

CHESHIRE

anti.
bullying
COMMISSION

stand
UP
not
back

Phase One
Report



David Keane
Police & Crime
Commissioner
for Cheshire

Foreword

We are seeing an increase in bullying not just in our schools but also in the work place. Research now reveals that one in six children have been bullied at school in the last 12 months while a third of adults have been subject to workplace bullying at some time in their careers.



We're also seeing the nature and intensity of bullying changing. Gone are the days when you could go home from school or work to a safe place away from bullies, internet technology now means bullies can operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week bringing a constant source of distress and worry for victims.

In the increasingly digital world we're currently living in due to the Covid-19 pandemic, there are even more opportunities for people to be targeted online.

This issue is becoming an epidemic among all generations in our society. There has been a number of cases where bullying has resulted in tragic events such as suicide and self-harm. This should not be happening; more needs to be done to protect both children and adults from bullying.

All law enforcement agencies, education establishments and employers have a role to play in providing better protection for their residents, pupils or staff members.

I am proud to have set up Cheshire's first Anti-Bullying Commission and I am proud of the work the Commission has undertaken so far. As a result of this first phase, focused on under 25s, the Commission has identified a set of recommendations which I believe can achieve real change for our young people in Cheshire and beyond.

I would like to thank Alan Yates for his leadership as Chair of the Commission, our dedicated Commission members and importantly, all those residents who shared their experiences and thoughts throughout the call for evidence.

It is crucial now that we work together to ensure these are not just words in a report but actions to make a difference for our communities.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be 'D. Keane'.

David Keane
POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

Foreword

I am proud to be part of the Cheshire Anti-Bullying Commission and would like to thank Commission colleagues and the many contributors to the knowledge and information gathering process. Most importantly the brave young people who responded so eloquently to the call for evidence. We have all learned a lot.

This first report shines a light on the various forms of bullying that exist, raises awareness of the damage it causes to the victims and our community and offers a way forward towards a more caring, tolerant and safe society that values all people. It focuses on under 25s and will be followed by further reports exploring the issues in the working population and the retired sector.

Bullying by its very nature thrives by not being in the spotlight; it has become an almost taboo subject that even victims are reluctant to admit is happening. It robs a person of their self-esteem making it impossible for them to function. The most common reason a person becomes a target of bullying is because they are different. The traumatic effects of bullying can stay with a person throughout their life with sometimes tragic consequences. Equally, help for a bully or potential bully is not easily found.

It is a very complex issue that is currently being addressed by a number of agencies, often working in isolation, with incomplete information. Individual voices need to be heard and all agencies involved need to share information and act together to ensure early identification of vulnerability and enable intervention. It is vital for the well-being our society.

We recognise that this report is only one step in raising awareness of the issue but believe that the discussion that it will generate will encourage a wider local and national debate, which will lead us towards a community that adopts a pro-active stance towards bullying. Reports, listens and intervenes. Stands Up Not Back. In short, a happy place to live and work.

Alan Yates
CHAIR OF THE COMMISSION



Introduction

We know that bullying is a very complex issue that is often addressed by a number of agencies, working in isolation, with incomplete information.

There is an urgent need for a coordinated approach if we are to achieve a caring society in which all individuals are afforded the tolerance, respect and support needed to achieve their full potential and live a happy and fulfilled life. It is vital for the well-being of our society. Individual voices need to be heard and all agencies involved need to share information and act together to ensure early identification of vulnerability and enable intervention.

Cheshire Anti-Bullying Commission, founded in May 2019 by Police and Crime Commissioner David Keane, has set out to take a closer look at the issue on behalf of Cheshire residents. The aim was to identify ways individuals and organisations can work more effectively together to support those who have been impacted by bullying, prevent such behaviour in the first place and intervene to address the behaviour of those perpetrating it.

This report is a progress report on the Commission's work and sets out the Commission's recommendations for change following the first phase, alongside a proposal that all organisations in Cheshire sign up to an Anti-Bullying Charter to show their commitment to eradicate bullying in our society.

The Commission recognises that taking on the topic of bullying is a huge task. As such the work has been split into three phases:

Phase 1

Under 25s

Phase 2

Bullying in the workplace

Phase 3

Over 65s

**giving
you a
voice.**





The Commission

Alan Yates

Independent Chair

David Keane

Police & Crime Commissioner

Darren Martland

Chief Constable

Ali Stathers-Tracey

Director of Prevention & Early Help, Cheshire East Council

Jasbir Dhesi

Principle/CEO Cheshire College (South and West) (Not pictured)

Meghan Earps

Cheshire Youth Commissioner Member

ClIr Mallie Poulton

Local elected representative

Dr Mike Eslea

Senior Lecturer in Psychology, University of Central Lancashire

Support to the Commission was provided by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire.



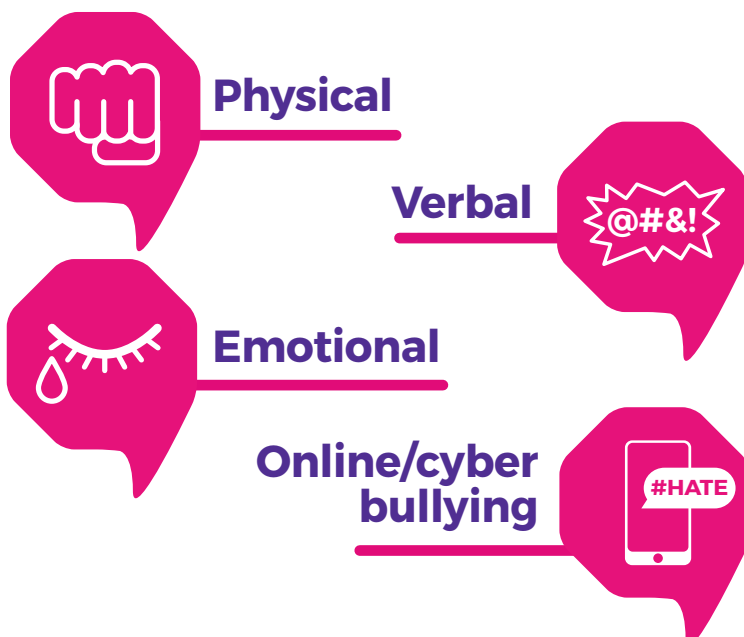
What is Bullying?

Whilst the Commission acknowledges that bullying is complex and often a multi-faceted act, it believes that there is a need to simply describe the key components to support public understanding and awareness. As such the Commission has adopted the following definition of bullying encompassing three elements:



In discussing what bullying is with the Commission, young people referred to people being rude to each other, calling people offensive names, being prejudiced, people being judgmental, judging people on appearance, not being open minded and not respecting others.

Types of bullying experienced/discussed by those taking part in this call-for-evidence included:



My experience was chronic - it was everyday...



...abuse sounds like a harsh word but that's what it was!

Call for Evidence

As part of the review of bullying, the Commission opened a call-for-evidence to give those with experiences of bullying the opportunity to tell their story. This included:

89 Online Evidence Submissions

More than
30
Community engagement events

Pledges and notes from school pupils during Anti Bullying week

7 hours of video evidence collected across Cheshire

Engagement and consultation with Cheshire Youth Commission

tell your story.



Call for Evidence - Key Findings

- Bullying is a serious issue that has both short term and life-long impacts on its victims.
- It takes many forms including physical, verbal and emotional bullying, along with an increase more recently in cyber/internet based bullying.
- Whilst some felt support was available, many felt there was a lack of support and/or barriers to accessing the support available.
- More support is needed to help those experiencing bullying, but many feel more support/help needs to also be targeted towards the bullies themselves.
- Currently, it is felt there is a lack of local support in the community and young people question where they would go outside of school if they needed support.
- A campaign to raise awareness is required. There is a need for greater awareness and understanding of what constitutes bullying, with education needed for victims, bullies themselves, parents/teachers and all those working in a setting with young people.
- Participants felt there was not a 'one size fits all' approach and that options need to be available in order to meet individual needs.
- The need for education on bullying should begin at a young age and be part of the curriculum.
- Greater awareness of support available and publicity on who to contact/options of where to go for support is also required.
- Participants were keen to see an accessible counselling website, helpline, social media support page, group chats etc. where those experiencing bullying can go, potentially anonymously, for help and support.
- Those experiencing bullying need to be encouraged to 'speak-up' knowing they will be listened to and have confidence that support will be available.
- Using case studies, where bullying had been reported and resolved successfully, would be beneficial in giving victims confidence that there was a way forward.

What the Call for Evidence Heard

Walking from one class to another - you walked through groups of people - they couldn't just let you walk past - they had to snipe - it is like a pressure pot and the steam just keeps building.

I used to be bullied a lot at high school because I am autistic - called names such as retard. They didn't understand what autism was and why I am different so picked on me.

I would get bullied relentlessly because I didn't look as pretty as everyone else or because I didn't fit in as much - as I had different interests.

I was ashamed to tell anyone as I thought it would get worse and that it was my fault.

There was a lot of physical abuse and emotional abuse - the names - they even made songs up that they chanted at me. It was brutal and the teachers had no control of it whatsoever.

You can tell teens all the help in the world is out there but if they don't feel safe talking to a teacher or even in their home life, things are tricky.

I would go to school in the morning dreading seeing her and her friends. I'd be anxious and worried about the possible things she would do.

My friend tried to change the way she dressed to make it stop. They just started to pick on her for different things.

Cyber bullying is worse - protected - not to your face.... I was terrified to go to school the next day.

So much is online we teachers can't monitor what they are watching or seeing out of school.

You think nobody will believe what you are saying and you feel embarrassed that it is happening to you.

This has come back and hit me really hard in my 30s to which I suffer severe anxiety and depression to this current day.

Research Findings

To inform its' recommendations the Commission has also undertaken pieces of research to help it understand what best practice looks like in terms of intervention to address bullying in schools and to identify what similarities were present in serious case reviews. It has also looked at research related to where bullying has been considered a factor in young people either taking or attempting to take their own life.

Anti-Bullying Interventions in Schools – Research Findings

Initial research was undertaken by the Commission with the support of Dr Eslea. In reviewing the effectiveness of school based programmes, the Commission acknowledged that the most recent research does not identify a wholly positive picture in terms of the success rates of programmes.

The Commission did, however, identify key themes in the programmes which were a success both in the academic reviews and in practice viewed by the Commission Chair in Cheshire schools and colleges:

- Whole school approach targeted at the entire school community.
- Delivered at school, class room and individual level.
- Had an ethos of prevention, intervention and monitoring.
- Focused on awareness, problem solving, building empathy, resilience and restorative practice.

Serious Case Reviews

The Commission identified the following key similarities within serious case reviews where bullying was seen to be a feature:

- Missed opportunities for early intervention due to interested parties not engaging with partner agencies.
- The lack of information sharing between partner agencies which, had information been disclosed properly or promptly may have identified concerns earlier.
- The need for a 'holistic' approach that includes all agencies being involved in the care plan.
- A lack of understanding of partner agencies in the impact or involvement of cyber bullying in some of the children's lives.

Recommendations



David Keane
Police & Crime
Commissioner
for Cheshire

Police and Crime Commissioner

To lobby the Government to:

- Increase investment in children and young people's mental health services.
- Improve internet safety to make it harder for young people to search and access information providing instructions on how to self-harm or take their own life.
- Require social media sites such as Instagram, Twitter and Facebook to adopt a feature which offers real-time, in-the-moment help and advice on whatever a child is typing. For example if a child is typing something which might be upsetting to the person receiving it or is using language which suggests they might be upset or in trouble.

Anti-Bullying Commission

- To develop, design, launch and scrutinise a Cheshire Anti-Bullying Charter outlining the high level principles to tackle bullying. This is to be signed up-to by leaders across Cheshire including the Police and Crime Commissioner, Emergency Services, Local Enterprise Partnership, Chambers of Commerce, Businesses and every local councillor at all levels.
- To carry-out further research to establish:
 - The link between socio-economic communities and reports of bullying, whether the presence of Junior Safety Officers or Mini Police are supportive factors in schools.
 - If faith schools or SEND schools experience the same level of bullying incidents to mainstream schools.
- To launch a Pan-Cheshire strap line 'Stand Up Not Back' as part of a Cheshire wide approach to combat bullying.
- To undertake an audit of evidence-based interventions in place in Cheshire to address the behaviour of those who commit bullying.
- To work with public sector partners to develop a pan-Cheshire anti-bullying campaign focused on enhancing awareness, providing consistency of support and effective referral to support services.

Education establishments

- To develop school / college based programmes to address bullying, encompassing the key themes of evidence based practice, namely:
 - Whole school approach targeted at the entire school community.
 - Delivered at school, class room and individual level.
 - Ethos of prevention, intervention and monitoring.
- Focused on awareness, problem solving, building empathy, resilience and restorative practice.
- Engages external expert agencies and support services.
- To work with Cheshire Constabulary to focus on prevention by targeting years 6, 7 and 8 to emphasise values, such as; tolerance, equality, respect for others and respect for self, and reinforce existing anti-bullying approaches. In doing so:
 - Increase knowledge of school policies in regards to anti-bullying procedures and how this is shared with parents.
 - Work with schools and youth groups to identify good practice and effective ways of getting messages to young people.
 - Consider peer to peer approaches as an effective strategy to capture the opinions of young people and influence future behaviours in a positive way.

Local authorities

- To work with Cheshire Constabulary to develop a multi-agency problem solving approach to improve the early identification of those at risk of bullying and those who have been repeat victims - this should include taking learning from processes such as Operation Enhance.
- To explore further training opportunities in collaboration with Cheshire Constabulary and other public sector agencies to develop training for PCSOs, Youth and Family Support Workers and teachers or lead teachers.
- To work with Cheshire Constabulary and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner to develop a toolkit to ensure consistent responses to bullying focused on:
 - Early intervention and prevention.
 - Promoting restorative and meaningful interventions which efficiently tackle the existing bullying issues.
- Developing interventions that target those who undertake bullying behaviour:
 - Multi-agency involvement to avoid criminalising young people where possible or the police being used as a punishment.
 - Complement responses with the use of support to increase personal resilience and coping strategies for those being bullied.
 - Responses to be tailored to each situation and recognise the individual impact, harm reduction and level of support required.
 - Monitoring to measure or improve the effectiveness.
- Work with Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) to commission free, safe and anonymous online counselling services and support for young people.



- To enhance the PCSO offer to ensure schools are embedded in PCSOs' community engagement on a routine basis to build better connectivity and confidence.
- To produce training videos for police officers to develop best practice and take learning from the outcomes of recent Coroner's Reports and Serious Case Reviews.
- To take part in a national NPCC research project looking at the impact of police delivering PHSE lessons, in order to assist in the development of an evidence base for police work in schools.
- Cheshire Constabulary Safer Schools Partnership to support PCSO coaches in enhancing PCSO engagement in Cheshire schools.
- To encourage engagement by identifying the schools, which are not actively involved with Cheshire Constabulary Safer Schools Project or local police in general to strengthen links. In doing so:
 - Support PCSOs to develop existing contact and make new connections in their areas.
 - Raise awareness with frontline officers about the role of the Youth Engagement Officer and how they can provide assistance.
 - Identify blockages to engagement such as language barriers, lack of parental support and knowledge gaps.
 - Work with schools to identify trends and hotspots for bullying.
- To provide clear guidance to be distributed to local authority and education establishments about when bullying should be treated as a criminal matter including defining what bullying is. This will include distribution of the NPCC guidance for schools and colleges on 'When to Call the Police' (document included in Appendices) which includes harassment; the likely offence most related to bullying.

All organisations in Cheshire

- To sign Cheshire's Anti-Bullying Charter and publicise their support for the Charter in order to eradicate bullying in our communities.
- Create a whole institution strategy to support the development of an effective and sustainable Anti-Bullying Policy, that is focused on creating a safe and secure environment, encompassing a culture of respect and tolerance. The strategy should have a proactive ethos of prevention, intervention and monitoring. It is clear that spotlighting awareness, problem solving and restorative practises will build empathy and resilience.



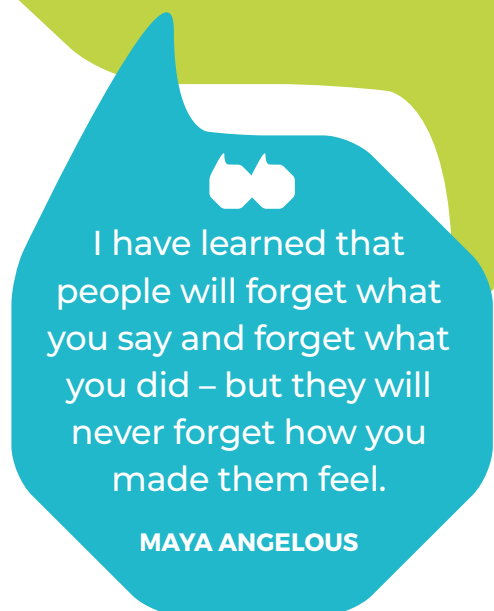
stand
UP
not
back

Cheshire Anti-Bullying Charter



Statement of intent

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly, tolerant and safe environment for all of our communities so they can participate in positive work, learning, social activity and enjoy a happy retirement. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable for anyone here in Cheshire, Warrington and Halton.



I have learned that people will forget what you say and forget what you did – but they will never forget how you made them feel.

MAYA ANGELOUS

Cheshire Anti-Bullying Commission definition of bullying

There is currently no legal definition of bullying; however there are three agreed defining features of bullying:

- 1** a victim is targeted by an individual or group on a regular basis (it is repeated).
- 2** there is intention to harm or humiliate physically or emotionally.
- 3** there is a power imbalance, the victim is fearful of those targeting them.

This charter is designed to complement the same principles and standards of anti-bullying work driven by proactive schools, colleges and Safeguarding Partnerships across the Region. This Charter recognises the impact of bullying on adults - in the work place and communities, and the need to challenge harassment and bullying behaviour as it affects all of our learners, our employees and residents.

The full charter is available via the Appendix.

Acknowledgements

- Residents of Cheshire who took part in the call for evidence
- All organisations who supported the call for evidence
- Cheshire Youth Commission
- Priestley Sixth Form College, Warrington
- Park Road Primary School, Warrington
- Rudheath Senior Academy, part of NWA Academy, Northwich
- Great Sankey High School, part of the Omega MAT, Sankey High School
- Sandbach High and Sixth Form College, Sandbach
- Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy, Runcorn
- St Gregory's Catholic High School, Warrington

Appendix

- Cheshire Anti-Bullying Charter
- Academic Report
- Serious Case Review Analysis
- Call for Evidence Survey
- Call for Evidence Report
- NPCC guide 'When to Call the Police'

To view these documents,
please visit: www.cheshire-pcc.gov.uk

If you or someone you know is experiencing any form of bullying and would like to seek help advice, these are some support services that can help:

www.childline.org.uk

www.youngminds.org.uk

www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

www.samaritans.org



...doors open up
as soon as you talk
to someone and
have the confidence
to say what is on
your mind.



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