

Worcestershire Bullying Survey for Parents and Carers Executive Summary

Introduction to the survey

During the summer of 2013 Parents' Voice conducted an online survey for parents and carers. We wanted anyone whose child had been affected by bullying *in any way* in Worcestershire to take part.

We would like to thank everyone who took part in this survey and those people and organisations who helped to make people aware of it.

Although we began with the simple intention of investigating where and how parents find information and support when a child or young person is affected by bullying, we found out so much more.

This report is a snapshot of what happens in Worcestershire when a family is affected by bullying – we do not claim that it gives a full picture.

In the full report¹ we have listed each of the questions as they were presented in the survey. We have then included charts, further details and, in some instances, further analysis and comments. Individual comments and quotes from respondents are also included.

Summary of results

- 1. 95% of the people that took part in the survey said their child had been a victim of bullying**
- 2. One child had been bullied by a member of staff in a school**
- 3. In 75% of cases the bullying began when the child was aged between 5 and 11**
- 4. Nearly a quarter of cases went on for over three years**
- 5. Just under a third of cases lasted for six months or less**
- 6. Over 80% of cases happened in school, although it also carried on beyond the school gates, on the journey home, in text messages and on the internet amongst other things**
- 7. 40% of respondents said the bullying is still going on or they weren't sure if it was**
- 8. Three quarters of parents felt they needed help and/or support to help their child, but a quarter didn't know where to go to find it**
- 9. 60% of those looking for information went on the internet to find it**
- 10. 71% of parents went to teachers for either information or support, although the effectiveness of doing this varied greatly**
- 11. When seeking information or support from peers or family members the respondents often said they found this the most useful**
- 12. A third of those parents who contacted Parent Partnership found them the most useful for information**
- 13. Over 90% of parents responded to the bullying by reassuring their child and 78% spoke to the class teacher/group leader/adult in charge**
- 14. The majority of parents were not happy with how quickly the situation was resolved or how it was resolved, with over 70% of parents dissatisfied with the speed of the response**
- 15. There are examples of good practice when the school and family work in partnership together to tackle the bullying**

¹ The full report is available from 18th November 2013; send an email to info@parentsvoice.co.uk to receive a copy, or check the *Have Your Say* page of the website: www.parentsvoice.co.uk

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Editor's notes

About Parents' Voice

We are a voluntary group of Worcestershire parents and carers. Membership is free and open to all parents, carers and parent groups in the county. There are no paid staff; we have a small committee and we do everything in our "spare" time when we are not busy raising our children and working outside the home!

As parents in Worcestershire, we want the county to be a great place for our children and young people to grow up in; we believe services for families work better when they are involved in shaping them.

Parents' Voice aims to promote genuine involvement of parents across services in Worcestershire by

- championing issues that are important to parents
- informing and thereby empowering all parents
- representing as many different parents and their viewpoints as possible
- encouraging open and honest engagement with parents
- promoting respect and clear communication between parents and decision makers.

If you would like to join us, please visit the "Contact us" page of our website (www.parentsvoice.co.uk) or send an email to info@parentsvoice.co.uk telling us you would like to join.

Background to the survey

During a discussion we realised that there is one memorable piece of advice given to children and young people about what to do if they are bullied – to tell someone. However, there is no one piece of advice for parents and carers who may be that "someone" that the child confides in. We wondered where Worcestershire parents found support and information, whether they found it easily and whether they had any comments or suggestions about making possible improvements.

Once the idea had been born, it grew! We felt that the information and support needed might differ according to the child's age and the form of bullying. We also realised that parents of children accused of bullying need information and support, as do those whose children witness bullying. In our publicity material we deliberately used the phrase "affected by bullying in any way".

We made no promises about what we could achieve with the survey. We decided that we wouldn't conduct the survey with a particular aim other than discovering whether parents needed information and support and where they found it in Worcestershire. What we planned to do about it would depend entirely on what they told us; we were contacted by some organisations who were interested in the results and we agreed that we would share the report with them and talk with them after the survey was closed. Future developments will be covered in our newsletters and should be on our website!

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To encourage parents and carers to take part we kept the survey quite simple. There were only 10 questions, though some had more than one part to them; some were optional, so the number of respondents for a few of the questions is less than others. Many questions involved respondents selecting just one option, others allowed people to tick more than one option.

At the end of the survey we gave parents the chance to write details of their experience, to tell us what they had found particularly useful or to give suggestions for improvements. Completing the survey could literally take a few minutes if somebody gave the bare minimum of information, but it could take longer if they chose to tell us more.

We promised to treat the information in confidence and to remove or change anything that we felt could identify a family, such as a name or location; we have endeavoured to do that. Many parents said similar things so it's possible someone may believe another respondent's comment is theirs! We want to thank everyone who took part in the survey and entrusted us with their information and very personal stories.

Parents made many comments; we have included so many in the full report because they tell the stories behind the figures. Each child or young person who is affected by bullying is an individual, not a number or a statistic. Parents' comments are probably the most important part of this report. Sometimes a comment is grammatically incorrect or may read a little strangely because of changes we have made to prevent identification; we apologise for that.

Generally we have changed "son", "daughter", "boy" or "girl" to "child"; where we have cut comments you may see a number of dots (...). If we have changed a word or added something to make a reference clear it will be in square brackets []. The illustrations in Appendix A show the frequency that words appear, both in individual questions and overall; the original text of comments is used in all these pictures.

We have used percentages throughout this report because we feel this conveys the relative size of respondents choosing each answer (the meaning of static numbers can be interpreted differently according to the reader's perception of what is a small or large number). We do not want *any* parent's experiences to be dismissed; what parents and carers told us should be taken very seriously because so many of the things they wrote about should never happen to even one child, parent or family!

Percentages have generally been rounded up or down to the nearest figure – eg: 94.92 % is rounded up to 95%. One exception to this is Question 7 where rounding up two figures of 25.5% would have resulted in 101%! Sometimes we have analysed other answers or comments made by a particular group of responses – and refer to the percentage of people who responded in that way (eg: Question 7).

The charts and percentages for each question generally relate to the number of respondents to that particular question. The one exception is Question 1 where we have used the total number of respondents to the survey². (For any compulsory questions the number of respondents to that particular question is the same as the total number of respondents to the survey.)

² In total, 59 people took part in the survey