Equality and Human Rights Commission

# Prejudice-based bullying in Scottish schools:
# A research report

Brandi Lee Lough Dennell and Caitlin Logan

LGBT Youth Scotland
respect*me*

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## Common abbreviations

| | |
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| CRER | Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights |
| *GIRFEC* | *Getting it Right for Every Child* |
| GTCS | General Teaching Council for Scotland |
| LA | Local authority |
| LGBT | Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender |
| SHANARRI | Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible, Included. Indicators within *GIRFEC*. |
| UNCRC | United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child |

# Executive summary

The experience of being bullied at school can have a range of negative impacts, including on an individual's physical and mental health, attendance and attainment and so on their ability to realise their full potential in the future.

This research examines prejudice-based bullying from the perspectives of Scottish secondary school pupils and teachers. It uses the lens of the protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act 2010 to assess how this behaviour is being experienced and addressed.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission in Scotland commissioned this research, with the aim of developing an understanding of the scope and scale of prejudice-based bullying and harassment in secondary schools in Scotland.

This report is a result of research undertaken across Scotland with pupils, teachers, and local authority[1] (LA) staff through surveys, focus groups and interviews. The work included a desk-based review of LA anti-bullying policies, and research on prejudice-based bullying.

Prejudice-based bullying has become a central aspect of anti-bullying work nationally in Scotland. The national framework produced by the Scottish Government and the Scottish Anti-Bullying Steering Group, *A National Approach to Anti-bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People (A National Approach)*, states among its principles that all forms of prejudice-based bullying should be highlighted and treated with the same importance (Scottish Government 2010: 8).

Bullying is defined as behaviours and impacts that make someone feel hurt, threatened, frightened or left out and affect their ability to feel in control of themselves (respect*me* 2014a; Scottish Government 2010). Prejudice is defined as a negative judgement of someone who has a characteristic such as race or disability, because of who they are or who they are perceived to be.

The harassment provisions of the Equality Act 2010[2] do not protect pupils from harassment by other pupils. However, the provisions on discrimination mean that schools have an obligation to ensure that bullying by pupils that is related to a protected characteristic is treated with the same level of seriousness as any other form of bullying.

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[1] State schools in Scotland are owned and operated by Local Authorities which act as Education Authorities. Education Authorities are subject to the public sector equality duty. For consistency, reference throughout this report is to Local Authorities.

[2] A school must not harass a pupil or applicant. There are three different types of harassment that are unlawful under the Act: harassment related to a 'relevant protected characteristic', sexual harassment, and less favourable treatment because of a submission to, or a rejection of, sexual harassment and harassment related to sex.

However, the prohibition on harassment of pupils or prospective pupils does not cover gender reassignment, sexual orientation or religion or belief.

Harassment is defined in this research as unwanted behaviour that has the purpose, or the effect, of violating a person's dignity and creating a hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

For the purposes of this research, the term 'prejudice' is applied to each of the protected characteristics covered by the school-specific provisions of the Equality Act 2010. These are defined in the Act as: disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, and sexual orientation. Bullying related to a protected characteristic need not be directed at someone who has a particular protected characteristic, but can also be based on a perception that they do or that they have an association with people who do.

In addition, the research covers prejudice regarding asylum seeker or refugee status and socio-economic group/social class. Travelling communities (Gypsies/Travellers, Roma, etc.) were also included in the research as a distinct category because, although they are protected by the Equality Act 2010 under the definition of race, they face manifestations of prejudice that are distinct from those faced by other ethnic groups. The purpose of this research is to be as wide-ranging as possible while considering the characteristics for which both young people and adults frequently experience prejudice.

The report offers information on experiences of prejudice-based bullying and the work that is being done to prevent and respond to it in both LAs and schools. Overall, it was found that bullying was given more attention within LAs and schools than prejudice. Few LA anti-bullying policies named all relevant protected characteristics and even fewer provided information on how bullying based on these characteristics was dealt with. Similarly, school prevention and awareness programmes were more likely to cover bullying than prejudice.

**Methodology**

The research was conducted using several methodologies, producing a rich source of information on prejudice-based bullying and the work being done on it:

- Literature review to identify key documents and research that shape national understanding.

- Interviews with strategic LA leads on anti-bullying or equalities, and a representative from Education Scotland.

- Surveys with both secondary school teachers and pupils.

- Focus groups with secondary school pupils.

The findings from each of these are presented in this report, highlighting areas for improvement as well as focusing on examples of good practice that emerged throughout the research. This information is used to inform recommendations to practitioners and policymakers in the field of anti-bullying.

**Literature review**

A desk-based literature review was undertaken to identify documents relevant to prejudice-based bullying. This review found that national frameworks such as *A National Approach*, *Curriculum for Excellence* and *GIRFEC* (*Getting it Right for Every Child*) were integral to understanding the context in which prejudice-based bullying is currently dealt with in schools. The research on experiences of bullying and prejudice-based bullying in particular evidence negative impacts on health and well-

being; pupils are often unwilling to report; may not be happy with how reports are handled; feel isolated and excluded as a result of the bullying, and may experience further impacts on physical and mental health as well as educational experience. The availability and depth of research varied across the protected characteristics, with some categories, such as pregnancy and maternity, receiving very little attention in the literature.

## Recorded incidents

Data on recorded incidents were requested from all LAs in Scotland. Fourteen authorities responded to the request, four of whom told the researchers that they did not have the requested data, either because it was not being recorded or because it was kept in individual pupil records. Most LAs had data on racist incidents. For 2011–2012, eight LAs provided information on race, and for 2012–2013, nine provided data. Between two and four authorities provided data on each of the following: disability, sexual orientation, sex or religion and belief. None provided data on incidents related to gender reassignment pregnancy and maternity, or any characteristics not covered by the Equality Act 2010.

Strategic LA leads commonly expressed the view that recorded incidents were not a reflection of the actual prevalence of bullying, for a number of reasons. It was stated that some school staff might fear that high rates of recorded incidents would reflect negatively on the school or LA. This problem was seen to be exacerbated by incorrect interpretations of data on the part of the media and parents. Teachers' lack of time to record information was also cited, as well as the perception of some teachers that recording data was either not useful, or not their responsibility.

In some LAs, staff who found that recorded incidents did not offer an accurate reflection of experiences used surveys to gather information on experiences of bullying and prejudice-based bullying. Overall, LA leads expressed varied opinions between feeling that recording processes would or could be improved, and feeling that the barriers to accurate recording could not be resolved.

## Review of LA anti-bullying policies

Policies were identified for each LA. Each policy was reviewed and analysed across a series of comparators based on the recommendations for anti-bullying policies included in *A National Approach*.

Of these policies, only 15 had been updated since the introduction of the Equality Act 2010, meaning that the rest included a smaller range of characteristics, in line with previous legislation. Only seven LA policies, all of which have been updated since 2010, referenced all seven of the protected characteristics relevant to schools and only eight made reference to the Equality Act 2010. This means that even among the policies updated since 2010, less than half included all relevant protected characteristics.

Characteristics were by no means included with equal frequency across the policies: race was the most commonly included, followed by disability, sexual orientation and religion and belief. Least often included were transgender identity (referred to as gender reassignment in the Equality Act 2010), pregnancy and maternity, or other characteristics not contained within the Equality Act such as socio-economic group/social class.

Many policies did not suggest specific preventative strategies, and the strategies which were offered rarely referenced prejudice. Fewer than half recommended that either prejudice or diversity be included in the curriculum, four recommended that schools put up displays about prejudice or diversity, three suggested themed days or weeks on prejudice or diversity, and two suggested assemblies on the subject.

**LA and Education Scotland interviews**

Strategic anti-bullying and equality leads from all LAs were invited to participate in interviews, with the intention of conducting five interviews with those who agreed. Eight individuals across four LAs took part in interviews, in addition to one representative from Education Scotland.

Key themes emerged, indicating the different approaches taken by LAs to tackling bullying and prejudice, all of which are reflected in the Scottish Government guidance, *Better Relationships, Better Learning, Better Behaviour*. They included a focus on health and well-being, on behaviour, and on children's rights. The approaches aligned with the policies and frameworks that were cited and discussed to varying degrees in each interview. Most LA leads cited *Curriculum for Excellence* and *GIRFEC* as influential in their anti-bullying work, while one authority focused on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in order to inform a rights-based approach.

Each LA offered some form of training on anti-bullying or equalities in schools, although the number of staff who could access the training and the regularity of training sessions varied. Interviewees noted that this depended on resources and staff capacity. The LA leads tended to agree that head teachers had considerable confidence in dealing with prejudice-based bullying, but views differed on whether this was fully translated to all school staff.

Barriers to reporting and recording bullying incidents were discussed, and many interviewees expressed the view that not all forms of prejudice-based bullying were recorded evenly and consistently. There was awareness that due to the changing landscape of equalities work, staff knowledge of prejudice-based bullying needed to be continually updated. Interviewees expressed an interest in learning from other LAs and suggested formats for this, such as a central online hub of up-to-date information, or regular forums at which to meet in order to share good practice.

**Teacher survey**

A survey aimed at secondary teachers was completed by 336 teachers across 22 LAs. Most teachers were aware of pupils in their school who had experienced bullying, and many were aware of prejudice-based bullying. Approximately two in five teachers were aware of bullying based on race or ethnicity or on sexual orientation. Most teachers who had responded to prejudice-based bullying said they were confident in doing so. Interestingly, fewer respondents were satisfied with how their reports of prejudice-based bullying were handled, with two thirds agreeing that the response had helped the situation.

A pattern emerged regarding the characteristics that teachers were aware of as a result of their coverage in their school's anti-bullying policy, the forms of prejudice recorded by their school, and the prejudices they felt confident to teach about and respond to. This pattern also showed a correlation with the attention given to relevant protected characteristics in anti-bullying policies. Race or ethnicity, disability, and religion and belief were the three characteristics that evoked the greatest confidence

and awareness. Among the legally protected characteristics, teachers had least confidence regarding gender reassignment and pregnancy and maternity: similar to their confidence concerning asylum seeker or refugee status and travelling communities. This pattern was then mirrored in the numbers of teachers who had taught pupils about different forms of prejudice, meaning that pupil education on prejudice is by no means consistent across characteristics.

Many teachers did not know which forms of prejudice were included in their anti-bullying policy or which forms of it, connected to incidents of bullying, were specifically recorded by their school. Respondents were more likely to be aware of their school's anti-bullying policy than that of their LA and were much less likely to be aware of national or international frameworks relevant to work on anti-bullying and prejudice. The national frameworks of which almost all teachers were aware were *Curriculum for Excellence* and *GIRFEC*, with *GIRFEC* eliciting the greatest confidence when teachers were asked about using these to prevent bullying or harassment.

## Pupil survey

The pupil survey was completed by 1,281 pupils across 31 LAs. Almost two in five pupils had experienced bullying, and more than half were aware of others who had experienced bullying. Almost one in four pupils were aware of other pupils experiencing specifically prejudice-based bullying. The forms of prejudice-based bullying that most pupils had themselves experienced were based on sexual orientation or socio-economic group/social class. It is important when considering these figures to remember that the number of pupils who will identify, or be perceived to identify, with each characteristic will differ significantly, and these data therefore do not illustrate the rates of prejudice-based bullying experienced by those who have particular characteristics.

Pupils who had been bullied were much less likely than those who had not been bullied to say they felt safe, healthy, achieving, supported, respected, included or happy in their school. Pupils reported that people with certain protected characteristics were more likely to be 'included' in the school than others. The trend in these responses matches coverage of the different characteristics in LA anti-bullying policies and teacher confidence in their survey responses, suggesting that tackling each form of prejudice has a trickle-down effect. The percentage of pupils who said they had been taught about the different forms of prejudice largely followed the pattern of the teacher responses, but the figures were much lower. Only half of pupils said they had been taught about prejudice at all, while three in four said they had been taught about equality. Pupils were less likely than teachers to say their school had implemented any of a range of preventative strategies, and said that these strategies covered bullying more often than prejudice.

Fewer than two in three pupils were willing or very willing to report either general bullying or prejudice-based bullying, and fewer than three in five who had already reported any form of bullying said that they would do so again. Just over half the number of pupils who had reported bullying were satisfied with how their report was handled, and less than half felt that reporting bullying had helped the situation.

## Pupil focus groups

Twelve focus groups were conducted in 11 secondary schools across 6 LAs. The focus groups asked pupils to discuss current systems for reporting bullying, potential

improvements to this, and their willingness to report different forms of prejudice-based bullying.

Pupils were almost always aware of ways in which they could report bullying in their school, although they felt that there were several barriers to doing so. The fear of retaliation or feeling nervous or embarrassed were among the main reasons that pupils felt it might be difficult to report bullying. In some cases pupils felt that reporting bullying would not resolve the situation and might even make matters worse. With respect to prejudice-based bullying, it was felt that it would be easier to report bullying based on characteristics that were commonly spoken about in school, as the discomfort involved in raising an issue that had not previously been discussed would act as a barrier.

Pupils' willingness to report different forms of prejudice-based bullying experienced by someone else in their school was determined largely by value judgements based on 'choice', 'severity' and 'familiarity'. Pupils were almost invariably willing to report bullying based on disability, as disability was defined by pupils as a characteristic that is not a choice and those experiencing the bullying were perceived as requiring support from other pupils. There was less willingness to report bullying based on socio-economic group/social class or sex, which were associated with a weaker understanding of what the bullying would entail and a perception that the bullying would be less serious. Pupils were least willing to report bullying based on pregnancy and maternity, and many expressed the view that it would be the fault, or would result from the choice, of the individual experiencing the bullying.

Factors that pupils felt made reporting easier, or would do so in an improved system, were strong pastoral and guidance teacher relationships, confidential and anonymous methods of reporting, and greater support for those involved in bullying in the form of one-to-one or group support and mediated (restorative) meetings. Some pupils expressed a desire for clearer punishments for bullying as they felt that current responses were ineffective.

## Good practice

Good practice was identified by asking LAs to share examples of it with researchers, and by covering the topic directly in interviews. Information on and understanding of good practice in anti-bullying work was also developed by interviewing Education Scotland, and by tapping respect*me*'s knowledge (as Scotland's national anti-bullying service) and research findings throughout the project.

It emerged that good practice could be characterised by: strong leadership on anti-bullying work; integrating different forms of prejudice into anti-bullying policies and strategies; involving the whole school community in developing policies and practices, particularly those taking into consideration the views of young people; and effectively monitoring and following up on trends in experiences of bullying and prejudice. Three LAs were identified for specific areas of good practice, which are apparent in their anti-bullying work. Scottish Borders Council is highlighted in a case study for its positive work on youth engagement in anti-bullying, City of Edinburgh Council is highlighted for its strong prevention work, and Angus Council is highlighted for its clear approach to recording and monitoring.

## Recommendations

The researchers were asked to produce a series of recommendations from these findings, covering several areas.

*Policy and review*

- LA staff (with remits for education or bullying as well as equality and discrimination) should review the LA's anti-bullying policy to ensure that it aligns with the Equality Act 2010 and *A National Approach*'s focus on impacts and behaviours of bullying.

- LA anti-bullying policies should cover all relevant protected characteristics and additionally socio-economic group/social class and provide information and guidance on each characteristic.

- LAs should undertake regular reviews of anti-bullying policies and include evidence of reported incidents across the relevant protected characteristics as well as information gathered from pupils on their experiences of prejudice-based bullying and barriers to reporting. They should also analyse and follow up locally on the findings from surveys and data on recorded incidents to refine and improve their policies.

*Leadership and training*

- In their training and teaching about prejudice, LAs and schools should include an understanding of the role of perception and of association in prejudice-based behaviour. Strong leadership in schools and LAs is needed to ensure that anti-bullying and prejudice are given a high profile and appropriate support is provided to develop staff and pupil understanding.

- LAs and schools should ensure that staff are trained in the local anti-bullying policy including an understanding of bullying based on each form of prejudice. Training should result in staff understanding their responsibility to prevent and respond to prejudice-based bullying, being confident to tackle prejudice, and knowing where to access appropriate signposting information. They should also be given the opportunity to explore ways to tackle prejudice within the school environment. This training should be delivered to all staff.

- LAs and schools should provide additional training where gaps in knowledge are identified and, where relevant, seek training and advice from external organisations with knowledge of particular forms of prejudice.

- Education Scotland should expand its current pre-inspection survey to include questions on all relevant protected characteristics, collating the survey responses by LA.

*Prevention*

- Teachers should embed discussions of all relevant protected characteristics, as well as socio-economic group/social class, and the prevention of prejudice-based bullying into teaching practices, so that pupils have the language, understanding and confidence to discuss prejudice and report prejudice-based bullying.

- Schools and teachers should ensure that pupils understand that low-level bullying and harassment are taken as seriously as those that cause visible harm.

- Schools and teachers should undertake awareness-raising campaigns on anti-bullying, ensuring that they include prejudice, and inform pupils about their school's anti-bullying policy and the procedures for reporting.

- Schools should display the following in classrooms, offices and hallways: information or literature from campaigns on their anti-bullying policy, clear statements that prejudice-based bullying is unacceptable, and images that include people with a range of protected characteristics.

- LAs and schools should ensure that equality and protected characteristics are factored in wherever relevant: in broader policies (for example, behaviour and conduct), in mentoring and buddying programmes, in planning based on Health and Wellbeing outcomes, in future systems to support facilities, and in practices.

*Reporting and response*

- Schools and teachers should ensure that pupils know how to report bullying and can be comfortable with the means of doing so. Options to be considered could include anonymous, discreet and confidential reporting such as electronic reports or the provision of peer advocates trained to support pupils when reporting.

- LAs and schools should ensure that protected characteristics are factored into the design of any future systems to support the recording of bullying and harassment.

- All school staff should challenge all forms of prejudice-based bullying clearly and consistently, including 'low levels' of harassment, when they occur. Prejudiced comments should also be challenged clearly and consistently.

- Teachers and schools should respond to and take action on all forms of prejudice-based bullying. These should be dealt with and recorded consistently, including information on the motivating prejudice.

- Schools and teachers should involve affected young people in decisions on actions taken in dealing with incidents of bullying, and follow up to ensure they feel that each situation has been resolved to their satisfaction.

*Monitoring and evaluation*

- LAs or schools should conduct anonymous surveys of pupils to capture experiences of bullying across relevant protected characteristics and forms of prejudice. This information will highlight trends in prejudice-based bullying and should be used to check, vary and adjust local approaches to dealing with bullying.

- LAs and schools should share information on good practice with other LAs and schools through online resources such as the websites of Education Scotland or respect*me*.

- Education Scotland should consider how it might request evidence systematically from schools concerning their management of bullying within inspection quality indicators for equality and inclusion.

- Scottish Government and Education Scotland should undertake research nationally in Scotland on prejudice-based bullying that asks young people about their identification with and/or attitudes towards the range of relevant protected characteristics, which would then provide insight into how prejudice functions.

# 1. Introduction

The Equality and Human Rights Commission in Scotland commissioned this research, with the aim of developing an understanding of the scope and scale of prejudice-based bullying and harassment in secondary schools in Scotland.

## 1.1 Aims of the project

The project aimed to establish a clearer understanding of the extent to which relevant national policies and legislation were reflected in LA anti-bullying policies; how these have influenced educational professionals and shaped practices; and how far they have been implemented or included in strategic approaches. Central to this was an exploration of current practices and experiences in LAs on the prevention of, and response to, incidents of prejudice-based bullying.

This understanding was constructed through an exploration of the views and experiences of LA practitioners: what set a policy apart as noteworthy; how individuals were made aware of policies, and what they felt were the current successes and barriers in Scottish education with regards to tackling prejudice-based bullying or harassment. With school pupils and teachers, the research explored the lived experiences of anti-bullying work being undertaken in schools, experiences of bullying itself, and of the reporting and responsive practices currently in place.

An important aim of the project was to uncover the extent to which pupil information such as reports of bullying or harassment, identification with relevant protected characteristics, and feedback on these processes, were being recorded. More significantly, the researchers were interested in how this information was being monitored and used, for example to inform progress on equality outcomes or the development of future policies. Through discussions and interviews with key LA leads and requesting data on incidents, this research highlights some of the gaps and barriers in current recording and monitoring processes.

Together with a literature review of research into bullying and particularly prejudice-based bullying, this report presents the findings of the current research in order to advance understanding of the experiences and issues involved in bullying based on prejudice about each of the following characteristics: asylum seeker or refugee status; disability, pregnancy and maternity, race or ethnicity, religion and belief, sex and gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic group/social class, gender reassignment (transgender identity) and belonging to a travelling community.

As well as highlighting areas for improvement, the research focused on uncovering and flagging up examples of good practice in specific LAs. Both these positive examples and the barriers faced and improvements needed in anti-bullying work were used to develop recommendations for practitioners.

## 1.2 Relevant legislation

On 5 April 2011, the public sector equality duty came into force. The equality duty was created under the Equality Act 2010. The equality duty covers the following 'protected characteristics': age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

Local authorities in Scotland are required under the equality duty to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment, advance equality of

opportunity and foster good relations. They are required to set equality outcomes for four-year periods and report bi-annually on their progress.

The Scottish specific equality duties mean that local authorities must take reasonable steps to include those who share a relevant protected characteristic, or those who represent them, in preparing a set of equality outcomes (The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012). The Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000 states that education authorities 'shall have due regard, so far as is reasonably practicable', to the views of children or young people in decisions that affect them. Article 12 of the UNCRC strengthens the rights of children and young people to have their views taken into account; while not enshrined in legislation, this is considered good practice in Scotland. Further, the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 requires public bodies such as LAs to take steps to uphold the UNCRC requirements within their areas of responsibility. This harmonises with the overall move within Scottish education to make the rights of the child paramount in decisions affecting their lives. Thus, the legal landscape in Scotland means that young people's views on how bullying and prejudice are dealt with in schools should be sought and taken into account. As will be explained, this is integral to the anti-bullying approach established by the Scottish Government.

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 states that education authorities must make general provision to meet the needs of all pupils who may need additional support. Education Scotland (formerly Learning and Teaching Scotland) considers that the experience of being bullied amounts to an additional support need (Learning and Teaching Scotland 2006). This means that schools should support young people to overcome the barriers to learning that may arise from their experience of being bullied.

## 1.3 Report structure

Chapter 2 explains the methodology for each stage of the project. This includes the methodology of the literature and policy review; gathering the data on recorded incidents; and the interviews, focus groups and surveys used in researching the lived experiences of pupils, teachers and LA leads. Finally, it highlights any gaps in the information acquired.

Chapter 3 reviews policies and legislation in Scotland and the UK that relate to prejudice-based bullying. It then reviews the research on bullying, both generally and with a particular focus on prejudice-based bullying.

Chapter 4 reviews the anti-bullying policies of Scotland's LAs. This includes the extent to which policies have been kept up to date and refers to relevant national policies and legislation; coverage of prejudice and protected characteristics; recommended prevention and response strategies; and procedures for recording and monitoring.

Chapter 5 provides a discussion of the data provided by LAs on recorded incidents of bullying, and of the current recording systems and how these are being put into practice.

Chapter 6 presents the findings from LA interviews, as well as an interview with Education Scotland. It explores the understanding and perspective of LAs on relevant policies, prevention work undertaken, staff confidence in responding to bullying, and any issues regarding the reporting of bullying.

Chapter 7 presents the findings of the teacher survey, including teacher awareness of prejudice-based bullying, their understanding of the national context, their knowledge of protected characteristics, and their experiences of responding to bullying.

Chapter 8 explores the findings from the pupil survey, including their knowledge and experience of policy and procedures on bullying, of awareness-raising initiatives, and of bullying and prejudice-based bullying incidents.

Chapter 9 details the findings from focus groups undertaken with secondary school pupils, including their understanding of bullying and their rights under the Equality Act 2010; what they feel are the barriers and aids to reporting bullying in school; and how willing they are to report bullying. It then presents pupil suggestions for improving current systems and making reporting easier.

Chapter 10 highlights examples of good practice that were identified through the research. This will include an overview of some examples of different forms of good practice across Scotland, as well as case studies of good practice in three LAs: Angus Council, City of Edinburgh Council and Scottish Borders Council.

Chapter 11 details the conclusions that have emerged from this project and highlights recommendations for LAs and schools.

## 2. Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodological approach to each aspect of the research. Leads on anti-bullying or equalities in each LA were identified by respect*me*'s working knowledge or by requesting the information from the LA.

Following initial contact by phone, a project brief was emailed to each of these contacts requesting their involvement and support at each stage of the research. A follow-up email was sent to reiterate the request for data on recorded incidents of bullying and prejudice-based bullying. In the sixth week after these communications began, the two surveys were emailed to all authorities. Follow-up occurred on a regular basis to encourage participation.

The degree of participation in each aspect of the research is detailed below. Participating authorities are not named in order to protect the anonymity of individuals, and because a condition of LA involvement was that the project would not serve to present 'league tables' of authorities. Local authorities, with permission, are named with regards to good practice.

### 2.1 Language and definitions

There are many potential definitions and interpretations of the terms 'bullying' and 'prejudice-based bullying'. The definitions presented below, which have been taken as the baseline understanding for this project, are based on legislation and on what has emerged as best practice in Scotland. These definitions were provided in the survey introductions, in addition to the definitions of each of the characteristics covered in the pupil survey and focus group.

Based on reserved equality legislation and documents used within Scottish education, the following definitions were used:

> Bullying is a combination of behaviours and impacts that can affect someone's ability to feel in control of themselves; it is behaviour that can make people feel hurt, threatened, frightened and left out. This behaviour can harm people physically or emotionally and, although the behaviour may not be repeated, the threat may be kept up over time, by actions: looks, messages, confrontations, hitting or hurting or the fear of these (see respect*me* 2014a; *A National Approach*).

> The harassment provisions of the Equality Act 2010[3] do not protect pupils from harassment by other pupils. However, the provisions on discrimination mean that schools have an obligation to ensure that bullying by pupils that is

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[3] A school must not harass a pupil or applicant. There are three different types of harassment that are unlawful under the Act: harassment related to a 'relevant protected characteristic', sexual harassment, and less favourable treatment because of a submission to, or a rejection of, sexual harassment and harassment related to sex.

However, the prohibition on harassment of pupils or prospective pupils does not cover gender reassignment, sexual orientation or religion or belief.

related to a protected characteristic is treated with the same level of seriousness as any other form of bullying.

Harassment is defined in this research as unwanted behaviour that has the purpose, or the effect, of violating a person's dignity and creating a hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Prejudice is a negative judgement of someone who has a characteristic such as race or disability because of who they are or who they are perceived to be.

Prejudice-based bullying and prejudice-based harassment occur where a person is picked on because of who they are or who they are perceived to be. This is rooted in the prejudice and beliefs of the person who is doing the bullying or harassing.

The terminology used to describe both characteristics that are protected under the Equality Act 2010 and other groups referred to in the research varies in this report according to context. In the surveys, the term 'sex' was used to mirror the characteristics named in the Equality Act 2010, whereas in the focus groups the term 'gender' was used as it was felt this would make discussions easier. 'Socio-economic group/social class' is not a category covered under the Act. For the purposes of the teacher survey, the term 'socio-economic group/social class' was used, while for the pupil survey and focus group the term 'social class' was used in order to simplify the language for the younger audience. This document will refer to 'socio-economic group/social class' and 'sex and gender' except where the question or piece of research referred to originally used an alternative or specific term.

'Gender reassignment' is a specific protected characteristic that applies to those who have, are in the process of, or propose to undergo gender reassignment to change the gender in which they live. The term used in the teacher and pupils surveys for this category was 'transgender identity', a term that covers a wider range of people. Transgender identity refers to someone who identifies as transgender. Transgender is a term used to describe a range of people whose gender identity or gender expression differs in some way from the assumptions made about them based on their biological sex. The term can include those who identify as transsexual, cross-dressers, and gender non-binary identities to name a few.

Each of these definitions can be found as they appeared to participants in the surveys in Appendices 3 and 4.

**2.2 National frameworks and literature review**

Researchers undertook a desk-based review of freely available resources that might shape understanding of prejudice-based bullying in Scotland today (Chapter 3). With a focus on materials available to those in the statutory and third sectors, the review includes GB-wide equality legislation, Scottish educational frameworks and guidance, as well as research on experiences of bullying published by the Scottish Government, national equalities, education or anti-bullying institutions, as well as voluntary organisations.

As the main piece of legislation regarding harassment related to protected characteristics is the Equality Act 2010, researchers limited the document review to include studies undertaken since 2010. This decision was based on the expectation that anyone writing at the beginning of this timeframe would have known about the development of the Equality Act 2010 and referred to it where relevant. In cases where protections for a specific protected characteristic, such as race, disability or

sex, were in place prior to the Equality Act 2010, older reports were reviewed where necessary.

## 2.3 Anti-bullying policy survey

Researchers undertook a desk-based survey of LA anti-bullying policies, using *A National Approach* and respect*me*'s resources as guidance on what to expect from a good practice policy (Chapter 4). This survey showed how recently the policies had been reviewed, the extent to which they placed themselves in the wider legal and policy context, their coverage of prejudice and strategies for dealing with it, and their procedures for recording and monitoring.

## 2.4 Recorded incidents

As stated, each LA was contacted by telephone and email to request data on recorded incidents of bullying and prejudice-based bullying for 2011–2012 and 2012–2013, including any relevant or explanatory documents (Chapter 5).

It was explained that the researchers were not using a Freedom of Information request. This is in keeping with the fact that this research was not undertaken with the intention of 'naming and shaming' LAs if there were improvements to be made. Local authorities should inform researchers if they do not hold the requested data, as the research would reflect all responses in its findings. The decision not to undertake Freedom of Information requests was based on a desire to foster a collaborative approach to inform the research and improve experiences in Scotland.

It was anticipated that LAs would be reluctant to share data on recorded incidents and that the comprehensiveness of these data would vary widely between authorities. On completion of the research, 14 local authorities provided the researchers with a response to their request for recorded incidents. Ten of these provided us with some level of data, of which 7 were among the 16 who stated in their policy that they would hold a central record. Nine of the authorities whose policy said they would hold a central record did not share the data with the researchers. The remaining 4 authorities who directly responded to the researchers' request informed them that there were either no central record or that incidents were not being recorded in schools. Several of the authorities who informed the researchers that they did not presently have the requested data indicated that this would be changing in the near future with the implementation of new systems. A number of those who did record some level of data also told the researchers that their system would soon be improving.

## 2.5 Local authority and Education Scotland interviews

Separate interviews were conducted with one member of staff from Education Scotland and strategic anti-bullying or equalities leads across four LAs (Chapter 6). All LAs were invited to participate, with the expectation that most would not accept. This resulted in a largely self-selecting sample of LAs, which might mean that those involved were particularly engaged with the topic of prejudice-based bullying and thus not representative of all authorities. The sample represented a relatively wide spread of geographical regions in Scotland, including both rural and urban areas.

The Education Scotland interview (Chapter 6) was intended to offer insight into the broad context of how bullying and prejudice in schools are being dealt with in Scotland, including good practice and emerging themes from school inspections. It also informed the shape of the LA interviews. Education Scotland is an executive

agency that is independent from but accountable to the Scottish Government, with the role of supporting quality and improvement in Scottish education (Education Scotland 2014). The Education Scotland Interview Guide in its entirety can be found in Appendix 1.

The LA interviews aimed to establish an understanding of anti-bullying work in different areas of Scotland, the common themes or disparities, and how this view from the top would be reflected in the findings from teachers and pupils. The interviews focused their perspectives on the understanding and confidence within the LA and in schools of preventing and dealing with prejudice-based bullying, their anti-bullying policy and recording systems, challenges and good practice that have emerged in their work, and how good practice might be further supported. The LA Interview Guide can be found in Appendix 2.

Although only four LAs took part in interviews, five other authorities offered information to researchers via email and telephone, which complemented the interview findings.

## 2.6 Teacher and pupil surveys

Two surveys, one aimed at teaching staff (Chapter 7) in secondary schools and one aimed at secondary pupils (Chapter 8), were distributed via email to anti-bullying and equality leads across all LAs in Scotland. The surveys were based online at a 'SurveyMonkey' link. The surveys were also posted on the LGBT Youth Scotland and respect*me* Facebook and Twitter pages and sent to other organisations in the equalities and youth sectors across Scotland with the request that they share this with their own contacts and on their social media pages. The teacher survey was emailed directly to all schools in Scotland.

The aim of the teacher survey was to create a picture of staff confidence in communicating anti-bullying policies and preventing and responding to prejudice-based bullying and harassment. The pupil survey complemented this by asking pupils about their awareness of school anti-bullying policies, prevention initiatives, systems of reporting and responses to bullying and prejudice-based bullying, as well as asking about their and their peers' experiences of bullying. The teacher and pupil surveys can be found in Appendices 3 and 4.

- 338 teachers across 22 of Scotland's 32 LAs participated in the teacher survey. Eighty-seven per cent of these responses came from 11 LAs, and 64% came from five LAs.

- 1,281 pupils from 31 LAs in Scotland participated in the pupil survey. Eighty-nine per cent of responses came from nine LAs.

- The number of responding participants appears alongside the findings in this report.

Most surveys were completed during class time; this was enabled by LA leads' promotion of the project in schools. This is evident from the large numbers who responded from areas where LA support was greatest. Sending the teacher survey to schools towards the end of the research period resulted in an increase in responses, and a small number of surveys were completed in youth groups in at least four LA areas.

## 2.7 Pupil focus groups

Twelve focus groups were conducted across six LA areas, in two schools within each area (Chapter 9). In one LA, the two focus groups took place in the same school. Overall, 152 pupils participated.

The aim of the focus groups was to provide a more in-depth understanding of pupils' views than might be offered by the survey, in a context that would allow for interactions between pupils. Again, schools' agreement was encouraged by the support of LA leads in these areas. The main areas covered in the focus groups were: awareness of how to report bullying in school; barriers and aids to reporting; willingness to report different forms of prejudice-based bullying, and suggestions for an 'ideal' reporting system. The Focus Group Guide can be found in Appendix 5.

The focus groups involved full group discussions and breakaway activities in smaller groups. In these activities, pupils wrote their responses and stuck labels on flipchart paper, which was used for analysis, in addition to the notes written by the researchers. The target number of participants for each focus group was 15 and the average number of participants in each group was 13. These pupils were selected randomly by school staff and were generally from the same year group to allow participants to be comfortable in communicating with each other. In one case, the focus group consisted of a mix of fourth-, fifth- and sixth-years (S4–6), and in another it consisted of a mix of fifth- and sixth-years (S5/6). Three of the groups were first-year pupils (S1), two were second-year pupils (S2), and five were third-year pupils (S3). In four of the six authorities, a different age group was used in each of the two focus groups to allow for broader representation. There was disproportionate representation of the lower school years because of difficulties finding time in senior pupils' schedules.

## 2.8 Good practice

Examples of good practice in anti-bullying and equalities work were highlighted primarily through interviews and other communications with LA staff and Education Scotland. In some cases, examples of good practice were available in publications, and through respect*me*'s working knowledge as the national anti-bullying service.

All LAs were informed that one aim of the project was to identify examples of good practice and it was requested that this information be shared with the researchers. LAs that participated in interviews were asked specifically about good practice. Additionally, eight LAs were informed that their policy had been identified as strong during policy reviews and that it would be of particular interest to the project if they were to identify examples of good practice in their area. Most LAs did not offer sufficient information to allow researchers to highlight their working practices.

Case studies were produced to identify specific areas of LA driven good practice (Chapter 10). These include Scottish Borders Council, for youth engagement in anti-bullying, City of Edinburgh Council for prevention work, and Angus Council for its recording and monitoring policy. These case studies detail specific examples in particular areas, but are by no means exhaustive illustrations of good practice in Scotland.

## 2.9 Evidence gaps and limitations

A number of important pieces of research have been published in recent years exploring experiences of bullying in schools in the UK and Scotland. Research has

emerged on bullying based on prejudice against each of the relevant protected characteristics, although the amount of information available varies by characteristic. In almost all cases the research dealt with one characteristic in isolation. Currently missing in published research is a holistic picture of prejudice-based bullying across schools in Scotland. This includes the extent to which teachers and other educators are confident in preventing and responding to prejudice-based bullying and harassment, how rights are taught to pupils, pupil understandings of their rights, and information on the experiences of pupils across all the relevant protected characteristics.

This research aims to help fill that gap. Through the triangulation of research methods using interviews, surveys and focus groups, policy analysis and recorded incidents, this research can offer insight into several approaches to anti-bullying work. It is important to note that only four LAs took part in the interview stage, and their responses are thus not representative across Scotland. Many of their comments, however, were reinforced through communications with leads from other LAs. Those most supportive of each stage of the research typically expressed a strong interest in anti-bullying and prejudice work. All LAs were contacted multiple times to ensure that all authorities were able and encouraged to participate. It was ultimately not possible, however, to control the nature of such a self-selecting sample.

While the research considered pupil and teacher views of anti-bullying work, it did not set out to measure the impact of awareness-raising courses or activities. Further information that could not be captured in the present research was the prevalence of bullying experienced by those with particular characteristics; for example, the data cannot show the total number of young disabled people who experienced bullying, or how many of them put this bullying down to prejudice regarding their disability. What the research does capture is the prevalence of different forms of prejudice-based bullying among the overall sample, although it is not possible to know how demographically representative the survey respondents were. Importantly, evidence has been gathered on the impacts of bullying, as well as the work that is being done to combat it, and the extent to which pupils are satisfied with current responses to bullying and prejudice-based bullying.

# 3. National framework and literature review

This chapter discusses the policy frameworks relevant to prejudice-based bullying, and the research identified in the literature review. First, the overarching legislation and policies influencing Scottish education are explored. Next, the methodologies, findings and central themes in research into bullying and prejudice-based bullying will be outlined. The research into bullying related to one or more of the following characteristics will be discussed, taking each characteristic in turn: disability, pregnancy and maternity, race or ethnicity (including in this breakdown asylum seekers/refugees and travelling communities: for example, Gypsies/Travellers, Roma; which, however, were treated as categories in their own right in the surveys), religion and belief, sex and gender, sexual orientation, transgender identity or gender reassignment, and socio-economic group/social class, which the researchers have noted is not a protected characteristic. This approach is taken in order to give each form of prejudice its due consideration, and to draw attention to where the greatest gaps in the literature lie.

## 3.1 National policies and frameworks

*A National Approach to Anti-bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People* (*A National Approach*) is the primary policy-driving anti-bullying work in Scotland (please see the end of this section for a note on citing framework documents).The Scottish Anti-Bullying Steering Group, comprising a range of bodies from the children's and education sectors, developed the document in partnership with the Scottish Government. *A National Approach* names the Equality Act 2010, the Concordat agreement between local and national government, *Getting it Right for Every Child* (*GIRFEC*), and the national framework for the curriculum, *Curriculum for Excellence,* as documents that are central to preventing bullying through a rights-based approach. Placing the rights of the child as paramount, the document states that all bodies and organisations working with children and young people should develop and implement an anti-bullying policy (*A National Approach*: 8).

*Curriculum for Excellence* and *GIRFEC* are also vital to undertaking anti-bullying work. *Curriculum for Excellence* sets out four goals for all learners aged 3–18: they should become successful learners, effective contributors, confident individuals and responsible citizens. Efforts to reduce bullying support pupils' progress towards these four goals in a number of ways. LGBT Youth Scotland summarise these as follows:

- Pupils experiencing prejudice-based bullying in school are less likely to become *successful learners*.

- Schools that promote inclusive learning environments and actively challenge bullying create *confident individuals* and *effective contributors.*

- Pupils who understand the importance of equality and the rights of others become *responsible citizens* (2009: 11).

*Curriculum for Excellence* also emphasises health and well-being experiences and outcomes to support the mental, emotional, social and physical well-being of pupils. These outcomes lend themselves easily to exploring and challenging prejudice, as shown in the case studies presented in *Promoting Diversity and Equality: Developing Responsible Citizens for 21st Century Scotland* (Education Scotland 2013).

*GIRFEC* focuses on children and young people's health and well-being across services, treating the views and involvement of young people as central. A set of well-being indicators prompts professionals to assess the extent to which individuals are Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included (SHANARRI).

Two older educational documents remain relevant to providing supportive learning environments that promote equality and inclusion. *Happy, Safe and Achieving Their Potential* provides standards relevant to addressing prejudice-based bullying. The standards state that schools provide information to help children and young people make informed decisions and choices (Standard Two); that staff respect confidentiality (Standard Nine); and that schools provide enough time and space for pupils to seek help (Standard Ten) (pp 6–7). *Being Well, Doing Well* emphasises the importance of supporting a pupil's health and well-being and shows how this is central to achieving their potential (2004).

A general note: some official works setting out the national framework are referred to by title/short title as follows:

> *Being Well, Doing Well: A Framework for Health Promoting Schools in Scotland* (Learning and Teaching Scotland 2004) is cited as *Being Well, Doing Well*.

> *Happy, Safe and Achieving Their Potential: A Standard of Support for Children and Young People in Scottish Schools: Executive Summary* Scottish Executive 2005) is cited as *Happy, Safe and Achieving Their Potential*.

> *A Curriculum for Excellence: Building the Curriculum 1* (Scottish Executive 2006) is cited as *Curriculum for Excellence*.

> *A National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People* (Scottish Government 2010) is cited as *A National Approach*.

> *A Guide to Getting it Right for Every Child* (Scottish Government 2012) is cited as *GIRFEC*.

> *Better Relationships, Better Learning, Better Behaviour* (Scottish Government 2013) is referred to by its title.

Other works are cited according to the names of their authors.

## 3.2 Educator conduct

The General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) guidance *Code of Professionalism and Conduct* notes that teachers should engage positively with pupils, colleagues, parents and carers in an 'open, inclusive and respectful way, in line with the law and with a non-judgemental approach' (General Teaching Council for Scotland 2012a: 9). They should also recognise that they are role models whose main duty is to protect the well-being of children and young people (GTCS 2012a: 3).

Education Scotland provides a framework for schools to use in self-assessment prior to school inspections (Education Scotland 2007). This framework includes several quality indicators into which work to reduce prejudice-based bullying and increase equality fit neatly. Although bullying prevention or incidents may be raised in self-evaluation reports, these areas are not reviewed regularly during school inspection visits. In pre-inspection reports, pupils are asked how far they agree with statements such as 'the school is helping me to become more confident' and 'I have a say in making the way we learn better'. Within the question set, pupils are also asked how

far they agree with the statement that 'staff are good at dealing with bullying behaviour'. Although these reports guide inspections and are available alongside inspection reports for each school, national information is not collated or analysed.

## 3.3 Existing research

*Incidence of bullying*

A report by ChildLine reviews support provided to children and young people in 2012–2013. During this time, 24% of the total counselling contact dealt with bullying, reported by more than 30,000 young people (ChildLine 2013: 18). Reports of online bullying were 87% higher than in the previous year, yet most of the bullying mentioned by young people still occurred in school with almost 20,000 phone sessions citing this location (ChildLine 2013: 41). Sixty-six per cent of young people were experiencing bullying based on their physical appearance or for being 'different'. Although the report does not cite examples, it is likely that a large proportion of prejudice-based bullying was described in this way (ChildLine 2013: 41). It notes that reports of racist bullying rose by 69% on the previous year (ChildLine 2013: 40). Less than half of those who had experienced bullying sought help at school and 11% of callers had been too scared to tell anyone about the bullying they were experiencing (ChildLine 2013: 40). Many young people who had reported bullying to their schools told ChildLine that they felt that little was done in response to their reports.

Research undertaken on behalf of the Scottish Government with school staff on their accounts of bullying consisted of surveys of 4,898 school staff, interviews with 31 LA representatives, and research in 12 case study schools (Black *et al.* 2012: 5). The survey asked teachers and support staff about their experiences over the past year and asked about specific behaviours. The research differentiated between 'positive', 'low-level disruptive' and 'seriously disruptive/violent' behaviours. Low-level disruptive behaviours included running in the hall, talking out of turn and using mobile phones, while disruptive behaviour included physical aggression and verbal abuse (Black *et al.* 2012: 5). Teachers and support staff noted that low-level disruption had the most negative impact on their teaching (Black *et al.* 2012: 5).

Teachers reported behaviours directed at other pupils that were racist (4%), sexist (9%), and homophobic (8%). Support staff were more aware of these incidences: 10% reported racist abuse, while 18% reported sexist abuse and 12% cited homophobic abuse (Black *et al.* 2012: 26). The research did not include any forms of prejudice-based bullying in the 'low-level disruptive behaviour' category, instead classifying these as 'seriously disruptive' (Black *et al.* 2012: 4–5). Tippett *et al.* discuss how the focus on bullying, rather than bullying and harassment, in the literature may in effect skew understandings of the experiences of young people. Racial harassment, for example, may be overlooked or go unreported when asking pupils about bullying (Tippett *et al.*: 2010: 20).

*Impacts of bullying*

Experiencing prejudice-based bullying affects an individual's learning, mental and emotional health and might also affect physical health. Fear of experiencing bullying can affect socialisation with others. Pupils may face the following barriers to reporting:

- Lack of pupil confidence (NSPCC 2010:11, Lough Dennell and Logan 2012: 13).

- Lack of awareness of rights (Lough Dennell and Logan 2012: 13).

- Not believing that staff will take reports seriously (Butler 2007: 22).

- Previous reports had no impact (Enable 2007:6).

- Not having proof that the bullying took place (Butler 2007: 22).

- Unwillingness to admit being bullied based on the perception of identifying with a particular characteristic.

- Worry about retaliation or exacerbating the bullying (Butler 2007: 23).

Tippett *et al.* argue that the experience of being bullied affects individuals differently across protected characteristics. Bullying aimed at shared identities (such as race or religion) affects a wider community, while bullying based on individual characteristics (such as gender identity or disability) are more likely to adversely affect the individual's well-being (Tippett *et al.* 2010: v).

## 3.4 Prejudice-based bullying

Together, the alliance of children's rights charities in Scotland, consulted its members in order to collate their research and information on a range of children's rights topics. Members told Together that more action must be taken to raise the awareness of professionals of the signs and impacts of bullying, particularly on vulnerable children and young people 'including children with long-term conditions, young carers, looked-after children, Gypsy/Traveller children, and LGBT children' (Together 2013: 67). Together highlights the importance of tackling prejudice in anti-bullying work (Together 2013: 67).

A study conducted by Tippett *et al.* for the EHRC in 2010 has covered the broadest range of information on prejudice-based bullying so far. This research reviewed LA prevention and responses to bullying in England, Scotland and Wales (Tippett *et al.* 2010). The study undertook a survey with staff in LAs across Britain, receiving responses from eight in Scotland (Tippett *et al.* 2010: 8). Most LAs had no information on the prevalence of prejudice-based bullying in schools for protected characteristics aside from race (Tippett *et al.* 2010: viii–ix). Tippett's report also presents information in a literature review of academic and third-sector publications on prejudice-based bullying, finding that bullying related to disability, learning disability and sexual orientation were common throughout Britain (Tippett *et al.* 2010: v).

*Disability*

Disability is the most well researched protected characteristic with regards to bullying (Tippett *et al.* 2010). Analysis of two large-scale longitudinal studies of young people shows that young people whose education is affected by their disability are the most likely to experience bullying (Department for Children, Schools and Families 2008, cited in Tippett *et al.* 2010: 26). Enable undertook a survey of 500 young people living in the UK and found that most (93%) children and young people with learning disabilities had experienced bullying, with half having experienced bullying for two years or more (Enable 2007: 4, 3). Thirty-eight per cent of young people said that the bullying continued after they had told an adult (Enable 2007: 6). The report speaks of the other settings in which young people cited bullying as occurring: on the bus, in the street, in the park. This highlights the importance of viewing bullying in education

as one part of the broader maltreatment that many young people may experience as a result of prejudice (Enable 2007: 6).

*Gender reassignment*

Due to gender stereotypes, transgender young people often experience homophobic bullying in addition to harassment specific to their gender identity. Research involving 350 LGBT young people found that 77% of transgender young people had experienced homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in education (Lough Dennell and Logan 2012:4). This report also found that LGBT young people were less likely to feel confident reporting transphobia than homophobia or biphobia; 44% of respondents said they would feel confident reporting transphobia in school (Lough Dennell and Logan 2012: 13). A health report based on the same survey found that 69% of those who had experienced transphobic bullying said that they had poor mental health (Lough Dennell and Logan 2013: 17).

Research into bullying and harassment of transgender people for the *Equality Review* in the UK, involving a survey of 872 people, found that 64% of transgender men and 44% of transgender women had experienced bullying or harassment in schools (Whittle *et al.* 2007: 63). This included inappropriate comments, verbal abuse, threatening behaviour and physical abuse (Whittle *et al.* 2007: 63). Gendered Intelligence conducted research in England on the bullying of transgender and gender-variant people in schools, colleges and universities, consisting of a focus group of transgender people aged 14–21, and a focus group of transgender parents and parents of transgender young people. These participants felt that there was a lack of general understanding and confidence among teachers, head teachers and health professionals in schools that would support transgender and gender-variant young people, and counter the social pressures to conform to narrow gender roles (Gendered Intelligence 2012: 30).

*Pregnancy and maternity*

There is a gap in the research on the bullying of people affected by pregnancy and maternity. Research by Barnardo's on teenage mothers touches upon their experience of education. Based on the experiences of 38 young mothers across the organisation's services, the report states that the young people generally had negative experiences of education during pregnancy (Evans and Slowley 2010: 6). The experiences, however, demonstrated a focus on treatment experienced from school staff rather than bullying from peers. Some women were not supported in keeping up to date with work when experiencing fatigue or missing parts of lessons due to toilet breaks or morning sickness, while others were forced to wear school uniforms instead of maternity trousers or excluded from school on 'health' grounds (Evans and Slowley 2010: 12). The young women also noted their experiences of sexist bullying, including sexualised name-calling from peers (Evans and Slowley 2010: 13).

*Race or ethnicity*

The Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights (CRER) undertook research in 2012 to review LA policies and analyse available data on racist incidents in Scotland (Young 2010). Young found that LAs varied widely in their policies and follow-through for recording racist incidents. CRER considers good practice of follow-through to comprise restorative approaches in which the young person is supported and the perpetrator and parent/carer are involved (Young 2010: 13). The CRER report also

notes that the best approach for dealing with racist incidents is through anti-bullying initiatives led by staff knowledgeable on racism and how it affects wider society (Young 2010: 34).

The research found little evidence that reviews of racist incident monitoring information were taking place in order to inform policy development (Young, 2010: 14). Having found very few recorded incidents, the author suggested that this was a result of schools not recording incidents correctly, incidents reported not being interpreted as racist, local data not being sent to LAs, or these incidents not being collated correctly by LAs (Young, 2010: 21–23).

Tippett *et al.* note that little research is available on bullying experienced by children and young people from travelling communities, and consider this group separately due to the different basis for prejudice (2010: iv). A 2001 report on the experiences of children from travelling communities in Scottish schools found that these pupils experienced considerable persistent bullying, and that teachers did not listen to or believe their reports (Lloyd and Stead, cited in Tippett *et al.* 2010: 21).

Refugees and asylum seekers are another group that is mentioned in ten Scottish LA policies in addition to the relevant protected characteristics, on which Tippett *et al.* note a lack of available research (2010: iv). One possible explanation for this is that these are not distinct protected characteristics, and prejudice against these may overlap with and be classified under prejudice based on race or ethnicity.

*Religion and belief*

Available research on religion and belief in Scotland is minimal. Beatbullying, an organisation based in England, produced a report on bullying in schools in 2008 based on a survey with 819 young people. Information on particular religions was not recorded, although 23% of participants reported experiencing bullying due to their faith and 13% believed that they were picked on as a result of religious stereotyping (Beatbullying 2008:6, 5).

It can be difficult to separate bullying behaviours based on race or ethnicity from those based on religion and belief where these forms of prejudice overlap (Tippett *et al.* 2010: 24). Kidd and Jamieson undertook qualitative research with Scottish Muslims and expressed similar complexities underlying the distinctions and overlaps between religion and belief and race or ethnicity (2011). Although not education-specific, the survey of 106 respondents and focus groups with 27 young people in schools showed that prejudices based on religion and race were closely intertwined (Kidd and Jamieson 2011: 4). In the focus groups with young people, they spoke of many examples that express the particular racial–religious stereotypes perpetuating Islamophobia (Kidd and Jamieson 2011: summary). Education resources, guidance and programmes exist on sectarianism, yet the researchers were not able to access examples of research on experiences of this form of bullying. What is missing is a comprehensive view of experiences across faiths and beliefs.

*Sex and gender*

Although the characteristic protected within the Equality Act 2010 is termed 'sex', pupils often experience bullying based not only on biological sex, but also on presumed or expressed gender identity. There are a number of different definitions of this form of bullying, which highlight the complexity of the attitudes and behaviours involved.

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC n.d.) uses the term 'sexual bullying' and states that it refers to any bullying behaviour based on someone's gender or sexuality. This definition includes slander or spreading rumours based on someone's sexual orientation or sex life, and using sexually derogatory words to put someone down. NSPCC explain that sexual bullying is directed more commonly at girls than at boys, and its definition of sexual bullying includes the term 'harassment' (NSPCC 2010). This definition refers to 'putting pressure on someone to act in a sexual way' and 'touching parts of someone's body that they don't want to be touched' (NSPCC 2010). The former statement should be understood as harassment and the latter could be defined legally as sexual assault (National Union of Teachers 2006: 7).

The National Union of Teachers (NUT) differentiates between sexual bullying and sexual harassment. Acknowledging the role of gender inequality, it draws on research that has found that the range of sexual **bullying** experienced is the same regardless of gender but girls evidently experienced more sexual **harassment** in schools (Duncan 1999 cited in NUT 2006: 4). The NUT refers to comments and behaviours that are often sexist, based on stereotypes that undermine an individual's gender identity and use homophobia as a tool (NUT 2006: 5). All aspects of these approaches place pressure on pupils to behave in stereotypically gendered ways or risk experiencing sexist, sexual or homophobic comments (NUT, 2006: 5).

Together states that bullying must be considered within the wider approach to sexualisation and gender inequality (2013: 67). The End Violence Against Women coalition views sexual harassment as a form of violence perpetrated against women and girls as a result of gender inequality. An online survey undertaken with 788 young people aged 16–18 found that 71% report hearing sexually derogatory words (such as 'slut') directed at girls either daily or several times a week (End Violence Against Women 2010:1). A quarter (24%) said that their teacher had never stated that unwanted touching and sexual name-calling were unacceptable and 40% said they had not received, or did not know whether they had received, lessons and information on consent (End Violence Against Women 2010:1). Twenty-eight per cent of the girls surveyed said that they had experienced unwanted sexual touching at school (End Violence Against Women 2010:1).

Scotland's national anti-bullying service, respect*me*, explains that it is important not to confuse bullying based on gender 'with sexually aggressive behaviour, which is potentially a form of criminal harassment and should be treated as such', and warns against using the phrase 'sexual bullying' in policies or practice (respect*me* 2014b). They refer instead to 'gender-based bullying' and explain that this behaviour, if unchallenged, may escalate into more abusive behaviours towards girls and others who do not conform to gender norms (respect*me* 2014). Gendered expectations and gender inequality play a role in bullying and harassment regarding several of the relevant protected characteristics, including gender, sexual orientation and gender reassignment.

*Sexual orientation*

In a survey of 158 lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils in Scottish schools, Stonewall Scotland found that 52% had experienced homophobic or biphobic bullying directly (2012: 2). Another study undertaken by LGBT Youth Scotland with 350 lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people in Scotland found that 69% of all respondents had experienced homophobia or biphobic bullying in school (Lough Dennell and Logan 2012: 4). Ten per cent of all LGBT young people had left

education as a result of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in the learning environment, while 14% of all LGBT young people left education as a result of direct bullying (Lough Dennell and Logan 2012: 15). As noted above, young people often experience homophobic or biphobic bullying as part of gender-based bullying or based on perceptions that they are gay or bisexual.

*Socio-economic group/social class*

Socio-economic group, or social class, is not a protected characteristic in Britain, but it is an important facet of prejudice-based bullying that merits further research. Several studies have linked socio-economic group/social class and inequality with experiences of bullying.

The Department for Children, Schools and Families in the UK released a report that stated that pupils who were among a minority eligible for free school meals in schools could be 'derided or shunned', due to being perceived as poor (2010: 5). This was reflected in Green *et al.*'s research showing that pupils in schools with higher proportions of free school meals were less likely to say they had been bullied (2010: 70). This suggests that it is not only the existence of poverty that places individuals at risk of bullying, but also being in a minority in a system of wider social stratification.

A study of more than 162,000 pupils across 35 countries found that young people from poorer backgrounds were at increased risk of experiencing bullying (Due *et al.* 2009: 913). A survey of more than 25,000 children across the EU into the effects of 'disadvantage' on children's online risk found that children who were more socio-economically disadvantaged could be at greater risk of harmful online behaviours, including bullying, as such children reported being less aware of how to deal with this kind of risk (Livingstone *et al.* 2011: 1). There was a direct correlation between parents' educational attainment, children's knowledge of online safety, and parents' knowledge of how to help keep their children safe online (Livingstone *et al.* 2011: 2, 5, 9).

Chowdry *et al.* looked at the effects of attitudes and behaviours on poorer children's educational attainment in the UK (2010). Analysing several datasets with samples of between 3,416 and 18,000 children, the study found that 16% of young people from the poorest backgrounds experienced more frequent bullying compared to 10% of those from the richest (Chowdry *et al.* 2010: 14, 29). The authors state that this is one factor explaining the gap between rich and poor in educational attainment (Chowdry *et al.* 2010: 32).

Missing from the available research is a direct measurement of whether the young people involved believe they were bullied because of prejudice relating to socio-economic group/social class. This is a gap that the present research aims to fill.

## 3.5 Conclusion

The review of policies and legislation shows that the Equality Act 2010 and *A National Approach* are the documents that provide the strongest reference points for dealing with bullying on the basis of protected characteristics. Further, the educational documents that provide the strongest frame of reference for preventing prejudice-based bullying and ensuring the health and well-being of pupils are *Curriculum for Excellence* and *GIRFEC*. Overall, the research shows the difficulty in defining bullying based on prejudice about particular protected characteristics such as sex, disability, race or ethnicity, or religion and belief. Regardless of definitions, the impacts of bullying come across clearly in the research: pupils unwilling to report

bullying; being unhappy with how reports are handled; feeling isolated and excluded, and experiencing poor physical and mental health or educational attainment as a result.

# 4. Local authority policy review

This chapter outlines the main findings of a review of LA anti-bullying policies across Scotland. In this chapter, LAs will be named only to point out areas of good practice in policies that were freely available and published online. The review includes an analysis of the extent to which the policies are up to date and reflect the wider policy and legal context in their coverage of prejudice-based bullying across a range of characteristics. Guidelines for preventing, responding to and recording bullying and harassment are also discussed.

Some form of anti-bullying policy or statement exists for all 32 LAs in Scotland. *A National Approach* states that all LAs should have anti-bullying policies as part of their work to uphold their statutory obligation of promoting and ensuring the welfare of children and young people (Scottish Government 2010:12). While creating and using a policy is not in itself a legal requirement, the framework sets out what the Scottish Government considers best practice.

## 4.1 Date of review

*A National Approach* recommends that anti-bullying policies are reviewed and updated every three years. Important developments have taken place in recent years in the national policy and legal context. *Curriculum for Excellence* came into effect in 2009, and 2010 saw *A National Approach* and the Equality Act 2010. In light of this, it is important that anti-bullying policies should not fall behind the national understanding of bullying and prejudice-based bullying.

A review of the available anti-bullying policies across LAs, undertaken between December 2013 and February 2014, found that 15 policies had been reviewed since 2010. Nine of the policies were dated between 2006 and 2009; four policies were dated between 2000 and 2005; one policy was dated before 2000, and two were undated. This indicates that fewer than half of the policies might reflect the current legal and policy frameworks relevant to education.

## 4.2 Placing the policy in the wider policy and legal context

Twenty-eight LA policies make reference to at least one policy or legal framework that has informed their policy's development. This demonstrates an understanding among most LAs that anti-bullying policies are situated in a wider picture of education, well-being and rights. Table 4.1 illustrates the most frequently cited documents.

**Table 4.1 Reference to wider frameworks in LA policies**

| National or international framework | Number of LA policies making reference |
|---|---|
| *Curriculum for Excellence* | 19 |
| *GIRFEC* | 14 |
| UNCRC | 20 |
| *A National Approach* | 8 |
| Standards in Scottish Schools Act 2000 | 9 |
| Equality Act 2010 | 8 |

As shown, *A National Approach* and the Equality Act 2010 are cited in only one-quarter of LA policies. Of the policies that do not refer to the Equality Act 2010, seven refer to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, four refer to the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, and three refer to the Equality Act 2006. These three acts have been replaced by the Equality Act 2010. This shows there is a need for local authorities to update their policies in line with current legislation providing protection to a wider range of characteristics.

## 4.3 Coverage of prejudice and protected characteristics

All the policies were analysed and compared on their coverage of different forms of prejudice-based bullying. This is in line with the recommendations of respect*me*, *A National Approach*, and the EHRC's GB-wide research into identity-based bullying (Tippett *et al.* 2010). Particular focus was placed on the seven characteristics protected in the Equality Act 2010: disability, sex, gender reassignment (transgender people), pregnancy and maternity, race or ethnicity, religion and belief and sexual orientation, although as previously noted, the application of protected characteristics to schools is limited.

In comparing the policies, the race or ethnicity category was also broken down to identify those who referred specifically to asylum seekers or refugees and those who referred to travelling communities including Gypsies/Travellers and Roma. It was felt that this was important because the issues and forms of prejudice that these groups may face can be quite distinctive.

Additionally, the policies were compared according to whether they included socio-economic group/social class.

*A National Approach* states that education should 'make sure all types of prejudice-based bullying are treated with the same importance' (2010: 8). The table below highlights the differences in the extent to which policies cover and explain bullying or harassment, based on each form of prejudice.

**Table 4.2 Coverage of each form of prejudice in LA policies**

| | No. of policies that refer to this form of bullying | No. of policies that advise recording this form of bullying | No. of policies with explanation/guidance on this form of bullying |
|---|---|---|---|
| Disability | 24 | 16 | 7 |
| Gender reassignment (transgender) | 8 | 6 | 1 |
| Pregnancy and maternity | 8 | 5 | 0 |
| Race or ethnicity | 27 | 21 | 10 |
|     Asylum seeker/refugee status | 10 | - | 2 |
|     Travelling communities | 7 | - | 1 |
| Religion and belief | 21 | 16 | 8 |
| Sex/gender | 22 | 16 | 9 |
| Sexual orientation | 22 | 17 | 11 |
| Socio-economic group/social class[a] | 10 | 9 | 2 |

Note: [a] This is the only category not included in the seven characteristics protected in the schools provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

At the time of analysis in January–February 2014, only one LA policy made reference to all the forms of prejudice in the table above, and a further six referenced the seven relevant protected characteristics.

Substantially fewer policies offered a definition or guidance to accompany the categories of bullying, even when they did refer to them. In order to focus preventative and responsive strategies appropriately, schools need to understand the issues involved in each of these forms of bullying. The information provided in LA anti-bullying policies should act as a useful introduction to this knowledge. East Renfrewshire is a clear example of good practice in this respect as it included suggested strategies for dealing with each form of prejudice to which it referred: disability, race or ethnicity, sex and gender, sexual orientation, religion and belief, asylum seekers or refugees and socio-economic group/social class.

There is much overlap in the policies that provided information on each form of prejudice-based bullying, meaning that only 12 policies included this much detail on any form of prejudice. Most of the definitions have been closely modelled on the information available in respect*me*'s practitioners' toolkit, *Bullying … It's Never*

*Acceptable* (respect*me* 2012). In some cases, definitions had been copied directly into the policies without further explanation. While this may indicate a positive willingness to adopt best practice it also risks a lack of engagement with the content and fails to consider how policy might be put into practice.

As shown in Table 4.2, some characteristics were featured and explained more frequently than others. It is perhaps surprising that bullying based on sexual orientation is the form that was most often elaborated on in the policies, but this may be the result of a combination of factors. This is one of the characteristics to which protection has been extended relatively recently and as a result more guidance may be required. Additionally, the work that has been done in recent years to raise the profile and public understanding of this issue may have played a role in this development. An important gap, however, remains in the understanding of this issue, as none of the policies referred to prejudice directed specifically at bisexual people (often referred to as biphobia).

Bullying based on race and religion and belief were also among the more commonly explained forms, with a relatively coherent, shared understanding across the policies that define them. A shared understanding also emerged in the policies explaining prejudice against disability, although the numbers of policies offering such an explanation are lower than might have been expected given that disability is one of the characteristics whose legal protection under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 preceded the Equality Act 2010.

While gender-based bullying is explained by nine of the LA policies, there was considerable variation in definitions. Two policies explained that this form of bullying may have sexual elements (such as the spreading of rumours or the use of sexually derogatory language), while also emphasising the importance of distinguishing gender-based bullying from sexually aggressive behaviour. In contrast to this, two policies referred to sexual bullying, in one case specifically citing unwanted physical contact. A greater focus in most of the policies was on gender stereotyping, noting that boys and girls who do not meet these expectations can be at greater risk of bullying. One notable absence from these policies is the concept of gender-based bullying as an aspect of gender inequality. While this can certainly affect all young people, it can be directed in very particular ways towards girls and LGBT people.

Among the legally protected characteristics, bullying based on transgender identity was elaborated on in only one policy, while bullying related to pregnancy and maternity was not explained in any. Overall, many of the policies could be improved by offering further information on prejudice-based bullying beyond simply listing potential characteristics and indicating how prospective bullying in these areas might be recognised, tackled and prevented.

## 4.4 Advice and procedure for dealing with bullying and harassment

A further way in which the policies vary is the extent to which they provide guidance on preventing, responding to, and recording and monitoring bullying and harassment.

*Prevention*

The most commonly noted methods of prevention reflect those suggested in *A National Approach*. Nineteen policies stated that pupils should be involved in developing anti-bullying policies, fitting with *A National Approach*'s recommendation of 'pupil involvement and engagement' (2010: 10). Fourteen policies recommended that schools should survey pupils on their experiences of bullying, and obtain their

feedback on the policy. Twenty-two policies recommended training for staff, and 20 recommended implementing buddying or peer mentoring systems. Table 4.3 outlines several other commonly recommended methods and indicates the extent to which policies include education on prejudice or diversity as a part of their prevention approach.

**Table 4.3 Coverage of anti-bullying and diversity/prejudice in policy prevention recommendations to schools**

|  | Anti-bullying | Diversity/prejudice |
|---|---|---|
|  | No. of policies recommending this to schools | |
| Included in curriculum | 22 | 14 |
| Dedicated assemblies | 15 | 2 |
| Themed days/weeks | 13 | 3 |
| Posters/leaflets or displays | 17 | 4 |

This suggests that there is a gap in LA policies in regards to offering schools clear guidance on strategies for preventing prejudice-based bullying. It is important to tackle prejudice clearly with prevention strategies, as there are issues unique to these forms of bullying.

Local authorities also recommended a number of other prevention strategies to schools. These include the involvement of pupil councils and drama groups in anti-bullying campaigns, UNICEF UK's *Rights Respecting Schools* programme (n.d.), and information events and workshops for parents. The best practice examples were those that offered the clearest suggestions for schools, with specific reference to prejudice. Local authorities whose policies were particularly comprehensive in this regard were: Clackmannanshire, East Renfrewshire, City of Edinburgh, Scottish Borders, Stirling and West Lothian.

*Responses*

As advised in *A National Approach*, restorative and mediation practices are recommended frequently as a response to bullying (2010: 10). Over two-thirds of policies recommended using these approaches, emphasising the importance of changing behaviour and relationships, rather than simply attributing blame. The policies that did not refer to restorative practices or similar approaches, in most cases, were those that did not offer any specific guidance on responses. Sixteen policies mentioned using sanctions against those engaging in bullying, such as detention or loss of privileges, and in most cases these were suggested alongside restorative approaches.

Nineteen policies specifically recommended involving parents when instances of bullying are thought to have taken place, while only four emphasised the importance of gaining consent from young people. For example, Scottish Borders Council's

policy noted that in certain circumstances, such as when the bullying involves 'sexual orientation, parental behaviour or beliefs, [or] family circumstances including domestic abuse, a child or young person may express a preference to not involve their parents' (2012: 15). This is a strong indicator of good practice in policy as it recognises the rights and needs of the child or young person.

*Recording and monitoring*

Bullying must be recorded and monitored, so that patterns can be acted upon. Twenty-six of the LA policies stated that schools should record incidents of bullying and one policy recommended that only racist incidents should be recorded. As indicated in Table 4.3, the extent to which the policies recommended recording prejudice-based bullying differs widely. Fifteen LAs included a recording form within their policy. Five of these asked for feedback from the person being bullied on how the incident was dealt with, while three asked for feedback from the person engaging in bullying behaviour.

Fifteen of the policies said that the LA would collate a central record of bullying incidents, and one further policy said that the authority would hold a central record of only prejudice-based incidents. Fifteen LAs stated that schools should monitor the effectiveness of their policy and review it regularly. Those policies that meet each of these criteria with regards to recording and monitoring should be regarded as examples of good practice.

## 4.5 Conclusion

Overall, there is a need for LAs to update their policies more regularly as more than half had not been updated since the introduction of the Equality Act 2010, or the publication of *A National Approach*. The coverage within the policies of different forms of prejudice-based bullying varied widely, as did advice regarding recording incidents. Most of the policies did not offer specific information or advice on the different forms of prejudice, nor did they recommend strategies for tackling prejudice-based bullying.

The policies that emerged as examples of good practice were those that gave detailed information and guidance to schools on preventing, responding to and recording incidents of bullying, and dealt with prejudice-based bullying and harassment consistently. This analysis was undertaken prior to the fieldwork component of the research, with the acknowledgement that good practice in regards to policies might not translate into the effective implementation of a policy or the experiences of staff, pupils and parents or carers.

# 5. Recorded incidents

This chapter will present the figures of recorded incidents of bullying and prejudice-based bullying as provided by LAs who shared the information. Discussion will also be offered on the context of these findings and the current picture of recording and monitoring processes in Scotland that have emerged from the interviews and other communications with LA leads.

The data gathered on recorded incidents leave a very incomplete picture. Schools in Scotland are not legally required to record or report on incidents of bullying. In turn, LAs are not required to collect or collate overall data for their areas on bullying incidents. The anti-bullying policies of 26 LAs recommended that schools record incidents of bullying and 16 stated in their anti-bullying policies that the LA would hold a central record of the data. The intention to promote a system where this data is recorded and collated is evident, but the extent to which this occurs in practice varies widely.

LAs are required by the public sector equality duty to assess the impact on equality of applying a new or revised policy or practice, and in making the assessment, to consider relevant evidence relating to protected characteristics. In being able to meet the impact assessment requirement, this lack of data is potentially significant.

Researchers requested information on recorded incidents from each LA, as well as any further contextual information. It was made clear that a response would be voluntary, and that those who did not record would not be identified. Fourteen LAs provided researchers with a response to their request for recorded incidents. Ten of these provided researchers with data, 7 of which were among the 16 who stated in their policy that they would hold a central record. This means that 9 of the authorities whose policies said they would hold centralised data did not share the data with researchers.

Table 5.1 below provides the collated figures from the data provided to researchers for each form of bullying recorded. The number of authorities who provided researchers with data varied considerably according to the type of bullying recorded. The numbers that were able to provide data for 2012–2013 also showed an increase, in some cases because a new system had been implemented, which meant that new information was recorded. The data presented here are not necessarily nationally representative. Based on the information provided to researchers in their communications with LAs, the numbers of incidents recorded are also unlikely to be a reflection of the 'true' picture. Placing these numbers in perspective, there were more than 4,500 race-related hate crime incidents in 2011–2012 and more than 4,000 in 2012–2013 (Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service 2012, 2013).

**Table 5.1 Data on recorded incidents of prejudice-based bullying, 2011–2012 and 2012–2013**

| | No. of authorities who provided data for 2011–2012 | No. of recorded incidents for 2011–2012 | No. of authorities who provided data for 2012–2013 | No. of recorded incidents for 2012–2013 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bullying (overall) | 4 | 681 | 5 | 569 |
| Disability | 2 | 9 | 4 | 8 |
| Gender reassignment | 0 | - | 0 | - |
| Pregnancy and maternity | 0 | - | 0 | - |
| Race or ethnicity | 8 | 112 | 9 | 123 |
|     Asylum seeker/refugee group/social class | 0 | - | 0 | - |
|     Gypsies/Travellers | 0 | - | **0 | - |
| Religion and belief | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| Sex and gender | 2 | 5 | 2 | 6 |
| Sexual orientation | 3 | 10 | 4 | 29 |
| Socio-economic group/social class | 0 | - | 0 | - |

Four LAs that responded to researchers' request for information told them that they did not have the requested data. From their communications with relevant LA leads, the researchers identified several reasons why data could not be made available. In some areas, the data were not currently centralised and it was suggested that schools would only hold the information in individual pupils' files, making the task of collating the data at this stage too large. One LA lead emphasised that they were not under a duty to record the data and that a relevant 'code' for recording this information is not included in Management Information Systems, which are used to record data across the country. Several authorities that did not presently have the requested data indicated that this would soon be changing with the implementation of a new system. A number of those who did record some level of data told us that their systems would be improving. Several LA leads suggested that there had been undue delays in implementing an appropriate system, either as a result of bureaucracy within the authority, or technical problems with the system itself.

It emerged that schools in many LAs use the Scottish Education Establishment Management Information System (SEEMiS) to record information on pupils. According to SEEMiS' website, LA schools across Scotland will be using SEEMiS by

March 2015 (SEEMiS 2014). While a process for recording bullying incidents through this system had already been proposed, researchers were told that this had yet to be implemented. In some cases this was cited as a reason for delays in beginning to record incidents across the authority. Delays in technology should not, however, be regarded as a valid reason for not recording incidents. It is important for authorities to monitor trends in bullying so that the emerging issues can be dealt with accordingly. A number of LAs indicated that a paper-based or simple spreadsheet system is used; such systems could be used by more LAs while awaiting an improved electronic system. In light of these developments, it is likely that there will be considerable changes in the national picture of data that record incidents of bullying in the next few years.

The research revealed a number of issues in the current system and practice of recording incidents of bullying and prejudice in schools. Among those authorities that did have data, including a number of authorities who spoke to researchers about it but did not ultimately provide them with data in response to their request, a common theme was that actual incidents were likely to occur much more frequently than recorded incidents. Researchers were informed that schools are often reluctant to record or report on data on bullying and prejudice-based incidents, for a number of reasons. Even after pupils report bullying, LA leads noted, there may be several additional barriers in place: staff not viewing the incident as serious enough to warrant recording; staff not having easy access to recording forms; staff experiencing time constraints in completing paperwork; staff not seeing the value of recording incidents that are being dealt with; and staff not wanting to record the actions taken in response to incidents. This resulted primarily from concern that a high number of recorded incidents would reflect negatively upon a school or LA. The LA leads indicated awareness that higher figures could in fact represent better systems of recording and a greater willingness among pupils to report. It was felt, however, that this concept might not be widely understood by teachers or parents and carers.

There was also understandable concern that if recorded figures were very low, sharing them more widely would compromise the confidentiality of those involved. A number of LA leads told researchers that they hoped numbers of recorded incidents would increase as their developing systems improved and began to be implemented. Others suggested that attempts to implement such a system might be futile due to the extent of the resistance and the lack of success so far. The leads from one LA expressed doubt as to whether the capacity existed within the authority to analyse the collated data and respond to emergent trends. This raises a potential concern in how useful the data currently being gathered can be, as recording information without using it to monitor trends and develop policy responses is not good practice.

One LA lead suggested that it may not be the place of LAs to hold detailed information, for example on whether an incident was a repeat incident, because those were concerns for schools to resolve internally. This lead pointed out that the impact on the children involved was of greater concern than collating an overall picture, and that recording information for each child on a confidential basis would be a higher priority than producing anonymised summary data. Of course, monitoring what is taking place in an individual's life can be vital, but there needs to be more understanding that monitoring overall trends can allow for individual children and young people to benefit from policy responses to these trends.

Another LA lead argued against making the recording of bullying incidents compulsory, as this may not aid in the process of resolving the underlying issues or reducing the frequency of incidents. It was also noted that more widely understood

and high-profile forms of prejudice would be more likely to be recorded, meaning that data may not allow for any reliable comparison.

Several LAs had conducted, or were in the process of conducting, their own surveys with pupils on bullying. One LA lead suggested that this might offer a potential replacement for recording incidents, as it may provide more detailed and reliable data. Effectively, this might remove a step in the communication chain. These surveys also allow data to be compared by characteristics of the respondents, such as gender or race, which is often lacking in current systems of recording incidents. The lead from another LA pointed out that surveys tend to indicate higher rates of bullying than recorded incidents and may be a clearer source of information on pupils' experiences.

One of these surveys, aimed at S2 pupils, asked respondents whether they were bullied based on any of a number of different grounds, including gender, race, skin colour, or nationality, faith or religion, disability, or 'being called lesbian, gay or bisexual'. The same survey asked pupils how they would describe their ethnic background, whether they were male or female, and whether they considered themselves to have a disability. Researchers were informed that pupils were not asked to identify their sexual orientation because it was felt by some that they were too young to do so. The survey also asked a number of more detailed questions about any incidents of bullying that took place and how they were dealt with.

One LA had conducted a survey into how safe and cared for pupils felt in school, mirroring two of the *GIRFEC* indicators, 'safe' and 'nurtured'. Positive outcomes across these indicators have an integral role in developing an environment where bullying is reduced and dealt with appropriately. Conducting surveys on bullying and other related experiences such as these can be regarded as an example of good practice that can provide a useful complement to available data. Such surveys, if administered consistently across time within LAs, may serve as an alternative to analysing recorded incidents, at least in the interim as systems of recording improve.

Closing current gaps in knowledge regarding prejudice-based incidents, whether through recording incidents or conducting pupil surveys, should provide sufficient information for LAs to include each protected characteristic in equality impact assessments. In analysing the recorded incidents and the supplementary information received from LAs, researchers found very little evidence that bullying is recorded and monitored consistently. Local authorities are not required to record any forms of bullying, but this only partially explains the low recording of incidents across the relevant protected characteristics. Various barriers to recording were uncovered: for example teachers' limited access to forms, and teachers concerned about high numbers of recorded incidents being interpreted as reflecting a poor school environment, and inadequate recording systems. As noted above, some LAs have begun gathering information on prejudice-based bullying incidents in the form of anonymous pupil surveys, and using these data to inform improvements.

# 6. Local authority and Education Scotland interviews

This chapter will present the findings of interviews that were conducted with one staff member from Education Scotland and eight strategic anti-bullying and equality leads from four LAs. The main themes in anti-bullying work that emerged from these discussions will be highlighted, particularly those related to prejudice-based bullying.

Reflecting the diversity of structures across the country, interview contacts had responsibility for: leading on, or supporting, corporate equalities policies; managing anti-bullying approaches; linking to schools directly or indirectly; delivering training; supporting youth participation; undertaking equality impact assessments; ensuring compliance with the Equality Act 2010; building relationships with communities; gathering information on bullying and discrimination; promoting equalities in schools or work with staff that do; working with pupil support services; and chairing or attending equalities groups. A message that came across clearly from all interviews was that a small number of staff within the authority had responsibility for promoting equalities, and that there were additional pressures placed on their time from other areas of their role.

## 6.1 Prevention

When asked about essential policies and frameworks for preventing and responding to prejudice-based bullying in education, interviewees mentioned a combination of local and national documents. LA anti-bullying and equality policies were mentioned, alongside internal equality impact assessments or equality outcomes.

*Curriculum for Excellence* was the most frequent response, with *GIRFEC*, *A National Approach* and the UNCRC the next most frequently mentioned frameworks. Other policies and frameworks mentioned were the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, *Public Sector Equality Duty Technical Guidance* (EHCR 2014), and UNICEF UK's *Rights Respecting Schools* programme. The interviewee from Education Scotland cited *Curriculum for Excellence*, *A National Approach* and the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 while also listing other official documents:

- *Better Relationships, Better Learning, Better Behaviour* (Scottish Government 2013).

- *How Good is Our School? The Journey to Excellence: Part 3* (Education Scotland 2007).

- *Journey to Excellence*-themed development packs and improvement guides.

Interviewees also mentioned GTCS' *Code of Professionalism and Conduct* and the *Scottish Social Attitudes Survey*[4] findings. One interviewee explained that the *Scottish Social Attitudes Survey* shows that people can show prejudice about one situation and not another, even if both presumably deal with the same protected characteristic. This is useful to understand and explore in anti-bullying work.

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[4] Participants did not mention a specific survey, although a 2010 report dealt specifically with discrimination: see Scottish Government/Equality and Human Rights Commission Scotland/Scottish Centre for Social Research (2010).

Interviewees often offered further information on the local approach or ethos promoted for dealing with bullying, which researchers have summarised as relating to health and well-being, behaviour or young people's rights:

- Health and well-being: promoting or protecting the health and well-being of pupils from within *GIRFEC* and *Curriculum for Excellence*. One interviewee noted the benefit of using curricular tools to raise anti-bullying and equalities issues, as they are more easily included in a teacher's regular work.

- *Curriculum for Excellence* health and well-being outcomes, and the *GIRFEC* strategy. These two overarching programmes provide guidance and a framework to promote children's well-being and resilience, to develop a sense of responsibility and citizenship in schools, and to support this ethos (Interviewee 1).

- Behaviour: included understandings of appropriate behaviour, bullying based on prejudice as inappropriate behaviour, respectful behaviours, the impact of bullying behaviour on an individual, and restorative practices exploring emotions and behaviour.

- Rights: young people's right to an education, freedom from discrimination, ability to have a say on issues that affect them. One LA mentioned this in regards to a whole-school ethos as promoted in *Rights Respecting Schools* (UNICEF n.d.), while another noted a focus on young people knowing their rights and being confident to tell others their rights and the rights of others.

One interviewee spoke about this focus on rights as important in enabling young people, and in providing them with the confidence to speak up about their own and others' rights.

> This is about young people being able to say they have rights, to say 'I know what they are', and being confident to tell other people. (Interviewee 3)

It is interesting to highlight that only one of the LA interviewees mentioned documents cited and created by Education Scotland. One LA mentioned gathering information for a local report in response to the priority actions proposed by *Better Relationships, Better Learning, Better Behaviour.* Although researchers did not ask follow-up questions focusing on such documents, possible reasons that most interviewees did not cite them are that:

- Staff did not consider these documents to be central to preventing and responding to prejudice-based bullying.

- Education Scotland documents are considered to be developmental tools and researchers asked about policies and frameworks.

The document *Better Relationships, Better Learning, Better Behaviour* is cited as 'central to the successful delivery of the *Curriculum for Excellence* and the implementation of *Getting it Right for Every Child*' (Scottish Government 2013: 2). This document contains all three themes raised by interviewees within its checklist of priority actions for LAs:

> *GIRFEC*. A whole partnership, community approach to dealing with bullying, putting the child at the centre (Interviewee 3).

> Staff are proactively ensuring that there are learning experiences and opportunities for young people aged 3-

18 within the context of *Curriculum for Excellence*, general education, there's formal learning around anti-bullying. (Interviewee 4)

As researchers were interested in hearing how LA representatives framed their understanding, they did not raise the Equality Act 2010 at this stage. It is notable that aside from policies mentioning the Equality Act 2010, none of the responses included the legislation itself but focused instead on responsibilities under the legislation. The additional fact that more respondents identified policies and frameworks relevant to Scottish education indicates that a focus on rights and on health and well-being in teaching (in line with *GIRFEC* and *Curriculum for Excellence*) may be most effective. It also indicates that the health and well-being of children and young people are central to anti-bullying work, particularly since the behaviour-based approach also focused on the impact of bullying and harassment on the individual.

## 6.2 Raising awareness of anti-bullying policy and prevention approaches

Approaches to disseminating anti-bullying policies to staff in schools often included a combination of methods. Electronic methods included publicising the document or important points in an email or e-bulletin, and making the document available to staff (as well as parents and pupils) on the school's website.

Several LAs interviewed provided or had initially provided training on anti-bullying policies and procedures to staff in schools. The intended recipients varied from staff leads on anti-bullying, to teaching staff, or all staff. Training on anti-bullying policies also arose in conversations about equality outcomes or responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 within training modules delivered to teaching (and in some cases also non-teaching) staff. Approaches to this ranged from e-learning courses to training school staff to be trainers within their schools. Limitations noted for training include the time required by trainers and participants for sessions, and computer access required by non-teaching staff for e-learning. After an increase in cyber-bullying in one area of an LA, trainers trained school staff and held sessions with parents and carers. This LA also cited other examples of responding to staff needs regarding bullying.

Several LAs were in the process of a transition to new anti-bullying policies. Positive examples of engagement included an LA consulting with teachers on the draft policy and schools consulting with parents, pupils and staff. Pupil awareness of the final policies was often raised through school assemblies and some schools had brought parents in for a session.

Awareness of anti-bullying and equalities policies and work was also raised beyond schools. Strategic groups featured in the interviews as vehicles both for sharing information on policies and equality developments, and for providing opportunities to share experiences and seek ideas. Such groups included equality groups with LA staff, community representatives and councillors, as well as meetings aimed at bringing together equalities champions from individual schools, or groups of schools within the LA. Other community forums mentioned include those looking at the needs and experiences of LGBT people, migrants and young people.

## 6.3 Teacher confidence to respond to prejudice-based bullying

Researchers asked interviewees for their perspectives on staff confidence in preventing and responding to prejudice-based bullying. Two LAs recognised that they

were not in close contact with schools and therefore found it difficult to assess, yet mentioned that staff were still adjusting to new policies. Two LAs had contrasting views on staff confidence, with one noting that they were 'fairly confident' and another that they were 'not confident that it is widespread'.

Both of these LAs expressed strong engagement with anti-bullying work and returned survey results that conveyed a more positive picture than the national average. The lead in one of these two authorities, however, had a tendency throughout the interview to focus on areas for improvement whereas the other had a tendency to focus on achievements. It may be a result of these differing viewpoints that these interviewees had contrasting interpretations of confidence levels among school staff.

Interviewees commonly noted that there were specific staff with a leading role on responses to prejudice-based bullying, and that even when this was not the case, teaching staff may not view such duties as relevant to their role:

> I think in secondary school any prejudice-based bullying would be dealt with probably by pastoral care, deputy heads, head teacher, staff that have a particular responsibility for that, and I would like to think that they generally would be really confident. However all school staff have a responsibility for eliminating discrimination. (Interviewee 1).

> Some staff may see this as another thing to do, especially when there are guidance teachers in secondary schools – there may be a view that they should be doing this (Interviewee 3).

On the other hand, in areas where anti-bullying work was linked to the curriculum, it was felt to be 'the core business of teachers'.

## 6.4 Reporting issues

Many of the issues faced when recording incidents appear common throughout LAs. As noted above in the chapter on recorded incidents, there is awareness that recorded information does not reflect the true rate of incidents and that teaching and non-teaching staff may be reluctant to record or report on incidents.

It was recognised that pupils may not involve an adult when they experience bullying, which means that this information is not recorded. One LA-led survey on pupil experiences asked whether individuals had dealt with the bullying without involving an adult and found that around half of all secondary school respondents had dealt with bullying without involving an adult. Another reason discussed for pupils not reporting was fear of repercussions. There was also recognition that pupils may be unsure whether experiences of bullying were 'serious' enough, with an example given that teachers might consider verbal abuse to be 'banter'. This was also raised by pupils during workshops. One interviewee, in noting that part of the focus of education is to build young people's agency and resilience, stated:

> To assume or expect that young people will always talk to school staff is disempowering. To make sure that the opportunity is available is not (Interviewee 2).

Another interviewee noted the tensions that may arise in regards to recording:

It is a difficult balance – recording for monitoring purposes, for analysis, for ensuring policy is in place, for looking at patterns, and asking teachers to do more tasks when already stressed (Interviewee 1).

### 6.5 Under-reporting of prejudice-based bullying

Interviewees from most LAs commented that under-reporting was a particular issue for prejudice-based bullying. One LA mentioned that disability and race were more likely to be reported due to a longer-term presence in equality legislation, and that it may be another 2–3 years before other protected characteristics caught up.

Through discussions on reporting, interviewees spoke about the ways in which they were made aware of the current situation, including the under-reporting. Some interviewees spoke about receiving qualitative information from quality improvement officers, educational psychologists or support services. Others received information from surveys conducted by external organisations within their LA. Two LAs had undertaken pupil surveys and one administers an equalities audit each year. This year's audit focused on bullying policies and procedures and yielded information and suggestions from head teachers across the LA.

### Changing prejudice

Throughout interviews, individuals commented on the changing landscape regarding prejudice and discrimination. In some areas, this was acknowledged during discussions on specific characteristics or groups that have recently increased visibility within the LA, and in others it focused on processes and expectations in regards to equalities legislation. There was recognition that practitioners, including teaching and non-teaching staff, would require regular information in order to transfer the learning and understanding to pupils.

### 6.6 Improvements

Researchers asked interviewees several questions about improvements based on what they knew of their LAs and practices across Scotland. The first question considered what might be needed to ensure good practice is undertaken consistently across the country, and the second considered additional support or information that might assist the LA to prevent and respond to prejudice-based bullying. Both questions elicited similar responses.

Interviewees spoke of providing initial support for staff such as training in intervention methods and the need to continually upskill staff, including non-teaching staff. There was awareness that finding staff time to attend training can be a challenge. Several felt that more training and work could be done on cyber-bullying both in training and with pupils. In regards to work undertaken in schools, one interviewee said that it was imperative that LAs work with young people to help them understand the impact of prejudice-based bullying and contain things before they escalate. One interviewee asked that Education Scotland take more of a lead in holding schools and authorities accountable by asking about all protected characteristics during inspections:

I think we get a sense of what's happening in our own wee bits of the world. But nationwide, unless you have contacts from other authorities who are doing things a bit differently, you tend to be a bit more insular perhaps. It would be good to have access to a wider network of

> examples, and the internet seems like a good way of
> doing that (Interviewee 1).

The objective that was resoundingly voiced across the interviews was a desire for access to information. They spoke of wanting to have a central hub for accessing and sharing information with other LAs on:

- statistics

- how recording is undertaken in other areas

- examples of good practice

- ideas on how to deal with issues that have arisen in schools regarding prejudice-based bullying

- curricular tools and examples of what has worked well for teaching specific topics within prejudice or discrimination.

They would like this resource to be easily searchable and to be able to provide quickly an idea of what is going on nationally. Two LAs specifically asked that this does not sit on GLOW[5] as they experience problems ensuring that the system is accessible throughout the LA. Both respect*me* and Education Scotland were suggested as potential locations for such a resource.

## 6.7 Conclusion

Overall, the interviews highlighted three broad approaches to preventing prejudice-based bullying in Scotland, with a focus on health and well-being, behaviour and rights. Interviewees spoke of their awareness of various barriers to bullying being reported, yet provided a marked contrast between LAs in regards to their emphasis on reporting bullying. While some interviewees were involved closely in the work of schools and others were not, all had developed various techniques for measuring the experiences of pupils and all were clear that prejudice-based bullying occurs at higher rates than documents are able to evidence.

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5 Glow is an online community for both educators and learners in Scotland; it is managed by Education Scotland and used by schools and local authorities across the country. More information on Glow can be accessed at http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/usingglowandict/glow/

# 7. Teacher survey

This chapter outlines the findings of the survey aimed at secondary school teachers, completed by 336 teachers across 22 LAs. These findings highlight how aware teachers were of incidents of bullying and prejudice-based bullying, their knowledge of the international, national and local policy context surrounding anti-bullying and prejudice work, and both the preventative and reactive work in which they have been engaged. The abbreviation 'n=' indicates the size of the sample from which the findings are drawn. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

## 7.1 Awareness of incidents of prejudice-based bullying

Most teachers said that pupils in their school had experienced bullying or harassment (94%). This much awareness among teachers should be regarded as positive as it is highly unlikely that any school exists where no bullying takes place. Figure 7.1 indicates that teachers were also aware of pupils in their school having experienced bullying based on a range of forms of prejudice.
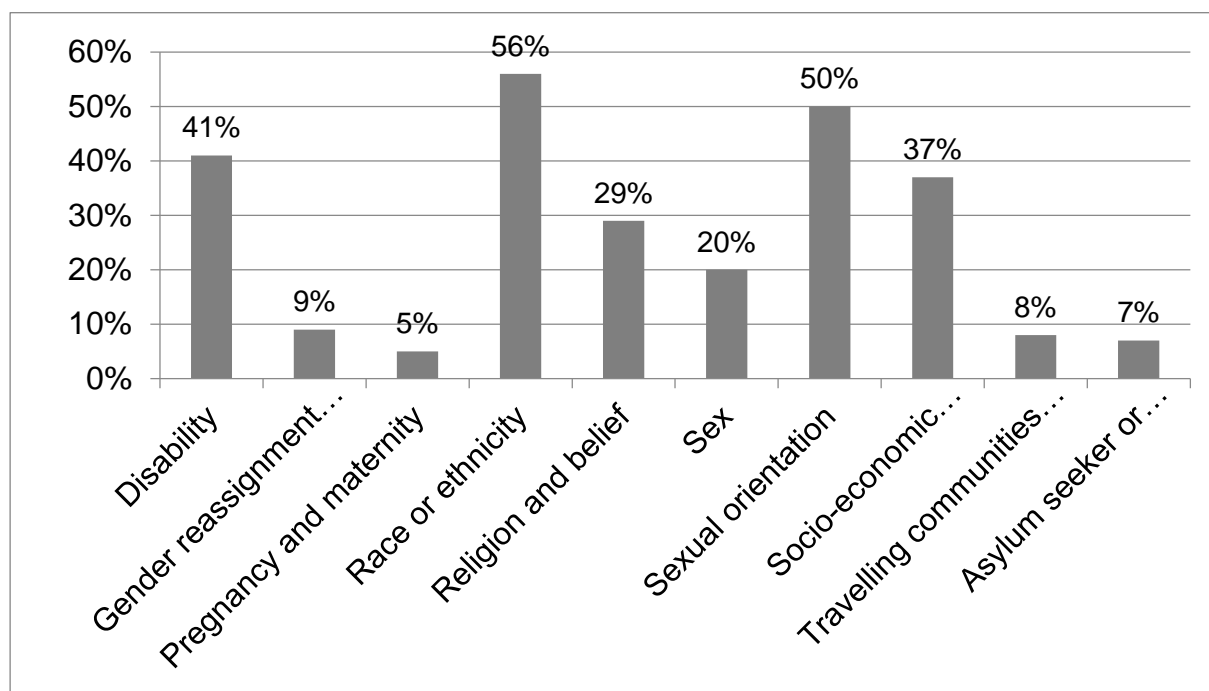


Note: Numbers responding to questions on awareness of bullying, 268, and on awareness of prejudice, 213.

**Figure 7.1 Teacher awareness of pupils experiencing different forms of prejudice-based bullying/harassment**

Of those who responded to this question, just over half of teachers were aware of pupils in their school experiencing bullying based on race or ethnicity (56%), and half said the same regarding sexual orientation (50%). Four in ten teachers were aware of pupils experiencing bullying based on disability (41%) and three in ten were aware of socio-economic group/social class-based bullying (37%).

Less than a third (29%) said pupils had experienced bullying based on religion and belief, and 20% said pupils had been bullied based on sex. Fewer than 10% of teachers were aware of pupils experiencing bullying regarding gender

reassignment/transgender identity (9%), travelling communities (8%), those with asylum seeker or refugee status (7%), or pregnancy and maternity (5%). This is probably due in part to the specificity of these forms of bullying and the smaller numbers of pupils within those categories. It is also important to note that the comparative levels of awareness may be influenced in part by the degree of understanding of the forms of prejudice in question. Slightly more than one in five (22%) said pupils had experienced bullying based on religion and belief, and 15% said pupils had been bullied based on sex. Less than one-tenth of teachers were aware of pupils experiencing bullying regarding gender reassignment/transgender identity (9%), travelling communities (8%), those with asylum seeker or refugee status (7%), or pregnancy and maternity (5%). This is likely due in part to the specificity of these forms of bullying and the smaller numbers of pupils within those categories. It is also important to note that the different scores for awareness might be influenced in part by how well teachers understood the forms of prejudice in question.

## 7.2 Understanding of the national policy and legal context

A number of national policy and legal documents were cited frequently in LA anti-bullying policies and interviews as integral to anti-bullying work. Of interest in the survey was the extent to which teachers were aware of these policies and how confident they felt in using them to prevent bullying and harassment.

Unsurprisingly, given their centrality to the Scottish education system, the two frameworks with which teachers who answered this question were most familiar were *Curriculum for Excellence* (99.7%, n=336) and *GIRFEC* (98%, n=335). Most respondents had also heard of the GTCS' *Code of Professionalism and Conduct* (2012a) (94%, n=331), as well as the Equality Act 2010 (93%, n=333), while fewer teachers had heard of the UNCRC (89%, n=332). There was less familiarity with the Standards in Scottish Schools Act 2000; 73% of teachers had heard of it (n=329). Respondents were least likely to be aware of *A National Approach* (2010) (64%, n=326).

The degree of confidence experienced by teachers in using each of these to prevent bullying and harassment also varies considerably (Figure 7.2).
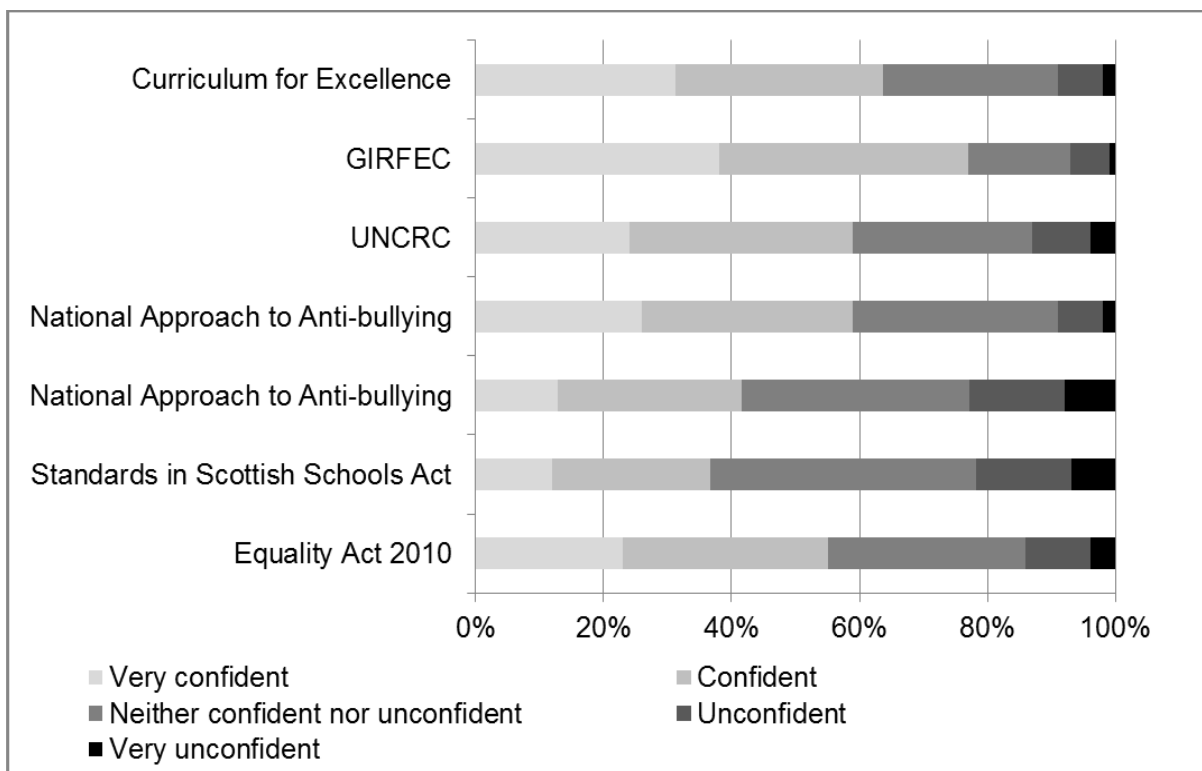
Note: numbers responding to questions on respective frameworks were as follows: *Curriculum for Excellence*, 330; *GIRFEC*, 331; UNCRC, GTCS' Code of Professionalism, Equality Act 2010, 325–326; *A National Approach*, 324; Standards in Scottish Schools Act 2000, 328.

**Figure 7.2 Teacher confidence to use wider frameworks to prevent bullying or harassment**

The most confidence was expressed in *GIRFEC.* Of those who responded to this question, more than three in four teachers said they would be confident or very confident in using *GIRFEC* to prevent bullying and harassment (77%). While the *Curriculum for Excellence* was the framework that most teachers had heard of, teachers expressed less confidence to use it to prevent bullying (63%). This may be because the SHANARRI indicators are seen as linked more directly than *Curriculum for Excellence* to anti-bullying work.

While nine in ten respondents had heard of the UNCRC, the GTCS' *Code of Professionalism and Conduct* and the Equality Act 2010, confidence rates in using these to prevent bullying were considerably lower (55–59%). This is an interesting finding, as it was anticipated that an awareness of equalities and children's rights might play an important role in preventative work on bullying and prejudice.

In line with the lower familiarity among respondents with the Standards in Scottish Schools Act 2000 and *A National Approach*, confidence to use these policies in anti-bullying prevention work was also lower (42%; 36%). Considering the frequency with which *A National Approach* appeared in local anti-bullying policies, the lack of confidence was unexpected. It may be, however, that the connection between local policy and *A National Approach* is not clear to teachers, though its principles are understood locally.

## 7.3 Knowledge of local policy and procedure

When asked about local policy and procedure locally, there was more awareness, although there remained a degree of uncertainty.
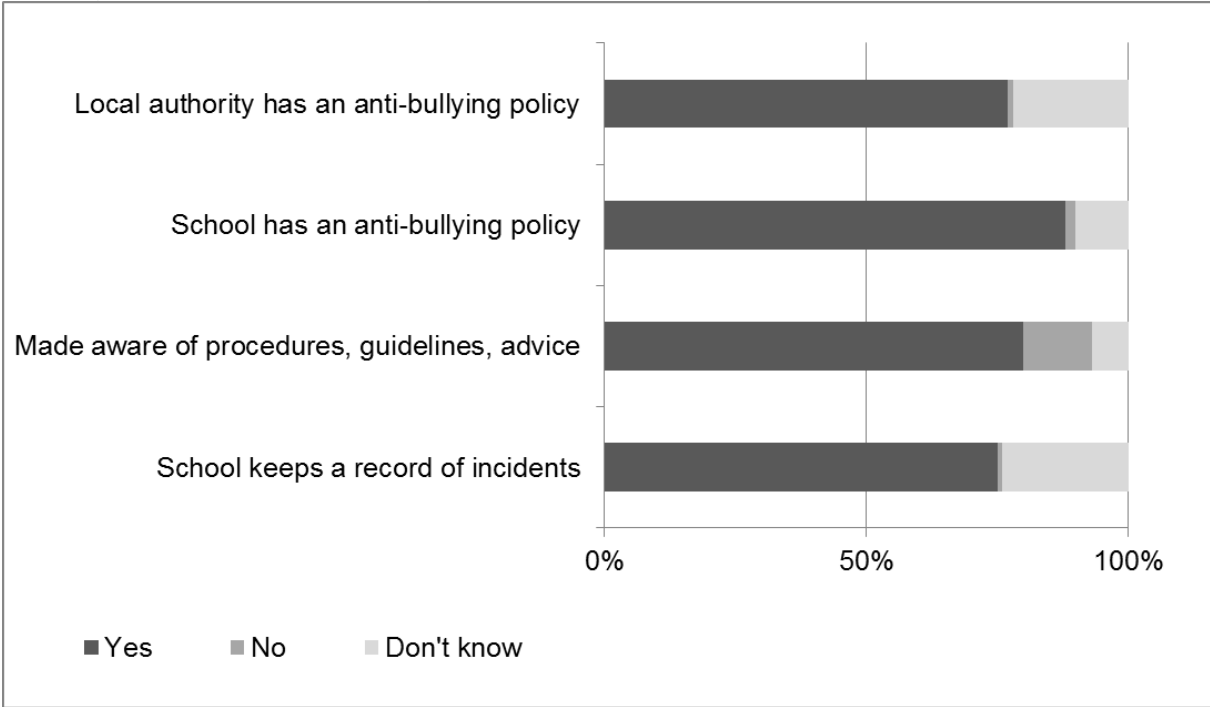


Note: Numbers who answered questions as follows: LA has an anti-bullying policy (225); school has an anti-bullying policy, 293; made aware of procedures, 291; school keeps a record of incidents, 292.

**Figure 7.3 Teacher knowledge of LA and school policy and procedure**

Over three in four teachers who responded to this question (77%) said that their LA had an anti-bullying policy, while most remaining respondents said they did not know whether their LA had such a policy (22%). Nearly nine in ten said their school has an anti-bullying policy (88%), while four in five said they had been made aware of procedures, guidelines or management advice on preventing and responding to bullying and harassment (80%). Three in four (75%) said their school kept a record of bullying incidents, while most remaining respondents said they did not know whether their school kept such a record (24%).

These findings suggest that some teachers are familiar with their own school policy or procedures but may not necessarily be aware of their connection with a wider LA policy. This need not pose a problem if the main issues are tackled clearly within the school policy and understood by staff. The concern lies with those who were not aware of either policy, and who were uncertain about recording procedures.

Respondents were also asked how they were made aware of these policies or of management advice. Provided with a selection of options, the most popular was a 'training input': of those supplying an answer here, 47% said they were made aware of the LA or school anti-bullying policy through training (n=271), and 58% said they were made aware of procedures, guidelines or management advice through training (n=245). This still represents a large number of respondents who had not received such training. Two in five had been made aware of policies or procedures via email (42%), and fewer still had been made aware by being given a print copy (39%) or provided with a copy via the school intranet (37%).

## 7.4 Prejudice-based bullying and harassment

Teachers were asked about the forms of prejudice considered within the main anti-bullying policy used by their school, and whether their school records the motivating prejudice of incidents. Responses varied considerably by characteristic.

**Table 7.1 Teacher awareness that each form of prejudice is tackled in the anti-bullying policy or recorded by the school**

|  | Policy tackles this area | School keeps record |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Asylum seekers or refugees | 30 | 25 |
| Disability | 60 | 40 |
| Pregnancy and maternity | 19 | 20 |
| Race or ethnicity | 64 | 48 |
| Religion and belief | 61 | 41 |
| Sex | 55 | 34 |
| Sexual orientation | 51 | 38 |
| Socio-economic group/social class | 40 | 28 |
| Transgender status | 27 | 18 |
| Travelling communities | 28 | 25 |

Note: Numbers responding to question about what protected characteristics were tackled by their school's anti-bullying policy, 271–276; numbers responding to question about whether school kept records, 274–283.

Teachers who responded to this question identified prejudice based on race or ethnicity, disability, and religion and belief as considered most frequently in the anti-bullying policy used by their school (60–64%). This aligns with the forms of prejudice that teachers were most likely to say their school records (40–48%). Still, less than half said that their school records whether incidents are based on prejudice about race or ethnicity.

Over half of respondents said their policy covers prejudice-based bullying regarding sex and sexual orientation (55%, 51%), and a smaller number said their school records these forms of prejudice (34%, 38%). The figures are even lower for the remaining characteristics. These findings follow a similar pattern to policy coverage of different forms of prejudice and procedures regarding recording incidents. Figure 7.4 illustrates only respondents who answered in the affirmative to these questions. The remaining respondents said 'don't know' much more frequently than 'no', meaning that there may be a considerable number of teachers who do not know the content of their school's policy and procedure. This is particularly true of practices in

recording prejudice-based incidents, which is concerning because teaching staff with whom pupils interact regularly should be aware of how incidents of prejudice should and will be dealt with.

## 7.5 Awareness raising and prevention work

When asked about their confidence to prevent bullying and harassment, 22% of respondents said they would be very confident, and 47% said they were confident (n=264). Their confidence to inform pupils of their rights concerning bullying and harassment was slightly higher, as 34% said they would feel very confident and 37% said they would feel confident in doing this.
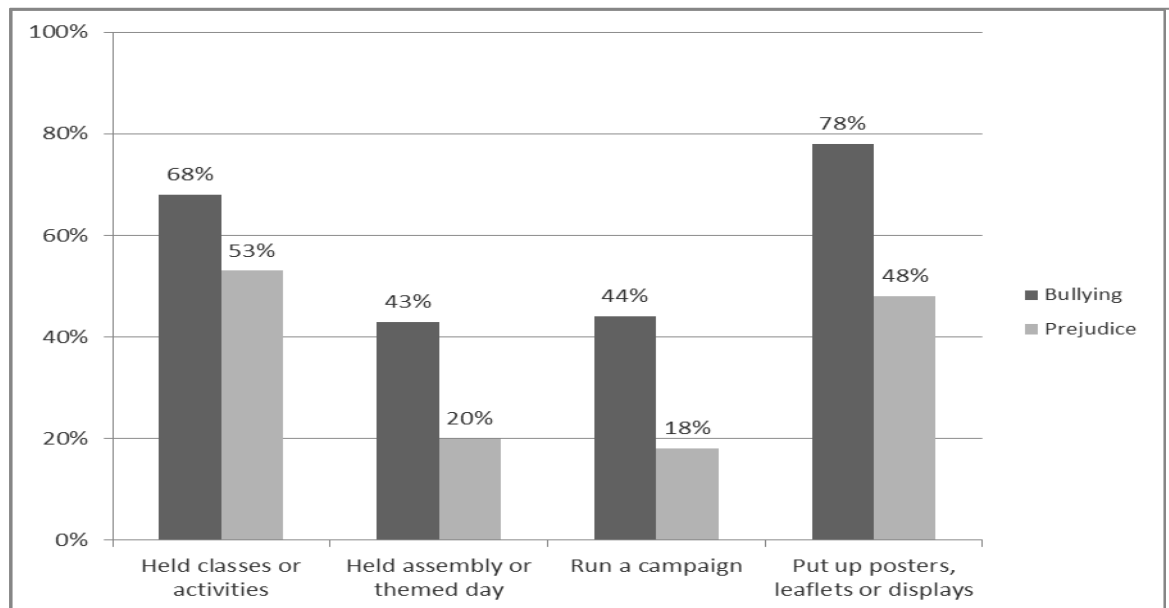


Note: numbers responding to question on awareness strategies about bullying, 273; about prejudice, 266.

**Figure 7.4 Teacher awareness that their school has implemented awareness-raising strategies in the past 12 months**

The numbers of teachers who said their school had employed anti-bullying prevention strategies in the past year were not particularly high. This response was more pronounced with regards to prejudice-specific strategies.

This reflects LA anti-bullying policies, as general anti-bullying awareness-raising strategies were recommended far more frequently than strategies specific to prejudice, equality or diversity. The action that teachers most commonly said their school had undertaken was putting up posters, leaflets or other displays about bullying (78%). Less than half said that displays about prejudice had been put up (48%).

### 7.6 Educating pupils about prejudice

A common recommendation within LA anti-bullying policies, in line with the advice of *A National Approach*, is that the whole school community, including pupils, parents and teachers, should be involved in developing and reviewing the approach to anti-bullying. Over half of teachers who answered this question said that pupils had been asked for their experiences of bullying in the last year (56%, n=277), 50% said that pupils had been involved in developing anti-bullying policies (n=275), and 42% said

the school had encouraged parents and carers to become involved in preventing bullying (n=270).

There was a large gap between the number of teachers who said they would be confident to tell pupils about different forms of prejudice and the numbers of those who had actually done so.

**Table 7.2 Teacher confidence to speak to pupils about different forms of prejudice compared with those having already done so**

| | Confident/very confident speaking to pupils about this form of prejudice | Has already spoken to pupils about this form of prejudice |
|---|---|---|
| Asylum seekers or refugees | 68 | 29 |
| Disability | 86 | 72 |
| Gender reassignment | 64 | 23 |
| Pregnancy and maternity | 72 | 27 |
| Race or ethnicity | 87 | 76 |
| Religion and belief | 87 | 71 |
| Sex | 83 | 48 |
| Sexual orientation | 79 | 63 |
| Socio-economic group/social class | 83 | 54 |
| Travelling communities (e.g. Gypsy/Traveller, Roma) | 69 | 36 |

Note: Numbers responding to question about the confidence to speak to pupils about disability, 281; race or ethnicity, 281; religion and belief, 282; sex, 278; sexual orientation, 278; socio-economic group/social class, 278. Remaining characteristics, 276–282.

Numbers responding to question about having already spoken to pupils about sex, 267; sexual orientation, 267; socio-economic group/social class, 267. Remaining characteristics, 267.

Following the emerging patterns, teachers claimed to have the most confidence in telling pupils about prejudice concerning race or ethnicity (87%), although slightly fewer said they had already done so (76%). There was also relatively high confidence concerning religion and belief (87%), disability (86%), sex (83%) and socio-economic group/social class (83%).

The numbers of teachers who had taught about prejudice regarding gender and socio-economic group/social class were surprisingly low (48%; 54%). Teachers were

slightly less likely to say they would be confident in telling pupils about sexual orientation (79%), but were actually more likely to say that they had already done this (63%) than for sex or socio-economic group/social class. The numbers of teachers who were both confident and who had taught about prejudice regarding the remaining characteristics dropped considerably (64–72%; 23–36%).

## 7.7 Confidence in responding to bullying and harassment

It emerged that teachers were more confident responding to prejudice-based bullying or harassment than preventing it. Four in five teachers who responded to this question said they would be confident or very confident responding to bullying or harassment at the time it was occurring (84%, n=262) or if it was reported to them (83%, n=263).
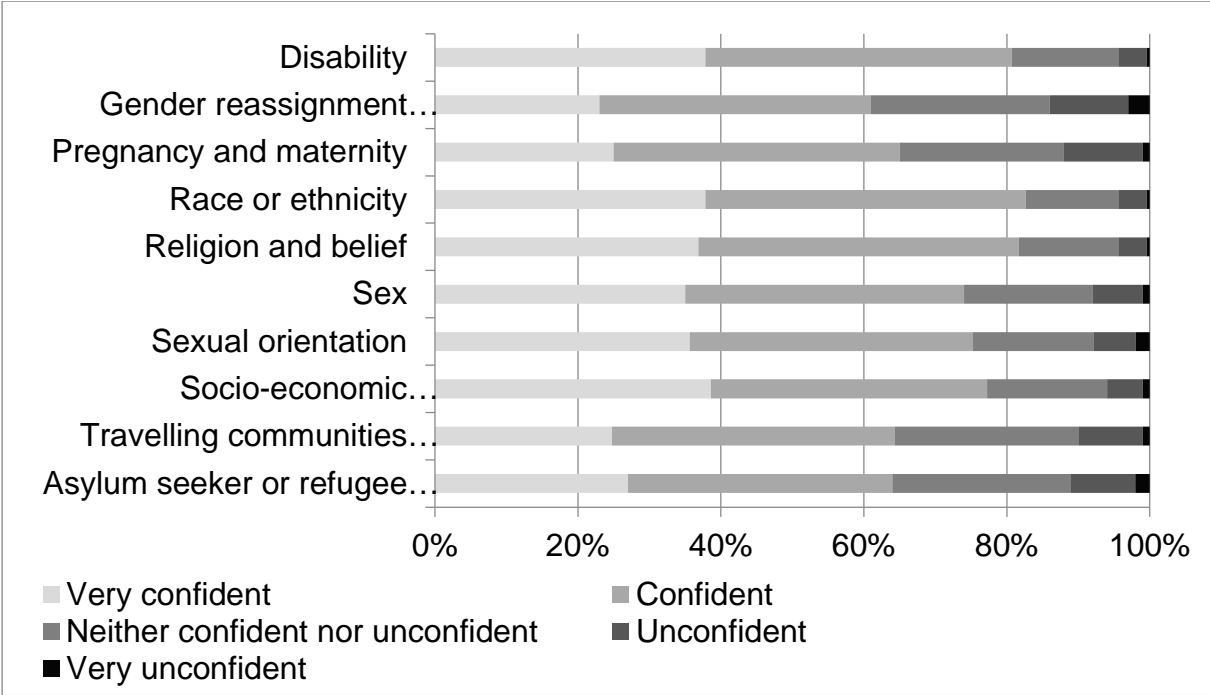


Note: numbers responding to questions about confidence concerning protected categories: Disability, race or ethnicity, religion and belief, 250–258; sex, 250; sexual orientation, 253. Remaining characteristics, 242–248.

**Figure 7.5 Teacher confidence in responding to prejudice-based bullying or harassment**

Just over four in five teachers were either confident or very confident to respond to bullying based on race or ethnicity (83%), religion and belief (82%) or disability (81%). A little more than three in four felt confident or very confident with regards to socio-economic group/social class (78%) or sexual orientation (76%), and just under three in four said the same regarding sex (74%). Once again, there was less confidence regarding the other forms of prejudice (61–65%).

## 7.8 Experience of responding to bullying and harassment

Almost three in four (74%, n=264) teachers who answered this question said they had dealt with an incident of bullying or harassment involving pupils in their school, and 60% of these said that they had dealt with an incident involving prejudice.

Respondents were asked about their response to the most recent incident of bullying that they had dealt with. Most teachers said that they were either confident (44%) or very confident (46%) in dealing with the incident of prejudice-based bullying or

harassment in question, while 9% were neither confident nor unconfident, and 2% were unconfident (n=153).
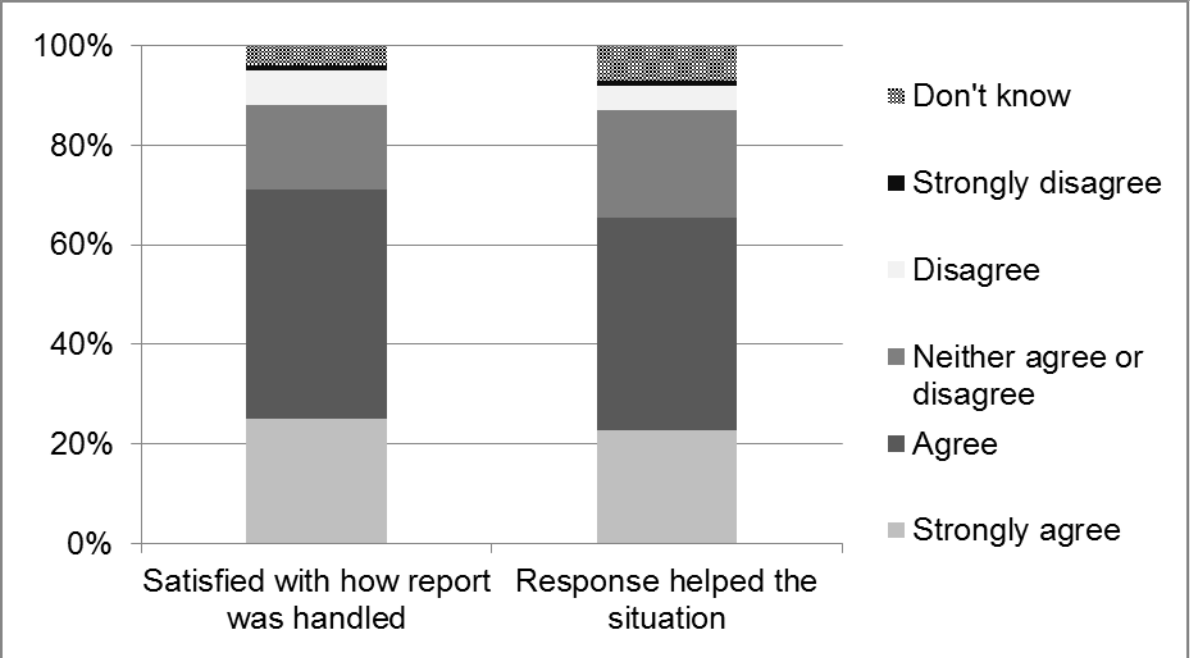


Note: numbers answering whether they were satisfied with how their report was handled, 150; whether the response helped the situation, 147.

**Figure 7.6 Teacher satisfaction with how an incident of bullying that they dealt with was handled and the success of the outcome**

Compared with their confidence in dealing with bullying, the numbers of teachers who agreed they were satisfied with how their report was handled were somewhat lower. Overall, 71% agreed or agreed strongly that they were satisfied with how their report was handled, while 66% either agreed or strongly agreed that the response to their report helped the situation. This is far from being an ideal picture, although this awareness among teachers that there was room for improvement in how bullying is dealt with might be seen as a positive finding.

## 7.9 Conclusion

Overall, a theme that emerges from the teacher responses is that different forms of prejudice are by no means met with equal amounts of understanding, confidence or attention. The findings show continually that teachers are most confident with and likely to tackle race or ethnicity, religion and belief, and disability with pupils. Teachers have more knowledge of school policy and procedures than of LA policies, and less knowledge or confidence regarding the national legal and policy context, with the exception of *Curriculum for Excellence* and *GIRFEC*. There appears to be a link between the attention given to each characteristic within LA policies and teachers' understanding and confidence in schools. These findings suggest that LAs should consider all forms of prejudice-based bullying comprehensively in their policies, and that they should also ensure they translate to school procedures.

# 8. Pupil survey

This chapter outlines the survey findings from 1,281 secondary school pupils across 31 LAs. These findings illustrate pupils' knowledge of school procedures and preventative work on prejudice-based bullying, including the education they have received about different forms of prejudice; their own experiences of bullying and prejudice-based bullying; their awareness of the experiences of other pupils, and their confidence in and satisfaction with school responses to bullying. The abbreviation 'n=' that appears alongside the data indicates the size of the sample from which the findings are drawn. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Pupils were asked to identify their current year of study in secondary school. The years S1–S3 had greater representation than S4–S6, with the following representations: 20% in S1; 18% in S2; 30% in S3; 9% in S4; 18% in S5, and 6% in S6 (n=1,281).

## 8.1 Pupil experiences

When asked whether they felt that pupils in their school were included based on each of the researched characteristics, responses varied.
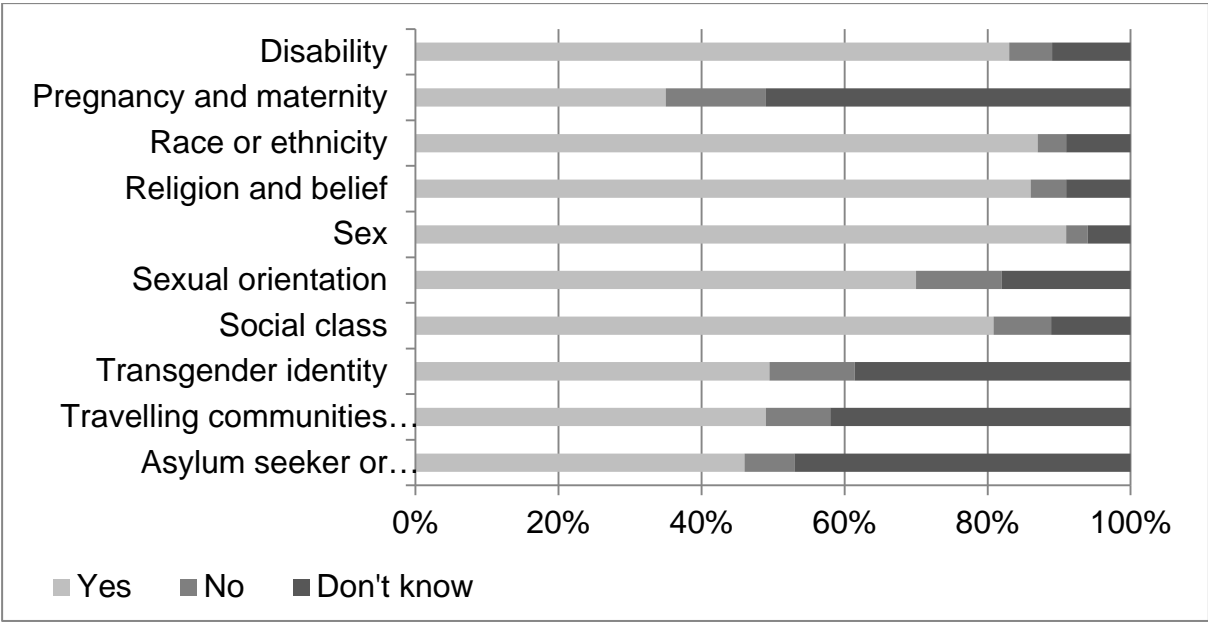


**Figure 8.1 Pupil views on whether pupils with different characteristics are included in their school**

Around nine in ten respondents felt that pupils were included regardless of their sex (91%) or their race or ethnicity (87%). Well over four in five pupils felt that pupils were included irrespective of religion and belief (86%), disability (83%) or social class (81%).

Pupils were less likely to think that pupils were included regardless of sexual orientation (70%). This figure dropped again for the remaining characteristics, with 50% saying that pupils were included if they were transgender. Less than half said the same for Gypsies/Travellers, asylum seekers or refugees, and only one-third said that pupils were included if they were pregnant or had a young baby. The range of

responses to this question largely follows the pattern in the teacher surveys and LA policies of coverage and awareness of the different characteristics.

## 8.2 Prevalence of bullying and prejudice-based bullying

Pupils were also asked about their direct experience and awareness of others' experiences of bullying. Nearly two in five pupils who answered this question said they had been bullied in their school (39%, n=1,220). The numbers who said they were aware of other pupils experiencing bullying was higher, at 57% (n=1,204). More than half of pupils (55%, n=470) who had experienced bullying said they had reported this to their school, while almost one in four (24%, n=682) of those who were aware of someone else experiencing bullying had reported this.

Pupils were also asked specifically about bullying based on prejudice. Almost one in four pupils said they were aware of pupils in their school experiencing bullying because of prejudice (24%, n=683).
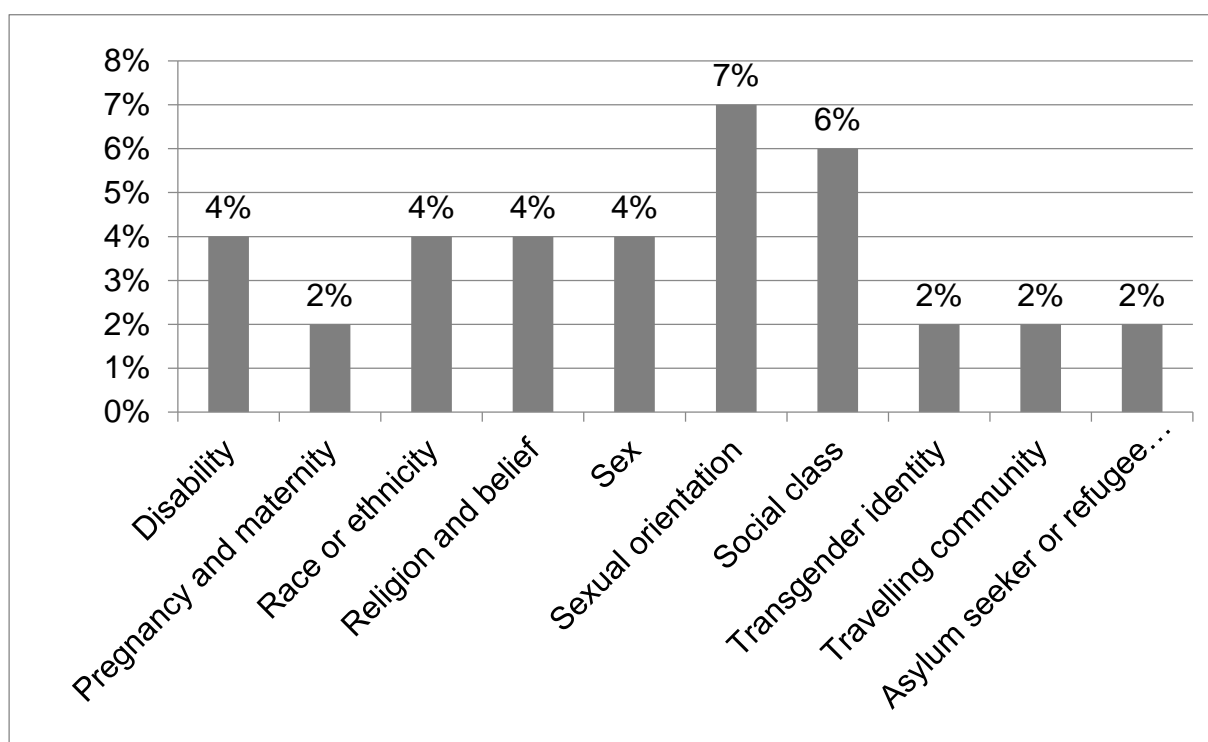


Note: Numbers responding to the question whether they had been bullied in school, 1,220: whether they were aware of others experiencing bullying, 1,204; whether they had reported being bullied, 470; whether they had reported somebody else being bullied, 682.

**Figure 8.2 Pupil experience of different forms of prejudice-based bullying**

While the number of pupils who stated that they had experienced each form of prejudice-based bullying is relatively low, it is important to remember that far more respondents will fall into some of these categories than others. Taking the 7% of pupils who have experienced bullying based on sexual orientation as an example, this represents 88 young people, who constitute almost one-fifth of the number of respondents who said that they had experienced any form of bullying. It is also not clear how well represented each of these categories was within the sample. While prejudice can be based on the perception of the person who holds the prejudice, or one's association with someone else, research shows that those who identify with a particular characteristic are more often the target of prejudice related to that identity.

## 8.3 The impacts of bullying

The most important issue to consider is the impact of bullying on those who experience it. Pupils were asked to rate their agreement with a series of general statements on their experience in school, most of which align with the SHANARRI indicators. The most striking finding that emerged from this was the difference in response between those who said they had ever been bullied in school and those who said they had not.

**Table 8.1 Percentage of pupils who agree/strongly agree that well-being indicators are met for them in their school**

| Feel … | Those who have been bullied | Those who have not been bullied |
|---|---|---|
| Safe | 69 | 89 |
| Encouraged to be healthy | 60 | 61 |
| A sense of achievement | 56 | 71 |
| Supported | 57 | 77 |
| Respected | 50 | 71 |
| Included | 54 | 79 |
| Happy | 55 | 74 |

Of those who responded to this question, pupils who had been bullied were less likely to agree or strongly agree that they felt safe, were encouraged to be healthy, had a sense of achievement, and were supported, respected, included or happy in school. While 89% of those who had not experienced bullying said they either agree or strongly agree that they feel safe in school, just 69% of those who had been bullied said the same. This was the statement that was met with strongest agreement by both groups. Of those who had experienced bullying, just half of the pupils agreed that they felt respected in school compared to slightly less than three-quarters of those who had not been bullied.

## 8.4 Knowledge of school anti-bullying policy, procedure and prevention initiatives

Pupils were asked a number of questions regarding the policy and procedures surrounding anti-bullying policies and prejudice-based bullying in their school, to gather an understanding of pupils' knowledge of their school system.
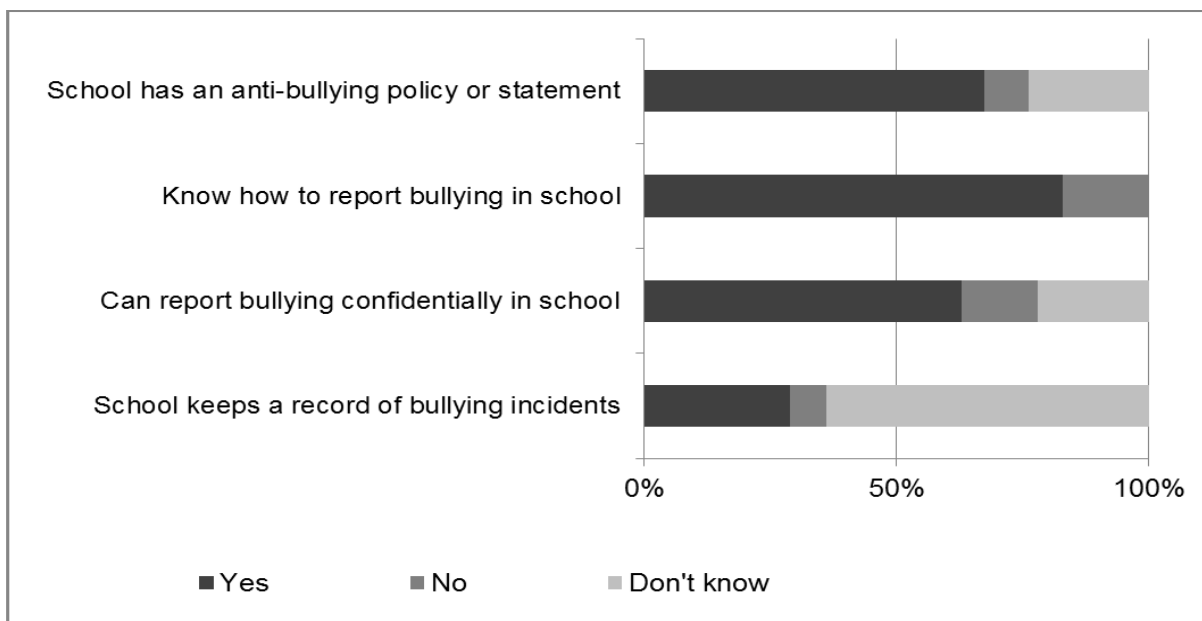
Note: Those responding to the question whether they were aware of an anti-bullying policy or statement in their school, 1,266; whether they were aware of how to report bullying in school, 1,213; whether they could report bullying confidentially, 1,216; whether their school kept a record of incidents of bullying, 1,273.

**Figure 8.3 Pupil awareness of school anti-bullying policy and procedure**

Just over two-thirds of the pupils who responded to this question said that their school had an anti-bullying policy or a clear statement of how they dealt with bullying; 68% of respondents said the policy or statement had been explained to them, while 42% said they had read it themselves (n=784) (these answers were not mutually exclusive).

Most pupils were aware of how to report bullying in school (87%), but just 63% said they could report bullying confidentially. In the pupil focus groups, pupils commonly raised the issue of confidentiality as an area for improvement in reporting processes. It is therefore concerning that less than two-thirds of pupils know that they can report confidentially.

Less than one-third said their school keeps a record of incidents of bullying (29%). This compares to almost three-quarters of teachers who said the same. One of the LA leads aptly suggested that recording incidents of bullying should in part serve the purpose of assuring pupils that their report is being taken seriously. It is therefore disappointing that so few pupils are aware of whether this takes place or not.

## 8.5 Prevention initiatives

Pupils were asked the same question as teachers regarding prevention strategies that had been implemented in their school. Pupils were less likely than teachers to say that any of these had taken place in their school in the last 12 months, with the exception of an assembly or themed day on bullying.
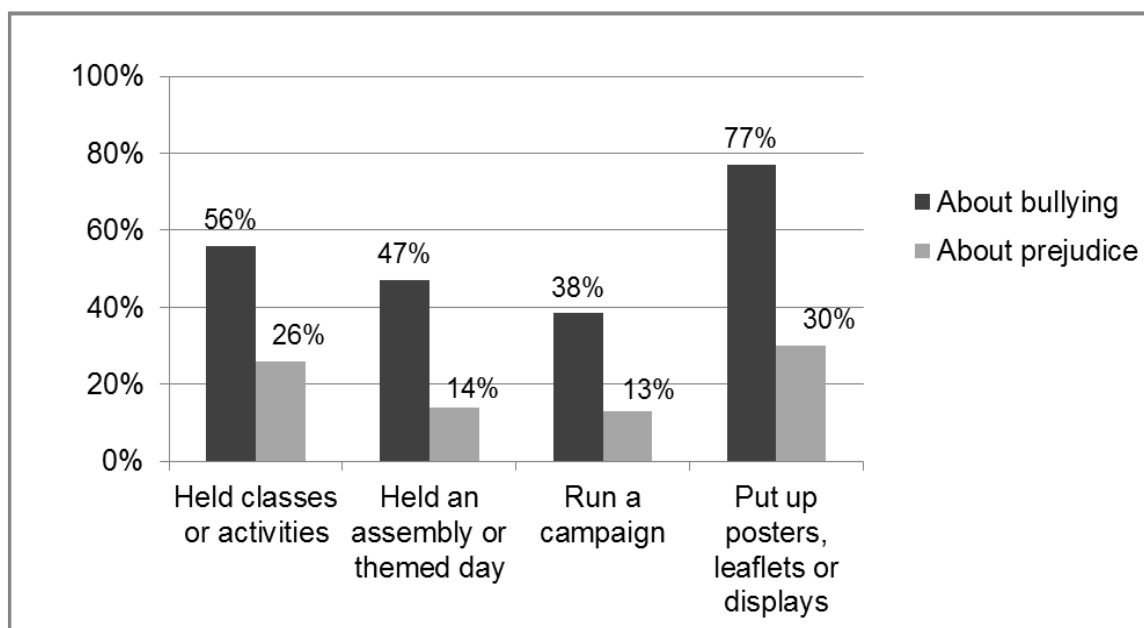
Note: Numbers of responses to question about pupil awareness of classes or activities about prejudice, 1,221; of posters, leaflets or displays about bullying, 1,224; of posters, leaflets or displays about prejudice, 1,218; of an assembly or themed day on prejudice, 1,218; of campaigns about prejudice, 1,200.

**Figure 8.4 Pupil awareness that their school has implemented awareness-raising strategies in the last 12 months**

In accordance with the teacher responses, pupils who answered this question were considerably less likely to say that awareness raising about prejudice had taken place than about bullying in general, and most of them said that their school had put up posters, leaflets or other displays about bullying (77%). Less than one in three said the same regarding displays about prejudice (30%), and just over one in four said that classes or activities about prejudice had been held (26%). Respondents were least likely to say that their school had held an assembly or themed day on prejudice in the past 12 months (14%), or run a campaign about prejudice (13%).

The percentage of pupils who were aware of methods for involving pupils and parents in the process of developing anti-bullying approaches was also lower than for teachers. Less than one in three pupils said that their school had asked them for their experiences of bullying in the past 12 months (31%, n=1,235), two in five (40%, n=1,226) said that pupils had been involved in the development of anti-bullying policies, and 29% said that parents and carers had been encouraged to become involved in preventing bullying (n=1,222).

## 8.6 Education on prejudice and inequality

About three in four pupils who responded to the question about education on prejudice and inequality (76%) said they had been taught in school about inequality, and around half (51%) said they had been taught about prejudice. When this was broken down by different characteristics, there was considerable variation in responses.
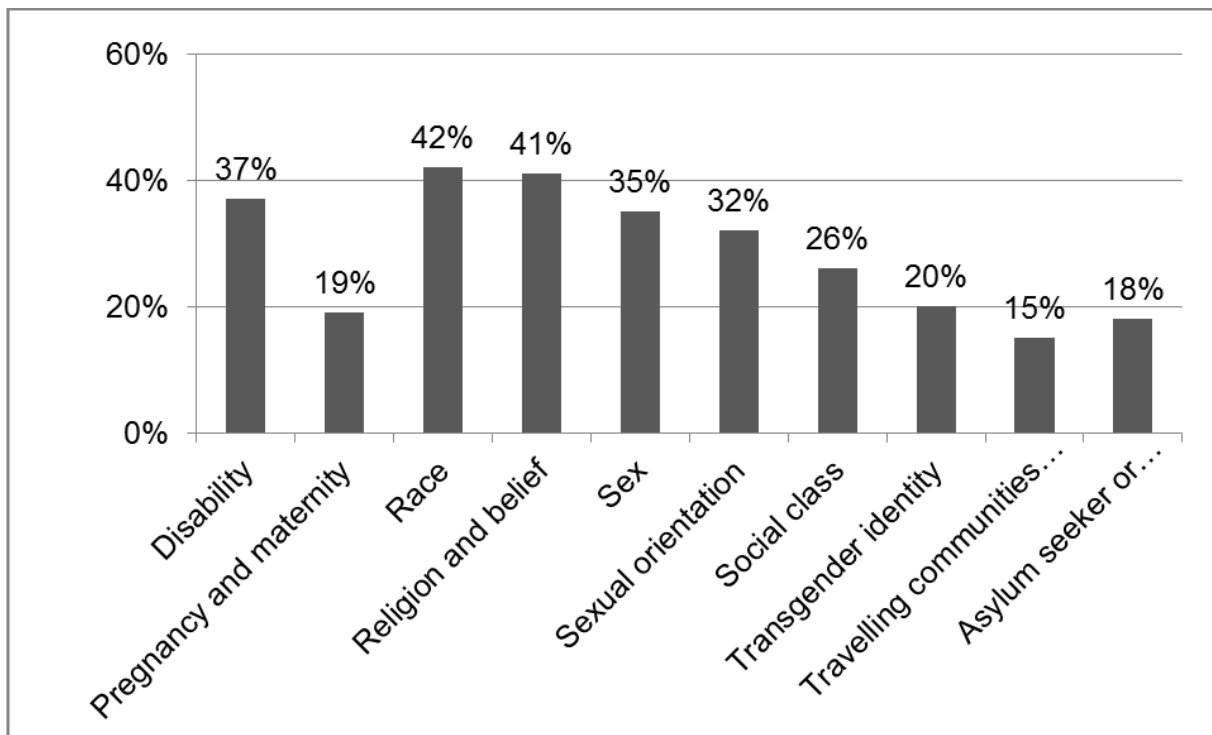
Note: Numbers responding to the question whether they had been taught about inequality, 1,239; whether they had been taught about prejudice, 1,225.

**Figure 8.5 Percentage of pupils who have been taught about prejudice and inequality based on each characteristic**

Of those responding to the question, pupils were most likely to say they had been taught about prejudice concerning race or ethnicity, and religion and belief (42%; 41%). Disability and sex were also among the characteristics about which pupils said they had been taught most frequently regarding prejudice (37%; 35%). Nearly one in three had been taught about prejudice regarding sexual orientation (32%), while just over one in four said the same of socio-economic group/social class (26%). Only a minority said they had been taught about prejudice regarding any of the other characteristics (15–20%).

All these figures are worryingly low, and the percentages here are lower than the percentages of teachers who said they had taught about different forms of prejudice. Aside from this, these findings align largely with the patterns in teacher responses. The exception is that teachers were least likely to have taught about prejudice regarding gender reassignment (transgender identity), whereas pupils said that they had least often been taught about prejudice towards travelling communities.

## 8.7 Confidence in school's response to bullying

Pupils were just slightly more willing to report prejudice-based bullying than bullying in general. Overall, of those who responded to this question, marginally more pupils said they would be willing (38%) or very willing (25%) to report prejudice-based bullying than those willing (37%) or very willing (22%) to report general bullying. Among those who had already reported bullying, the opposite relationship was found. Respondents who had reported bullying that was not related to prejudice were more likely to say they would report it again (59%, n=213) than those who had reported bullying that was based on prejudice (55%, n=107).

57
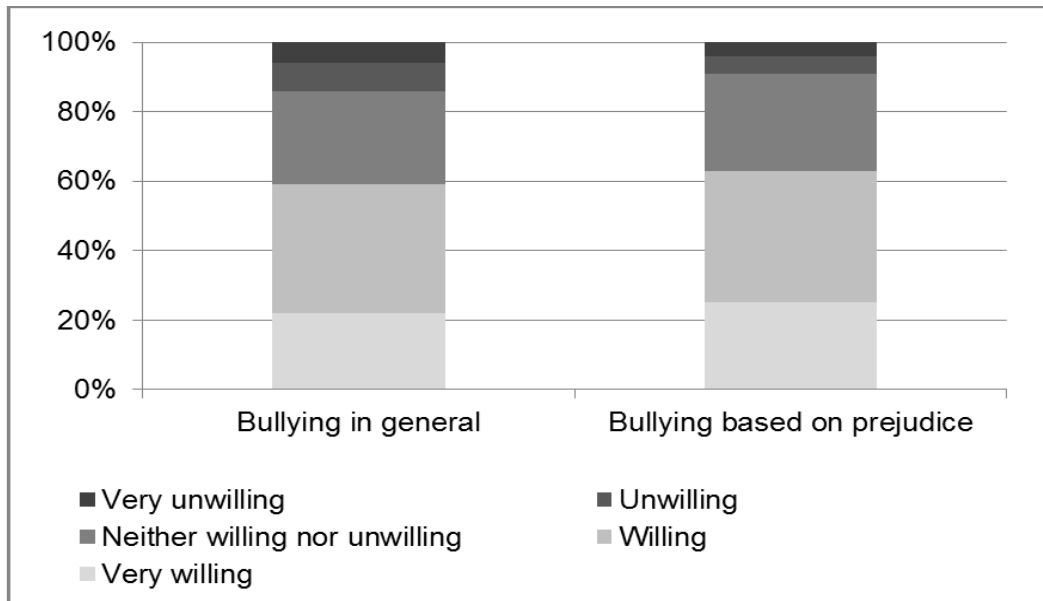
Note: numbers responding to question on whether they would report general bullying, 1,208; on whether they would report prejudice-based bullying, 1,181.

**Figure 8.6 Pupil willingness to report general and prejudice-based bullying**

There was, however, very little difference at all between those who had reported prejudice-based and general bullying with regards to their view of how well their report was handled by the school.
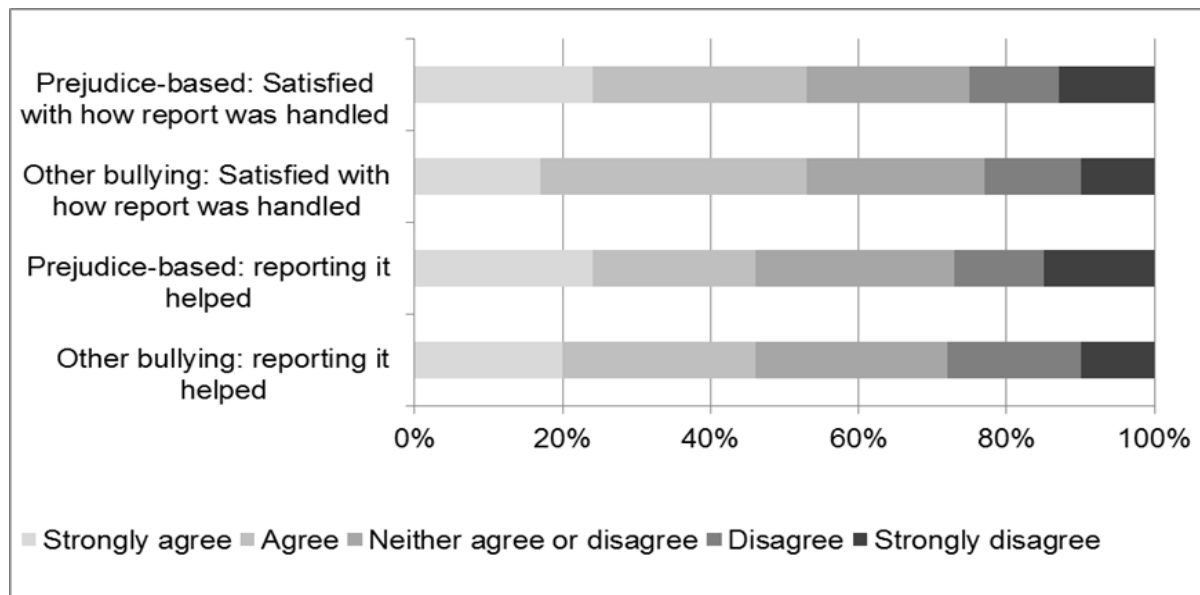


Note: numbers responding to question on whether they were satisfied with response to report of prejudice-based bullying, 134; on whether they were satisfied with response to report of general bullying, 276; on whether reporting had helped the prejudice-based bullying situation, 126; on whether reporting had helped the general bullying situation, 270.

**Figure 8.7 Pupil views on the response to and outcome of their reports of prejudice-based and general bullying**

While 53% of those who had reported either general bullying or prejudice-based bullying were satisfied with the way their report was handled, only 46% felt that it had

helped the general bullying or prejudice-based bullying situation. Pupils who had reported prejudice-based bullying were slightly less likely to say that their report was taken seriously by the school (47%, n=103) than those who had reported other forms of bullying (51%, n=170). These findings are concerning, as pupils need to feel that they will be taken seriously and that reporting bullying can improve matters for those experiencing it if systems of reporting are to be effective.

## 8.8 Conclusion

The findings from the pupil survey in many ways mirror the trends of the teacher survey regarding the characteristics that pupils feel are most likely to be included in their school's approach to bullying, and that they have been taught about concerning equalities and prejudice. The findings also show a disparity between the different characteristics and forms that prejudice takes. Of those who had been bullied, a large number said that this was related to prejudice. This might include any of the forms of prejudice covered in the survey, although sexual orientation and social class were the most common bases of prejudice. The impacts on those experiencing bullying are apparent from the finding that those who had been bullied were considerably less likely to feel safe, healthy, achieving, supported, respected, included and happy in their school than those who had not.

# 9. Pupil focus groups

This chapter presents the findings from 12 focus groups that took place with pupils across six LAs, complementing the findings in the pupil survey regarding reporting and understandings of prejudice-based bullying. Focus groups took place with pupil groups ranging from S1 to S6. The year group that made specific comments is noted in brackets throughout.

## 9.1 Awareness and confidence regarding reporting systems

Pupils were asked how they or their peers could report bullying in their school. The most common initial response among the groups was that they could tell pastoral care or guidance teachers, followed by telling any teacher or person in authority. Four groups said that they could tell parents. Five groups suggested that they could tell friends, either as a means of support or so that they could report on behalf of an individual. Several groups suggested that younger pupils could tell a senior pupil, such as a 'buddy' or a prefect, who might then deal with it themselves or speak to guidance if the incident was serious (S1; S4–6; S5/6). A peer mediation group was mentioned in one group, who they said could be contacted by leaving a note with their name and problem in a box (S5/6). In one school, pupils mentioned paper and web-based reporting forms, which could be left anonymous (S1).

In several schools the researchers learned of potential reporting processes that were not raised by the pupils. In one school the researchers saw a form of 'worry box' prior to the focus group. This was not brought up by the pupils until they were prompted, at which point they said they did not think that anybody used it (S3). In three other schools the researchers were informed by teachers that such a box existed but that it was not used. The pupils in these schools (S1; S3; S3) actually suggested that a 'worry' or 'bully' box should exist, but were not aware that it was already in place. In one school the researchers were shown an anti-bullying room where senior pupils volunteer to offer peer support to pupils who come to the room during breaks. This system was not mentioned by the pupils (S3).

This suggests that there is perhaps a lack of connection in some cases between what is available in schools and what pupils are aware of or prepared to use.

## 9.2 Challenges in reporting bullying

In several groups it was suggested that pupils would be unlikely to report bullying at all (S2; S3; S3; S5/6): 'Most people don't do anything about it' (S2). The most common explanation for why people might not report bullying was feeling threatened, blackmailed, or scared of retaliation. Half of the groups suggested that people might be too shy, nervous or embarrassed to report bullying. Pupils in several groups said that reporting bullying may make things worse or may not resolve the situation. Three groups suggested that the school might not take any action if bullying was reported (S3; S3; S5/6). Other difficulties raised were that pupils might not think the bullying is serious enough to report (S3; S3), or they might not want to be perceived as a 'grass' (S1; S3).

> People don't suffer enough consequences for bullying –
> they feel like they can get away with it (S5/6).

## 9.3 Facilitating the reporting of bullying

A number of positive points were also raised with regards to what currently helps pupils to report bullying. Several pupils felt that pastoral and guidance teachers make it easy to report: 'The guidance teacher always asks if things are okay and to tell them if you have any problems, she's really nice' (S1); 'Guidance teachers are quite well known so they're easy to talk to' (S4–6). In one school, the pupils pointed to the availability of guidance staff and other teachers. 'You don't need to make an appointment' (S1); 'Teachers stay after school' (S1).

In one school there was a system of reporting on the school website, which was highlighted as positive: 'It's just between you and the guidance teacher and nobody else knows' (S1). In another area, a pupil remembered that they had been told about a way of reporting online, which they felt would make it easier to report (S2). The teacher explained that this was through the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP).

## 9.4 Willingness to report bullying

After an introduction to the relevant protected characteristics, the groups were split into smaller groups of three, four or five pupils. Each sub-group was given: a piece of flipchart paper with a scale from willing to unwilling; labels with the names of each of the seven school-specific protected characteristics (that is, not including social class), and a set of definitions of the terms.

The pupils were asked to decide in their groups where to place each label on the scale as an indication of their willingness to report bullying witnessed based on each characteristic. The focus was placed on bullying experienced by others to reduce the discomfort and risk to pupils that may arise in discussing personal experiences. The researchers visited each group and prompted further discussion and note-taking on the reasoning behind their decisions, which were then discussed and debated in the wider group.

Responses varied between sub-groups, indicating that there was not necessarily a shared understanding within each school. As shown in Figure 9.1, pupils were much more likely to decide that they would be willing to report bullying based on some characteristics than others. The data from 1 of the 25 groups have not been included because it emerged that they had placed the labels at random.
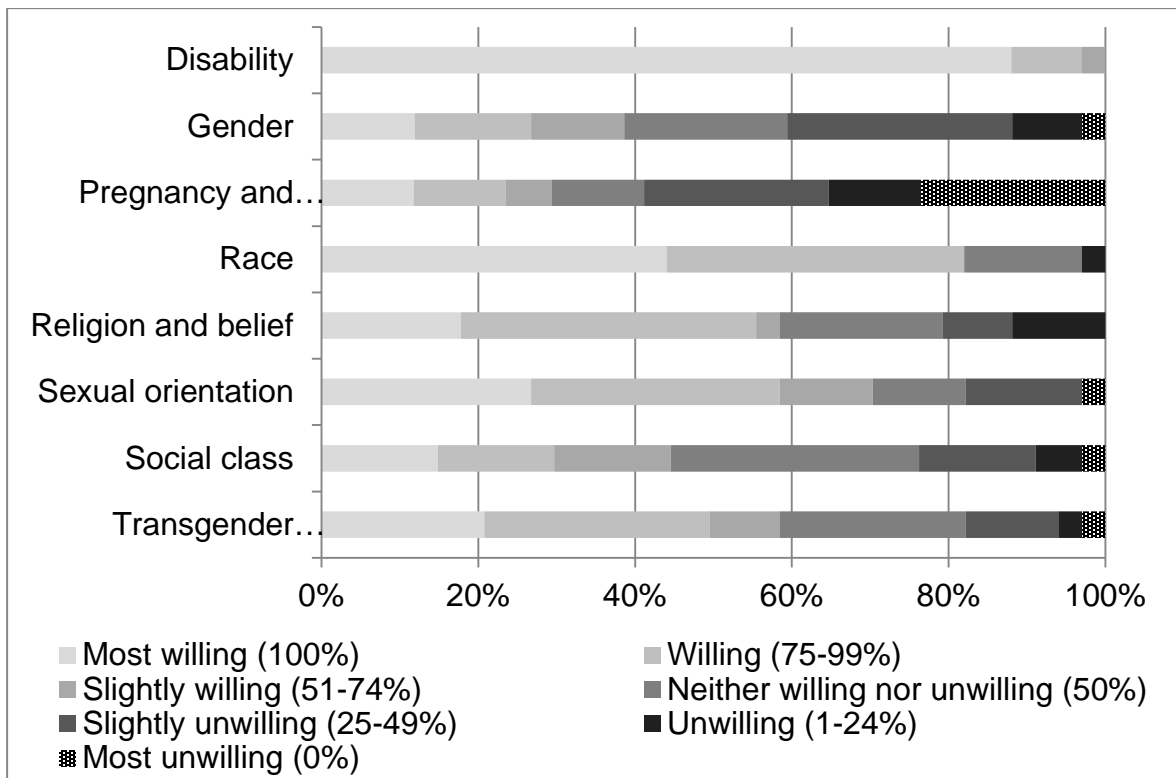
**Figure 9.1 Willingness among pupil sub-groups to report different forms of prejudice-based bullying experienced by others**

Most of the sub-groups decided they would be 'most willing' to report bullying based on disability (88%), while the remaining groups were either 'willing' (9%) or 'slightly willing' (3%). There was a less clear consensus about the other forms of prejudice, although groups were also largely willing to report bullying based on race, with 44% at the 'most willing' point, and 38% being 'willing'. Most of the sub-groups also placed their labels somewhere on the 'willing' side of the scale for sexual orientation (71%), and transgender identity (59%) and religion and belief (59%). There was a greater variation in response for the remaining characteristics. Less than half of the groups decided they would be on the willing side of the scale for social class (44%) or gender (38%). Bullying based on pregnancy and maternity was the only form for which more than half of the groups indicated they would be on the unwilling side of the centre, with 59%, compared to just 29% who were on the willing side of the centre.

The reasoning behind these decisions tended to hinge on value judgements and familiarity. Points that frequently arose were whether the person 'deserved' to be bullied, whether it was a 'choice' to hold a particular identity or characteristic, whether they had friends or family to whom these forms of prejudice might relate, and simply whether they believed that form of bullying to be common. Other groups raised the issue of the 'seriousness' of different forms of bullying. In one case the pupils perceived that their peers would be more likely to experience physical abuse if the bullying was based on transgender identity, race, disability, or sexual orientation, and as a result the group was more willing to report those forms of bullying. Pupils frequently believed that their response would be dependent on the situation, with a focus on the behaviour of the person being bullied.

*Reporting bullying based on disability*

Bullying based on disability was the form that pupils were invariably the most willing to report, frequently stating that it was not a choice or the 'fault' of the individual.

> It's not like they chose to be disabled so they shouldn't
> get judged for it (S2).

Pupils' comments commonly conveyed the view that disabled people were in some respect helpless and needed the protection of other pupils:

> They might not be able to stick up for themselves (S1).

Bullying based on disability was perceived by the pupils as being among the most 'serious' forms of bullying. In some cases pupils drew attention to the impact on the person experiencing it.

> If you were in their position you would feel terrible! (S1).

One pupil pointed out that a disabled person may not realise that they were being bullied and that, because of this, they would be more likely to report the bullying on their behalf (S4–6). One sub-group explained that they had recently been taught about the bullying of disabled people and that it was an immediate and easy decision for them to place disability at the 'most willing' side of the scale (S5/S6).

*Reporting bullying based on race*

In most cases, bullying based on race was also among the forms of bullying that pupils said they would be most willing to report, frequently expressing the perception that other forms of bullying were 'less serious'. One reason given for this was the knowledge that discrimination based on race was 'against the law' (S1). Despite the preceding discussion of the Equality Act 2010, the understanding had remained in one group that other characteristics were not legally protected (S1).

The pupils again emphasised that the lack of choice on the part of the person experiencing the bullying would make them more willing to report: 'No one chooses what race they are' (S2). Some pupils also explained that they had a greater awareness of this form of bullying, either because it occurred frequently, or because they had been educated about it:

> I have seen people being bullied because of this and this
> makes me more aware (S1).

> [Bullying based on race is] well known and discussed
> often by older people (S4–6).

In one LA, some prejudicial attitudes about race emerged in both of the focus groups. Statements were made that implied that 'race' was only a category that applies to the minority, that white British people are less likely to be 'allowed' to express their views of other races than vice versa, and that minority groups use language about themselves that is deemed unacceptable when used by the majority. In one case it was suggested that racist incidents were so common that pupils would not report them all and that 'minor' incidents such as the use of racist language would not be worth reporting. These groups were 'less willing' to report bullying based on race than the groups in other LAs.

*Reporting bullying based on religion and belief*

Greater indecision and variation in responses emerged regarding religion and belief. Some sub-groups were very willing to report bullying based on religion and belief. These groups tended to focus on the upbringing of the individual with religious beliefs and did not define this as a personal choice. Conversely, other sub-groups perceived that religion was a choice and were therefore less willing to report it: 'You can change your religion' (S2). One group suggested that because religion is a choice, 'you should be able to stand up for yourself' (S3).

In some cases, pupils who were willing to report this form of bullying mentioned the impact that it could have in the wider social context. Others regarded sensitivities about religious beliefs as a reason why they would be less willing to report this form of bullying.

> [Religious conflict] can cause a lot of war (S3).

> Don't want to accidentally say something offensive when you're just trying to help. Have to be careful in the way you approach it and what you choose to say (S4–6).

*Reporting bullying based on sexual orientation*

The sub-groups were more often willing to report bullying based on sexual orientation than on religion and belief. Pupils frequently stated that sexual orientation was not a choice.

> You cannot help who you fall for or have feelings for. (S3)

On the other hand, some sub-groups believed the opposite, that it was 'their decision' (S3). While this view formed part of a negative judgement among some sub-groups, in others it was cited as a reason why they would be willing to report the bullying.

In one instance where pupils were less willing to report it, the sub-group felt that while sexual orientation itself may not be a choice, 'people can choose to let people know' (S5/6). Another group also suggested that pupils could avoid being bullied based on sexual orientation, and that this was a reason why this form of bullying was uncommon: 'people hardly come out so they don't get bullied' (S3).

One sub-group, who were very willing to report bullying based on sexual orientation, explained that they had been taught about this in Modern Studies and noted that 'people say offensive words in the wrong context (e.g. gay)' (S1). Concerns were expressed in a number of groups that reporting this form of bullying could effectively 'out' the person experiencing it. 'You don't want to tell people if you're the only person that knows' (S1). This reveals a degree of sensitivity about the issues involved in homophobic or biphobic bullying and indicates respect for the consent of those involved. This also hinges, however, on the belief that someone must identify with the particular identity for which they are being harassed.

*Reporting bullying based on transgender identity*

Most sub-groups were fairly willing to report bullying based on transgender identity, albeit less so than bullying based on the aforementioned characteristics. Pupils frequently expressed the view that people should not be bullied for this because 'you can be whoever you want' (S1). Comments tended to focus on transsexual people, and these comments were generally positive and understanding.

> They should not be bullied for wanting to feel comfortable
> in their own body and be who they are (S3).

It is unclear whether pupils have gained this awareness through education or via other sources, but this indicates a positive development towards a rejection of transphobia. As with sexual orientation, concerns were expressed over 'outing' someone who identifies as transgender. It was suggested that the person experiencing the bullying may not want it to be reported if they are not 'out', because it may make things worse for them (S3). Some groups suggested that transphobic bullying might be a difficult subject to raise with teachers because it is not spoken about as often in school (S3, S4–6). One group suggested that if they had more of a chance to discuss the issues involved before bullying actually took place, it would then be easier to tell someone if the situation arose (S3).

The most common reason given for being less willing to report this form of bullying was that the pupils did not 'know anyone like that' (S3) or that it did not take place in their school. One group questioned whether it was likely that this form of bullying would be relevant to schools, as they assumed you would have to be older before you could undergo this kind of 'major surgery' (S4–6). This highlights a gap in knowledge regarding transgender identity beyond a purely medical understanding, and is a further indication of the focus in the pupils' discussions on the identity of the bullied individual rather than the perceptions of others.

*Reporting bullying based on gender*

Bullying based on gender, along with socio-economic status, was among the forms of bullying about which there was the greatest uncertainty and ambivalence. A number of pupils asked the researchers or each other how someone could be bullied based on gender:

> You're either a boy or girl and that's about it. There is
> nothing to be bullied about being a boy or a girl (S3).

This indicates that there is perhaps a need for the concept of gender stereotypes and gender-based harassment or violence to be tackled further in school education. A member of staff in one school told us that the school had organised an external programme of awareness raising on the topic of gender stereotypes and gender-based violence, but that this took place in the third year as it was felt that younger pupils were unlikely to understand the concepts.

Other groups suggested that bullying based on gender was not as serious or important as other forms of bullying, and that they would be less willing to report it as a result:

> I'd rather report racism because it would be worse for
> someone experiencing that (S3).

Some sub-groups or individual pupils did regard bullying based on gender as serious and were 'very willing' to report it. This was usually the case in groups where all the members were girls. One sub-group of girls placed gender at the 'most willing' point on the scale, and commented that: 'I would hate for someone to think they are better because they are a boy' (S3). Others commented that people cannot help what gender they are, or that 'girls and boys should be equal and be allowed to do whatever job/sport they want' (S2). The boys and girls in one sub-group disagreed over whether they would be willing to report bullying based on gender, with the girls being more willing to do so (S3). The girls from this sub-group approached the

researchers at the end of the session to say that sexism is not talked about enough in their school and that they thought that it also affects boys, who feel the need to act 'macho' (S3).

*Reporting bullying based on pregnancy and maternity*

Most of the sub-groups were less willing to report bullying based on pregnancy and maternity than on any of the other characteristics. Pupils' discussions were based on whether being pregnant or having a child was a choice. Pupils frequently expressed the view that it was someone's 'fault' if they were pregnant.

In a number of groups, debate was had over whether it could be regarded as someone's fault if they were bullied for being pregnant. In several cases, these discussions concerned the possibility that the girl might have been raped (S1; S3; S4–6; S5/6). Generally it was felt that it would be more serious and less acceptable for someone to be bullied in the circumstance that they had been raped. One pupil said that the circumstances should not matter, because the important issue is that somebody is being bullied (S4–6).

One group suggested that 'people expect' this form of bullying but that 'it doesn't last long' and therefore is not particularly serious (S4–6). There were also discussions within this group about the age of the individual and feeling that it was 'awkward' or 'sensitive' to report if the person was under the age of 16 (S4–6). Another group suggested that they would not want to reveal that the person was pregnant, because 'you would be embarrassed if the school contacted your parents about being pregnant' (S1).

Some sub-groups, however, were willing to report this form of bullying. One reason given for this was that it could put stress on the mother and baby (S5/6).

*Reporting bullying based on socio-economic status*

Socio-economic status was the one characteristic included in this activity that is not specifically protected in law. Several of the groups were unsure of the term to begin with, initially understanding it as relating to social popularity. In sub-groups where this issue was raised, pupils tended to agree they would be more likely to report the bullying if it related to a lower socio-economic status.

> We'd [report] it, though if it was for rich (snooty) people it
> wouldn't really be a big deal (S3).

Other sub-groups said that they would be willing to report bullying based on socio-economic status because it was not the choice of the individual:

> You don't choose […] where you are born into (S3).

> It isn't fair, [it's] not the child's fault (S3).

A few groups felt that bullying based on socio-economic status was uncommon, while others felt that it was not serious:

> [It] happens often and can often be mistaken for a joke so
> seen as not very serious (S4–6).

In one sub-group, the pupils wrote notes of names that they or others had been called. One of these was the word 'peasant' (S2). The discussions about this form of bullying indicate that pupils may not have the vocabulary or the understanding of the

complex issues involved in socio-economic status and related prejudices to discuss the issue and its impacts in depth.

## 9.5 Pupil recommendations

Finally, pupils were asked for their recommendations on what would make an 'ideal system' for reporting bullying in which it could be as easy as possible for pupils to report bullying in their school.

A theme that emerged across the groups was the need for confidentiality, discretion, and at times anonymity:

> Confidential – make sure the whole school doesn't find
> out (S3).

Most groups suggested some form of non-verbal reporting, such as 'worry boxes' or logbooks, a website or Facebook group, or via text. Each of these was highlighted as potentially maximising confidentiality and comfort in reporting. It was emphasised, however, that discretion was needed to allow people to make use of these, for example by having the 'worry box' in a secluded area (S3) or by ensuring that Facebook communications are private (S1). One group highlighted the importance of being able to speak to a teacher without it being passed on to parents, 'no matter how bad it is' (S3). Third-party reporting was also raised: three groups suggested that having parents make the report would be easier (S1; S3; S3) and one recommended that friends could speak with pastoral care on someone's behalf (S3).

Several groups recommended that more individual support be offered to pupils to deal with the impacts of bullying (S3; S3; S4–6). Others recommended that some form of support group should be provided. Three pupils suggested a weekly support group and safe space for those being bullied (S1; S2; S5/6). Three groups recommended some form of restorative or mediation approach to dealing with bullying such as support groups including the people bullying and those being bullied (S3), or meetings with guidance teachers, parents and the person doing the bullying (S1).

In another three groups, it was suggested that greater consequences for bullying were needed:

> If someone is bullying someone they should be punished
> more. They should have to stay before and after school
> as well as at lunch time so they can't have the chance to
> bully the person (S5/6).

The need for schools to 'take all forms of bullying seriously' (S4–6) was also emphasised:

> Adults shouldn't be so condescending if someone reports
> bullying, it may not matter as much to them but it does
> matter to the victim (S3).

It was suggested that pupils should be taught about bullying from a younger age (S1), and that induction days with P7 pupils could be used to raise awareness of behaviours that would not be acceptable in secondary school, including all types of bullying (S5/6). Other recommendations were that anti-bullying training programmes should work with senior pupils as well as teachers (S4–6), that all teachers should be involved 'so you can pick the one that you are more comfortable speaking to' (S1),

and that there should be greater publicity about anti-bullying, similar to Show Racism the Red Card campaigns at football matches (S1).

## 9.6 Conclusion

Overall, the understanding and awareness of pupils in focus groups varied with regards to specific protected characteristics. Interestingly, the pupils made a series of value judgements when deciding whether they would be willing or unwilling to report specific forms of bullying. The importance of perception and association in considering prejudice and bullying does not appear to have a place in pupils' current understanding. On the contrary, pupils put the focus not only on the identity of the person experiencing the bullying but also on their ostensible choices to identify or behave in a certain way. Less frequently, pupils also spoke about the severity of incidents and the impact on individuals when making decisions.

It may be that more needs to be done to educate pupils about the concept of 'victim blaming', and to encourage a clearer understanding that behaviour that impacts upon someone negatively, such as verbal or physical bullying, is not acceptable regardless of whether someone's identity is or is not a choice. Further to this, awareness could be raised among pupils of the personal and social impacts of each of the different forms of prejudice. Pupils felt that anonymity, confidentiality and discretion were the most important elements in any system.

# 10. Good practice

This chapter highlights some important areas and examples of good practice that emerged throughout the project. While the initial research aim was to identify top-down, authority-wide examples of good practice, LAs and Education Scotland more often shared examples of localised or topic-specific good practice. These examples were primarily identified by the LAs, who named their own work and the work of others. Some examples were also identified in publications and in the Education Scotland interview. Researchers restricted coverage in this section to examples cited or published since 2010 and those that highlight the work and approach undertaken by the LA itself.

Three case studies of good practice in LAs are presented here, each of which relates to a different area of good practice in anti-bullying that aligns with the principles of *A National Approach*. These are not intended to convey a full picture of the practices taking place in these authorities. There will also doubtless be important examples of good practice in other areas that were not brought to researchers' attention, although all LAs were given the opportunity to provide us with this information.

The interviewee from Education Scotland named several overarching behaviours that marked good practice within an LA:

- Working across the protected characteristics;
- Responding relentlessly to bullying;
- Engaging pupil groups or committees in work on equality;
- Supporting pupils who are acting as advocates on equalities issues;
- Young people taking the lead and speaking out;
- Empowering pupils;
- Engaging teachers in an individual's story.

What also came across, in other interviews, was the idea of leadership:

> I think what comes to me through some of the audits is where things are prioritised in schools it gets all staff involved and it has a kind of whole-school approach to things and it seems to be effective within the leadership in a school (Interviewee 1).

These are themes that emerged in the good practice examples offered to us, under the broad headings of 'youth engagement', 'prevention and awareness raising' and 'monitoring and evaluation'.

## 10.1 Scottish Borders Council: youth engagement

Scottish Borders Council was identified as an example of good practice with regards to their anti-bullying policy. Scottish Borders Council appears on respect*me*'s website as a good practice area, and was highlighted by two interviewees from outside the LA area. One interviewee referred positively to Scottish Borders' Respectful Relationships anti-bullying policy, while another noted their involvement of young people. Representatives from Scottish Borders Council provided us with further information on their youth engagement work.

Prompted by *A National Approach*, Scottish Borders Council undertook research co-produced with young people in order to design their anti-bullying policy. Twelve young people aged 14–25 formed Scottish Borders Youth Commission on Bullying, supported by an advisory board including Scottish Borders Council, Lothian and Borders Police, NHS Borders, respect*me*, and Young Scot. The group received training from respect*me* and undertook research in 2011–2012, including surveys, interviews, focus groups, and engagement with parents, teachers, pupils, and partner organisations. From this, they created and presented 33 recommendations which highlighted the importance of respect in relationships and an environment where bullying is never acceptable. The council developed a policy based on the recommendations, in consultation with teachers. *Scottish Borders Youth Commission on Bullying: Evaluation Report* notes that the project used a youth work approach with the young people involved, in order to support their skills development and acknowledge their areas of knowledge and experience (Youth Commission on Bullying Advisory Board and Northern Star 2012). As a result of their involvement, youth commissioners noted an increase in confidence, communication skills and understanding of equality (Youth Commission on Bullying Advisory Board and Northern Star 2012: 12–14).

The council also displays a strong commitment to youth involvement through Scottish Borders Youth Voice. This involves young people aged 12–25 in seven projects, including a Child Rights Group, which meets fortnightly with the aim of promoting the rights of children and young people. The group conducted research with decision makers into their knowledge about rights and developed a series of peer-evaluated lesson plans for schools. In the coming year, these lessons will be accompanied by a handbook and rolled out through a peer-education programme.

The strong element of youth involvement in identifying issues, recommending improvements, and bringing changes forward in Scottish Borders Council is a clear example of good practice.

## 10.2 City of Edinburgh Council: prevention and awareness raising

City of Edinburgh Council's anti-bullying policy was identified as a good practice example in the policy review. The policy includes raising awareness of diversity, equal opportunities policies, and hate crime, and recommends using Education Scotland's guidance in *Promoting Diversity and Equality: Developing Responsible Citizens for 21st Century Scotland* (Education Scotland 2013).

City of Edinburgh Council shared a number of examples of good practice in anti-bullying prevention work. The authority has developed programmes to improve resilience and self-esteem such as Growing Confidence, a training programme for staff, parents, carers and pupils, to promote mental health and emotional well-being. LA leads cite this as improving staff confidence to deal with bullying. The council have adapted lessons initially developed at the Royal High School covering bullying, stereotypes and discrimination, and rights and responsibilities, to be available electronically to all schools. The English as an Additional Language Service has produced a Global Citizenship programme, covering topics such as diversity, inclusion and anti-racism (Tee 2013: 6). The council provides all schools with guidance and lesson plans prior to Anti-bullying Fortnight, covering bullying based on race, religion, disability, learning disability, sexual orientation and sex and gender.

City of Edinburgh Council has developed a tool entitled the 'palette of responses' for staff training, which presents a list of words and encourages discussion about

whether or not these are offensive, and introduces alternative terminologies. The LA explains that this exercise encourages discussion on changing terminologies and actively examines 'political correctness' in a non-threatening way, with the aim of increasing confidence to challenge language.

The authority has engaged in various partnerships in order to raise awareness of different equalities areas. In 2013, council staff supported the Crown and Procurator Fiscal Office to hold a public speaking contest with secondary pupils on 'diversity' (Tee 2013: 8). The council has a partnership arrangement with Stonewall, achieving status as Stonewall Education Champions last year, as well as LGBT Youth Scotland and Show Racism the Red Card. Recently, City of Edinburgh Council has worked with ENABLE to produce resources on bullying of people with learning disabilities.

City of Edinburgh Council evidences a positive approach to preventing bullying and prejudice, reflective of the recommendations of *A National Approach*: the promotion of education and awareness raising about diversity and equality; proactive information strategies and campaigns, and programmes designed to promote emotional health and well-being.

### 10.3 Angus Council: monitoring and evaluation

Angus Council has been identified for its strong policy and practice in recording and monitoring as elements in tackling bullying and prejudice. The current anti-bullying policy recommends that schools record whether incidents of bullying are based on homophobia, racism, sexism or other forms of prejudice. According to strategic leads from Angus Council, both transphobic bullying and bullying based on pregnancy will soon be recorded under their new policy, in response to changes in current legislation.

Schools are encouraged to record all alleged incidents of bullying, in order to emphasise the importance of the impact on the pupil rather than the potentially limiting definitions of bullying that may come into play in staff decisions about whether to record an incident. The council's recording form, included in their anti-bullying policy, has a space for the views of the young person to be written 'in their own words' regarding the resolution of the incident. In addition to this, the form asks pupils to indicate, by selecting 'yes' or 'no', whether or not they feel that adults in the school 'listened to their concerns' and 'responded to their concerns appropriately'. This focus on the outcome of the response for the pupil is an important marker of good practice, as the views of, and impact on, the young people involved should be central to guiding anti-bullying work.

Reports on this data are provided to the LA by schools each term and then collated for analysis. Data on both the numbers of incidents and the percentage of pupils who felt that the situation was resolved to their satisfaction are reported annually to a committee and followed up. For example, the LA had recently provided additional training to a school where particular issues emerged in the data. Angus Council has also monitored and reviewed the success of their anti-bullying initiatives and policy by seeking the views of pupils, staff, and parents and carers. For example, an evaluation has recently been conducted by asking for staff and pupil views on restorative practices, which have recently been rolled out through a training programme to all schools.

Angus Council demonstrates a strong policy of recording, monitoring and responding to patterns of bullying incidents, all of which are regarded as integral to anti-bullying work in *A National Approach*. The council's anti-bullying work clearly aligns with this

approach through its inclusion of the views of the pupil in the recording process, and its involvement of the whole school community in reviewing practices.

## 10.4 Conclusion

These examples of good practice align clearly with the principles of *A National Approach* as well as those of other national frameworks integral to work in Scottish schools such as *Curriculum for Excellence* and *GIRFEC*. The frameworks reflect a strong focus on the views and involvement of all young people, promoting their health and well-being, and encouraging respect, inclusion and rights.

These examples, importantly, show LAs working across relevant protected characteristics in line with the Equality Act 2010, and show their commitment to tackling bullying and prejudice. This section informs recommendations for LAs, as positive examples offer potential strategies for use in areas that need improvements, highlighted elsewhere.

# 11. Conclusions and recommendations

Previously a gap existed in the literature, which lacked an overview of the prevention of and response to prejudice-based bullying in secondary schools across Scotland. This included the extent to which teachers are confident to prevent and respond to prejudice-based bullying in schools, how pupils are taught about their rights and prejudice, and pupil understandings of these. This report has helped to fill that gap. Evidence has also been gathered on pupil experiences of reporting processes.

While this research found some examples of good practice and positive prevention of and responses to prejudice-based bullying across Scotland, the picture is by no means uniform, nor is there currently enough depth in practice. Overall, there are important gaps in several aspects of preventing and responding to prejudice-based bullying in secondary schools; the role of prejudice in bullying, pupils' confidence in rights and systems, and leadership occupy a weaker position in the curriculum.

The LA anti-bullying policies that emerged as examples of good practice were those that provided clear information and guidance on preventing, responding to and recording incidents of bullying and consistently fighting prejudice across all relevant protected characteristics. Due in part to the fact that there is no legal requirement to record bullying incidents, very few LAs were able to share information on the number of incidents. Monitoring for and understanding pupil experiences of bullying across protected characteristics is important for informing equality impact assessments as well as informing policy review and designing prevention strategies. One system for identifying the range and scale of these experiences is through anonymous pupil surveys, which this report cites as good practice.

The researchers recommend:

- LA staff (with remits for education or bullying as well as equality and discrimination) should review the LA's anti-bullying policy to ensure that it aligns with the Equality Act 2010 and *A National Approach*'s focus on impacts and behaviours of bullying.

- LA anti-bullying policies should cover all relevant protected characteristics and additionally socio-economic group/social class and provide information and guidance on each characteristic.

- LAs should undertake regular reviews of anti-bullying policies and include evidence of reported incidents across the relevant protected characteristics as well as information gathered from pupils on their experiences of prejudice-based bullying and barriers to reporting. They should also analyse and follow up locally on the findings from surveys and data on recorded incidents to refine and improve their policies.

- LAs or schools should conduct anonymous surveys of pupils to capture experiences of bullying across relevant protected characteristics and forms of prejudice. This information will highlight trends in prejudice-based bullying and should be used to check, vary and adjust local approaches to dealing with bullying.

- LAs and schools should ensure that protected characteristics are factored into the design of any future systems to support the recording of bullying and harassment.

- LAs and schools should ensure that equality and protected characteristics are factored in wherever relevant: in broader policies (for example, behaviour and conduct); in mentoring and buddying programmes; in planning based on Health and Wellbeing outcomes; in future systems to support facilities, and in practices.

There has been some successful work undertaken across the country in making pupils aware of the process of reporting bullying. Pupils in surveys and focus groups were very well informed of the reporting processes in their schools. What emerges, however, is that there are still gaps in other areas: an awareness that all forms of bullying are 'serious enough' to report; confidence to report, and a knowledge of and confidence in the process after an initial report is made. For instance, there was some pupil unhappiness in surveys and focus groups about how bullying reports were dealt with. This was not restricted to one particular LA approach. The issue seems to be that pupils do not always know what happens after an initial report is made. They also may not know that something was recorded as an incident after they reported it. Pupils who reported prejudice-based bullying were slightly less likely (47%) than those who reported other forms of bullying (51%) to say that their report was taken seriously by the school. These lower numbers show that improvements must be made so that all pupils feel respected and included.

The researchers recommend:

- Schools and teachers should ensure that pupils know how to report bullying and that they can be comfortable with the means of doing so. Options to be considered could include anonymous, discreet and confidential reporting such as electronic reports or the provision of peer advocates trained to support pupils when reporting.

- Schools and teachers should involve affected young people in decisions on actions taken in dealing with incidents of bullying, and follow up to ensure they feel that each situation has been resolved to their satisfaction.

- All school staff should challenge all forms of prejudice-based bullying clearly and consistently, including 'low levels' of harassment, when they occur. Prejudiced comments should also be challenged clearly and consistently.

Across the research engagement, it became clear that the concept of prejudice was dealt with much less often than the concept of bullying. This was the case in LA policies, in regards to what activities and prevention measures teachers said that they had undertaken with pupils and what pupils said that they had learned about. Only half of pupils said that they had been taught about prejudice while three-quarters said that they had been taught about equality. Only seven LAs named all seven protected characteristics relevant to education and not all explained them.

Nationally, there was a clear link between the attention given to each protected characteristic in policies and the teachers' understanding and confidence in regards to that protected characteristic. This then transferred to pupil understanding and confidence. The protected characteristics that were most likely to appear in policies, engender teacher confidence, and be identified by pupils as included in the life of the school, are disability, race or ethnicity, and religion and belief. The protected characteristics that were least likely to fall into these categories were gender reassignment and pregnancy and maternity. Gypsies/Travellers, asylum seekers and refugees also received very little attention and low confidence ratings from teachers and pupils.

A consequence of this coverage and teacher knowledge and confidence is that pupils have different understandings of different forms of prejudice and are more willing to report bullying based on certain protected characteristics. In many cases this is because they have a less supportive attitude towards those experiencing the bullying, as they have not been equipped with sufficient information on the manifestations and experiences of specific forms of prejudice. In other cases, pupils were unsure or not confident raising issues on prejudice against particular protected characteristics because they felt these issues were spoken about less frequently, or they were less aware of them**.**

The researchers recommend:

- Teachers should embed discussions of all relevant protected characteristics, as well as socio-economic group/social class, and the prevention of prejudice-based bullying into teaching practices, so that pupils have the language, understanding and confidence to discuss prejudice and report prejudice-based bullying.

- Schools and teachers should ensure that pupils understand that low-level bullying and harassment are taken as seriously as those that cause visible harm.

Teachers were most likely to report that their school had shared posters, leaflets or displays on bullying as a form of prevention. Across all forms of prevention activity they had dealt with bullying more often than prejudice. Pupils' responses also reflected an emphasis on general bullying with less than a third saying that they were aware of posters or leaflets on prejudice, which received the highest response rate of all activities about prejudice. As shown above, pupils in focus groups felt that they were more likely to be comfortable discussing an issue that was visible and dealt with within the school environment.

The researchers recommend:

- Schools and teachers should undertake awareness-raising campaigns on anti-bullying, ensuring that they include prejudice, and inform pupils about their school's anti-bullying policy and the procedures for reporting.

- Schools should display the following in classrooms, offices and hallways: information or literature from campaigns on their anti-bullying policy, clear statements that prejudice-based bullying is unacceptable, and images that include people with a range of protected characteristics.

The survey found that teachers were often more aware of the LA or school anti-bullying policy than they were of equality legislation. They were most likely to be aware of educational frameworks such as *Curriculum for Excellence* and *GIRFEC*. More LA policies mentioned *A National Approach* than the Equality Act 2010. While *A National Approach* itself contextualises the importance of the Act in regards to bullying, this was not often transferred to LA polices. There were also gaps in teachers' confidence to prevent bullying and inform pupils about prejudice. Teachers were more confident to respond to actual bullying.

The researchers recommend:

- In their training and teaching about prejudice, LAs and schools should include an understanding of the role of perception and of association in prejudice-based behaviour. Strong leadership in schools and LAs is needed to ensure that anti-bullying and prejudice are given a high profile and appropriate support is provided to develop staff and pupil understanding.

- Teachers and schools should respond to and take action on all forms of prejudice-based bullying. These should be dealt with and recorded consistently, including information on the motivating prejudice.

- LAs and schools should ensure that staff are trained in the local anti-bullying policy including an understanding of bullying based on each form of prejudice. Training should result in staff understanding their responsibility to prevent and respond to prejudice-based bullying, being confident to tackle prejudice, and knowing where to access appropriate signposting information. They should also be given the opportunity to explore ways to tackle prejudice within the school environment. This training should be delivered to all staff.

- LAs and schools should provide additional training where gaps in knowledge are identified and, where relevant, seek training and advice from external organisations with knowledge of particular forms of prejudice.

There are currently some gaps in the materials available to LAs working to improve pupil experiences. Education Scotland's pre-inspection survey asks pupils to rank their school in regards to the SHANARRI indicators but does not collate these by LA nor does it ask questions on protected characteristics. There is also a gap in the literature in regards to prejudice-based bullying across the range of protected characteristics. Several interviewees mentioned desiring a stronger message from Education Scotland on protected characteristics during inspections; that they should ask for evidence on how schools know that they are addressing prejudice or bullying based on each protected characteristic.

The researchers recommend:

- Education Scotland should expand its current pre-inspection survey to include questions on all relevant protected characteristics, collating the survey responses by LA.

- LAs and schools should share information on good practice with other LAs and schools through online resources such as the websites of Education Scotland or respect*me.*

- Education Scotland should consider how it might request evidence systematically from schools concerning their management of bullying within inspection quality indicators for equality and inclusion.

- Scottish Government and Education Scotland should undertake research nationally in Scotland on prejudice-based bullying that asks young people about their identification with and/or attitudes towards the range of relevant protected characteristics, which would then provide insight into how prejudice functions.


## Report précis

This research report discovers the current understandings and experiences of prejudice-based bullying in secondary schools in Scotland. Evidence has been drawn from a review of LA anti-bullying policies, interviews with involved LA staff, pupil focus groups and questionnaires with both pupils and teachers. The research concentrated on the Equality Act 2010's protected characteristics relevant to a school context, and socio-economic status, in order to gauge potential differences in pupil and teacher confidence, knowledge or treatment of these identities in preventing and responding to prejudice-based bullying.

What is already known:

- Experiencing bullying has a negative impact on an individual's physical and mental health, and learning.

- Pupils experiencing bullying and particularly prejudice-based bullying face barriers to reporting incidents.

- Teacher confidence to approach a subject influences pupil understanding and confidence.

What this report adds:

- Less than one-third of LA anti-bullying policies cover the protected characteristics relevant to education. The attention paid to each protected characteristic in anti-bullying policies was reflected in teacher and pupil confidence, understanding, and experiences.

- Staff confidence and awareness varies considerably by protected characteristic, which has an impact on pupil understanding and experiences of these identities.

- The concept of prejudice is not dealt with sufficiently. In LA anti-bullying policies, prevention work tends to focus on bullying or equality without exploring the prejudices that may underlie bullying. Just over half of teachers stated that their school had undertaken activities or initiatives on prejudice within the past year.

- When deciding on their willingness to report prejudice-based bullying witnessed, pupils use value judgements such as whether someone 'chose' that identity or the 'severity' of the incident. LA leads are aware that little is done to report and record bullying incidents, yet employ different strategies to close the information gap on experiences.

## Appendix 1: Education Scotland Interview Guide

1. Please tell me about your role.

2. What interactions do you have with Local Authorities?

   a. With QIOs[6] or other equality leads?

3. What would you list as the key policies and frameworks for preventing and responding to prejudice-based bullying in education?

   a. Are these used to their full capacity by Local Authorities?

   b. How widespread do you think understanding of these is?

4. Do you think there's an awareness at a strategic level within Local Authorities of the connections between:

   - Equality Act 2010

   - *A National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People*

   - Health and Well-being Outcomes under *Curriculum for Excellence*?

5. What would you say is the current understanding of preventing and dealing with prejudice-based bullying …

   a. At Education Scotland

   b. At a national level/In Local Authorities

   c. For educators in schools?

6. Where do you think the understanding *should* be in regards to preventing and dealing with prejudice-based bullying …

   a. At Education Scotland

   b. At a LA level

   c. For educators within schools

   d. For pupils?

7. As you mentioned when we met, bullying is a standard inspection topic with young people, staff and parents. Can you tell us about this process and your impression of the situation in schools across Scotland?

   a. Do any examples stand out in your mind?

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[6] Quality Improvement Officers.

b. Are there any Local Authorities that we should look at in regards to good practice?

c. What do you think would allow all Local Authorities to mirror these good practice examples? What current tools and resources could be better used?

8.  Finally, what key themes have emerged in your work with regards to Local Authorities

## Appendix 2: Local authority Interview Guide

1. Please tell me about your role.

    a. What interaction do you have with Area Lead Officers (ALOs) from Education Scotland?

    b. What interaction do you have with head teachers/schools?

2. What would you list as the key policies and frameworks (local and national) for preventing and responding to prejudice-based bullying or harassment in education?

3. What do you think is the level of awareness at a strategic level in schools of the connections between:

    - Equality Act 2010

    - *A National Approach to Anti-bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People*

    - Health and Well-being Outcomes under *Curriculum for Excellence*?

4. What would you say is the current understanding of preventing and dealing with prejudice-based bullying:

    a. At a strategic level within your LA

    b. For head teachers in your LA

    c. For educators in schools?

5. Can you tell us about the council's anti-bullying policy?

    a. Are bullying and harassment mentioned in your council's equality outcomes and vice versa?

    b. Do schools record specific forms of prejudice when dealing with bullying and harassment incidents? Which ones?

    c. Is the data collated centrally within the Local Authority or at a school level?

        i. Is anything done with this data?

6. Anti-bullying policy:

    a. How is the anti-bullying policy disseminated to staff in schools?

    b. How confident do you think head teachers are to support and guide staff in their schools on preventing and responding to prejudice-based bullying and harassment?

    c. How confident do you think staff in schools are to work to prevent prejudice-based bullying and harassment?

    d. How confident do you think staff in schools are to respond to prejudice-based bullying and harassment?

    e. Does the LA suggest any particular strategies to schools for preventing prejudice-based bullying and harassment?

7. Have you been involved with challenging practices or supporting improvements for anti-bullying processes in schools? (ask about follow-up if not shared)

**Positives and moving forward**

8. What would you say the understanding *should* be for dealing with prejudice-based bullying and harassment …

   a. At a strategic level within your LA

   b. For head teachers within your LA

   c. For educators in schools?

9. Please tell us about any examples within your LA that you consider good practice for preventing and responding to prejudice-based bullying and harassment.

10. What do you think would allow all Local Authorities to mirror these good practice examples? What current tools and resources could be better used?

11. Is there any additional information or support that you or other QIOs would benefit from in order to support your LA(s) to prevent and respond to prejudice-based bullying and harassment?

    a. What do you think might be needed at a school level to ensure good practice?

12. Finally, what key themes have emerged in your work with regards to Local Authorities and their anti-bullying/harassment and equality work?

13. Any final thoughts or questions?

**This is a survey of secondary school teaching staff in Scotland exploring bullying and harassment in schools based on prejudice.**

The project has been commissioned by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) in Scotland and is being conducted by researchers from LGBT Youth Scotland and respect*me*.

An important focus of many of the questions will be bullying and harassment based on prejudice and how you, your school and your Local Authority prevent and respond to these. These terms will be explained in more detail below.

The findings from this survey will help to identify:

• Ways in which prejudice-based bullying and harassment can be dealt with in schools and the wider community

• Any barriers there may be in dealing with prejudice-based bullying and harassment

• Any support which might be required for responding to prejudice-based bullying and harassment


Your participation is entirely voluntary: you may stop participating in the questionnaire at any time. All responses are anonymous and confidential and you will not be identified from your answers. By completing the questions, you are giving us consent to use your answers in our research.

This questionnaire should take about **15 minutes** to complete. By answering as many questions as you can, you could help improve the way in which bullying and harassment are dealt with in schools.

If you choose to leave an email address at the end of the questionnaire, we will send you a link to the summary of the survey results when available.

If you require any further information about this project, **please feel free to contact us**. Thank you for your help.

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**Terms**

*Bullying* is behaviour that can make people feel hurt, threatened, frightened and left out.

This behaviour may happen once or many times and can harm people physically or emotionally. The threat of this behaviour may be kept up over time by actions such as: looks, messages, confrontations, hitting or hurting, or the fear of these.

*Harassment* is unwanted behaviour that has the purpose, or the effect, of violating a person's dignity and creating a hostile, degrading humiliating or offensive environment.

This behaviour can be related to the protected characteristics of: Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment (i.e. transgender people), Marriage or civil partnership, Pregnancy or maternity, Race, Religion or belief, Sex, and Sexual orientation. An individual may not necessarily possess one of the protected characteristics but can be targeted because others perceive them to have the characteristic or they associate with others who do.

*Prejudice* is a negative judgement towards someone because of who they are or who people think they are in relation to a characteristic such as race or disability.

*Prejudice-based bullying and prejudice-based harassment* is where a person is targeted because of who they are or because of who they are perceived to be. This is rooted in the prejudice and beliefs that the person who is bullying or harassing someone has.

**✱1. Please select the Local Authority of your school from the drop-down menu below:**

◯ Aberdeen City

◯ Aberdeenshire

◯ Angus

◯ Argyll and Bute

◯ Clackmannanshire

◯ Dumfries and Galloway

◯ Dundee City

◯ East Ayrshire

◯ East Dunbartonshire

◯ East Lothian

◯ East Renfrewshire

◯ Edinburgh, City of

◯ Falkirk

◯ Fife

◯ Glasgow City

◯ Highland

◯ Inverclyde

◯ Midlothian

◯ Moray

◯ North Ayrshire

◯ North Lanarkshire

◯ Orkney

◯ Perth and Kinross

◯ Renfrewshire

◯ Scottish Borders

◯ Shetland

◯ South Ayrshire

◯ South Lanarkshire

◯ Stirling

◯ West Dunbartonshire

◯ West Lothian

◯ Western Isles

**National Policy and Legal Context**

## National Policy and Legal Context

### 2. Have you heard of the following policy frameworks?

| | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| Curriculum for Excellence | ◯ | ◯ |
| Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) | ◯ | ◯ |
| United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child | ◯ | ◯ |
| General Teaching Council Scotland's Code of Professionalism and Conduct | ◯ | ◯ |
| National Approach to Anti-bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People (2010) | ◯ | ◯ |
| Standards in Scottish Schools Act (2000) | ◯ | ◯ |
| Equality Act (2010) | ◯ | ◯ |

### 3. How confident would you be in using these to prevent bullying and harassment in school?

| | Very confident | Confident | Neither confident nor unconfident | Unconfident | Very unconfident |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Curriculum for Excellence | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| General Teaching Council Scotland's Code of Professionalism and Conduct | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| National Approach to Anti-bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People (2010) | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Standards in Scottish Schools Act (2000) | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Equality Act (2010) | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |

### 4. Please use this space to tell us about any other policies or frameworks you think are useful in preventing bullying and harassment in school:

**5. Which of the following characteristics are protected under the Equality Act (2010)** *in relation to education*? **(Select all that apply).**

- [ ] Age
- [ ] Disability
- [ ] Gender Reassignment
- [ ] Marriage and Civil Partnership
- [ ] Pregnancy and Maternity
- [ ] Race
- [ ] Religion and belief
- [ ] Sex
- [ ] Sexual Orientation

## Local Policy and Procedure

### 6. Thinking of your current Local Authority and secondary school....

| | Yes | No | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|
| Does your Local Authority have an anti-bullying policy? | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Does your school have an anti-bullying policy? | ○ | ○ | ○ |

### 7. How were you made aware of these? (Select all that apply)

- [ ] Email
- [ ] Given a print copy
- [ ] Training input
- [ ] Intranet
- [ ] Other (please specify):

### 8. Has your school...?

| | Yes | No | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|
| Drawn up its own anti-bullying policy | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Adopted an anti-bullying policy drawn up by the Local Authority | ○ | ○ | ○ |

## 9. Does the school's main anti-bullying policy explicitly address bullying and/or harassment based on prejudice regarding?

| | Yes | No | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|
| Disability | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Gender Reassignment (i.e. transgender people) | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Pregnancy and Maternity | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Race or ethnicity | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Religion and belief | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Sex | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Sexual Orientation | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Socio-economic group/social class | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Travelling communities (e.g. Gypsy/Traveller, Roma) | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Asylum seeker or refugee status | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Other form of prejudice | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Other form of prejudice (please specify):

[                                                                    ]

## 10. Does your school keep a record of incidents of bullying or harassment?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Don't know

If yes, please give brief details:

[                    ]

## 11. Does your school keep a record of whether these are based on prejudice in relation to:

| | Yes | No | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|
| Disability | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Gender Reassignment (i.e. transgender people) | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Pregnancy and Maternity | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Race or ethnicity | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Religion and belief | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Sex | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Sexual Orientation | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Socio-economic group/social class | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Travelling communities (e.g. Gypsy/Traveller, Roma) | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Asylum seeker or refugee status | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Other form of prejudice | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Other form of prejudice (please specify)

[                                        ]

## 12. Have you been made aware of any procedures, guidelines or management advice on preventing and responding to bullying and harassment in your school?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Don't know

## 13. How were you made aware of these? (Select all that apply)

☐ Email

☐ Given a print copy

☐ Training input

☐ Intranet

☐ Other (please specify):

[                              ]

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## 14. How confident would you feel in telling pupils about prejudice in relation to:

| | Very confident | Confident | Neither confident nor unconfident | Unconfident | Very unconfident |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Disability | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Gender Reassignment (i.e. transgender people) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Pregnancy and Maternity | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Race or ethnicity | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Religion and belief | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Sex | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Sexual Orientation | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Socio-economic group/social class | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Travelling communities (e.g. Gypsy/Traveller, Roma) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Asylum seeker or refugee status | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Other form of prejudice | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Other form of prejudice (please specify):

## 15. Have you ever spoken to pupils about prejudice in relation to? (Select all that apply)

☐ Disability

☐ Gender

☐ Gender Reassignment (i.e. transgender people)

☐ Pregnancy and Maternity

☐ Race or ethnicity

☐ Religion and belief

☐ Sex

☐ Sexual Orientation

☐ Socio-economic group/social class

☐ Travelling communities (e.g. Gypsy/Traveller, Roma)

☐ Asylum seeker or refugee status

☐ None of the above

☐ Other form of prejudice (please specify)

Please give brief details of what this involved:

## 16. In the last 12 months, has your school?

| | Yes | No | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|
| Held classes or activities about bullying | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Held classes or activities about prejudice | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Held an assembly or themed day on bullying | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Held an assembly or themed day on prejudice | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Run a campaign about bullying | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Run a campaign about prejudice | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Put up posters, leaflets or other displays about bullying | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Put up posters, leaflets or other displays about prejudice | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |

## 17. And in the last 12 months, has your school?

| | Yes | No | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|
| Asked pupils for their experiences of bullying | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Involved pupils in the development of anti-bullying policies | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Encouraged parents and carers to become involved in preventing bullying | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Organised buddying or mentoring for pupils who have been bullied or have bullied others | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |

## Practice and Experience

## 18. Do you know if pupils in your school have experienced bullying or harassment?

◯ Yes

◯ No

## 19. Do you know if pupils in your school have experienced bullying or harassment based on prejudice regarding? (Select all that apply)

- [ ] Disability
- [ ] Gender Reassignment (i.e. transgender people)
- [ ] Pregnancy and Maternity
- [ ] Race or ethnicity
- [ ] Religion and belief
- [ ] Sex
- [ ] Sexual Orientation
- [ ] Socio-economic group/social class
- [ ] Travelling communities (e.g. Gypsy/Traveller, Roma)
- [ ] Asylum seeker or refugee status
- [ ] None of the above
- [ ] Other form of prejudice (please specify):

## 20. Has your school taken any of the following actions when bullying or harassment is reported? (Select all that apply)

- [ ] Involved the pupil being bullied in deciding what action is taken
- [ ] Contacted parents/carers of the pupil being bullied
- [ ] Gained consent from the pupil being bullied before contacting parents/carers
- [ ] Offered teacher or peer support to the pupil being bullied
- [ ] Disciplined the pupils who are bullying
- [ ] Offered support to pupils who are bullying
- [ ] I do not know what action has been taken
- [ ] Other (please specify):

## 21. How confident would you feel....?

| | Very confident | Confident | Neither confident nor unconfident | Unconfident | Very unconfident |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Informing pupils of their rights in relation to bullying and harassment | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Preventing bullying and harassment | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Responding to bullying or harassment when it is occurring | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Responding to reports of bullying or harassment | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Recording incidents of bullying or harassment | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

## 22. How confident would you feel responding to bullying or harassment based on prejudice regarding?

| | Very confident | Confident | Neither confident nor unconfident | Unconfident | Very unconfident |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Disability | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Gender Reassignment (i.e. transgender people) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Pregnancy and Maternity | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Race or ethnicity | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Religion and belief | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Sex | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Sexual Orientation | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Socio-economic group/social class | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Travelling communities (e.g. Gypsy/Traveller, Roma) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Asylum seeker or refugee status | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Other form of prejudice | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Other form of prejudice (please specify):

## 23. Have you ever dealt with an incident of bullying or harassment involving pupils in your school?

○ Yes

○ No

Only answer this section if you **have** dealt with an incident of bullying or harassment in your school.

### 24. Have you ever dealt with an incident of bullying or harassment involving pupils in your school in relation to prejudice about? (please select all that apply)

☐ Disability

☐ Gender Reassignment (i.e. transgender people)

☐ Pregnancy and Maternity

☐ Race or ethnicity

☐ Religion and belief

☐ Sex

☐ Sexual Orientation

☐ Socio-economic group/social class

☐ Travelling communities (e.g. Gypsy/Traveller, Roma)

☐ Asylum seeker or refugee status

☐ None of the above

☐ Other form of prejudice (please specify):

## Responding to Bullying and Harassment

Only answer this section if you have dealt with an incident of bullying or harassment, but this was never in relation to prejudice.

Please answer the following questions in reference to the **most recent incident** you dealt with.

### 25. How confident did you feel in dealing with the bullying or harassment?

○ Very confident

○ Confident

○ Neither confident nor unconfident

○ Unconfident

○ Very unconfident

## 26. What actions were taken by the school when it was reported? (Select all that apply)

☐ Involved the pupil being bullied in deciding what action was taken

☐ Contacted parents/carers of the pupil being bullied

☐ Gained consent from the pupil being bullied before contacting parents/carers

☐ Offered teacher or peer support to the pupil being bullied

☐ Disciplined the pupils who were bullying

☐ Offered support to pupils who were bullying

☐ The school did not take any action

☐ I do not know what action was taken

☐ Other (please specify):

## 27. How far do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

|  | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I was satisfied with how the report was handled | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The response to the report helped the situation | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

## 28. If you would like to give us information about any other instances of harassment or bullying you have dealt with, please do so here:

## Responding to Prejudice-based Bullying and Harassment

Only answer this section if you have dealt with bullying or harassment which was related to prejudice.

Please answer the following questions in reference to the **most recent incident you dealt with** *where the bullying or harassment related to prejudice.*

## 29. How confident did you feel in dealing with the bullying or harassment?

○ Very confident

○ Confident

○ Neither confident nor unconfident

○ Unconfident

○ Very unconfident

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**35. What do you think helps pupils to feel confident in reporting prejudice-based bullying or harassment?**

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**36. Do you have any additional ideas for improving school and local authority prevention of and responses to bullying and harassment?**

**37. If you would like to add any further comments, please do so here:**

**38. If you would like to be sent a copy of the report based on this project, please leave your email address here:**

Thank you very much for taking part in this survey. If you would like any information on bullying, visit **respectme's website.**

# Appendix 4: Pupil survey

## 1. Introduction

**This is a survey of secondary school pupils in Scotland exploring bullying in schools based on prejudice**. For example, this could be the way you are treated based on a belief others have about something that makes you 'different'—it may be to do with the colour of your skin, whether you are a boy or a girl, gay or straight or what your religion is or isn't. You will be asked how your school teaches about and deals with bullying. These terms will be explained in more detail below.

The project has been commissioned by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) in Scotland and is being conducted by researchers from LGBT Youth Scotland and respect*me*.

The findings of the survey will be used to identify ways to improve school prevention of, and response to, prejudice-based bullying.

It is up to you whether you take part and you can stop the survey at any time.

We will only use your answers to inform our research and will not use your answers to identify you in any way. For example, the information you share will help us learn about experiences of bullying in schools but individual answers will not be shared with schools or teachers and we will never use your email address in reports or when speaking with teachers or schools.

**If you answer the survey, it means that you agree to take part in this research**.

This questionnaire should take about **15 minutes** to complete. By answering as many questions as you can, you'll help us to help your teachers to deal with bullying.

If you choose to leave an email address at the end of the questionnaire, we can send you a link to the summary of the survey results when available, and you can enter to win a £50 Amazon voucher.

If you would like any further information about this project, please feel free to contact us. Thank you very much for your help.

Brandi Lee Lough Dennell brandilee.loughdennell@lgbtyouth.org.uk Tel: 0141 552 7425

Caitlin Logan caitlin.logan@lgbtyouth.org.uk Tel: 0141 552 7425

**Terms**

**Bullying** is behaviour that can make people feel hurt, threatened, frightened and left out. This behaviour may happen once or many times and can harm people physically or emotionally. The threat of this behaviour may be kept up over time by actions such as: looks, messages, confrontations, hitting or hurting, or the fear of these.

**Equality** is when people have what they need to have the same chances and experiences as others, such as all being fully included in school.

**Prejudice** is a negative judgement towards someone because of who they are or who people *think* they are in relation to a characteristic such as race or disability.

**Prejudice-based bullying** is about being targeted because of who you are or who people think you are. This is related to a prejudice or belief they have about something that makes you 'different' – it may be to do with the colour of your skin, whether you are a boy or a girl, gay or straight or what your religion is or isn't.

## *1. In which council do you live?

**If you're not sure, you can check by entering your postcode at this address:**
**http://local.direct.gov.uk/LDGRedirect/Start.do?mode=1**

| | |
|---|---|
| ◯ Aberdeen City | ◯ Inverclyde |
| ◯ Aberdeenshire | ◯ Midlothian |
| ◯ Angus | ◯ Moray |
| ◯ Argyll and Bute | ◯ North Ayrshire |
| ◯ Clackmannanshire | ◯ North Lanarkshire |
| ◯ Dumfries and Galloway | ◯ Orkney |
| ◯ Dundee City | ◯ Perth and Kinross |
| ◯ East Ayrshire | ◯ Renfrewshire |
| ◯ East Dunbartonshire | ◯ Scottish Borders |
| ◯ East Lothian | ◯ Shetland |
| ◯ East Renfrewshire | ◯ South Ayrshire |
| ◯ Edinburgh, City of | ◯ South Lanarkshire |
| ◯ Falkirk | ◯ Stirling |
| ◯ Fife | ◯ West Dunbartonshire |
| ◯ Glasgow City | ◯ West Lothian |
| ◯ Highland | ◯ Western Isles |

## *2. What year are you in?

◯ 1st year (S1)

◯ 2nd year (S2)

◯ 3rd year (S3)

◯ 4th year (S4)

◯ 5th year (S5)

◯ 6th year (S6)

## 2. Your School

### Terms

Throughout the survey, we will ask you about different forms of identity and prejudice. The terms below are important to your understanding of these questions. If you are unsure what any of these mean, you can check back to this page whenever we ask about them.

**Asylum seeker/refugee**: Is someone who moved to the UK because it was dangerous in their home country, for example, because of a war.

**Disability**: Is when someone has a physical or mental condition that means they face extra barriers to daily life and need support or changes to the ways things are done. This might affect how they learn, how they communicate or how they are able to use their body. For example, people with dyslexia or cerebral palsy may consider themselves to

have a disability.

**Gender reassignment/Transgender identity**: is when someone's gender identity doesn't match the body they were born in. If someone was born and brought up as a girl but felt like a boy and wanted to live their life as a boy/man, this is called being a transgender man. A transgender woman is someone who was raised a boy but feels like a girl. Some transgender people do not feel like either a boy or a girl.

**Pregnancy and maternity**: is when someone is going to have a baby or has recently had one.

**Race/ethnicity**: is about someone's nationality, where they were born, their family's origins or skin colour. This can also be linked to culture and religion.

**Religion and belief**: is about someone's beliefs, for example whether they believe in a god (or gods), and can also relate to their family's beliefs and religious practises such as attending a church, mosque or synagogue.

**Sex**: is whether someone is a girl or a boy , woman or man

**Sexual orientation**: This is about who you are physically and emotionally attracted to (i.e. who you "fancy" or love). Being gay/lesbian is when you're a boy who is attracted to boys, or a girl who is attracted to girls. Being straight/heterosexual is when you're a boy who is attracted to girls, or a girl who is attracted to boys. Being bisexual is when you are attracted to both boys and girls, or to people regardless of their gender.

**Social class**: is about the amount of money someone's parent/carer has, whether they qualify for free school meals, and the kind of area they live in. This can also be about whether someone has more or less money than their peers to spend on things such as food, clothing, phones, music or leisure activities.

**Travelling community**: is what someone may belong to if they have no fixed home and move from place to place. Many people who come from travelling communities may have now settled in one home but still think of themselves as being from a travelling community. Travelling communities include: Scottish Gypsy/Travellers, European Roma, Showmen or Showpeople, New Travellers, and Travellers from other parts of Britain.

Thinking of your current secondary school, please answer the following questions.

## 3. Thinking of your current secondary school, do you...? (Please tick one box on each line)

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Feel safe in school | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Feel happy in school | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Feel supported by your school | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Feel respected by your school | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Feel included in school | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Feel your school encourages you to be healthy | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Have a sense of achievement in your school | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

## 4. Do you think that all pupils are included in school... (Please tick one box on each line)

| | Yes | No | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|
| if they have a disability | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| if they are pregnant or have a young baby | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| whatever their race or ethnicity | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| whatever their religion and belief | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| whatever their sex | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| whatever their sexual orientation | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| whatever their social class | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| if they are transgender | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| if they are from a travelling community (e.g. Gypsy/Traveller, Roma) | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| if they are an asylum seeker or refugee | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Please explain why you think this:

## 5. Does your school have an anti-bullying policy or a clear statement of how they deal with bullying?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Don't know

## 6. If YES, have you....

| | Yes | No | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|
| Read it? | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Had it explained to you? | ○ | ○ | ○ |

## 7. Does your school keep a record of incidents of bullying?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Don't know

### 8. In your school, have you been taught about equality between people?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Don't know

### 9. If YES, did the teaching cover equality between people on any of the following grounds? (please tick all that apply)

☐ Disability

☐ Pregnancy and Maternity

☐ Race or ethnicity

☐ Religion and belief

☐ Sex

☐ Sexual Orientation

☐ Social class

☐ Transgender identity

☐ Travelling communities (e.g. Gypsy/Traveller, Roma)

☐ Asylum seeker or refugee

☐ Other form of prejudice (please write in):

### 10. And in your school, have you been taught about prejudice?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Don't know

## 11. If YES, did the teaching cover prejudice against people on any of the following grounds?

- ☐ Disability
- ☐ Pregnancy and Maternity
- ☐ Race or ethnicity
- ☐ Religion and belief
- ☐ Sex
- ☐ Sexual Orientation
- ☐ Social class
- ☐ Transgender identity
- ☐ Travelling communities (e.g. Gypsy/Traveller, Roma)
- ☐ Asylum seeker or refugee
- ☐ Other form of prejudice (please write in):

## 12. Are you aware of your right to learn in a school free from bullying?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ Don't Know

## 13. In the last 12 months, has your school? (Please tick one box on each line).

| | Yes | No | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|
| Held classes or activities about bullying | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Held classes or activities about prejudice | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Held an assembly or themed day on bullying | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Held an assembly or themed day on prejudice | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Run a campaign about bullying | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Run a campaign about prejudice | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Put up posters, leaflets of other displays about bullying | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Put up posters, leaflets of other displays about prejudice | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |

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## 14. And in the last 12 months, has your school?

| | Yes | No | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|
| Asked you for your experiences of bullying | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Involved pupils in the development of anti-bullying policies | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Encouraged parents and carers to become involved in preventing bullying | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Organised buddying or mentoring for pupils who have been bullied or have bullied others | ○ | ○ | ○ |

## 4. Your and your peers' experience

## 15. Do you feel that you have ever been bullied in school?

○ Yes

○ No

## 16. If yes, was it in relation to: (Please tick all that apply)

☐ disability

☐ pregnancy and maternity

☐ race or ethnicity

☐ religion and belief

☐ sex

☐ sexual orientation

☐ social class

☐ transgender identity

☐ travelling community (e.g. Gypsy/Traveller, Roma)

☐ asylum seeker or refugee

☐ Other (please write in):

[ text entry box ]

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## 17. Where did this bullying take place? (Please tick all that apply)

☐ Classroom before lessons

☐ Classroom during lessons

☐ Somewhere else in school

☐ Online/Via text

☐ Bus or walk to/from school

☐ Other (please specify):

[text box]

## 18. Are you aware of any other pupils experiencing bullying in your school?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Don't know

## 19. IF YES, do you think this bullying has ever happened because of prejudice?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Don't know

## 20. Where did this take place? (Please tick all that apply)

☐ Classroom before lessons

☐ Classroom during lessons

☐ Somewhere else in school

☐ Online/Via text

☐ Bus or walk to/from school

☐ Other (please specify):

[text box]

## 5. Reporting Bullying

## 21. Do you know how to report bullying in your school?

○ Yes

○ No

### 22. Can you report bullying confidentially in your school?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Don't know

### 23. How willing would you be to report bullying in your school?

○ Very willing

○ Willing

○ Neither willing nor unwilling

○ Unwilling

○ Very unwilling

### 24. How willing would you be to report bullying in your school if it was based on prejudice?

○ Very willing

○ Willing

○ Neither willing nor unwilling

○ Unwilling

○ Very unwilling

### 25. Have you ever reported bullying to your school? (Please tick all that apply.)

☐ Yes, that I experienced

☐ Yes, that someone else experienced

☐ No, I have not (skip to section 9: 'What works')

## 6.

**Only complete this section if you HAVE reported bullying.**

### 26. Was the bullying you reported ever because of prejudice? (If NOT, please skip to section 8: 'Response to bullying')

○ Yes

○ No (skip to section 8)

○ Don't know

## 27. If YES, was the prejudice about...? (please tick all that apply)

☐ disability

☐ pregnancy and maternity

☐ race or ethnicity

☐ religion and belief

☐ sex

☐ sexual orientation

☐ social class

☐ transgender identity

☐ travelling community (e.g. Gypsy/Traveller, Roma)

☐ asylum seeker or refugee

☐ other (please write in)

## 7. Response to bullying based on prejudice

Only complete this section if you HAVE reported bullying based on prejudice.

## 28. Have you reported bullying based on prejudice more than once?

○ Yes

○ No

## 29. Thinking of the last time you reported bullying based on prejudice, how far would you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Please tick one box on each line)

|  | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I was satisfied with how the report was handled | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Reporting the bullying helped the situation | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**30. If you were the person experiencing the bullying (if not, please skip to question 32), what did the school do when you reported it? (Please tick all that apply)**

- [ ] The school took my report seriously
- [ ] I was involved in deciding what action to take
- [ ] My parents/carers were contacted
- [ ] I gave permission for my parent/carer to be contacted
- [ ] I was offered teacher or peer support such as a 'buddy'
- [ ] The people who bullied me were disciplined
- [ ] The people who bullied me were offered support
- [ ] I was asked for feedback on how it was dealt with
- [ ] I don't know what the school did
- [ ] The school did not do anything
- [ ] Other (please write in):

**31. If you were bullied again because of prejudice, would you report it?**

- ( ) Yes
- ( ) No
- ( ) Don't Know

Please explain why you would or would not report it again:

**32. If there is anything you would like to tell us about other reports of bullying based on prejudice that you have made which have not been discussed already, please do so here:**

## 8. Response to bullying

**Only complete this section if you HAVE reported bullying, but it was NOT based on prejudice. You do not need to complete this if you have answered section 7.**

### 33. Have you reported bullying or harassment more than once?

◯ Yes

◯ No

### 34. Thinking of the last time you reported bullying, how far would you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Please tick one box on each line)

|  | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I was satisfied with how the report was handled | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Reporting the bullying helped the situation | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |

### 35. If you were the person experiencing the bullying (if not, please skip to question 37), what did the school do when you reported it? (Please tick all that apply)

☐ The school took my report seriously

☐ I was involved in deciding what action to take

☐ My parents/carers were contacted

☐ I gave permission for my parent/carer to be contacted

☐ I was offered teacher or peer support such as a 'buddy'

☐ The people who bullied me were disciplined

☐ The people who bullied me were offered support

☐ I was asked for feedback on how it was dealt with

☐ I don't know what the school did

☐ The school did not do anything

☐ Other (please write in):

### 36. If you were bullied again, would you report it?

◯ Yes

◯ No

◯ Don't Know

Please explain why you would or would not report it again:

### 37. If there is anything you would like to tell us about other reports of bullying you have made which have not been discussed already, please do so here:

## 9. What works?

We would like to hear of things that schools do to prevent bullying based on prejudice and how they deal with it if it happens. Please let us know what you think by answering the following questions.

### 38. What do you think helps schools to prevent bullying based on prejudice?

### 39. What helps you to report bullying based on prejudice to your school?

**40. Do you have any further ideas for improving how schools deal with bullying?**

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**41. Tick the options below and leave your e-mail address if you would like to:**

☐ Be entered into a prize draw for a £50 Amazon voucher

☐ Be sent a copy of the report based on this project

E-mail address

Thank you very much for taking part in this survey, your answers will help us work to improve educational experiences in Scotland.

**If you have experienced any of the issues covered in this questionnaire and would like advice or support, please contact Childline on 0800 1111 or find out more information on bullying at respect*me*'s website:http://www.respectme.org.uk/children.html**

## Appendix 5: Pupil Focus Group Guide

| TIME | FORMAT | ACTIVITY |
|---|---|---|
| 5 mins | Verbal | Introduction<br><br>We're from LGBT Youth Scotland and respect*me* (about orgs). We're here to ask you about your opinions and ideas. What we learn from you in this workshop will be used to suggest improvements for how schools across Scotland deal with bullying.<br><br>Group agreement<br><br>• Please do not name names in your examples<br><br>• Keep what's in the room, in the room<br><br>• Respect for each other's privacy, opinions and space<br><br>• Keep yourself safe – especially since we're talking about bullying. If you are struggling, it is okay to zone out for a few minutes. Please do not zone out for the whole session though.<br><br>Define bullying with them – ask for one definition and then share ours. Check for understanding. |
| 5 mins<br><br><br>5 mins | Full group discussion | Awareness of how to report Bullying<br><br>In your school, how might someone reporting bullying? (5 mins). Second facilitator to flipchart discussion.<br><br>What are some of the things that make this easy to do?<br><br>What are some of the things that make this hard to do? |
| 10 mins | Verbal | Your Rights<br><br>Has anyone heard of the Equality Act 2010? (If yes, 'Can you tell us what you know about it please?')<br><br>The law uses a very legal phrase 'protected characteristic', but this just means that it is about a part |

<table>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>of someone's identity.

Ask them if they know who is protected.

- Validate their answers when they offer them (i.e. a young person says 'gingers' or 'people who wear glasses' and the facilitator then says something to the effect of good guess. So what you picked out is that it could be about the way someone looks. That is definitely part of it. Can anyone think of other reasons that someone might need to be protected besides how they look?) and then review the protected characteristics that are included using definitions from the survey. Emphasise that the law is about everyone.

- *Prejudice* is a negative judgement about someone because of who they are or who someone thinks they are in relation to a characteristic such as race or disability.

- You are protected from discrimination if you do have that identity, but also, if someone thinks you do (for example, if someone think you have a certain religion or have a disability), or if you spend time with someone who does (like a friend, neighbour or family member).

Questions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 mins</td>
<td>Small group work</td>
<td>Their thoughts on how easy they feel it would be for their peers to report bullying

Split into 2–3 groups of around 5 (depending on numbers).

Very quick group decisions. One minute per label.

Groups are provided with a flipchart scale of 'willing' to 'unwilling' and a sheet of address labels pre-prepared with protected characteristics covered in schools. One set of labels per person.

Thinking about your school, how willing do you think you would be to report bullying you witnessed? Please place an X where you feel matches your level of willingness.</td>
</tr>
</table>

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | Now, with the labels, how willing would you be to report bullying about these forms of identity? |
| | | Discussion why they placed things where they did. Capture that on flipchart. |
| 10 mins | Group discussion | **Building the Ideal System**<br><br>We want to know what you think would make reporting bullying and harassment better in your school. We will take this information and use it to make suggestions for how things are handled across the country.<br><br>- Refer to their earlier barriers<br>- Mention any specific examples of 'hard to report' responses for protected characteristics raised<br><br>Pupils are asked to think of ways to improve reporting of bullying.<br><br>Draw this on the paper somehow – in lists, mind map or images.<br><br>- Any ideas for improving the way reporting happens or the tools used (like the forms) to report bullying. |
| 5 mins | | **Wrap-up and Close**<br><br>• Review of key points of workshop and how we will use them<br>• Thank them for taking part<br>• Tell them that they will be entered into a draw for a £50 Amazon voucher if they want. 'If interested, please write down your email address clearly on flyer'<br>• Hand out respect*me* resource |

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