What is Equality, Diversity and Prejudice Related Bullying?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Index</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is Equality &amp; Diversity</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prejudice Related Bullying</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexism and Gender</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homophobia</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body Image</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looked-After &amp; Accommodated</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion &amp; Belief</td>
<td>7&amp;8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Carers</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabilist Bullying</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial Bullying</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asylum Seekers &amp; Refugees</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectarianism</td>
<td>13&amp;14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is Equality and Diversity?

Many children and young people experience bullying because they are ‘different’ or because they are perceived to be different.

England has become a diverse and multi-cultural country, home to people from different backgrounds, race, faith and gender. More and more we are learning, working, socialising and mixing with a broader group of people and we must be open to the different perspectives, opinions and needs that this brings.

So, what is equality and diversity? How can it be defined and how can we ensure that we integrate an equality and diversity approach into everything we do, particularly where children and young people are concerned, to teach them the value of difference?

Equality enables us to create a fairer society where everyone can participate and has the opportunity to fulfil their potential. Equality is mostly backed by legislation which is designed to address unfair discrimination among members of a particular group in society, but it's everyone's responsibility to.

Diversity is the recognising and valuing difference in its broadest sense. It is about creating a culture and practices that recognise, respect, value and embrace difference for the benefit of everyone.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion are different things they need to be progressed together. Equality of opportunity will only exist when we recognise and value difference and work together for inclusion.

It's vitally important from a learning and role modelling point of view that adults who come into contact with children and young people in any setting are seen to value difference. If this isn't the case and bullying is taking place, it may act as a barrier to telling.

In reality, we don't yet live in a society where diversity is embraced and this can and does lead to bullying.
Prejudice-Related Bullying

Prejudice-related bullying (also known as Identity-based bullying or bias bullying) refers to any form of bullying related to the characteristics considered unique to a child’s identity, such as their race, religion, sexual orientation or physical appearance. These forms of bullying are not only targeted at an individual, but reflect negative attitudes towards a wider sub-community or group to whom that individual identifies with (or is believed to identify with).

Prejudice-related bullying can be separated into 10 characteristics unique to a child’s identity, these are:

- **Race or ethnicity**: bullying directed towards an individual which relates to their skin colour, ethnicity, or national identity.
- **Gypsy, Roma and Traveller**: bullying of children which relates to them being members of a travelling community.
- **Asylum seekers and refugees**: bullying of children which relates to them being from refugee and asylum seeking backgrounds.
- **Religion or belief**: bullying motivated by prejudice against an individual’s perceived or actual religious or spiritual beliefs, affiliations and practices e.g. Islamophobia.
- **Learning disability/difficulty**: Bullying of children who have an impairment which affects the way they learn, understand, socialise and communicate (i.e. speech and language difficulties). It is likely that these children will have Special Educational Needs.
- **Disability**: Bullying of children who have a physical or mental impairment (apart from learning disabilities/difficulties). For example, mobility, visual or hearing impairments, epilepsy, diabetes or a progressive condition such as multiple sclerosis. It is likely that these children will have Special Educational Needs.
- **Sexual orientation**: bullying motivated by prejudice against children who are, or are perceived to be, lesbian, gay or bisexual. Also referred to as homophobic bullying.
- **Gender**: bullying based around sexist attitudes or sexually inappropriate behaviours, intended to either demean or humiliate an individual because of their sex.
- **Gender identity**: bullying directed towards children whose gender identity is seen as being different to typical gender norms. This is also referred to as transphobic bullying.
- **Body Image**: bullying on the grounds of body image, size and obesity is one of the most prevalent forms of prejudice-related bullying.

Young people can also be bullied because they are looked-after and accommodated or for being young carers.

The following pages will explain in more detail the above types of prejudices.
Sexism and Gender

Gender stereotyping based on the notion of acceptable and unacceptable male and female behaviour can leave children and young people who do not conform to these notions vulnerable to indirect and direct bullying.

Personality traits that do not fit into the unwritten rules of ‘appropriate’ male and female behaviour can make children and young people a target for their perceived difference. For example, boys portraying compassionate and sensitive characteristics and girls who are seen as being assertive and loud can lead to bullying, questioning and targeting of their gender.

Alongside personality, the academic choices, social activities and sports deemed ‘acceptable’ for males and females can pressurize children and young people to fit in and not stand out from the crowd. This gender stereotyping can cause anxiety and wider social connotations which can affect the shaping of an individual's future life choices.

Bullying in the form of derogatory language and the spreading of malicious rumours can be used to regulate both girl’s and boy’s behaviour - suggesting that they are not being a real man or a real woman. These terms can be of an explicit sexual nature and it is worth noting that many can involve using terms for people who are gay and lesbian as a negative towards a person's masculinity or femininity.

Bullying can also be gender focused, with children and young people targeted for being perceived as being of a particular gender. This can include the use of sexual innuendo, offensive mimicry, continually asking someone out, displaying sexual materials, sexual comments and jokes that demean others, touching and gestures. This behaviour can have a seriously negative effect on the individuals concerned, and can make them feel inferior through this use of power.

Barriers to telling someone that bullying is taking place:

- If children and young people are experiencing confusion over their gender identity, they may be reluctant to challenge behaviour that could attract attention to them.
- Institutional sexism within organisations can prevent children and young people from coming forward for fear that they may not be believed or taken seriously.
- The behaviour may be ignored and minimised by being dismissed as flirting.
- Children and young people may perceive gender and sexist bullying as their personal problem and can be embarrassed and ashamed about coming forward.
Homophobic Bullying

Homophobic bullying is mainly directed towards young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) or young people who are questioning their sexuality. Bullying behaviour can also be directed at young people who are perceived to be different for not conforming to strict gender norms - for example, a boy who doesn't like football - or a girl judged to have a 'masculine' fashion sense.

Ultimately, any young person can experience homophobic bullying and any young person can display homophobic bullying behaviour if negative attitudes, language and behaviour remain unchecked.

For some LGBT young people, homophobic bullying does not end at the close of the school day and home is not a refuge. Often, families can be unsupportive or hostile when they think that their child is gay or when their child ‘comes out’ to them.

Barriers to telling that bullying is taking place:

- Telling about the bullying will mean that a young person has to effectively ‘come out’ to you and many young people are not ready to do this
- Many young people don't think it's worth it - they assume that professionals won't understand homophobic bullying and the issues that they are facing and may, in fact, be homophobic themselves. Some young people are disillusioned by responses they have received in the past and feel that homophobia is not taken as seriously as other types of bullying
- A prevailing culture of ‘Heterosexism’ - where there is a wide assumption that everyone is ‘heterosexual’ can heighten a sense of difference towards LGBT young people and promote the idea that they do not have the same rights to protection from bullying as others
- Some young people think that the homophobic bullying they are experiencing is not serious enough to report - to them, and some of their peers, negative attitudes and verbal abuse are simply part and parcel of being LGB or T

Good Practice in Challenging Homophobic Bullying:

- Developing a culture of awareness and understanding towards LGBT issues within your organisation will create a safer and more positive environment where LGBT young people can feel more confident about reporting bullying
- Staff training raises capacity to support LGBT young people more effectively and builds skills and confidence to address bullying
- Negative attitudes towards LGBT people are often expressed through language. Education about appropriate LGBT terminology promotes understanding and a basis for driving the message that homophobic bullying is never acceptable
- Access to confidential support and peer mediation are very important to young people who are being bullied and feel uncomfortable about ‘coming out’
Bullying and Body Image

Bullying on the grounds of body image/size/obesity is one of the most prevalent forms of prejudice-related bullying. Recently, the level of such bullying has been exacerbated by national concerns about rising levels of obesity. The media’s constant reinforcement of concerns about body image/size/obesity and the trivialisation of these issues is a key factor related to this problem.

Body image is hugely important to children and young people and bullying because of body image can have a real negative impact. A child or young person who is noticeably over or underweight may find themselves particularly vulnerable to bullying behaviour. This bullying may itself take a variety of forms including name-calling, mimicry of eating habits or perceived eating habits, demeanour or physical agility, nasty comments about clothes and general appearance and/or covert photos being taken when changing for PE. The impacts of bullying on the ground of body image can manifest in the development of poor eating habits and eating disorders.

Barriers to telling that bullying is taking place:

- A belief that they will not be taken seriously
- A belief that they will be blamed and asked to change themselves/their diet, etc
- A desire to ‘fit in’ and not attract further attention or scrutiny to themselves
- A desire to protect other family members, who may also be over/under weight, from the stress associated with bullying behaviour

Bullying and disfigurement

Children and young people who have a condition, injury or illness that makes them look ‘different’ can be especially vulnerable to appearance-related remarks and bullying behaviour. For further information and guidance visit: www.changingfaces.org.uk
Bullying and Looked After & Accommodated Children and Young People

Children and young people who are looked after and accommodated by the local authority are vulnerable to bullying behaviour for a number of reasons. It may be due to regular changes in schools or where they are placed which can make forming friendships difficult, poor relationships skills stemming from attachment difficulties, inappropriate reactions to situations as a result of learned behaviours, a reluctance to make friends, low self-esteem, lack of role models and a heightened sense of privacy.

Many pieces of research highlight how vulnerable looked after and accommodated children and young people are to bullying. Bristol City Council commissioned research to look into the educational experiences of their looked after and accommodated children and young people (Love, 2000). The evidence showed that almost half of them had been bullied.

- 46% of all looked after children had been bullied: 71 out of 154
- 31% of these children said that although they had told someone the bullying hadn't stopped. The research does not tell us which percentage of those bullied children had told someone with a positive effect

Looked after and accommodated children and young people may have very similar experiences of bullying to other young people, but often the bullying will focus directly on the fact that they are looked after. This can take a more serious turn if the child or young person lives in the same house or unit as the person responsible for the bullying. Being with the person(s) who is bullying you 24 hours a day would be extremely stressful and very difficult to manage.

Barriers to telling that bullying is taking place:

- Lack of a trusting relationship with an adult or a distrust of authority
- A concern that they will not be believed or that any action will be taken
- A concern that they will be seen as the perpetrator
- Children and young people may be exhibiting behaviour which they feel is indicating that they are being bullied but the adults around them may not pick up on this. Changes in behaviour may be put down to stress about reviews or other events in the life of a looked after and accommodated child or young person
- A desire not to highlight their looked after situation
- A heightened sense of self-reliance and independence
- A desire not to ‘rock the boat’ especially at the start of a new placement or during a successful placement
Bullying, Religion and Belief

Bullying based on religion is directed against individuals and groups because of their actual or perceived religious belief or their connection with a particular religion or belief. For example, someone may be targeted because of the religion of a friend or family member, or because they are wrongly assumed to belong to a particular faith community, due to their appearance.

Individuals may also experience bullying because they don't hold a particular faith or because of their philosophical beliefs that shape their view of the world they live in.

Lack of knowledge and understanding about the traditions, beliefs and etiquette of different faiths can lead to religious intolerance. Lack of awareness about the differences in practices of religions such as prayer times, dietary requirements, fasting and the wearing of religious clothing or articles of faith can result in misunderstandings and stereotyping, which may fuel bullying.

As well as religious intolerance and bullying between one faith against another, bullying behaviour can also occur because of differences (or perceived differences) between different denominations or sects within the same faith, e.g. between Catholic and Protestant Christian, Sunni and Shia Muslim, and between the Orthodox and Reform strands of Judaism. Sectarianism and religious intolerance put children and young people at greater risk of bullying directly and indirectly.

Finding out what others believe and why religious practices are important to them can be the first step to promote tolerance and understanding for people of all faiths and none. However, merely learning about different customs is not enough. Encouraging young people to celebrate diversity through meeting and talking with others from different faiths allows a greater understanding and the creation of a climate where all are valued and bullying is not tolerated.

Local, national and international events can all contribute to a social climate which makes children and young people more likely to be the targets of religious bullying. After the Sept 11 attack on the World Trade Centre and the London bombings of 7 July many Muslims found themselves the target of reprisal attacks, verbal insults and harassment. Individuals from other faith communities, such as Sikh and Hindu were often wrongly assumed to be Muslim and were also targeted for abuse.

Barriers to telling that bullying is taking place:

- The desire to fit in can stop children and young people of faith challenging bullying - they may feel that they will draw more attention to themselves.
- Fear of retaliation from the bullies if they do speak up.
- Cultural identity and Religion and Belief can be part of the same identity. Cultural differences could lead to reluctance to involve others.
- Due to its nature, and the fact that religion can be an integral part to someone's identity, there may be reluctance to tell family members, knowing that they too...
would be targets of the bullying if they are of the same faith.

- A general lack of awareness, understanding and acceptance of different faiths within organisations can prevent children and young people feeling they will be believed or trust than anything will happen anyway.
- Lack of awareness and understanding of when behaviour moves away from being bullying to religious hatred and a criminal offence.
Bullying and Young Carers

The lives of young carers can be significantly affected by their responsibility to care for a family member who has a physical illness or disability, mental health problem, sensory or learning disability or has issues with the misuse of drugs or alcohol. Young carers are at risk of bullying for a variety of reasons. Depending on responsibilities at home they may find themselves being unable to fully participate in school or after-school activities or ‘fun stuff’. This can make it difficult to form relationships, hinder successful transitions or lead to educational difficulties. Young carers may find themselves being bullied because of the differences or perceived differences in their family circumstances. A child who has the burden of all the household tasks may find it difficult to maintain a high level of personal presentation. The family may have a very low income which affects the opportunity to take part in activities which have to be paid for, and may impact upon the child or young person to be able to ‘fit in’ with fashion and labels or have the latest mobile phone.

Powys Council in Wales reports the following statistics regarding young carers and bullying:

- 71% of young carers have been bullied
- 79% were called names
- 20% missed school as a result of bullying
- 33% did not tell turn to their teachers for help

Barriers to telling that bullying is taking place:

- A desire to ‘fit in’ and prevent drawing further attention to themselves.
- A lack of a trusting relationship with a member of staff at school due to sporadic attendance
- A concern about increasing the stress levels of parents
- A strong sense of self-reliance and independence that may come with their caring responsibilities
- A belief that bullying is a ‘low priority’ compared to other issues in the young person's life.
Disabilist Bullying

Disabilist Bullying is the term used to describe the bullying of someone based on their physical, mental or learning disabilities or perceived disability.

Those who are exercising bullying behaviour may see children and young people with disabilities as being less able to defend themselves and less able to tell an adult about the bullying. The bullying behaviour is likely to be focused upon their specific disability or disabilities, whether they are in mainstream schooling or in specialist provision.

"Nearly all children and young people with a learning disability are bullied. They can be bullied wherever they go - at school, at the park, in the street, on the bus and at youth centres. Many children with a learning disability are scared to go to new places and try new things because of bullying.

Bullying has a long-term impact, making it harder for children and young people with a learning disability to develop skills and gain confidence - both of which are already hard for children with a learning disability." Mencap

Some children and young people may also experience mockery of their specific disability or disabilities: mockery of their contribution to work or play and refusal by other children to work, play or interact with them.

Children and young people who have a disability are potentially more likely to experience bullying because of perceived differences in their appearance, demeanour, at work or play or in their communication abilities.

Low self-esteem often found in children and young people with disabilities can lead them to make friends with people who exploit them who, in reality, aren't really ‘friends’ at all. This lack of confidence may also mean that they get hurt more easily and are less resilient in relationships with other children. In turn, the outward signs of bullying - a change in behaviour, low mood, dishevelled clothing or bruises - may not be picked up by adults as an indicator of bullying.

Barriers to telling that bullying is taking place:

- A difficulty in articulating their experience
- A desire to ‘fit in’ and prevent drawing further attention to themselves
- A belief that they will not be listened to, understood or believed
- A difficulty with remembering exact dates, times and details of incidents in order to successfully report and investigate bullying incidents according to policy
- A desire not to get ‘friends’ into trouble
Racial Bullying

Racist Bullying is a term used to describe prejudicial bullying based on someone’s race on ethnicity or someone’s perceived race or ethnicity.

The NSPCC report ‘Protecting Children from Racism and Racist Abuse’ highlights a number of key points:

- Children from ethnic minorities are more likely to experience bullying than their white counterparts
- Although research evidence is limited, what is available does imply that racial bullying frequently involves the use of violence
- The impact of racist bullying can go far beyond the individual person. This bullying can impact their family and others perceived to be from the same or similar group

Children and young people from minority ethnic groups often experience bullying based on the perceived differences in dress, communication, appearance, beliefs and/or culture. The status of ‘minority’ in a school, community or organisation can often mark a child or young person as a target for those involved in bullying behaviour. This can stem from a misguided and/or learned belief that they ‘deserve’ to be treated differently or with less respect.

Media and cultural influences can also affect the ‘status’ of minority ethnic communities within a school, community or organisation and trends in bullying incidents may reflect this. It may not just be the colour of someone’s skin that provokes racist bullying, country of origin and culture may also be a factor - children and young people from Gypsy and Travelling communities report racial bullying, for example. It is vital, when thinking about this demographic, to consider gypsy traveller children and young people. These children and young people report a very high level of racist bullying.

Racist bullying can take a variety of forms. Verbal abuse includes name calling, offensive mimicry of accent and/or pretending not to understand what is said. Mockery and mimicry may extend to dress, religious observance, diet and country of origin or perceived country of origin. Non-direct bullying may include graffiti, vandalism of property, flaunting of racist badges, slogans, leaflets etc.

Barriers to telling that bullying is taking place:

- A desire to ‘fit in’ and prevent drawing further attention to themselves
- A lack of understanding about when racist bullying becomes a racial offence
- A concern that they will not be listened to or believed (especially where institutional racism is perceived to be present)
- A concern about causing further worry to family members who may also be affected by racist incidents in the community
- A lack of trust in authority figures
- Cultural differences that may inhibit asking for support with difficult circumstances and/or reluctance to look for others to become involved
Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Bullying

There are an estimated 30,000 refugees and asylum seekers in the UK. There are around seventy different nationalities, the majority being Iranian, Iraqi, Pakistani, Somali, Congolese, Afghan, Turkish and Chinese. Many refugee and asylum seeking children and young people are unaccompanied, living in the care of the state in residential care homes and foster homes.

Children and young people who are seeking asylum or have been granted refugee status are doing so to escape persecution on the grounds of their race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion. They are unable to return home. Stigma due to lack of knowledge and understanding of asylum seekers and refugees and reluctance to burden parents with extra worries can allow bullying to go undetected and continue.

Children and young people who are asylum seekers or refugees may be at greater risk of bullying directly and indirectly. This can range from people saying hurtful things, which may not be intended to be hurtful, to deliberate physical attacks. It can be identified by the motivation of the bully, the language used, and/or by the fact that the victims are singled out because of their race, the way they talk, their ethnic background, their nationality, or by their religious or cultural practices.

Fear of bullying and attacks can have an adverse effect on integration and engagement into the wider community, with many children and young people reluctant to become involved in leisure and social activities after school.

The stereotypes and myths that surround asylum seekers and refugees create hostile attitudes and prejudicial views that result in bullying being accepted and perhaps not challenged as readily as it would be with any other minority group.

Barriers to telling that bullying is taking place:

- Due to negative treatment from authority figures there can be a lack of trust in approaching for help and advice
- Language barriers can prevent children and young people being able to express themselves fully, especially in times of stress through bullying
- Home experiences such as poverty and the mental anguish of adults waiting for a decision on an asylum application can result in children not wanting to add any more pressure to their parent's situation
- A desire to 'fit in' and not draw further attention to themselves can prevent children and young people coming forward about bullying
- A view that children and young people who are asylum seekers and refugees should be ‘happy to be here’ can make them feel that they should just put up with the bullying behaviour
Sectarianism and Bullying

Sectarianism, like bullying, takes many shapes and forms. Nil by Mouth's experience of working with young people of all ages and backgrounds is that name-calling is the most common form of sectarian bullying and that this can lead to violence. Sectarian bullying can be one-on-one, between groups of friends or gangs who identify themselves as belonging to different cultures. Sectarian attitudes can fuel bullying behaviour between pupils from different schools and young people from different communities.

While Sectarianism tends to be associated with religion, the issue also has a strong link to cultural and political differences. Judgements about perceived differences in identity can be based on your family background, the football team you support, the community you live in, the school you attend and even the colour of your clothing. This means that any young person can be a target for sectarian bullying - whatever their beliefs may be.

Sectarianism refers to divisions between different denominations of the same faith. In Scotland and Northern Ireland it is most commonly fuelled by attitudes towards perceived differences in Catholic and Protestant identities and cultures. Religions other than Christianity are also affected by Sectarianism globally, such as conflict between Sunni and Shia cultures within Islam.

Challenges of Sectarian Bullying:

- Children can be exposed to sectarian attitudes from a young age through attitudes and behaviour displayed by adult role models. This can encourage young people to develop damaging attitudes and become involved in bullying behaviour
- Acquiesce, or pressure to conform, is a common impact of sectarian bullying. Young people may switch their allegiances to a particular football team or conceal their religious beliefs in order to 'fit in' or avoid being bullied
- Sectarianism can lead young people to make negative choices about their behaviour, such as believing that people from other denominations do not deserve to be treated with respect
- Some communities are perceived to be predominantly linked to a particular denomination. This can heighten a sense of difference and feelings of isolation, increasing the risk of bullying towards young people with different cultures or beliefs

Good Practice in Challenging Sectarian Bullying:

- Young people are naturally curious about religion. Education about different faiths and sectarianism encourages young people to be active participants in challenging sectarian bullying
- Sectarianism, focused on perceived differences between ‘sects’ of the same religion', is distinct from prejudice between different religions. This should be recognised in all relevant policies in relation to equality and diversity
- Open discussions about sectarian language and symbols can challenge many
of the historical and cultural myths which promote sectarian attitudes and behaviour

- Some children are brought up with the example that sectarian attitudes are acceptable. This attitude must be challenged consistently to prevent sectarian bullying. Rather than label children as ‘bigoted’ we can listen to their experiences, highlight potential consequences and encourage a positive change in behaviour.
- A strong and child-centred ethos of celebrating diversity can encourage everyone in your organisation to take responsibility for challenging sectarian bullying and supporting an equal culture of respect for young people of all backgrounds.