

# PROTECTING CHILDREN UPDATE

Managing the safety of children and young people in schools

## Self-harmers suffer in silence

Most young people who self-harm do not tell anyone about it, according to findings from an online, self-selecting survey of young people's experiences of self-harm by ChildLine, selfharm.co.uk, YouthNet and YoungMinds.

Of the 1,398 young people who responded, 91% were girls; 86% had injured themselves, with more than half admitted to hurting themselves on a daily basis or a few times a week.

The survey revealed that 41% of young people who had hurt themselves had not told anybody about it; those who did were most likely to tell friends first. However, the majority felt this had not helped and continued to hurt themselves. Boys are significantly less likely to tell anyone about their self-harming than girls.

Respondents cited feeling depressed as the main reason for hurting themselves. Feeling lonely and family problems also accounted for a high proportion of self-injury cases. Cutting was the most common way of self-harming, with 81% adopting this method; scratching was also

high at 71%.

Speaking on behalf of the four charities, Sue Minto from ChildLine said: 'ChildLine alone has seen a 59% increase in the number of self-harm related counselling interactions in 2010-11 compared to the previous year. The overall number of ChildLine counselling interactions (across all issues) increased by 42%, so the proportion of self-harm related activity is rising at a significantly higher rate.

'Our charities are coming together to raise awareness of the range of support available for children, teenagers, parents and those working with young people.'

Between them, the charities offer helplines, online and face-to-face support and training for those who work with children and young people, and are calling on anyone who knows a young person who is, or is at risk of, injuring themselves to get in touch.

For useful practical advice, support and other links on self-harming, go to: <http://bit.ly/zXVz3W>

## Updated guidance on searching and reasonable force

The Department for Education has updated guidance on the use of reasonable force and screening, searching and confiscation, including what reasonable force is and when it can be used; and searching with and without the pupil's consent.

School staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injuring the pupil. 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.

If they are authorised by the headteacher, teachers can search without pupil consent if they have reasonable

grounds for suspecting that a pupil is in possession of a prohibited item, such as knives or weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs and stolen items. However, they must be the same sex as the pupil being searched and there must be a witness (also a staff member) who should also be the same gender as the pupil being searched where at all possible.

You can read the advice on screening, searching and confiscation at: <http://bit.ly/yzLwMh> and the updated advice on use of reasonable force at: <http://bit.ly/y8nNTt>

Issue 87 April 2012

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### From the editor

Spring is here and April's edition of *Protecting Children Update* is full of practical advice: see Tim Barker's article on the **dos and don'ts when making a referral** on page 5.

Page 7 offers an overview of two recently published research reports into **cyberbullying and pupils' use of new technologies**. One study from Beatbullying looks at cyberbullying and offers recommendations on policy and practice; the other study from NFER asks teachers questions about their pupil's use of cyberspace and asks: **is your school equipped to manage problems?** Francis Whitehead analyses both studies.

Page 9 introduces the new **teenage rape prevention programme**, 'This is abuse'. Learn about this campaign and the updated resources available.

Turn to page 10 for the second part of 'Attention seeking or attention needing?', containing a further two case studies to help you understand the potentially **damaging effect of labelling a child 'attention seeking'**.

Page 11 contains an overview of a new website offering **advice for teachers and pupils on self-harm**.

Finally, page 12 introduces the new **framework for the inspection of safeguarding** in schools. No longer a limiting judgement in its own right, safeguarding is now covered under leadership and management; however, the expectations placed on schools have not changed.

Jenni Whitehead

# NSPCC prioritises tackling sex abuse

Child sexual abuse is a public health problem which requires a coordinated, concerted and sustained response, argues the NSPCC in a review of the evidence for making child sexual abuse one of its child protection priorities.

*Sexual Abuse: a Public Health Challenge* looks at what we currently know about the causes, prevalence and consequences of sexual abuse. It points to research showing that child sexual abuse has a more negative impact on child victims if it involves a greater degree of contact, a higher number of perpetrators, the use of force or threats of death, and occurs more frequently and over a longer duration. Other evidence discussed shows that core stress response systems in the brain are affected and startle reflexes are inhibited, impacting on the child's more general development and affecting their capacity for learning and focusing attention.

There is a huge gap between service need and service provision for children and young people who have been sexually abused and are in need of therapeutic intervention to aid their recovery, with an estimated shortfall in provision of between 51,000 and 88,000 places for therapeutic support. Services are often provided too late or are less accessible for particular groups of children and young people, for example, those with disabilities and those living in rural areas. There is a lack of comprehensive information on the specific need for services and on what service interventions, in particular post assessment treatment, are effective. Service provision for children and young people with harmful sexual behaviour is patchy across the UK.

In terms of policy, the NSPCC is calling for government to collect and publish annual data from police forces showing

the number and ages of victims, and to clearly link this with the number of convictions resulting from the recorded offences. It is also calling for data to differentiate between whether the offender was an adult or a child, and to show the age gap between offender and child, their gender and their relationship with the child. The NSPCC has evidence that thousands of teenage girls who are sexually assaulted by boys do not tell anyone because they may accept abuse as part of a relationship or do not know how to stop it. Adolescents are responsible for around one-third of sex offences committed against children and, in 75% of cases, the victim will know the offender.

To read the full report, go to:  
<http://bit.ly/zhvW5V>

## Abuse affects brain growth

Childhood maltreatment or abuse is a major risk factor for depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and psychotic and personality disorders, according to new research from the Harvard University into the impact of childhood abuse on brain growth.

The research, published in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, found that the volumes of three areas of an area of the brain called the hippocampus were reduced by up to 6.5% in people repeatedly exposed to abuse as children. The hippocampus has an important role in memory and is connected to other parts of the brain that control emotional behaviour.

The Harvard researchers scanned the

brains of 193 volunteers who also completed a questionnaire used by psychiatrists to assess the number of adverse childhood experiences.

Forty-six per cent of the group reported no exposure to childhood adversity but 16% reported three or more forms of maltreatment, the most common being physical and verbal abuse from parents. Other types of abuse included corporal punishment, sexual abuse and witnessing domestic violence.

The research paper is available at:  
<http://bit.ly/A8nJ76>  
This *Guardian* report also contains links to previous research on the subject:  
<http://bit.ly/zU6NAD>

## New intervention gives results in high-need families

A new parenting intervention has been able to show good rates of improvements in children's behaviour, emotional wellbeing, according to research from the DfE's High Need Families Project.

Children with severe and persistent conduct problems living in complex family circumstances are exposed to significantly increased risk of negative outcomes, such as criminal activity, substance misuse and unemployment, and are more likely to be responsible for the significant social and economic costs associated with conduct disorder.

The programme lasted a maximum of six months and consisted of 20 individualised sessions, addressing risk factors that inhibited effective parenting and supporting change in the context of chaotic family environments. It empowered parents to help themselves and look after their families. The research shows that families became more engaged with services; 70-100% of parents and teachers found improvements in children's behaviour, emotional wellbeing, as well as in parents' goals and overall sense of wellbeing.

You can read the full report at: <http://bit.ly/yFZNc4>

## Probation services put children at risk

Child protection teams in London are not doing home visits to offenders who pose a high risk of serious harm to the public when they are released from prison, putting vulnerable children at risk.

A report published by HMI Inspectorate of Probation found that home visits had not been carried out in 76% of 124 child protection cases, and in 73% of 177 other cases where it would have been appropriate. Where an initial home visit was done, it was not timely in 57% of cases. The contribution of offender managers and other staff to

multi-agency child protection procedures was also found to be not always sufficient.

The report found that greater use of home visiting was required in the ongoing management of risk of harm to others and child protection concerns. In some cases insufficient priority was given to victim safety and the report recommended that more focus was given to this. Work by probation staff in London to counter the risk of harm posed by offenders is done well enough 70% of the time, compared to the national average of 77%.

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<http://bit.ly/xXTRSZ>

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### How schools can help combat child neglect

<http://bit.ly/xiY9R8>

School staff are well placed to recognise neglected children. Learn how to give staff a solid grounding on the issue of neglect

### Ofsted inspection of safeguarding

<http://bit.ly/zGoP9>

Our Reference Zone keeps you up to date on what Ofsted will be looking for when they visit your school

You'll need to log in to see the above pages. If you can't find your log-in details, just phone us on 0845 450 6404 or email customer.services@optimus-education.com and we'll be happy to help.

## All included in your subscription, available at all times

The screenshot shows the Optimus Education website interface. At the top, there are navigation links for Home, News, Support Services, Reference Zones, Consult the Experts, Conferences, Bookshop, and About Us. A search bar is prominently displayed. Below the search bar, there are several featured articles and promotional banners, including one for 'Safeguarding on the internet: your anti-cyberbullying duties' and another for 'Tackling self-harm in primary schools'. The website layout is clean and professional, with a focus on providing easy access to educational resources.

Protecting Children Update is now part of your Safeguarding Support Service

The screenshot shows the cover of the 'Protecting Children Update' newsletter for the 9th March 2012 issue. The cover features the title 'PROTECTING CHILDREN UPDATE' in large, bold letters. Below the title, there are several headlines for the featured articles, including 'Project will gather best practice on safeguarding', 'Include staff use of ICT in policy', and 'From the editor'. The cover also includes a 'CONTENTS' section listing various articles and their authors. The overall design is professional and informative, with a clear focus on child protection topics.

## PROTECTING CHILDREN UPDATE

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# More help for young people on domestic violence

More should be done to help teenage victims of domestic violence and to support schools to offer preventative programmes, finds a review of domestic violence in the London Borough of Hackney.

Despite under-reporting, domestic violence in Hackney accounts for 20% of all reported violent crime and Hackney has the second-highest rate of domestic violence reporting in London, compared with the families of most similar boroughs. Twenty-eight per cent of domestic violence incidents reported to the police in Hackney showed a young person as an informant or witness to an incident. Across London, 75% of children on the 'at risk' registers have domestic violence as a feature of their lives.

The establishment of the domestic violence and hate crime team within the council and the creation of the joint specialist domestic violence court with the London Borough of Tower Hamlets have had significant impact in the past two years in driving up the reporting of domestic violence and in achieving successful outcomes for the victims.

Hackney's Community Safety and Social Inclusion Scrutiny Commission, which undertook the review, acknowledges the key role of teachers in providing advice and guidance and also in supporting children and young people who are experiencing or witnessing domestic violence. It also acknowledges that issues such as gender equality, domestic violence, peer abuse, honour-based violence and female genital mutilation should be addressed in an age

appropriate way in the sex and relationships education (SRE) curriculum offer. It has requested that the trust currently running education in Hackney works with the domestic violence team to encourage and supports headteachers to provide high-quality domestic- and gender-violence preventative programmes in schools and colleges. It asks the education trust to explore how routes into schools for this information might be improved. A programme of work that has already started to engage more schools includes raising awareness of the need to include domestic violence issues in sex and relationship education (SRE), using existing headteacher and governor forums to increase knowledge of issues associated with domestic violence at a strategic level. The education trust is focusing on the developing of sex and relationships education resources and activities in schools, specifically including domestic violence.

The commission has recommended that the Local Safeguarding Children Board explore how well-targeted interventions for young people aged 16-18 who have experienced or are experiencing domestic violence can be developed and should consider creating a junior multi-agency risk assessment conference for younger victims, as it notes that notes that 16-18 year olds are averse to being treated under CYP Services.

To read the reports, go to: <http://bit.ly/AfCaWP>

## Provide evidence for early interventions

The value of investing in early intervention to improve outcomes for children, young people and families and to bring about cost savings in the longer term is widely supported but there is a lack of evidence on the cost effectiveness of different approaches, according to a review published by the National Foundation for Education Research (NFER). Potential savings increasingly need to be identified and evidenced to enable policymakers and local commissioners to make informed decisions.

For desired outcomes to be achieved, policymakers, LA officers, commissioners and practitioners must ensure, when introducing, commissioning or delivering programmes of support, that providers adhere to the programme's design. LA officers and practitioners should work with local families to develop a thorough understanding of the individual needs of different communities, as well as those shared across communities, so programmes can be targeted appropriately. This may also help engage parents and families in early intervention programmes. The report comments that the professional development of all practitioners working with children must be supported so that they acquire the skills and knowledge to be able to identify need appropriately and signpost families to suitable support services in order to help achieve the best outcomes for children and young people.

Download the report at <http://bit.ly/Ah3bGd>

## Young asylum seekers at risk of destitution

Vulnerable young people are being left homeless, hungry and forced to resort to increasingly desperate means in order to survive, reveals a report published by the Children's Society on levels of destitution among refugee, asylum-seeking and migrant children and young people.

The report was prompted by a noticeable increase in the number of destitute young people accessing The Children's Society services - between April and September 2011, 34% of young refugees supported by the Children's Society's New Londoners project were destitute, compared with 14% in the previous year (2009-10). In a recent

parliamentary question, immigration minister Damian Green explained: 'no asylum seeker need be destitute while their claim is being determined... therefore, we do not measure the incidence of destitution among the asylum seeker community.'

However, since immigration status determines access to the labour market and institutional support, it does mean that most children without a regular immigration status will have very limited access to support and vital services such as housing, education and healthcare because their parents are unable to earn income through legitimate means and

will also be unable to access benefits.

The Children's Society's support workers report great difficulties in making referrals to local authorities for migrant children and young people who are destitute. The society is concerned that some local authorities are aware of the difficulties facing destitute young people and families but do not take appropriate action to safeguard them. Social workers openly acknowledge that they do not have the resources to do so.

You can read '*I don't feel human: Experiences of destitution among young refugees and migrants at:* <http://bit.ly/ADEsze>



# Dos and don'ts when making a child protection referral

Making a referral to children's social care is not an easy task. **Tim Barker** explains what to do and what not to do with the aim of making the whole process easier

This article is written from the point of view of a social worker with many years' experience of receiving referrals from schools. Although the focus is on referrals about safeguarding issues, much of it applies equally to child in need concerns. Much of what I have to say may seem obvious and basic, but all of it is based on actual experience.

**DO: Make sure you are clear about local referral arrangements, phone numbers etc, and that these are easily accessible.** The last thing you want to be doing in an urgent situation is trying to find a phone number.

Bear in mind that children's social care (which may have different names locally) works on the basis of a child's normal home address, so if you take children from more than one authority, you will need to be clear about which authority is responsible. A further complication arises for children with disabilities, as different authorities take different approaches. In some, the children with disabilities team will take all referrals, including child protection, while in others safeguarding matters need to be referred to the referral and assessment team. If you are not sure of your local arrangements contact your local safeguarding children board, or visit their website.

**DON'T: Panic.** Safeguarding issues can be both upsetting and disorientating, particularly if you are not experienced in this type of work, so the urge to

*Reliance on memory without accurate and contemporaneous records could lead to failure to protect*

'do something' can be very strong. However it is always worth taking five minutes before your phone call to gather your thoughts and make sure you have all the relevant information in front of you – names, addresses, dates of birth of child and family members, current concerns, known history.

**DO: Understand the threshold, which is that a child may be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.** (see box below)

While referrers and children's social care may not always see eye to eye on whether a case meets the threshold, it is helpful to maintain an open dialogue. If in doubt schools should make use of sources of professional advice within the local authority.

**DO: Keep accurate and timely records of concerns.** Sometimes a referral is justified by a single incident, such as an injury. More often concerns accumulate over a period, suggesting neglect for example, and it is in these cases that record keeping is crucial. I would always recommend a standardised form which staff are trained to use to record concerns, and a system for these concerns to be regularly reviewed within school.

Ultimately the school's records may be crucial for future decisions, even in rare cases in care proceedings, and reliance on memory without accurate and contemporaneous records could lead to failure to protect.

When you make the referral you can also expect

## Significant harm

Harm is defined in Section .31 (9) of the Children Act 1989 as ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development. In this context:

- ill-treatment includes sexual abuse and other forms of ill-treatment which are not physical
- health means physical or mental health
- development includes physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development.

It is important to keep in mind that the health or development of children subject to ill-treatment may be impaired in a number of different ways. For example:

- physical abuse can lead directly to physical injury, disability and neurological damage, but has also been linked to aggressive behaviour in children, emotional, behavioural and educational problems
- emotional abuse can impact on a child's mental health, behaviour and self-esteem
- sexual abuse can cause physical injury, and can also lead to

a variety of disturbances in behaviour and emotional health

- neglect can cause impairment of physical growth, intellectual development, and social functioning.

Where the question of whether harm suffered by a child is significant turns on the child's health and development, his health or development shall be compared with that which could reasonably be expected of a similar child.

There are no absolute criteria on which to rely when judging what constitutes significant harm. Consideration of the severity of ill-treatment may include the degree and the extent of physical harm, the duration and frequency of abuse and neglect, the extent of premeditation, the degree of threat, coercion, sadism, and bizarre or unusual elements in child sexual abuse. Each of these elements has been associated with more severe effects on the child and/or relatively greater difficulty in helping the child overcome the adverse impact of the maltreatment.

to be asked about any information you hold 'about difficulties being experienced in the family/household due to domestic violence, substance misuse and/or learning disability in order to inform the decision making.' (*Working Together to Safeguard Children* <http://bit.ly/xuREWt> para 5.32)

**DON'T: Be tempted to exaggerate your concerns in order to get a response.** In my experience this can happen when schools feel their genuine concerns have not been adequately responded to, but is ultimately self-defeating. Disagreement and/or confusion over the threshold for a safeguarding referral is not uncommon, and can be very damaging. Therefore:

You should also be aware of the local arrangements for resolving disputes of this nature, laid down by the local safeguarding children board. Escalation procedures can usually be found on local safeguarding children board websites.

**DON'T: Contact the family before referral if this is likely to place the child at increased risk of harm.** This is a tricky one as in general schools should aim to work in partnership with parents and act with their consent, including agreement to making a referral. Clearly it is a matter of professional judgement whether doing so is likely to place a child at risk. If in doubt, seek professional advice. Early discussion with children's social care will enable parents to be advised in a planned way.

**DO: Follow up your referral in writing as soon as possible.** This is a statutory requirement on schools (*Safeguarding Children in Education and Safer Recruitment* <http://bit.ly/wWfsK8> Appendix 3). Most local authorities will have a referral form and you can follow up your referral using this form. If you are not sure about local arrangements contact your local safeguarding children board or visit their website.

**DON'T: Leave referrals to the end of the school day**

*Delayed referrals are probably the biggest complaint social workers have about schools, and unfortunately it is surprisingly common*

**Tim Barker is a former LA child protection adviser, who worked in children's social services for many years**

**when concerns have arisen earlier.** Delayed referrals are probably the biggest complaint social workers have about schools, and unfortunately it is surprisingly common. The result is that decisions have to be made in a hurry before the end of the working day. Often the child may have already returned home, making the social worker's job harder, and potentially placing the child at risk. So why does it happen? In small primary schools it may be due to over-reliance on one individual, the designated person, who is often also the headteacher, and as such has many other responsibilities.

I was once phoned by a deputy HT at the end of the school day about an incident that had come to light during morning break. The explanation was that the HT had been out all day at a budget meeting, and no decision could be made until she returned! In larger schools the explanation for late referrals is more likely to be about communication systems. So:

**DO: Have clear lines of responsibility and communication within schools, which ensure that concerns about harm to children are promptly and appropriately addressed.** In larger schools there is a lot to be said for a safeguarding team approach – see 'Ten survival tips for the named person' by John Guest in *Protecting Children Update*, issue 83, November 2011. As a minimum in smaller schools there need to be clear arrangements in place – including delegated decision making authority – or when the designated person is unavailable. Whatever the arrangements in place in an individual school, these need to be published and widely known within the staff group.

**DON'T: Investigate possible abuse or neglect** (*Working Together* <http://bit.ly/xuREWt> para 2.159). This is not always straightforward, as it often makes sense to check on basic facts, but to go beyond this can seriously muddy the waters, and hinder further investigations by children's social care and the police. If in doubt, take professional advice.

## Do volunteers need to be CRB checked?

### Advice from our expert panel

As with so many questions about safeguarding at the moment, there is a short answer and a long answer. The short answer is that you are advised to request CRB checks for your volunteers if they are in 'regulated activity', that is if their work involves regular contact with children 3 or 4 times in a 30 day period or once a month or more, or overnight.

The CRB and vetting and barring system is under review and due to be changed when the Protection of Freedoms Act receives Royal Assent in 2012. For the time being you should make no changes to the way you check volunteers but you should ensure you keep up to date with the proposed changes.

Other proposals include:

- Volunteers under 16 will not be eligible for CRB checks

because they should not be working unsupervised.

- The CRB certificate will be sent directly to the member of staff or volunteer, who will be able to review and dispute its contents before giving it to their potential employer.
- CRB certificates will be portable, meaning that volunteers who work in different places will not need to have separate CRB checks for each establishment. Employers will be able to access updated information online about applicants.

*Continued online at <http://bit.ly/GDIGaw>*

**Have you got a safeguarding question? Submit it at <http://bit.ly/xcecJ7> and receive a personal response from our safeguarding experts. See page 3 for more details.**

# Meeting the challenge of cyberbullying

Two new pieces of research focus on how schools are reacting to the problem of cyberbullying. **Francis Whitehead** discusses the issues for schools

The Beatbullying charity have released *Virtual Violence II: Progress and Challenges in the Fight against Cyberbullying*, which looks at the issue of cyberbullying and the use of mobile phone technology in bullying, and the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) have published *Protecting Children Online: Teachers' Perspectives on E-safety*. Both reports provide some insight into the nature of cyberbullying and how schools are facing the challenge.

## Virtual Violence II

The Beatbullying report found that nearly one in three 11- to 16-year-olds has been deliberately targeted, threatened or humiliated by an individual or group through the use of mobile phones or the internet. The effects of bullying can be seen, with 20% of victims saying it has resulted in them becoming reluctant to go to school, and 14% feeling they would be unsafe at school; 5% of victims reported self-harming, and 3% attempt suicide as a result of their bullying.

Even more disturbingly, for a quarter of these victims the experience was ongoing, meaning that one in 13 children were persistently cyberbullied – ie they were bullied for many months, and in some cases for over a year.

There have been a number of high-profile cases where the victim has committed suicide or has attempted suicide, but researchers are beginning to understand the other effects of cyberbullying on children and young people, including:

- increased isolation,
- poor educational attainment,
- self-destructive behaviour.

The report also states that new forms of bullying have emerged such as 'sexting', where children and young people produce and circulate sexual content via the phone or over social networking websites. A third of the children in this study report having received unwanted, 'nasty' images involving sexual activity. The Beatbullying survey revealed a number of high risk groups:

- Pupils with special educational needs are 16% more likely to be persistently cyberbullied.
- Pupils receiving free school meals are 13% more likely to be persistently cyberbullied.
- White non-British ethnic background all reported a higher incident of persistent cyberbullying.

On a more general note the survey found that girls were twice as likely to be persistently bullied. Beatbullying identifies a number of social networking websites where bullying frequently takes place, with the MSN instant messenger

service and Bebo social networking site being among the worst offenders. YouTube is also identified as a site where footage of bullying incidents has been posted.

## Policy reforms

Beatbullying proposes a number of policy reforms to combat cyberbullying:

- Websites need to design better and clearer reporting mechanisms for children. The moderation of websites should be transparent and sanctions for misuse and abuse should be clearly displayed and enforced. Active and transparent referral for the victims of cyberbullying to support and assistance portals such as CyberMentors, CEOP and ChildLine should be standard across the industry.
- Safety nets for those young people targeted in cyberspace should be available, including: counsellor services, textual and audiovisual advice sites or peer-to-peer online support networks. These services should be appropriate for children well-versed in using digital technology and accessible to those likely to feel isolated from their peers and responsible adults.
- Innovative anti-bullying programmes should be adequately resourced. Educating children in an engaging manner to properly recognise their role in bullying and its negative impacts is crucial as is early and decisive interventions to redirect the social power held by children toward more constructive ends.

More research is needed in respect of the cyberbullying of the vulnerable groups identified by the survey, followed by targeted intervention work with these groups to support those affected and redirect behaviours.

A shared responsibility for reducing the occurrence and harmful effects of cyberbullying and harmful online behaviour and content needs to be established, this includes families and responsible adults. There is a need to put in place a range of policies and initiatives to increase the knowledge, understanding, skills and confidence of adults, and parents in particular, to help them educate young people to stay safe using new technologies.

## Beatbullying's recommendations for schools

Given that cyberbullying is happening how best might a school position itself to cope with the issue? The Beatbullying organisation aims to address this question in its report. Its recommendations include:

- Schools having a designated teacher responsible for anti-bullying work who can oversee the school's bullying prevention and intervention plan.

*The effects of bullying can be seen, with 20% of victims saying it has resulted in them becoming reluctant to go to school, and 14% feeling they would be unsafe at school; 5% of victims reported self-harming, and 3% attempt suicide as a result of their bullying*

- Schools having procedures and mechanisms for recording and reporting of incidents of bullying and cyberbullying.
- All behaviour, anti-bullying and acceptable use policies to contain reference to cyberbullying.
- Schools to oversee the provision of training, support and guidance in dealing with bullying, including cyberbullying, to all teachers to allow them to better identify, resolve and prevent incidents involving children within their care.
- Schools to provide more training programmes to raise awareness about cyberbullying in particular.

### Providing peer support

CyberMentors is the latest project by Beatbullying. CyberMentors.org.uk is a traditional mentoring system delivered via a social networking site. Young people aged 11-25 are trained as cybermentors, in schools and online, so that they can offer support to their peers. Peer mentoring is already established in many schools and Beatbullying reports that in the first six months of its CyberMentors website being up and running over 179,000 users visited the site and over 110,000 individual messages were sent between registered users and their ever-expanding mentoring team.

Through the website children are able to talk to a person who understands them through a medium that they understand and are familiar with. Speaking to a peer online also reduces the stigma that many victims feel because they are not having to speak face-to-face with someone.

### Schools inadequately prepared

The NFER's report is based on an online survey of teachers carried out in January 2012. Eleven questions relating to e-safety, cyberbullying, student use of social media and mobile phones were asked. More than 1,300 teachers took part in the survey, and the group was divided between primary and secondary teachers for comparison.

According to the NFER report it would seem some schools are not adequately prepared to tackle the issue of cyberbullying, with 23% of primary school teachers feeling they have not received enough training regarding e-safety. Within secondary schools that figure is even higher, at 33%.

Respondents were asked if their school has a designated e-safety lead person who they can go to for advice; 68% of all respondents said 'yes', but a worrying 13% responded in the negative, and a further 19% did not know. Broken down across primary and secondary the situation is surprising in that 78% of primary schools said they have an e-safety lead person but only 54% of secondary schools report having an e-safety lead.

As one would expect more children in secondary than in primary to be regularly using new technologies it is hard to see why there are far fewer e-safety leads across secondary schools.

A similar issue is reported in respect of how many teachers know how to report abuse: 74% of

primary teachers said they know how to report abuse whereas only 66% of teachers from secondary schools reported this knowledge.

Only 47% of teachers reported that they thought their pupils would know how to report abuse.

### Is it good to have mobile phones in school?

Fifty-seven per cent of teachers agreed that it was good for pupils to have mobile phones in school but 53% of them agreed that there is a growing problem with children using their mobiles during the school day and 69% reported that it was difficult to control what pupils access on their phones during the school day. Teachers clearly recognise that the phone is useful for emergencies and understand the advantage of pupils carrying them but also recognise that they are not able to control what pupils are accessing, and as most phones allow access to the internet this is a concern.

### Concern about social networking sites

The report shows that teachers are concerned about children using social networking sites and the amount of time their pupils are spending on such sites. Primary school teachers are concerned that despite the fact that most social networking sites say you have to be 13 to join, many of their pupils are regularly accessing such sites.

The survey also addressed the use of such sites by teachers; 59% of respondents said they have a social networking profile that only their friends can see, 49% said they didn't have a profile and 1% said that they had two profiles, one that only friends can access and one that pupils from school can see. Only 1% of teachers reported being happy about pupils contacting them through such sites and only 1% of teachers reported having experienced pupils leaving inappropriate comments on their profiles.

Secondary school teachers are generally more at ease with the use of social networking sites, with 71% reporting that they felt they were a good way for pupils to communicate with friends.

### Conclusions

The findings of both studies should inform development work in schools. The Beatbullying study calls on schools to establish clearer policies around the use of new technologies and to take on board the need to tackle cyberbullying that occurs both in and out of school. This recognises that the bullying that occurs outside school will inevitably spill over into school and also recognises that bullying will affect the pupil's attainment at school as well as being damaging to the child's overall wellbeing.

The NFER report shows that teachers are very concerned about their pupils' use of new technologies but also reveals that many teachers feel that they have not been offered appropriate training in e-safety and that many schools do not have the support of a lead person for e-safety issues.

*Primary school teachers are concerned that despite the fact that most social networking sites say you have to be 13 to join, many of their pupils are regularly accessing such sites*

### Further information

- *Virtual Violence (Beatbullying)* can be downloaded via <http://bit.ly/wyknBD>

- *Protecting Children Online (NFER)* can be downloaded via <http://bit.ly/ynYEIG>



# New campaign seeks to educate young people about sexual violence

The Home Office has announced the re-run of the 'This is abuse' campaign.

**Jenni Whitehead** gives an overview of the campaign and how schools can get involved

'This is abuse' is a powerful campaign and I really hope schools take advantage of it. You will probably remember the last time it was run, with adverts on the television and radio.

This new campaign is riding on the back of the Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) action plan but has updated the materials and resources including the dedicated website for young people.

The VAWG action plan seeks to prevent violence against women and girls happening in the first place by:

- changing attitudes, behaviours and practices which contribute to VAWG by means of appropriate challenge; and
- increasing public understanding of VAWG by putting in place focused awareness-raising initiatives which include looking at its root causes, hidden nature and economic cost to society.

This campaign seeks to:

- develop education and awareness-raising campaigns on rape and sexual assault. It aims to build on recommendations in the Stern Review (independent review into how complaints of rape are handled by public authorities in England and Wales) to spread awareness of the law amongst the public – and in particular young people – to ensure basic elements of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 are understood
- prevent teenagers from becoming victims and perpetrators of sexual violence and abuse
- encourage teenagers to rethink their views of rape, sexual assault violence and abuse and direct them to places for help and advice.

The campaign builds on the government's teenage relationship abuse (TRA) campaign to specifically focus on rape and sexual violence that young people experience (see <http://bit.ly/ezKFIh>). Never heard of it? I am not surprised – despite being specifically developed around teenagers it is on the Home Office website not the DfE!

## Key messages

Back in 2011 the NSPCC published *Standing on My Own Two Feet*, probably the first in-depth research looking at young people's attitudes towards violence in relationships. The findings of this research were shocking. Not only did it find that young people were experiencing violence within their relationships and that violence included sexual assault, it also described the young people's attitude towards the use of violence. The research raised worrying issues about the level of acceptance of

violence and the lack of understanding that sexual behaviour that is forced on a person constitutes assault and possibly rape.

The new campaign aims to get across a number of key messages including:

- pressurising someone to engage in sexual activity is never acceptable
- sex with a person who doesn't want to or someone who hasn't given their consent is rape regardless of whether they are in an established relationship
- rape does not have to involve physical force – using emotional, verbal pressure to have sex with someone who doesn't want to is rape
- being sexually assaulted or raped is never the victim's fault
- sexual assault should always be challenged and reported.

## The website

The campaign's website offers a range of posters and a very useful leaflet for parents who may be concerned about their teenager. These are easily ordered from the site and I would encourage schools to display them.

The website itself is interactive, containing polls, interactive games and an online (moderated) discussion forum where young people can share their reactions to the adverts and share their experiences. The videos have been updated and one of them now deals more directly with rape. The only pitfall of the videos is that they require access to YouTube and some teachers may have to seek permission to access them.

## Use in schools

The resources available will prove very useful in sex and relationships teaching, but I must point out that the videos and posters are hard-hitting and are meant to provoke discussion and debate.

Some pupils may find the materials particularly distressing, if they are in an abusive relationship or have experienced abuse in the past. For this reason I suggest that where schools use the resources, careful thought needs to be given to the likely reaction from individual pupils. If as a class teacher you intend to use the materials with a particular class, it is worth running the idea past your named person for child protection and past your pastoral leads as they may be able to alert you to possible reactions from individual pupils.

I would also suggest that these materials should not be used without two members of staff being present, allowing for one person to offer support to any student who becomes distressed.

*The resources available will prove very useful in sex and relationships teaching. The videos and posters are hard-hitting and are meant to provoke discussion and debate*

Visit the dedicated web-site at <http://thisisabuse.direct.gov.uk>

# Attention seeking or attention needing? Two more case studies

Children are sometimes described as 'attention seeking', but does this labelling damage our view of the child and does it allow us to ignore a child who actually needs attention? In the second of two articles, [Jenni Whitehead](#) discusses the risks of labelling children inappropriately with reference to two cases she has known

## The theory

The theory behind ignoring attention seekers is that if you give them attention for a particular behaviour it reinforces that behaviour. We know from child development that the crying baby if ignored will eventually give up. There is a point, however, where this would be damaging to the baby and we would call the totally unresponsive carer neglectful. There has to be a balance. If by ignoring we really mean not reacting to unacceptable behaviour but trying to distract the child with another activity alongside making a point of praising the child when they do behave well, then most of us will be familiar with this model of working. However, when I hear the sentence 'Just ignore him, he's attention seeking', it usually means just that, and in my opinion simply ignoring behaviour doesn't work.

## Labelling

By referring to children as 'attention seeking' we label them, and unfortunately this label tends to stick. Once labelled the child can easily be dismissed – ignored because that's what we are told to do with 'attention seeking' children. Children who are attention needing are likely to have to escalate their behaviour to call people's attention to their plight.

## Case study: self-harm

Some children and young people seem to have a self-destruct button which can take many different forms of self-harm. Self-harm is quite definitely an attention needing behaviour, but I have heard young self-harmers described as attention seeking. I remember how a member of staff at a unit found herself sat in a girl's bedroom listening to a tale of grief about not having any friends. I have to say that this particular girl made it very difficult for anyone to like her. She would start a new friendship and after a few weeks would set about destroying it. She was what the girls described as a 'stirrer'. She would manipulate the other girls in the unit, setting one against the other by telling tales about them or by spreading malicious rumours and suggesting someone else was doing it.

She loved to be the centre of attention and to be considered both the 'hardest' girl in the unit and the one that got things 'sorted' but actually this was usually after she had caused the problem.

It was really unusual to see her cry and the member of staff sat for nearly an hour listening to

*Children who are attention needing are likely to have to escalate their behaviour to call people's attention to their plight*

her tale of woe. However, she wasn't sure whether she too was being manipulated. It was nearly half past 12 when the member of staff decided to call it a day. The girl was now very sleepy so the member of staff pulled up her covers and tucked her in like a small child.

She had just got to the door when the girl whispered, 'Please don't leave me.'

The member of staff said, 'Well, I have spent quite some time with you and I need to check everyone else is OK.'

The girl replied, 'But I feel sick.'

The member of staff got her a bowl and she was sick. The vomit looked strange, very white.

'What have you eaten?' the member of staff asked.

The girl looked very droopy and it clicked. She had taken a huge overdose of paracetamol. She was taken to hospital and had her stomach pumped out. The doctor thought she had already got rid of a lot from vomiting.

This girl recovered and the member of staff did a lot of work with her about relationships.

The point is, if the member of staff had continued sitting there, would she have said anything? On the other hand if the 'attention seeking' label had kicked in, would she have been left to get on with it? The member of staff gave her the benefit of doubt by listening to her sorry tale and I think this attention and the relief she found in it was just enough to tip the balance. Being alone to die scared her and the member of staff's threat of leaving was perhaps enough for her to want to take a chance at living.

## Case study: a girl with severe and complex disabilities

Mary is 12 years old. She attends a school for young people with severe and complex disabilities and health needs. She isn't able to speak but can make some noises. Her teachers are trying to help establish a communication method with her using her eye movements from side to side, which she has quite good control over, and through her finger tapping and twisting.

Mary's mum tries hard but gets very frustrated and has been heard to shout at Mary. The finger tapping is fairly constant and while mum will put objects in front of Mary to see if she is asking for that thing she soon gives up. Mum often interprets the finger tapping as 'attention seeking'. ▷

# Straightforward online advice for young people who self-harm

There is a growing recognition of self-harm in schools but where can pupils and teachers seek information and advice? **Jenni Whitehead** gives a brief overview of a useful new website

A growing number of schools are reporting that they have pupils who self-harm and that it is difficult to know how best to help them. The behaviour is often hidden and it is difficult for young people to come forward to ask for help. It is for this reason that I want to introduce the selfharm.co.uk website.

You will of course want to make referrals to your local young people's mental health services and this service does not replace such services, but it does offer a place that young people can visit by themselves.

It is a web-based project dedicated to supporting young people affected by self-harm, providing a safe space to talk, ask any questions and be honest about what's going on in their life.

The website is the first part of a plan to provide support and services both for young people, parents and professionals.

The site offers straightforward advice on self-harm and children and young people can post their own stories photos and videos. The site is moderated and includes a panel of volunteer experts who oversee the website and answer individual users' questions.

The website emerged from the work of LCET, a local charity based in Luton. LCET aims to work

*A growing number of schools are reporting that they have pupils who self-harm and that it is difficult to know how best to help them*

with the emotional and social needs of young people. In 2009 it was recognised that LCET was getting more and more requests for support from outside their local area and funding was sought to develop a national programme.

The development of a website was a key part of the charity's vision:

- 'to create a safe, pro-recovery site for people to use to communicate with
- others and express their experiences through the use of video blogs, stories, poetry and art.'

The charity's next goal is to develop an online therapeutic programme that would allow young people from all over the UK to be placed within a regular online group, and engage with real professionals in real time in order to explore the deeper issues surrounding self-harm and to empower and enable them to seek support in their local area.

Selfharm.co.uk has a number of well-developed training programmes that can be provided to schools and colleges and these are described on the web site. The site also provides links to other support sites and services.

Visit the site at [www.selfharm.co.uk](http://www.selfharm.co.uk)

◁ However, two members of staff are convinced that they can help Mary develop her communication skills by using the movement that she has in her arms and hands and picture boards.

After many weeks of perseverance from Mary and staff she is able to establish that a glance to the left means 'yes' or 'I like' and a glance to the right means the opposite. Once this is achieved the picture boards are much more successful and Mary also starts to make different noises in response to different objects of reference.

The finger tapping and twisting continue but now seem to start making sense. The tapping was a way of asking for help and the twisting of her fingers seemed to be associated with being bored.

Mary's mum found this whole process very difficult and it was a long time before she accepted that Mary was indeed communicating her needs. A full year later all of the hard work with mum and Mary began to pay off. Mum eventually admitted that in some ways it had been easier for her to manage if she treated Mary as a baby without any form of communication.

*Instead of seeing Mary's movements as just attention seeking, mum now takes great pride in her daughter's abilities and achievements*

Mary had not spent much time in school during her primary years. She had had a number of operations and a considerable amount of time off being poorly. Any previous attempts at developing communication with Mary had been sabotaged by mum not working together with the staff. The staff noticed an all-round improvement in Mary, including her appearance. Instead of seeing Mary's movements as just attention seeking, mum now took great pride in her daughter's abilities and achievements: 'I was going to put her some trousers on but she wanted to wear a dress!'

The first part of this article appeared in the March edition of *Protecting Children Update*

Access more child protection case studies at <http://bit.ly/GPocvi>, <http://bit.ly/GMcejh> and <http://bit.ly/GFYmaX>

# Inspection of safeguarding under the new Ofsted framework

Ofsted's inspection framework was revised in January 2012. [Jenni Whitehead](#) examines the changes

Under the new Ofsted framework safeguarding judgements contribute to the overall judgement of leadership and management, and will be tested under the new framework judgement on behaviour and safety. There has been some questioning of the new position of safeguarding in inspections. Some professionals see the move away from having safeguarding as a limiting judgement as a lowering of its importance. However, the government's view is that this move aims to embed safeguarding within management and leadership.

In its briefing for Section 5 inspections, Ofsted describes safeguarding in its broadest sense, including issues for schools such as:

- pupils' health and safety
- bullying
- racist abuse
- harassment and discrimination
- use of physical intervention
- meeting the needs of pupils with medical conditions
- providing first aid
- drug and substance misuse
- educational visits
- intimate care
- internet safety
- issues which may be specific to a local area or population, for example gang activity
- appropriate arrangements to ensure school security, taking into account the local context.

The list above gives a strong indication of the way judgements will be made in respect of behaviour and safety and inspectors will expect schools to evidence the work they have done or are doing across these areas.

Inspectors will talk to pupils and parents about behaviour at school and about how safe they feel in school.

## Leadership and management: the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures

Ofsted inspections will expect a school's leaders and managers to have a clear understanding of their statutory responsibilities regarding safeguarding and to be able to evidence the steps they are taking to develop good practice beyond the statutory minimum.

Governing bodies must ensure that the school has policies and procedures in place in accordance with the DfE guidance *Safeguarding Children in Education and Safer Recruitment* (2007). The new framework acknowledges that the 2007 guidance will be updated following the passing of the

*Some professionals see the move away from having safeguarding as a limiting judgement as a lowering of its importance. However, the government's view is that this move aims to embed safeguarding within management and leadership*

To read *Inspection of Safeguarding under the New Ofsted Framework: Briefing for Section 5 Inspections and supporting information* go to <http://bit.ly/xXNrwa> and download the accompanying zip file

Protection of Freedoms Bill which makes major changes in respect of CRB checks and other recruitment practices.

The 2007 guidance indicates that safer practice in recruitment should be reflected in every stage of the process, and inspectors will expect schools to evidence that all required checks have been carried out and recorded in a central register.

This framework points out that there is no requirement for schools to carry out retrospective checks on current staff – the necessary checks are those that were in force at the time the appointment was made; and that there has never been a statutory requirement for CRB disclosure certificates to be renewed.

I think this will be news for most schools and local authorities, who at present routinely renew CRB checks every three years!

The DfE has obviously recognised this as an issue and promise to strengthen its new guidance to deter schools from such routine re-checks, which are considered to be a poor use of resources. Inspectors have been reminded that they should avoid giving any impression that Ofsted considers such routine re-checks to be good practice.

Inspectors will check the school's single central register record early in the inspection with the expectation that it will be complete and meet statutory requirements. However, minor administrative errors will be pointed out and the school will be given time to rectify them before the end of the inspection.

The framework points out that it remains a criminal offence for a school to employ a person who they know has been barred from working in regulated activity; and reminds schools of their statutory duty to inform the ISA if they permanently remove a person from regulated activity (or where a person leaves while under investigation) for allegedly causing harm or posing a risk of harm.

## All staff

The new framework reminds us that the Laming Report (2009) emphasised that safeguarding is 'everybody's responsibility' and Ofsted therefore expects every person working at a school to know how to respond and who to contact if they have concerns about a child. Ofsted inspectors will then expect to see evidence of safeguarding being part of every member of staff's induction and training.

Greater emphasis is placed on teaching children how to keep themselves safe in this framework and on ensuring children understand what behaviour towards them is unacceptable.