

All Together Project – Working as one to address sectarian bullying in Northern Ireland

Survey Information for Participants

Background and Context

Bullying is one of the main issues impacting children and young people today, having an adverse effect on the development of their personal, social and emotional health, wellbeing, life chance and achievement. Bullying can severely isolate children and young people from their own community and links between bullying and mental health are well established in research. Studies show how children who have been bullied are significantly more likely to experience a range of mental health issues including anxiety, self-harm and depression with the effects lasting well into adulthood. These include having poorer physical and mental health, and achieving less financially and occupationally than those who were not bullied.

Bullying both in school, online, and in the community among children and young people appears to be a bigger problem in Northern Ireland than in the South of Ireland or in Britain although we are lacking recent good quality research in the area. A comparative poll of young people from England and NI carried out by the Anti-Bullying Alliance in 2020, of over 1K pupils aged 11-16, found that 56% of young people had experienced bullying in NI, compared to 33% in England. Of them, 47% say they have experienced bullying in the community, but in comparison, this was only the case for 16% of young people in England. This stark comparison shows us that bullying beyond school is a serious problem in NI and those working with children and young people on a daily basis are struggling to address it.

Research has shown that sectarianism and sectarian bullying is still rife among adults in NI¹, but there is very little research of the impact of sectarian bullying has among young people in today's Northern Ireland 26 years on from the Good Friday Agreement.

ABA wish to design resources for the children's workforce in NI on the topic of Sectarian Bullying, to give them the skills to understand how to prevent and respond to sectarian bullying. In order to create resources, we need to gain a better understanding of the current state of sectarian bullying of children and young people in NI. The All Together project which has been funded by the Irish Government, Department of Foreign Affairs, Reconciliation Fund, aims to work with children and young people, children's workforce, and parents and carers, listening to their experiences, and creating

¹ [Sectarianism in Northern Ireland: A Review](#)



resources to create change. To achieve this, we wish to gather evidence through focus groups and surveys with the aforementioned stakeholders.

Evidence Gathering

Surveys with Children and Young People, Children's Workforce, and Parents & Carers

Objective: To explore the experiences and perceptions of sectarian bullying amongst children and young people and inform resource development

In order to expand our understanding ABA will design 3 surveys for children and young people, parents & carers, and the children's workforce in NI. The surveys will include themes such as perceptions, trends, current strategies, and current gaps. Our target groups and purpose for each survey are;

- Conduct a survey with young people in NI aged 11-18 years old about sectarian bullying and children's experiences to help inform the development of our report and training.
- Conduct survey with the children's workforce from across the youth sector in NI to understand adult's perceptions of sectarian bullying and establish what they need to help address it in the community and help to remove barriers that may exist.
- Conduct survey with parents and carers about sectarian bullying and how they can better support their children if sectarian bullying takes place.

Surveys should last no longer than 10-15 minutes for children and young people, and no longer than 15-20 minutes for adults

Survey Title: What does sectarian bullying look like in 2024/25?

Discussion topics;

- Existence and nature of sectarian bullying
- Personal experiences and observations
- Settings of bullying (school, community, online)
- Reporting and handling of incidents
- Perspectives on inter-community relations

Ethical Considerations

In order to ensure the evidence gathering phase of the 'All Together' project is in line with the purpose of the programme, child protection standards, and data protection laws, the following measures will be implemented:

- The purpose of the surveys will be communicated prior to participation including definitions of bullying and sectarianism, along with available support resources (to be shared at end of survey)
- No personal or identifiable data will be used in reports



- Consent to use information gathered will be requested by all participating in the surveys
- All individuals, schools, and organisations will remain anonymous
- All survey data will be safely stored, and password protected and held for 8 years as per NCB policy.

Participants Rights

Participation in the survey is voluntary. Young people have the right to withdraw. If a young person changes their mind they can choose not to take part in the survey, or leave during it without giving a reason.

Consent: Please ensure any participating young people under 16 years old have parental/guardian consent to participate in the survey.

Survey Links

Children and Young People Survey:

<https://nationalchildrensbureau.typeform.com/to/xAfZdFpB>

Children's Workforce Survey:

<https://nationalchildrensbureau.typeform.com/to/hsCrzMLK>

Parent & Carer Survey: <https://nationalchildrensbureau.typeform.com/to/ioIA5Hbx>

Any Questions?

If there are any parts of this information sheet you do not understand, or you would like to ask some questions, please contact aniccolaim@ncb.org.uk