have no, or ineffective, measures in place.

Additionally, the Government is also talking directly to young people to challenge attitudes about abuse and consent. This year the Home Office launched the third phase of their campaign 'Disrespect NoBody', which aims to prevent the onset of domestic violence in adults by challenging attitudes and behaviour amongst teenage boys and girls and which emphasises that abuse in relationships is unacceptable.

09 Sep 2017 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 6636

Date tabled: 20 Jul 2017 | **Date for answer:** 05 Sep 2017 | **Date answered:** 09 Sep 2017

- [Schools: Hate Crime](#)

Asked by: Turley, Anna | **Party:** Labour Party · Cooperative Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what systems are in place for schools reporting hate incidents occurring in the classroom.

Answering member: Nick Gibb | **Party:** Conservative Party | **Department:** Department for Education

Schools are required by law to have behaviour and safeguarding policies. Schools should record and deal with incidents according to those policies and are held to account for how they do so by Ofsted. The Department for Education's statutory safeguarding guidance, 'Keeping children safe in education' (September 2016), is clear that if staff have any concerns about a child, or think that the child is in danger, they should speak to the school's designated safeguarding lead.

The Department's 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying' guidance (July 2017) sets out that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour or communications could constitute a criminal offence. When school staff feel that an offence may have been committed, they should seek assistance from the police.

12 Jul 2017 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 3599

Date tabled: 06 Jul 2017 | **Date for answer:** 11 Jul 2017 | **Date answered:** 12 Jul 2017

- [Speaker's Commission On Digital Democracy](#)

Asked by: Smith, Cat | **Party:** Labour Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the recommendations of the WebRoots Democracy report, Democracy 2.0: Hitting refresh on the Digital Democracy Commission, published on 26 January 2017, whether the Government plans to commission a review on the widespread internet abuse of politicians and citizens online; and what steps her Department is taking to ensure that (a) young people leave school digitally literate and (b) adults of all ages are educated in digital literacy.

Answering member: Matt Hancock | **Party:** Conservative Party | **Department:** Department for Culture, Media and Sport

We announced on 27 February that we would lead a cross-Government initiative on internet safety. We will be convening a series of round-table discussions with social media companies, technology firms, young people, charities and mental health experts to examine online risks and how to tackle them. The round tables are also expected to examine concerns around issues like trolling and other aggressive behaviour which impact on politicians and citizens more generally.

The Department for Education (DfE) launched the new computing curriculum, includes digital literacy, in September 2014. DfE has provided additional funding for digital skills through The Good Things Foundation, funding 680,000 people since 2014.

Government is also introducing a digital entitlement to ensure that publicly funded digital training to people who are over the age of 19 and do not have such skills.

02 Mar 2017 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 65031

Date tabled: 22 Feb 2017 | **Date for answer:** 24 Feb 2017 | **Date answered:** 02 Mar 2017

- [Schools: Homophobia](#)

Asked by: Lord Scriven | **Party:** Liberal Democrats

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many incidents of homophobic and transphobic bullying were recorded last year in schools broken down by region.

Answering member: Lord Nash | **Party:** Conservative Party | **Department:** Department for Education

The Government does not hold information on the number of cases of homophobic bullying recorded in schools. The recording of instances of bullying is managed locally by schools.

We are examining the overall prevalence of a range of bullying types, including homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic bullying, through surveys such as the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) Teacher Voice and the Pupil and Parent/Carer omnibus surveys, which will report later this year.

We are committed to promoting LGBT equality, including amongst young people. We are currently investing £3million in a three-year programme to prevent and address homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in schools.

22 Feb 2017 | Written questions | Answered | House of Lords | HL5407

Date tabled: 09 Feb 2017 | **Date for answer:** 23 Feb 2017 | **Date answered:** 22 Feb 2017

- [Pupils: Bullying](#)

Asked by: Hayes, Helen | **Party:** Labour Party

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what steps the Government Equalities Office is taking to ensure that schools are safe spaces for children and young people to learn without the threat of (a) sexual bullying, (b) LGBT bullying and (c) harassment.

Answering member: Caroline Dinenage | **Party:** Conservative Party | **Department:** Women and Equalities

Protecting women and girls from violence is a key priority for this Government.

Working with partners like the PSHE Association, we are ensuring schools have access to safe, effective and high quality resources for teaching about healthy relationships. In February 2016 we launched "Disrespect Nobody", the second phase of the teen relationship abuse campaign, encouraging teens to rethink their views on violence, controlling behaviour and consent. This followed on from the acclaimed 'This is Abuse' campaign.

Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying is unacceptable and the Government is committed to tackling it.

The Government Equalities Office has launched a £3m programme to invest in charities that are working to prevent and address homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in schools in England.

14 Feb 2017 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 63383

Date tabled: 07 Feb 2017 | **Date for answer:** 09 Feb 2017 | **Date answered:** 14 Feb 2017

- [Schools: Homophobia](#)

Asked by: Lord Watson of Invergowrie | **Party:** Labour Party

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Nash on 1 February (HL5039), how far their three-year programme to prevent and address homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in schools has progressed; whether an action plan for the programme has been published; on what basis (1) local authorities, (2) academy chains, and (3) individual schools, have been contacted to seek information about their experience of such bullying; and how the programme funds are being spent.

Answering member: Lord Nash | **Party:** Conservative Party |
Department: Department for Education

The Government announced a £2.8m investment in tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (HBT) bullying in September 2016. This followed the successful completion of a £2m pilot programme last year. Since we announced this programme, a further £0.2m has been allocated in order to enable more robust evaluation and quality assurance of the programme. This brings the total to £3.0m.

Six grantee organisations were selected through open competition to deliver innovative schemes to tackle HBT bullying in schools which have no or ineffective measures in place. These were: Barnardo's, LGBT Consortium, Metro Charity, National Children's Bureau, Proud Trust and Stonewall. The Government has also contracted with the PSHE Association to quality assure the resources produced as part of the programme and Sheffield Hallam University to assess the impact of the programme. The funding for the programme is split between these organisations.

Since September, the six grantees have been further developing their implementation plans and they have been registering schools to be part of the programme. The aim is that the grantees will start working with schools during 2017. An action plan for the current programme has not been published and we do not intend to do so. We published the evidence from the pilot programme on GOV.UK in July 2016. A report demonstrating the evidence from, and the impact of, the current programme will be published after this programme concludes in 2019.

The Government has used a wide variety of evidence to inform its decision to tackle HBT bullying, including external research and the evidence from the 2015-2016 pilot programme. The organisations funded through the programme have been and will continue to be in regular contact with local authorities, academy chains and individual schools as they are recruiting schools.

09 Feb 2017 | Written questions | Answered | House of Lords | HL5200

Date tabled: 02 Feb 2017 | **Date for answer:** 16 Feb 2017 | **Date answered:** 09 Feb 2017

- [Children: Internet](#)

Asked by: The Marquess of Lothian | **Party:** Conservative Party

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to implement the recommendations of the Children's Commissioner, made on 4 January, that the rights of children online are upheld, including through the creation of a digital ombudsman and the inclusion of digital citizenship in the national curriculum.

Answering member: Lord Nash | **Party:** Conservative Party |
Department: Department for Education

The Department welcomes the work of the Children's Commissioner on this important area. We will carefully consider this report as part of our ongoing work to make the internet a safer place for children.

The Department for Education is part of the UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS), a group of more than 200 organisations established in 2010 drawn from across government, industry, law enforcement, academia, parenting and charity sectors which work in partnership to keep children safe online. The group is chaired by three Government ministers: the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Sport, Tourism and Heritage, the Minister for Vulnerability, Safeguarding and Countering Extremism and the Minister of State for Vulnerable Children and Families.

UKCCIS has produced advice for schools and colleges on responding to incidents of sexting and guidance for school governors to help them support their school leaders to keep children safe online. Other UKCCIS achievements include the roll-out of free, family-friendly ISP level filters and the deployment of friendly Wi-Fi filtering in public spaces.

All schools are required to teach a balanced and broadly based curriculum that promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils, and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. Maintained schools have to follow the new National Curriculum, which, from September 2014 has focused on essential knowledge, allowing teachers and schools to use their professional judgement to ensure the school curriculum meets the needs of their pupils. The computing curriculum covers e-safety at all four Key Stages, and was developed with input from e-safety experts including Childnet, NSPCC and the UK Safer Internet Centre. There is progression in the content across the four Key Stages to reflect the different and escalating risks that young people face as they get older.

However, this is only part of the wider school curriculum. Schools have more freedom to teach subjects or topics, such as digital citizenship, beyond the prescribed curriculum to ensure that children receive a rounded education. Teachers also have access to a wide range of high quality resources produced by experts including advice published by the PSHE Association, the Sex Education Forum, and Brook. These address changes in technology and legislation since 2000, in particular equipping teachers to help protect children and young people from

inappropriate online content, and from online bullying, harassment and exploitation.

24 Jan 2017 | Written questions | Answered | House of Lords | HL4545

Date tabled: 10 Jan 2017 | **Date for answer:** 24 Jan 2017 | **Date answered:** 24 Jan 2017

- [Social Media: Harassment](#)

Asked by: Turley, Anna | **Party:** Labour Party · Cooperative Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the effect on the mental, physical and general health of users of social media platforms of online abusive content.

Answering member: Nicola Blackwood | **Party:** Conservative Party | **Department:** Department of Health

We have made significant assessments of existing research and evidence on the effects of people, especially children and young people, of using social media platforms of online abusive content.

Research has shown that the increasing time children and young people spend online may impact their social and emotional well-being. Tackling the full impact of social media platforms on the lives and mental health of its users requires a cross-Government approach working collaboratively across sectors and with the online media organisations. We are therefore working with other Government Departments including the Department of Education and the Department of Culture Media and Sport, the latter of which governs the UK Council for Child and Internet Safety, which has set up a Digital Resilience Working Group.

However, we believe not enough research is available in this area which is why, following the Chief Medical Officer's recommendation, we have commissioned a new prevalence study of mental ill health in 2-19 year olds. This is the first since 2004 and the first to include cyber bullying and social media. It is due to report in 2018.

11 Jan 2017 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 58706

Date tabled: 06 Jan 2017 | **Date for answer:** 11 Jan 2017 | **Date answered:** 11 Jan 2017

- [LGBT People: Bullying](#)

Asked by: Andrew, Stuart | **Party:** Conservative Party

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what recent steps the Government has taken to tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying; and if she will make a statement.

Answering member: Caroline Dinenage | **Party:** Conservative Party | **Department:** Women and Equalities

We want to ensure that all schools are safe, inclusive environments where pupils are able to learn and fulfil their potential. The Government expects schools to take a strong stand against all forms of bullying and cyberbullying.

This is why we recently announced a three year, £2.8 million, programme to prevent and address homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in schools

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/thousands-more-children-to-benefit-from-anti-bullying-app>).

We have also published new cyberbullying guidance

(<http://www.childnet.com/resources/cyberbullying-guidance-for-schools>)

and an online safety toolkit for schools to help provide advice on understanding, preventing and responding to cyberbullying

(<http://www.childnet.com/resources/pshetoolkit>).

12 Dec 2016 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 56245

Date tabled: 06 Dec 2016 | **Date for answer:** 12 Dec 2016 | **Date answered:** 12 Dec 2016

2.2 Oral Parliamentary Questions

- [Young Women: Self-Harm](#)

Asked by: Baroness McIntosh of Hudnall (Lab) | **Party:** Labour Party

My Lords, building on the Question from the noble Baroness, Lady Walmsley, does the noble Lord agree with me that bullying in schools can start very early, well before secondary school, and can give rise to very severe mental health issues among those who are bullied? Does he also agree with me that schools struggle to deal with this issue, partly because they are unclear about how to balance their duties of care to victims and to perpetrators, who often have issues of their own? Can he say in what way he is working with his colleagues in the Department for Education to make sure that primary schools have access to good resources to meet this, including programmes such as Place2Be?

Answered by: Lord O'Shaughnessy | **Party:** Conservative Party

The noble Baroness picks up on a particular interest of mine. She may know that I was involved in setting up three primary schools. It is important to start these lessons early. In the end it comes down to behaviour policies and what is expected from children. Schools with fair and robust behaviour policies do not tend to see bullying. Those which are more lax do. First it is about making sure that teachers have training and resources and the support they need from the leadership, governors and parents to crack down on it. Bullying now has moved into different domains, particularly online. I think it is very encouraging today—the noble Baroness may have seen it—that His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge is launching some actions on cyberbullying. Dealing with

bullying is a big part of that and I agree with the noble Baroness about the importance of starting early.

16 Nov 2017 | Oral questions - Supplementary | Answered | House of Lords | House of Lords chamber | 785 c2120

- [Young People: Digital Resilience](#)

Asked by: Lord Dobbs (Con) | **Party:** Conservative Party

My Lords, will my noble friend accept that the problem goes way beyond direct abuse and bullying? Many children feel intimidated and coerced into using social media in the first place. They seem to have many more friends but many fewer relationships. Will he accept that there is a need to look at the research that says that children who manage to give up social media feel liberated and strengthened, emotionally, intellectually and socially, and that we should not restrict ourselves to the narrow point, important as it is, about direct abuse? There is an education programme the Government need to take responsibility for.

Answered by: Lord Agnew of Oulton | **Party:** Conservative Party

My noble friend raises an important point. Parents need to be much more assertive in the way they manage their children's use of electronic gadgets. In my case, I did not allow my children to use them until they were aged 13. That is something other parents should think about. Some of the studies we are funding this year, such as the Anne Frank Trust, help to develop a debate programme that encourages young children to think about the importance of tackling prejudice, discrimination and bullying.

07 Nov 2017 | Oral questions - Supplementary | Answered | House of Lords | House of Lords chamber | 785 c1687

- [Social Media: Online Abuse](#)

Asked by: Lord Cashman (Lab) | **Party:** Labour Party

My Lords, the reality of online harassment and bullying has resulted in some teenagers taking their own lives. I accept the Minister's point that statutory guidance is not the only answer, but it is a part of it. Given that, will she listen to the House and agree to bring forward statutory guidance on online abuse so that we can end the bullying, harassment and intimidation which is costing young lives?

Answered by: Baroness Shields | **Party:** Conservative Party

I thank the noble Lord and acknowledge the importance of the tragedies that have affected a lot of young people online. I shall take forward his thoughts and come back to him. Realistically, we have in place a strong regime of recommended guidance for companies through the UK Council for Child Internet Safety, and companies comply with it. I would say that today we are further along in combating child sexual abuse and exploitation online, and as new

developments emerge, we will need to continue to evolve the guidance to support people and victims and to address the perpetrators of these crimes.

15 Mar 2017 | Oral questions - Supplementary | Answered | House of Lords | House of Lords chamber | 779 c1862

- [Violence against Women and Girls](#)

Asked by: Oliver Colvile | **Party:** Conservative Party

I thank my right hon. Friend for that answer. How much training and emotional support is given to girl guides and other young girls who are bullied online?

Answered by: Justine Greening | **Party:** Conservative Party |
Department: Women and Equalities

Tackling all forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying, is a priority for us. We are investing £1.6 million over two years directly in anti-bullying initiatives, including via the Diana award project, which has a focus on digital resilience for young people. The Government have also funded the UK Safer Internet Centre to develop new cyber-bullying guidance for schools and an associated online safety toolkit. My hon. Friend's question highlights the fact that the world is a very different place for our young people these days, and our guidance, laws and teaching need to stay up to date.

02 Feb 2017 | Oral questions - 1st Supplementary | Answered | House of Commons | House of Commons chamber | 620 c1167

- [Bullying](#)

Asked by: Angela Rayner (Ashton-under-Lyne) (Lab) | **Party:** Labour Party

After the EU referendum, teachers warned us of a disturbing rise in levels of racist bullying in schools, and now we are seeing the same following the election of Donald Trump in the US. In the spirit of Anti-bullying Week, will the Minister take this opportunity to condemn not only such bullying but the politicians whose hateful, divisive rhetoric has made some children think that this is acceptable?

Answered by: Edward Timpson | **Party:** Conservative Party |
Department: Education

As I said, I think we all condemn all forms of bullying, from wherever it comes and for whatever its purported reasons, but we also need to make sure that we educate our children to understand the effects that bullying has on others, so that, as they grow older, they do not repeat the mistakes of those who have gone before them.

14 Nov 2016 | Oral questions - Supplementary | Answered | House of Commons | House of Commons chamber | 617 c15

Date answered: 14 Nov 2016

2.3 Parliamentary Debates

- [Young People: Digital Resilience](#) (HL Deb 7 November 2017 cc1685-1687)
- [Bullying](#) (HC Deb 14 November 2016 cc15-16)

2.4 Early Day Motions

- [ANTI-BULLYING WEEK 2016](#)

That this House notes Anti-Bullying Week which takes place from 14 to 18 November 2016; acknowledges that this week is used to shine a spotlight on bullying and encourages all children, teachers and parents to take action against bullying throughout the year; expresses deep concern that the NSPCC states that more than 16,000 young people are absent from school due to bullying which potentially has a long-lasting negative impact on someone's life; believes that no-one should live in fear of bullying; welcomes the Power for Good campaign that the Anti-Bullying Alliance has organised to help encourage individuals to play their part in stopping the bullying that too many people, particularly young people, face on a daily basis; congratulates Gallowhill Primary School on winning NSPCC School of the Year for the work that the pupils have done to tackle cyberbullying with their popular Oor Bullie comic book; and encourages everyone to play their part in helping to end bullying of young people.

15 Nov 2016 | Early day motions | Open | House of Commons | 677
(session 2016-17)

Primary sponsor: Newlands, Gavin | **Party:** Scottish National Party

Other sponsors: Donaldson, Stuart · Monaghan, Carol · Nicolson, John · Oswald, Kirsten · Fellows, Marion

Number of signatures: 29

3. Press Articles

[Prince William launches anti-bullying plan to combat 'banter escalation scenarios'](#), *Telegraph*, 16 November 2017

- An article about the work of the Royal Foundation's [Taskforce of the Prevention of Cyberbullying](#). This taskforce has developed a code of conduct for the internet called 'Stop, Speak, Support' and is working alongside social media companies to prevent online bullying.

[Anti-bullying week: Bullying needs defining before we can beat it](#), *TES*, 13 November 2017

- In order to avoid 'sensationalisation', this author believes that we should have a better definition of when an incident constitutes 'bullying'

[Counselling for cyberbullying has doubled in five years – children's charity](#), *Guardian*, 13 November 2017

- The NSPCC has released data suggesting that its Childline has delivered double the amount of counselling sessions in 2016/17 than in 2011/12.

[Teenager whose home address was shared on social media by trolls says life has been 'ruined'](#), *Independent*, 24 October 2017

- Concerns have been raised about the safety of streaming app *Live.me*

[Malicious communications double in a year as experts warn live-streaming apps mean children are 'bullied in their bedrooms'](#), *Telegraph*, 24 October 2017

[Taming the web for children; Tech World Regulation? Education? Tech tools? How do we tackle the risks facing children in a Wild West of cyber-bullying? Madhumita Murgia reports](#), *Financial Times*, 21 October 2017 [Available via Nexis News subscription]

[Facebook to train thousands of schoolchildren on cyber bullying](#), *Telegraph*, 16 October 2017

- "The US internet giant has announced a £1 million package that it said would be enough for every secondary school in the UK to have a 'digital safety ambassador' that would help stamp out online bullying."

[Google and Facebook to be asked to pay to help UK tackle cyberbullying](#), *Guardian*, 11 October 2017

- Article about the proposed voluntary levy on social media firms to deal with internet safety issues, as outlined in the Government's [Internet Safety Strategy green paper](#)

[Government outlines plans to 'regulate the internet' and get rid of problem content](#), *Independent*, 11 October 2017

- Further material covering the publication of the Internet Safety Strategy green paper.

[Google and Facebook could be forced to take responsibility for everything posted on their sites as Government considers crackdown](#), *Telegraph*, 10 October 2017

- Article considering proposal to reclassify social media companies as publishers, rather than communication channels, so they can be held responsible for the content of posts

[The grim truth about the sexual violence epidemic in Britain's schools](#), *Telegraph*, 9 October 2017

[Why onlookers hold the key to standing up to bullies](#), *Guardian*, 29 September 2017

- An article suggesting that witnesses to bullying behaviour should also play a role in addressing the problem and that we should not only focus on the bully and the victim.

[Gay and Northern Irish: 'Teachers called me sissy and compared me to a plague'](#), *Guardian*, 26 September 2017

- "Campaigners call for swift action as report on LGBT pupils reveals the scale of homophobia faced by young people in the region"

[Teachers reject own schools for their children over bullying](#), *Times*, 15 September 2017 [Available via Library subscription]

- "A quarter of secondary school teachers would not send their child to the school where they teach because bullying is so rife there, a survey reveals"

[UK considers internet ombudsman to deal with abuse complaints](#), *Guardian*, 22 August 2017

['Start early' to teach children to beat bullies](#), *Times*, 9 July 2017 [Available via Library subscription]

- An article about some St Andrews academics who believe the Scottish Government should treat bullying as a public health concern.

[Muslim children victims of 'constant bullying' in wake of UK terror attacks](#), *Independent*, 28 June 2017 [Available via Nexis News Library subscription]

[Police warn of rise in children bullied by sext](#), *Times*, 15 January 2017 [Available via Library subscription]

[We could do so much more to stamp out school bullying](#), *Times*, 25 November 2016 [Available via Library subscription]

- Arguing that “bullying needs to be seen as a collective failing of an educational community, rather than a problem with individuals,” the author of this article recommends some ways in which Government, schools and parents could work together.

Effect of bullying

[Mental effects of bullying largely gone after five years, major study shows](#), *Telegraph*, 11 October 2017

[School cyberbullies more likely to attempt suicide, study finds](#), *Independent*, 16 August 2017

[Playground taunts more damaging to teenagers than online bullying](#), *Telegraph*, 11 July 2017

- The 110,000-person study found just one per cent of the adolescents reported being regularly bullied online but not in person.
For those who did suffer online bullying, the emotional impact was less significant than the damage caused by face-to-face bullying, the study found.¹

[More than 60 per cent of UK school staff have witnessed racist bullying](#), *TES*, 13 November 2017

[Anti Bullying Week: over a third of UK women who were bullied say it affected their mental health](#), *FE News*, 13 November 2017

[Anti-bullying week: Bullying needs defining before we can beat it](#), *TES*, 13 November 2017

[Thousands more children to benefit from anti-bullying app](#), *Department for Education*, 8 September 2016

¹ [Playground taunts more damaging to teenagers than online bullying](#), *Telegraph*, 11 July 2017

4. Further reading

Advice for professionals and parents

The DfE's [Preventing and Tackling Bullying](#) guidance includes links to further information and organisations (see last section). This includes organisations tackling:

- Cyber-bullying
- Homophobia
- Bullying of those with special educational needs
- Children's mental health
- Racial bullying
- Sexual harassment

Coram's Child Law Advice centre provides [information for parents whose children have been bullied](#), which may be helpful to your constituents in its entirety (they also have an [advice line](#)).

[Ditch the Label](#) is a global anti-bullying charity which offers advice and carries out [research](#).

[How to use film to tackle bullying](#), *TES*, 16th October 2017

This advises on the use of classroom activities to encourage young people – through viewing films – to consider their behaviour as well as that of others.

Official publications

On 11 October, the Government published its [Internet Safety Strategy green paper](#). In sum, the prototype strategy suggests:

- A new social media code of practice to see a joined-up approach to remove or address bullying, intimidating or humiliating online content
- An industry-wide levy so social media companies and communication service providers contribute to raise awareness and counter internet harms
- An annual internet safety transparency report to show progress on addressing abusive and harmful content and conduct
- And support for tech and digital startups to think safety first - ensuring that necessary safety features are built into apps and products from the very start²

The consultation will close 7 December 2017. More information can be found in the green paper. Annex A of the paper also summarises research in the field, including [hate crimes and cyberbullying](#).

The Department for Education has funded a number of projects designed to combat bullying, as highlighted in its press release,

² [Making Britain the safest place in the world to be online](#), HM Government, 11 October 2017

[Thousands more children to benefit from anti-bullying app](#) on 8 September 2016.

House of Commons Library publications

- Commons Library Briefing Paper SN06104, [Sex and Relationships Education in Schools \(England\)](#)
- Commons Library Briefing Paper CBP-07303, [Personal, social, health and economic education in schools \(England\)](#)
- Commons Library Briefing Paper CBP-07967, [Online harassment and cyber bullying](#)

Research

[Ditch the Label](#), the global anti-bullying charity, has published a number of pieces on its [research pages](#), dealing with gender, cyberbullying, abuse within online gaming, and 'make-up shaming.' It has also published an annual bullying survey since 2013.

[More than 60 per cent of UK school staff have witnessed racist bullying](#), *TES*, 13 November 2017

- This survey of 1,593 young people and 273 teaching staff also found that 61 % had seen instances of racial bullying, 44 % had seen bullying cases related to poverty, and 43 % had seen sexist bullying.

[Anti Bullying Week: over a third of UK women who were bullied say it affected their mental health](#), *FE News*, 13 November 2017

[School report: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bi and trans young people in Britain's schools in 2017](#), Stonewall, 2017

- Some headline findings from this report include:
 - **Nearly half** (45 per cent) of lesbian, gay, bi and trans young people are bullied for being LGBT at school.
 - **86 per cent** hear the phrases 'that's so gay' or 'you're so gay' in school.
 - **40 per cent** of lesbian, gay, bi and trans young people are never taught anything about LGBT issues at school.³
- Stonewall has also found similar results in other research, including [The Teachers' Report \(2014\)](#). Stonewall also highlights the bullying sections in [Youth Chances: the experiences of LGBTQ young people in England](#), published by Metro in 2014.

[Quarter of young Brits confess to 'bullying or insulting' someone online](#), *Demos*, 2 October 2017

- A survey of 668 16-18 year olds found a significant percentage of internet users had engaged in 'trolling' online:

³ Secondary schools, [Stonewall website](#), accessed 21 November 2017

- Research from think-tank Demos mapping the behaviour and decision-making of young people online, finds 26 per cent of the 16-18 year olds surveyed say they have 'bullied or insulted someone else' online
 - 15 per cent of the young people Demos surveyed said they had 'joined in with other people to "troll" a celebrity or public figure'
 - Demos found that boys are significantly more likely to say they have bullied or insulted someone online than girls (32 per cent compared with 22 per cent) or 'trolled' a public figure (22 per cent compared with 10 per cent)
 - 93 per cent of those who said they had insulted or bullied someone else online, said that they had themselves experienced some form of cyber-bullying or abuse
 - Conversely, Demos finds that 88 per cent of the teenagers surveyed had given emotional support to someone online
 - Demos analysis finds that young people with stronger traits of empathy and self-control are considerably less likely to engage in cyberbullying.⁴
- Demos, on the back of this research recommends teaching of 'Digital Citizenship' amongst young people

[Almost half of girls aged 11-18 have experienced harassment or bullying online](#), Plan International, 14 August 2017

- A study of 1002 people aged between 11 and 18 found that:
 - 43 per cent of girls admitted to holding back their opinions on social media for fear of being criticised
 - 29 per cent of girls have received upsetting or abusive messages from someone they know in person, compared with 21 per cent of boys
 - 23 per cent of girls have felt harassed by someone contacting them regularly on social media, compared with 13 per cent of boys
 - 20 per cent of girls have felt threatened by what someone has said to them online, compared with 13 per cent of boys
 - 22 per cent of girls have received abusive comments on a status or photo they have posted, compared to 18 per cent of boys⁵

Izabela Zych, David P. Farrington, Vicente J. Llorent and Maria M. Ttofi, [Protecting Children Through Anti-bullying Interventions](#), In: Zych, I., Farrington, D.P., Llorent, V.J. and Ttofi, M., Protecting Children Against

⁴ [Quarter of young Brits confess to 'bullying or insulting' someone online](#), Demos, 2 October 2017

⁵ [Almost half of girls aged 11-18 have experienced harassment or bullying online](#), Plan International, 14 August 2017

Bullying and Its Consequences. SpringerBriefs in Psychology. Springer, Cham, 2017

- Not currently available via the Library, but abstract does contain useful bibliography.

[Scarring effects of childhood bullying](#), Closer

- This outlines a longitudinal study by researchers at the Institute of Psychiatry at King's College London which analysed information on 7,771 people born across England, Scotland, and Wales 1958, being followed as part of the [National Child Development Study](#).
- The key finding was that "Being bullied as a child is associated with a range of negative social, physical and mental health outcomes later in life, including depression, unemployment and lower life satisfaction."
- The research can be found in Takizawa, R., Maughan, B. and Arseneault, L., Adult health outcomes of childhood bullying victimization: Evidence from a 5-decade longitudinal British birth cohort. [American Journal of Psychiatry](#) 171 (2014)

Jonathan Bradshaw, Gemma Crous, Gwyther Rees and Nick Turner, [Comparing children's experiences of schools-based bullying across countries](#), *Children and Youth Services Review* 80 (2017)

- This article takes an "international data set from a survey of children aged 8 to 12 years old across 16 diverse countries to explore variations in rates of schools-based bullying of children and the associations between experiences of being bullied and child subjective well-being, both within and between countries". The UK is included.

Rozemarijn van der Ploega, Tina Kretschmera, Christina Salmivallic and René Veenstraa, [Defending victims: What does it take to intervene in bullying and how is it rewarded by peers?](#) *Journal of School Psychology* 65 (2017)

Anthony A. Volka, René Veenstrab and Dorothy L. Espelagec, [So you want to study bullying? Recommendations to enhance the validity, transparency, and compatibility of bullying research](#), *Aggression and Violent Behavior* 36 (2017)

[What children are telling us about bullying: Childline bullying report 2015/16](#), NSPCC, 2016

Emma J Scott and Jeremy Dale, [Childhood bullying: implications for general practice](#), *British Journal of General Practice*, October 2016

Judith Hebron, Jeremy Oldfield, Neil Humphrey, [Cumulative Risk Effects in the Bullying of Children and Young People with Autism Spectrum Conditions](#), 19 April 2016

Stella Chatzitheochari, Samantha Parsons and Lucinda Platt, [Doubly Disadvantaged? Bullying Experiences among Disabled Children and Young People in England](#), *Sociology* 2016, Vol. 50(4) 695–713

L Bevilacqua, D Hale, N Shackleton, E Allen, L Bond, D Christie, D Elbourne, N Fitzgerald-Yau, A Fletcher, R Jones, R Legood, A Miners, S Scott, M Wiggins, C Bonell and R Viner, [The role of school context and family factors in bullying and cyberbullying](#), *BMJ*, 2016

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