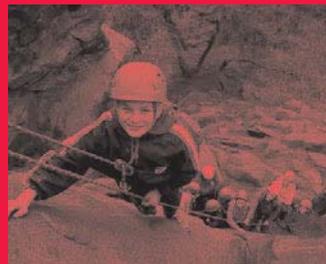
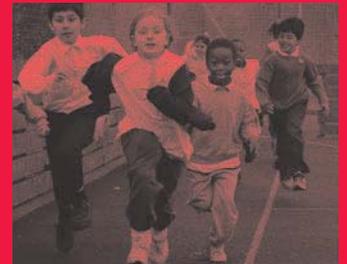




Staying Safe: Action Plan



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Foreword by Ed Balls



We are committed to improving the safety of all children and young people. Safety is fundamental – if children are not safe, they cannot be happy, healthy, achieve, or reach their full potential. It is the responsibility of us all to keep children and young people safe.

This Government's ambitions for children and young people are set out in the Children's Plan, which my Department published in December 2007. This sets out our aim to make this country the best place in the world for children and young people to grow up. We confirmed our commitment to improving children's safety in the Children's Plan and said we would publish a specific action plan, following the consultation on *Staying Safe*, the first ever cross-Government strategy for improving children and young people's safety. During this consultation, the Government has listened to what parents, practitioners and children and young people themselves have told us about children's safety. This Action Plan sets out how we intend to respond and the work we are committed to taking forward.

Childhood should be a time for enjoyment, learning and exploration. Children and young people today are safer in many ways than in previous generations, and enjoy a range of activities and opportunities their parents and grandparents could not have dreamt of. The internet has opened new worlds of information, education, communication and entertainment; travel is cheaper and easier; and improvements in educational standards mean that children and young people have opportunities for further study and better job prospects. But these changes can also bring new challenges and risks for children and young people. This does not mean that we should wrap our children up in cotton wool – we need to strike the right balance between protecting children and young people and allowing them the freedom to develop and enjoy their childhoods.

We had a fantastic response to the consultation and I would like to thank everyone who contributed. We heard from over 1000 people – parents, practitioners, organisations, and voluntary groups – but the majority of responses came from children and young people themselves. We held events up and down the country, with children and young people, parents, people who work with children, and the general public. These views have all fed into this Action Plan.

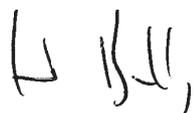
We have heard that the vast majority of people feel children today are safe, although they recognise that some children can be harmed. People spoke about the balance between protecting our children from harm and allowing them the freedom to develop independence. They felt that sometimes we,

as a society, are not getting this balance right. Parents told us they worry about the safety of their children, and would appreciate more information on risks to their children's safety and how they can help to reduce these. Children and young people told us they want to feel safer when they are out with their friends, with safe, well-lit places to go. Practitioners told us about the issues of supporting parents who experience serious problems such as domestic violence or substance misuse which affect their children, and wanted to make sure families get the support they need. Those working with vulnerable groups of children and young people underlined the importance of ensuring services are available to respond effectively where harm does occur.

This Action Plan lays out commitments in response to this debate and builds on a robust framework of existing legislation and guidance. The actions here from across Government signal a shared commitment to improve children's safety, and a new approach to co-ordinate policy. We will also be publishing case studies gathered during the consultation from around the country where people are working together to keep children and young people safe.

Importantly, we recognise that children are brought up by parents, not by Government. The vast majority of parents want to keep their children safe and they need to know that professionals, services, Government and their communities are working to help them.

I am pleased to launch this Action Plan on behalf of my colleagues across Government. Underpinning this work is a new Public Service Agreement (PSA) to improve children and young people's safety. This shows our commitment to delivering the actions set out here, and we will shortly be updating the delivery agreement of this PSA to fully reflect this work. I look forward to working with you all to deliver this vitally important programme of work and to seeing real improvements in children's safety over the next three years.



Rt Hon Ed Balls MP
Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families

1. Introduction and context

The Children's Plan: building brighter futures

1.1 The publication of the Children's Plan¹ and the recent creation of the Department for Children, Schools and Families signal the Government's commitment to prioritising the well-being of children and young people. We want to make this country the best place in the world for children and young people to grow up and have set out in the Children's Plan the goals for what we should achieve for children by 2020. The Children's Plan is underpinned by five key principles.

Children's Plan: five key principles

- Government does not bring up children – parents do – so Government needs to do more to back parents and families
- All children have the potential to succeed and should go as far as their talents can take them
- Children and young people need to enjoy their childhood as well as grow up prepared for adult life
- Services need to be shaped by and responsive to children, young people and families, not designed around professional boundaries
- It is always better to prevent failure than tackle a crisis later

1.2 Staying safe is a fundamental part of the Children's Plan: children cannot enjoy their childhoods or achieve their full potential unless they are safe. In many ways, children and young people are safer today than in previous generations. Rates of accidents are down, including the number of children seriously injured or killed on our roads, and rates of sudden infant deaths have fallen. Children and young people enjoy opportunities that their parents and grandparents could not have imagined – instant access to new technologies, better educational standards and job prospects, travel and leisure.

1.3 But the environment children grow up in today is changing and is, in many ways, more complex. Changing family and community structures mean that many parents no longer have the same informal networks of support. New technologies can also mean new opportunities for children to come to harm – on the internet or as victims of cyberbullying. In some areas children and young

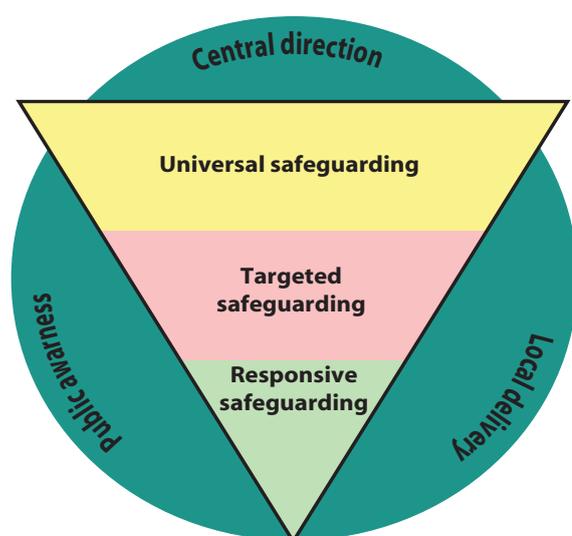
¹ The Children's Plan is available from http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/childrensplan/?pid=childrens_plan

people are facing the threat of serious violence from street gangs. Despite improvements in road safety, young drivers and child pedestrians are still at risk. And some groups of children, such as children living in deprived areas, looked after children, disabled children, migrant children and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, are more vulnerable to harm than others.

- 1.4 In this changing environment, parents and carers may find it difficult to have an accurate perception of the risks their children face, or understand how to manage these risks as they may be different from risks they faced in their own childhoods. Annex A sets out some the different risks to children’s safety, and what we know about the likelihood of children coming to harm.
- 1.5 Chapter 2 of the Children’s Plan – ‘Safe and Sound’ – sets out our vision for making children and young people’s safety everyone’s responsibility. ‘Safe and Sound’ identifies key areas where more can be done and this Action Plan builds on that – giving more detail about the actions we will take to improve children and young people’s safety over the next three years.

Staying Safe: a cross-Government strategy for improving children and young people’s safety

- 1.6 *Staying Safe*² was launched for consultation by the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, Ed Balls, in July 2007. The strategy is about more than just preventing accidents or stopping bullying. It covers the full span of the Every Child Matters ‘stay safe’ outcome – keeping children safe from neglect and abuse, accidents, bullying, crime and anti-social behaviour and providing a safe and stable home environment. Out of the five Every Child Matters outcomes, children and young people have told us that staying safe is the most important³.
- 1.7 Improving children and young people’s safety depends on a wide range of people – practitioners, agencies working in partnership through Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs), national inspectorates, central and local government and, crucially, parents, and children and young people themselves.
- 1.8 The *Staying Safe* consultation document set out three levels of safeguarding:



2 The *Staying Safe* consultation document is available from <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations/conResults.cfm?consultationId=1500>
 3 The five Every Child Matters outcomes are to: be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being.

Universal safeguarding – Working to keep all children and young people safe and create safe environments for all children

Targeted safeguarding – Some groups of children are more at risk than others, and it is important to target policies and services to these groups, to help keep them safe from harm

Responsive safeguarding – Unfortunately, no matter what we do, there will always be some children and young people who suffer harm. We need to respond quickly and appropriately when this happens – supporting children and dealing with those who harm them

- 1.9 There are already robust legislative and guidance frameworks in place to keep children and young people safe. The aim of the *Staying Safe* strategy is not to start from the beginning, but to build on this existing framework. The purpose of the consultation was to raise awareness and understanding of the issues, to look at the effectiveness of the co-ordination of existing and planned initiatives, and to identify and plug gaps.
- 1.10 The *Staying Safe* consultation closed on 31 October 2007. Written and online responses received after the closing date have also been considered. To help engage children and young people in the consultation, a separate young people’s version of the consultation document was produced. These documents generated a total of 1039 online and written responses, of which 649 were from young people.⁴
- 1.11 The *Staying Safe* consultation aimed to start wide-ranging debate around children and young people’s safety. The document identified areas for action, and suggested proposals for new work in these areas. We asked people to give their opinions about these proposals and the new areas, as well as asking broad questions about children’s safety, and inviting respondents to put forward their own proposed priorities for action.
- 1.12 As well as the online and written consultation, the Department for Children, Schools and Families worked with the independent research company, Ipsos MORI, to hold eight regional practitioner events and 18 discussion groups with children and young people, parents and the general public. Ipsos MORI’s reports from these regional events will be available on the Every Child Matters website (www.ecm.gov.uk/stayingsafe). Further details on these events can also be found in Annex C. Feedback from the consultation in relation to specific safety issues is included in the subsequent chapters of this Action Plan, with headline messages set out here.

4 For a full summary of the consultation responses and a breakdown of respondents by age, gender and occupation, see Annex C.

Headline messages from the *Staying Safe* consultation

Most respondents **supported the consultation and the proposals** saying they were 'common sense' and practical, and related to many of the key issues that children, young people, parents and general public have identified.

"I think in a way it says..what we've been saying, which is provide information for parents, how to address internet safety, provide parents with information on support services and...substance issues...so it's kind of what we've been saying all the way along, is that they provide this information. It's good that they're thinking this way." – Parent

The majority of respondents of all ages **felt that children and young people in general are currently safe, secure, and well looked after**, although there was still concern about some specific issues.

"Obviously there are vulnerable children who are not safe, as a result of poverty, dangerous environments, adult neglect and abuse, and other reasons, but the enormous majority of children in Britain today are objectively safer than children have ever been throughout history. At the same time some old hazards, like traffic, are getting worse, and there are some new ones, e.g. in cyberspace." – Charity

"Coming home on the bus at night, especially in the winter, makes the walk home dark...there aren't enough lights on the main road." – Young person

There has also been overwhelming **agreement that keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility**.

"You would hope that it would be everybody's responsibility, the community, the family, to do the right thing, not just the professionals." – Parent

"I would tell the police, adult or a teacher if I was worried about [someone]." – Young person

"We need to take complaints from members of the public more seriously, since often it is them who see the family rather than officials." – Practitioner

The majority of respondents agreed that it is important for us, as a society, to **strike a balance between protecting children and allowing them to explore and learn about risks for themselves**. There was also widespread concern that this balance is currently not being achieved.

"...children need to know what is safe and what is not, they can not do this if they are not given the appropriate freedom to learn for themselves." – Primary Care Trust

"Children learn through making mistakes, taking risks and stretching their abilities. All people have accidents and at some point suffer injuries, but currently we do not have the balance right in providing opportunities for children." – Sector Skills Council

"You learn from your mistakes." – Young person

A significant minority (around 14%) of respondents spoke about the **role of the media**, both in terms of its portrayal of risk and of young people themselves, and the effect this has on children and young people being allowed to go out unaccompanied – with some feeling that the media exaggerates some risks.

"The current obsession with danger to children, whilst being very real in a small number of cases, has been overstated by the media..." Adult

"Parents are encouraged by the mass media to think that only careless or thoughtless parents allow their children the freedom to develop in their own way, despite the history of countless generations before us having survived and flourished mostly with little or no overt adult supervision." – Charity

"They just made a ridiculous amount of money because of a nice sensationalist headline about how there was a child terror super gun, and then, of course, we all think this is happening everywhere, all the time... you don't hear about the ten perfectly normal, rational children who are growing up and just doing their schooling and living normal, everyday lives." – Young person

Multi-agency working was an issue raised by many practitioners, both at the events and in written responses to the consultation. Whilst practitioners agreed it is vital for services to work together to keep children and young people safe, many respondents also felt there were barriers to successful joint working.

"[The] strategic bit is there ... money is being spent in the right places but breaking down barriers between the different services [is the problem]." – Practitioner

"Everyone needs training and the best form of training is a multi-agency approach." – Practitioner

A recurring comment in many of the responses was that to improve children's safety, we would first have to tackle **child poverty**.

"The most significant and impactful [sic] thing that this government could do would be to deliver on its promise to lift a significant number of children out of poverty." – Local Safeguarding Children Board

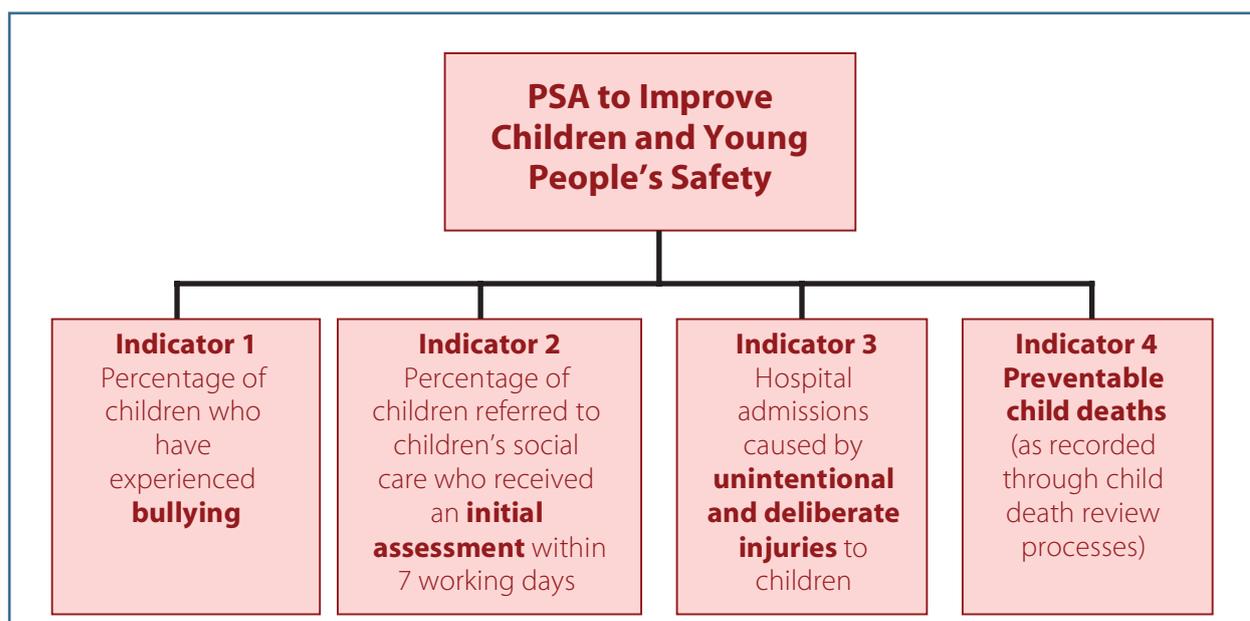
"Policy aimed at reducing child poverty contributes to reducing inequalities and related safety inequalities." – Local Safeguarding Children Board

- 1.13** This document, the *Staying Safe: Action Plan*, has been launched to respond to the consultation and set out the work we are committed to taking forward. Throughout this document the word 'we' is used to refer to the whole of central Government. The Action Plan is structured in three chapters covering universal, targeted and responsive safety issues for children and young people. Chapter 2 covers areas for new action aimed at keeping all children and young people safe. Chapter 3 includes areas for new action designed to protect the most vulnerable groups, including disabled children and young people, those with emotional and mental health needs, young offenders and those living in deprived areas. Chapter 4 covers areas for new action to support those children and young people who are harmed. Chapter 5 sets out how this plan will be monitored and evaluated, including the links to the Public Service Agreement (PSA) to improve children and young people's safety. The PSA delivery agreement will be updated in due course to reflect the actions outlined here. In Annex B we set out details of work to be taken forward, making clear the timescales and the Government Departments which are responsible for delivery.
- 1.14** Each area for new action will include an outline of the consultation responses around that issue and the commitments to be taken forward during the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) Period (April 2008 – March 2011). A summary of these commitments is included as Annex B. We

will also be publishing case studies gathered during the consultation exercise to share examples of innovative work which were highlighted during the consultation process.⁵

PSA to improve children and young people’s safety

1.15 In October 2007 we announced a new PSA to improve children and young people’s safety.⁶ This will drive forward the *Staying Safe* strategy and ensure that delivery is effective, measuring outcomes at a national level. The creation of this PSA is a major step forward. It underlines our ongoing commitment to keeping children and young people safe and signals our determination to go further, giving this issue the sustained national priority it deserves.



1.16 The PSA and the ‘stay safe’ indicators in the local government National Indicator Set⁷ will help to drive national and local delivery of work to improve children and young people’s safety. Ongoing measurement of outcomes and processes will allow us to monitor progress, and give us a clearer picture on whether the policies set out here are effective in keeping children safe. Although targets are not being set against the PSA indicators, we expect to see clear and significant improvements over the CSR period.

1.17 To monitor and drive delivery of the PSA, a cross-Departmental PSA Board has been established, including representatives from the Department for Children, Schools and Families; Home Office; Ministry of Justice; Department of Health; Department for Communities and Local Government; Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills; Department for Culture, Media and Sport; HM Treasury; Prime Minister’s Delivery Unit; Cabinet Office; Department for Transport; and the Border and Immigration Agency. Chapter 5 sets out further information about the PSA and wider evaluation of this Action Plan.

⁵ This will be available from www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/stayingsafe

⁶ The PSA Delivery Agreement is available from: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/0/8/pbr_csr07_psa13.pdf

⁷ For more information about the National Indicator Set, see www.communities.gov.uk

2. Helping all children and young people to stay safe

“I feel safe, everyone should feel safe.” – Young person

Summary

Safety is important for all children and young people and preventing harm from occurring in the first place is the best way to keep children and young people safe. Children and young people should be able to enjoy safe environments wherever they spend their time. It is also vital that children, young people and their parents can develop a good understanding of risks to children’s safety and how to manage these.

Areas for new action covered in this chapter are:

- Play and taking part in positive activities
- Understanding and managing risk
- A safe workforce
- Addressing new threats to children’s safety
- Helping Local Safeguarding Children Boards to make a difference
- Road safety
- Health visiting services
- Third sector engagement

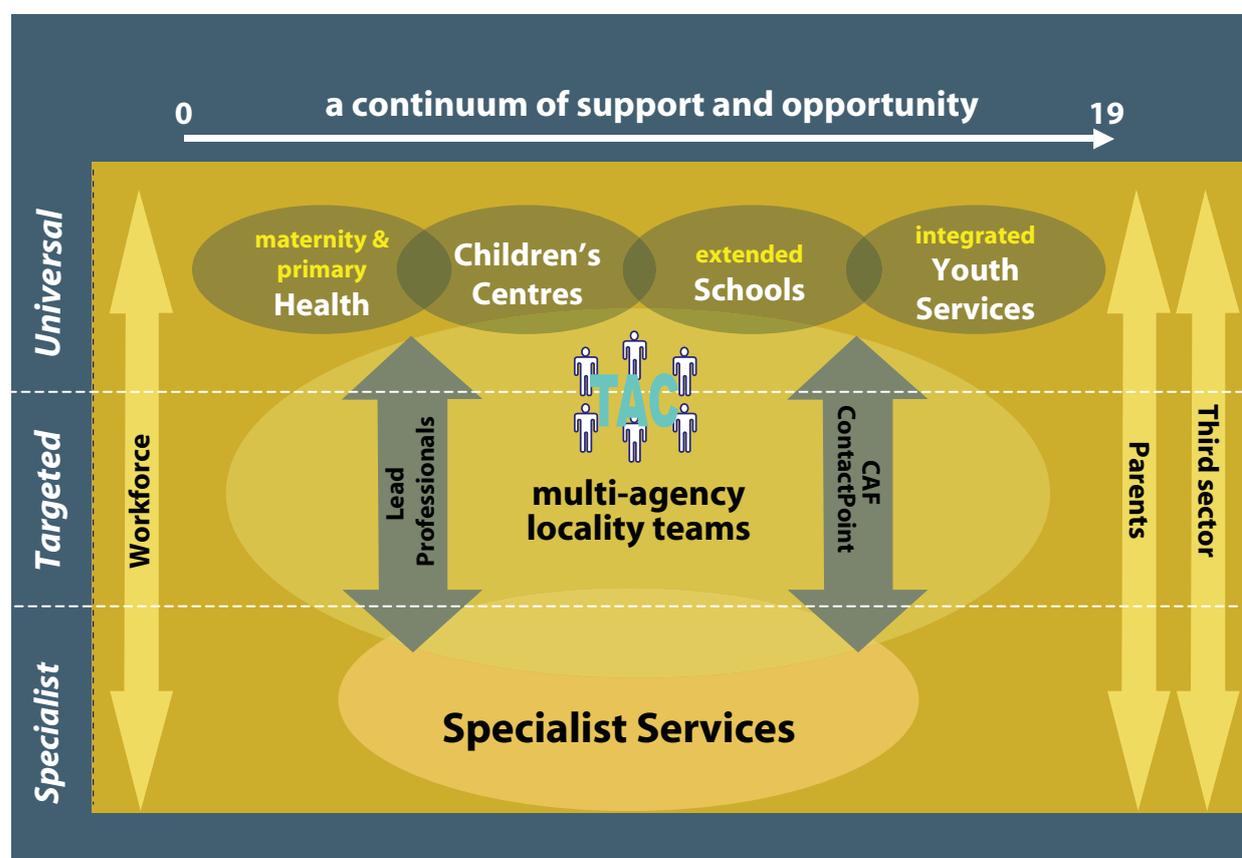
In this chapter, we announce the following new commitments for the next three years:

- the establishment of a new **Child Safety Education Coalition** to ensure that more children have access to fun and practical safety education opportunities;
- the launch of a **major new communications campaign on children’s safety**, including targeted information for more vulnerable groups and public communications to encourage people to take responsibility for children’s safety; and
- the creation of a **new National Safeguarding Unit for the Third Sector** to provide advice and assistance to all third sector organisations on safer recruitment procedures, risk management in activity provision and anti-bullying policies.

- 2.1 All children and young people should feel safe and protected. We want them to enjoy their childhoods, to stay safe and have the freedom to grow and achieve their full potential.
- 2.2 It is important that everyone – parents, practitioners, government – works together to create safe and accessible environments for children and young people wherever they are, whether at

home, at school, at college, out playing, on transport, at nursery, in public spaces or in a youth club. It is everyone's responsibility to create these safe environments, so that all children and young people can enjoy and achieve.

- 2.3 Keeping children and young people safe from harm is an integral part of wider work being undertaken to develop integrated children's services. In *Every Child Matters*, we set out an ambition for children's services to work together to ensure that children can be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being. This is being achieved in local areas around the country by different services working together as a Team Around the Child (TAC), using the Common Assessment Framework and sharing information where necessary about children at risk of harm. Effective communication and information sharing are vital for keeping children and young people safe. This helps identification of children and young people in need or at risk of harm and, in cases of concern about children's welfare, will enable professionals to consider jointly how to proceed in the best interests of the child. Supporting tools such as ContactPoint will play an important role in ensuring that practitioners know who else is working with a child or young person.⁸
- 2.4 People working with children and young people are increasingly working together, often co-located in the same offices, and are being trained together including on the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge. The processes for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children are set out in *Working Together to Safeguard Children*.⁹



8 Information on ContactPoint is available from www.ecm.gov.uk/delivering-services/contactpoint/

9 Flow charts setting out the process from the point concerns are raised about a child, through referral, initial assessment, taking urgent action, and what happens after the child protection conference are included in Chapter 5 of *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, available from: <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/socialcare/safeguarding/workingtogether/>

2.5 Many different agencies have a key role to play in creating safe environments for children and young people, and will be represented on the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).

- **universal services** including schools, early years providers, extended school services, Further Education (FE) colleges, training providers working with 14-19 year olds, housing services, local authority planners, parks/green spaces managers and road safety officers will work to create a safe environment for children and young people, educate children and young people about how to keep themselves safe, and refer any concerns about children's safety to the relevant local agency;
- **everyone working with children and young people**, whether in paid employment or as volunteers, should promote children's resilience to harm, be alert to risks and indicators of harm, know how to find out who else is working with the child, and know when and with whom to share information;
- **NHS organisations and staff** will actively promote the health and well-being of children, identify and work in partnership with agencies to address safeguarding concerns, and provide timely, therapeutic and preventative interventions;
- **police forces** will identify and act on child protection concerns, carry out criminal investigations, enforce road traffic laws and help to prevent harm. Police forces have specific child abuse investigation units and can exercise emergency powers where necessary to protect children believed to be at immediate risk. Police forces will be increasingly involved in Safer Schools Partnerships to help schools provide a safer and more secure school community, including ensuring children are not victimised. Community Support Officers increasingly have a role in ensuring the safety and cohesion of local communities and in tackling bullying which occurs in the community;
- **children's social care services** will act on child protection referrals, assess need and co-ordinate responses from local agencies to keep children safe and promote their welfare;
- **services for vulnerable adults** such as prisons, adult mental health, adult substance misuse and domestic violence intervention projects will recognise the links between service users who are parents and risks to their children's safety and act to safeguard children;
- **third sector organisations** provide a range of preventative services and resources relating to accidental and deliberate harm, including helplines (such as ChildLine and Parentline Plus), ensure the safety of those working with children, and promote the road safety of children. Many third sector organisations, including faith organisations, work with hard to reach groups to carry out important preventative work within communities. The third sector can also be involved in providing therapeutic support for children who have been abused, which can help to improve the quality of service received by the child and their family; and

- **the Fire and Rescue Service** has a statutory duty to carry out fire prevention work and fulfils this by promoting fire safety to children in the local area, and being involved in LSCBs and child death review panels as necessary. The Fire and Rescue Service also plays an important part in road safety, including working actively to promote road safety and so prevent accidents.
- 2.6 This chapter sets out areas for new action we will take over the next three years to help keep all children and young people safe. As well as broader work to improve children’s services, as set out in the Children’s Plan, this chapter focuses on areas where we consider new action is needed to help further improve children’s safety.

Areas for new action

PLAY AND TAKING PART IN POSITIVE ACTIVITIES

- 2.7 This issue generated widespread interest during the consultation. The majority of respondents felt that playing outside (in a combination of supervised and un-supervised play) is beneficial for children, not just for their enjoyment but also for their general health and to allow them to develop independence. Several respondents felt that children and young people today do not spend as much time outside their homes as previous generations, and were concerned about the impact this had on the development of children’s resilience – including learning how to handle risks for themselves and important social skills.
- Respondents were broadly supportive of the consultation proposal to launch a communications campaign to encourage parents to let children and young people play outside.
 - They would particularly welcome information on facilities in their local area.

“Children need to be encouraged and allowed to play outside by communities.” – Local Safeguarding Children Board

“[We] believe that there needs to be more information about the relative risks to children playing outside as well as an increase in appropriate adults around play spaces.” – Charity

- 2.8 However, some respondents commented that:
- it is too dangerous to let young children outside unsupervised;
 - there is no need for a new communications campaign – signposting existing information would be sufficient;
 - there are currently not enough public areas for children and young people to play – a communications campaign would need to be supported by the provision of more facilities;
 - play facilities must be safe, and also need to be risk assessed for disabled children, to ensure they have provision for exploring and play;
 - lack of facilities mean that young people, particularly teenagers, are more likely to get involved in unsafe behaviour, such as spending time in unlit areas away from other people; and
 - play areas need to be incorporated into local planning and development.

2.9 Children and young people themselves wanted:

- safe places to meet their friends during the day and in the evening; and
- facilities that catered for groups and families, as well as individuals.

"Give us indoor safe places to go at night e.g. cafes for kids our age (rough people not allowed in)." – Young person

"Listen to children and young people, help make the environment safer so we can play and explore without parents needing to control everything we do!" – Young person

2.10 To respond to the views in consultation and promote further play and positive activities, we will:

- **work with the Play Safety Forum, a group of national agencies involved in play safety, to help play providers understand the importance of balancing the benefits of offering children opportunities to take risks in their play with ensuring the levels of risk are reasonable;**¹⁰
- **spend £225 million on play initiatives that include offering every local authority capital funding that would allow up to 3,500 playgrounds nationally to be rebuilt or renewed and made accessible to children with disabilities; publish a play strategy by Summer 2008; and create 30 adventure playgrounds for 8-13 year olds in disadvantaged areas, as announced in the Children's Plan;**
- **work with delivery partners to ensure the Government's £100 million additional investment in increased sporting and physical activity opportunities for young people reaches the maximum possible number of young people;**
- **work to improve the quality of parks and urban green spaces, which provide opportunities for play, education, sport and physical activity for children and young people;**
- **continue to promote the neighbourhood management approach, including warden schemes, as a means to empower communities and make public services more responsive to local needs;**
- **launch new guidance on taking pupils outside the classroom as part of the 'Out and About' package, which will also include revised *Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits* guidance;**¹¹
- **work with the Health and Safety Executive and other partners to reinforce the message to schools that risk assessment must be proportionate – in order to minimise risk without denying children the opportunity to experience the benefits of learning outside the classroom;**

¹⁰ The Play Safety Forum position statement says that risk-taking is an essential part of play provision and providers should offer children, including disabled children, stimulating, challenging environments for exploring and developing their abilities, whilst ensuring they are not exposed to unacceptable levels of risk. A copy is available from: www.ncb.org.uk/cpc/ Policy & Research Section, Play Safety Forum

¹¹ *Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits – A good practice guide* (1998) supplemented by: *Standards for LEAs in Overseeing Educational Visits*, *Standards for Adventure*, and *A Handbook for Group Leaders* (all 2002); and by *Group Safety at Water Margins* (2003).

- launch a new 'Out and About' framework for teachers' continuing professional development, to ensure teachers have the skills to take pupils on trips safely;
- bring together existing 'safety' and 'quality' badges and accreditation procedures to form one easily recognisable and understandable system for schools and other users to select venues for learning outside the classroom;
- continue to make play a priority in the early years: the Early Years Foundation Stage, which will come into force in September 2008, makes clear that providers should offer access to outdoor play areas wherever possible, or undertake outings on a daily basis to allow children to play outdoors. Early Support¹², the central government mechanism for achieving better co-ordinated family-focused services for very young disabled children and their families, will ensure that disabled children also benefit from the development and expansion of early years services; and
- continue to promote positive activities for young people through *Aiming High for Young People*¹³. We will invest £184 million over three years, alongside ongoing funding of £495 million to improve positive activities for young people. This includes the launch of a new programme of capital investment in youth facilities that provide both safe places to go and more opportunities for young people to experience different leisure time activities. In addition to this, we announced a further £160 million funding in the Children's Plan – supporting our ambition that there will be new and improved youth facilities in every constituency over the next 10 years.

UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING RISKS

2.11 In the consultation, parents, practitioners, the general public and children and young people all stressed the importance of learning the skills to understand and manage risk. Parents in particular were concerned about risks such as road traffic, accidents in the home, grooming through the internet and the potential risks arising from early sexual activity.

Teaching children and young people to understand and manage risks

2.12 There was strong support for Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) as a way of teaching children and young people about risk.

"The development of the PSHE part of the school curriculum plays an important role in enabling children and young people to understand the concepts of risk, safety and the development of skills for life. But parents need to be made aware of what is learned." – Charity

2.13 Some respondents also called for PSHE to be made a compulsory part of the curriculum. Several groups wanted PSHE to cover specific issues, such as domestic violence and internet safety.

2.14 Several consultation respondents pointed out the value of other forms of safety education, citing Crucial Crew or LASER centres, where children go and experience risk in a safe environment, and

¹² More information on *Early Support* is available from <http://www.earlysupport.org.uk/>

¹³ *Aiming High for Young People: The 10 Year Youth Strategy* is available from: <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/tenyearyouthstrategy/>

Kerbcraft child pedestrian training, which provides practical on-road education, so that children can learn safety skills in the real world. Responses suggested that the provision and quality of such safety education varies greatly throughout the country. Some areas have well-developed and evaluated schemes, whilst others do not have any. It was felt that great benefit could be derived from sharing material and good practice to help children and young people in more areas have access to high quality safety education.

2.15 Some respondents saw practical difficulties in using PSHE to teach children and young people about safety or felt that other routes would be more effective:

- some respondents were concerned that PSHE already included many topics, and so it would be difficult to include safety education;
- many young people spoke about the need for the deliverers of safety education to have credibility, and several respondents felt that youth workers, or people with direct experience of relevant problems, rather than teachers, should go into schools to deliver safety education;
- an additional suggestion was that safety education should be delivered outside schools, for example in youth centres; and
- some responses suggested that safety education should be included in all aspects of the curriculum, rather than taught in one subject.

“Learning of this nature is best when it is embedded across the curriculum.” – Professional association

2.16 Young people’s criticisms of PSHE safety education mainly concerned the way in which it is currently taught: they feel it is not interactive and does not use up-to-date materials.

Giving parents and carers information on understanding and managing risks

2.17 Several respondents felt that risk education should not just be focused on children and that parents and carers also need to learn these skills in order to teach their own children. Respondents were broadly supportive of proposals to provide parents with information about risks. Some parents said that they received lots of information when their children were young but would appreciate more information as their children grew up.

“It is easy to get information about safety when your baby is small but it’s harder to find things for older children.” – Parent

2.18 There was a range of views about existing levels of access to services – some parents felt they could access a lot of information, through children’s centres and other early years provision, while others (often living in the same area) disagreed. Many respondents spoke about the need for universal parenting support, allowing parents to access information in a non-stigmatising way.

“[Children] don’t come with a manual...I wish they did!” – Parent

2.19 Several routes for delivering support to parents were suggested, including:

- health workers, particularly health visitors, who visited families at home;

- local centres where parents could meet each other in an informal setting; and
- post-natal classes made available to parents in a similar way to ante-natal ones.

2.20 Some parents expressed the view that asking for help makes them feel that they have failed in a crucial aspect of parenting and therefore universal support would make them feel more confident about seeking advice.

“How are you going to get a dad to turn round and say, look I do need help. There’s a sort of pride...” – Parent

2.21 Some parents of children from black or minority ethnic backgrounds were also concerned about their children being subject to racist bullying or abuse, and how this can affect their use of public space available in the local area. However, some minority ethnic parents, particularly in Asian communities, felt that they were able to access a high level of support through their communities and strong extended family networks.

“This society, this is very much different, we are Asians, we can go to anybody... I know your grandfather or somebody else, I will tell you what you need to know... here in English system, if I say something they say, mind your own business, go away, so it’s a society difference.” – General public

“I feel sorry for some English parents, it’s not the same for them... like for me there are lots of people I can go to... but I don’t think it’s the same for all of them.” – Asian parent

2.22 One concern raised by practitioners was that providing information for parents will not engage parents with no interest or those without much free time to find and absorb it. They felt that the parents who already actively seek information will be the ones who take advantage of information services, and so it is important to deliver information through a range of channels (in addition to, for example, leaflets and posters distributed through children’s centres).

2.23 Parents raised concerns about their ability to talk to their children early about sex and relationships. Research shows that open and unembarrassed communication between parents and their children helps to delay early sex and increases contraceptive use if young people do become sexually active.

2.24 Respondents also felt it is important to tailor any communications campaigns to the needs of different groups, such as people who don’t speak English, or have poor literacy skills, to ensure that they have access to information. This could be by the use of visual or pictorial communications methods as well as written texts.

2.25 To promote better understanding and management of risks we will:

- **set up a new Child Safety Education Coalition to deliver and evaluate child safety education across the country and ensure that more children, including disabled children, have access to activities such as Crucial Crew or LASER centres;**
- **launch a major new communications campaign on children’s safety, including information for parents and carers about risks to their children’s safety, targeted**

communications to families living in high risk areas and public communications to encourage people to take responsibility for children's safety;

- publish the results of the review proposed in the *Staying Safe* consultation document, looking at which safety education resources for PSHE are of the most use, to help teachers identify the best resources for their lessons;
- explore ways in which safety education can be reflected in the National PSHE Continuing Professional Development Programme and the ways in which this can be made available to a range of practitioners including those in FE;
- review the delivery of sex and relationships education in schools, so that it better meets young people's needs, giving them the knowledge, skills and confidence to make safe choices in relation to their sexual health;
- continue to provide clear messages through the teenage pregnancy strategy media campaign to help young people to:
 - delay early sex;
 - avoid peer pressure;
 - use contraception if they become sexually active;¹⁴ and
- continue to roll out the Extended Schools programme to provide all children with access to a safe environment and trusted adults outside school hours as well as access to specialist services and family support.¹⁵

A SAFE WORKFORCE

2.26 Many parents and the general public who took part in the consultation thought that recruitment practices were already geared towards ensuring a safe workforce. Children and young people themselves expressed a range of views about the professionals they come into contact with, but the majority said that they always felt safe.

2.27 Most respondents (practitioners, parents and the general public) supported vetting education staff, and so welcomed the extension of this to other members of the children's workforce. Some respondents raised concerns that the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks could give a false sense of security and consequently undermine common sense in recruitment. It is vital that those employing staff to work with children and young people adopt recruitment and selection procedures, and other human resources management processes, that help to deter, reject, or identify those who might harm children.¹⁶

"We need to check references more – need to look at continuity, and ask about gaps." – Practitioner

¹⁴ More information on the teenage pregnancy strategy is available from: <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/teenagepregnancy/>

¹⁵ Information on the Extended Schools programme is available from: <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/ete/extendedschools/>

¹⁶ Guidance for education employers on safer recruitment practices, as well as CRB checks, is available in *Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education* (chapters 3 and 4) www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications

2.28 This Action Plan includes a number of significant developments being taken forward in response to the Bichard Inquiry recommendations.¹⁷ This includes ground-breaking initiatives such as the new Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) scheme as well as important developments to improve the management and sharing of intelligence and other operational information by the police.

The Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA)

The Government is introducing the toughest ever vetting and barring scheme, designed to prevent those who are known to pose a risk of harm to children or vulnerable adults from gaining access to them through their work. The scheme, to be operated under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, places new duties on employers and employees and is enforced through criminal law.

Once the new scheme is introduced, all those seeking to work with children or vulnerable adults, in either a paid or unpaid capacity, will need to register with the Independent Safeguarding Authority before they enter the workforce. Employers, and those who manage the work of volunteers, must check that the individual is registered before he or she can start work.

Parents will also be able to check the registration status of people they employ to look after their children, including home tutors, sports coaches and nannies.

The Government is conducting a vigorous communications campaign to ensure that employers and stakeholders know and understand their new duties and responsibilities.

For more information see www.isa.gov.org.uk.

2.29 The ISA scheme will be introduced through a phased and managed roll-out. We are currently consulting on the approach to phasing the roll-out.¹⁸

2.30 As part of the new ISA scheme, parents will be able to check the registration status of those they employ in a private capacity, such as home tutors, sports coaches and nannies. This will give parents greater reassurance. If the individual is ISA-registered then the parent or employer will know that the individual is not barred and that the ISA has considered all the relevant information held on that person, including convictions, cautions and local police records, as well as referrals from previous employers. Parents will be able to register their interest in an individual they are employing so that they are notified if the individual's ISA registration status changes.

2.31 To continue to make progress on safer workforce and safe employment practices, we will:

- **work with the Children's Workforce Development Council on new guidance and training on safer recruitment for all of the children's workforce;**
- **complete the policy development and secondary legislation for the Independent Safeguarding Authority scheme, launch the scheme, and continue the communications campaign about the scheme to employers, employees, and the general public;**

¹⁷ The Bichard Inquiry report is available from www.ecm.gov.uk/files/8B1AD603DCDB33C72AB47586CE7C3A86.pdf

¹⁸ *Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006: Independent Safeguarding Authority Scheme* Consultation is available from: <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations/conDetails.cfm?consultationId=1516>

- **revise the scope of the Exceptions Order to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 so that Enhanced criminal record checks can be obtained on a wider range of occupations, in line with coverage of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006;**
- **continue work to enhance police information capabilities and information flows and work with the CRB to improve disclosure service arrangements (as part of the implementation of the Bichard Inquiry recommendations);**
- **roll out safer recruitment training for the post-16 education and training sector run by the Centre for Excellence in Leadership and the National College of School Leadership (NCSL); and**
- **continue to work with NCSL and other key stakeholders to maximise the numbers of heads and nominated governors successfully completing the online Safer Recruitment training. NCSL are continuing to run events to train trainers in the delivery of the Safer Recruitment workshop materials to school staff at local level.**

ADDRESSING NEW THREATS TO CHILDREN'S SAFETY

2.32 Many respondents to the consultation raised this issue, and it was a particular concern for parents, practitioners and the general public. Whilst people recognised the benefits of new technologies for learning, having fun and socialising, there was widespread concern about new areas of danger for children and young people. Specific issues raised during the consultation included mobile phones, the internet and cyberbullying.

Mobile phones

2.33 These were seen as having both positive and negative impacts on children's safety. Many children and young people were reassured by having a mobile phone to keep in contact with parents and call for help if necessary.

"My mum lets me go anywhere but I have to have a phone on me." – Young person

2.34 However, many other respondents were concerned that:

- mobile phones (and other portable devices such as MP3 players) can make children and young people targets for crime; and
- Bluetooth (a system for transferring data between mobile phones) enables the transfer of content that some children and young people might find offensive without the receiver's consent – young people could receive inappropriate images in this way.

2.35 Concerns about young people becoming victims of crime will be addressed in more detail in the forthcoming Youth Crime Action Plan (see paragraph 3.39).

The internet and computers

2.36 Again, respondents recognised the educational and social benefits of the internet but were concerned about some aspects:

- young people viewing potentially inappropriate content on the internet and in computer games; and
- social networking and user-generated content sites, such as Bebo, MySpace, Facebook and YouTube enabling young people to post personal information online, view inappropriate images and be contacted by those wishing to harm them.

Cyberbullying

2.37 Respondents raised the potential for these new technologies to act as a new medium for bullying – when young people send bullying messages or pictures via phone, email or social networking websites. This was seen as a way in which bullying could spread from schools, or local areas, into children’s own homes.

2.38 Children and young people themselves did not express great concern about the internet, with some saying they recognised there were risks and knew what not to do.

“Tell them [siblings and friends] about the dangers of the internet...block your address, name, where you live and phone numbers.” – Young person

2.39 Many respondents felt that the prevalence of these new technologies, in homes, schools, and public areas (such as libraries) means that it is now difficult to monitor use.

“[We] wish to stress that access to technology among young people, which allows for the dissemination of information and the creation of content, is now so pervasive that any attempt to control fully how, when and where it is used is neither possible or enforceable.” – Professional organisation

2.40 There was a strong consensus on the importance of teaching children and young people to keep themselves safe in these new areas, and for parents and carers to be aware of the new technologies and techniques for making internet use safer.

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP)

The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) has a range of education-related activities to help keep children and young people safe online. Their work over the next three years will include:

- an interactive resource for children at Key Stage 1 as well as a website, leaflets, posters and lesson plans;
- the CyberCafé toolbox of resources for children at Key Stage 2 which includes lesson plans, a film, web resources, leaflets, posters and activities. The CyberCafé toolbox has been developed in partnership with Becta and also includes training for teachers in how to use the resources; and
- the 'thinkuknow' education programme for children and young people at Key Stages 3 and 4. CEOP have delivered this programme to 1.1 million children and young people in 2006/07, and plan to deliver their education programme to a further 3.5 million by the end of the 2009 academic year.

CEOP also provide a 'Report Abuse' service, with a button on websites to click to report abuse to specialist police officers and investigators.

See www.ceop.gov.uk for more information and copies of the resources.

2.41 Respondents were overwhelmingly positive about the proposal to involve Becta¹⁹, CEOP and other organisations to give parents more information about keeping children safe online.

"My mum doesn't know anything about computers... maybe she should, it might make her feel better about when I go on the internet..." – Young person

2.42 It was felt that the information should be tailored for parents with different levels of knowledge. Some parents are relatively computer savvy and are confident about keeping their children safe online, for example by keeping computers in communal areas, password protecting them, and talking to their children about what they are doing online. Other parents were concerned that their children know more than them about the internet and felt that they do not have the skills to keep their children safe online.

"Adults need specific guidance and training to know what to look out for as often children are the ones with time to explore the computer." – Charity

2.43 Good practice guidance for parents on internet safety is currently available from CEOP – 'Purely for Parents' and Childnet – 'Know IT All for parents'. Parents will also be helped by a new collaboration between the PC Association (a trade association of computer retailers) and the NSPCC to change PC retailers' code of practice, ensuring staff give consumers guidance on safe use of the internet when they are aware that the computer may be used by children.

2.44 Some respondents felt that it is not just parents who are responsible for e-safety. They thought there should be more information for children and young people themselves, either taught in specific lessons (such as PSHE) or throughout the curriculum. Respondents also talked about training teachers in e-safety.

¹⁹ Information on Becta is available from: <http://www.becta.org.uk/>

"A module [on e-safety] ought to be developed and provided for all trainee teachers and it should become a part of compulsory core curriculum at all teacher training institutions." – Charity

- 2.45 A number of responses said that the industry, for example internet service providers themselves, should be more responsible for online safety by, for example, providing filtering tools as standard on new PCs. It is also possible to include a reporting abuse mechanism on internet software e.g. the CEOP 'Report Abuse' button.

The Byron Review

In September 2007 the Prime Minister asked Dr. Tanya Byron to examine the risks to children and young people from exposure to potentially harmful or inappropriate material on the internet and in video games, using her expertise as a clinical psychologist with considerable experience of working with vulnerable children and families.

The Review has already generated an important debate, with engagement across a range of stakeholders including industry, parents, children and young people. Two calls for evidence were issued, including one specifically aimed at children and young people, which generated over 650 responses.

Dr. Byron is assessing existing mechanisms for protecting the safety and welfare of children and young people when online or playing video games. Dr. Byron will report back to the Government in March 2008 on the evidence on the benefits and potential risks of new technologies, what is being done to minimise the risks, and what more can be done, to empower parents and protect children.

For more information go to <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/byronreview/>

- 2.46 To help parents to control their children's access to inappropriate internet content and services, the Home Office and Ofcom (the communications industry regulator) are working with the British Standards Institute (BSI) to develop a BSI standard for internet content control software. The first kite marks will be awarded shortly. This should help parents to monitor the online activities of their children, enforce limits on children's internet usage, and help children avoid accidentally accessing harmful, illegal or inappropriate content.

- 2.47 To help promote online safety, we will:

- **give full and proper consideration to, and respond to the recommendations of, the Byron Review, which is due to report in March 2008;**
- **continue to work with industry and children's charities through the Home Secretary's Task Force on Child Protection on the Internet. This will include supporting the development and publication of the new guidance for the providers of social networking sites and the Ofcom/British Standards Institute (BSI) Standard for internet content control software; and**
- **introduce the new ICT curriculum for Key Stage 3 in September 2008, which will have an increased emphasis on internet safety. There is also support for implementation by the National College for School Leadership, the Specialist School and Academies Trust and National Strategies in advance of this date.**

HELPING LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARDS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs)

The role of Local Safeguarding Children Boards is to:

- co-ordinate what is done by each person or body represented on the Board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area of each local authority; and
- ensure the effectiveness of work to safeguard children and young people in the local area.

Some local organisations have to be members of the LSCB by law, including local authorities, health services, police, probation, youth justice organisations and Connexions. Other organisations such as schools, FE institutions, independent healthcare organisations, the NSPCC and other voluntary and community sector bodies should be involved in the LSCB.

2.48 Respondents in this area were predominantly practitioners or representatives of organisations – possibly reflecting one issue raised by several respondents that more work needs to be done to raise the profile of LSCBs among the general public.

2.49 The comments from different regions indicate that there is currently variability in the effectiveness of LSCBs. Some areas reported wide-ranging programmes of work by LSCBs and engagement from a high number of services, whilst others were concerned about organisational issues.

"[LSCBs] have the power to embarrass people ... and even force change." – Practitioner

"I can think of lots of really good things that have come out of LSCB – like our pan-Sussex child protection procedures." – Practitioner

2.50 Many practitioners felt that LSCBs could be very effective in improving children's safety, but were concerned about lack of resources and lack of clear guidelines about funding.

"For a lot of people who sit on the board it is a 'bolt on' to their daily job – for it to become more useful it needs to be part of their job description." – Practitioner

2.51 There was also some general comment from practitioners that they did not know:

- how LSCBs should be structured;
- what their lines of responsibility are; and
- whether they should be involved in specific cases or in general agenda setting.

2.52 Respondents were generally positive about the proposals included in the *Staying Safe* consultation document.²⁰ Further issues raised, particularly by practitioners, were that LSCBs would like a funding formula to determine the levels of contributions from different services. Participants also spoke about distribution of good practice models between LSCBs, in particular LSCBs in the same region.

"Guidance on recommended resource levels for LSCBs would be helpful." – Organisation

²⁰ For a full list of the proposals in the *Staying Safe* consultation document, please see Annex C

- 2.53** Some respondents felt that LSCBs could do more to protect disabled children and promote their welfare. The Council for Disabled Children was commissioned by the Government to produce a resource to help LSCBs in this role, and further guidance is available in *Working Together to Safeguard Children*.²¹
- 2.54** Although respondents said there was good commitment to LSCBs in their local areas, some said that housing officers and Registered Social Landlords could play a greater role in improving the safety of children and young people they encounter in their work.
- 2.55** From 1 April 2008, each LSCB will have to put in place processes to review the deaths of all children. This will consist of a rapid response when a child dies unexpectedly, and a child death review panel which will take an overview of all deaths of children aged up to 18 in the local area. The panel will look at how such deaths might be prevented or avoided in the future and make recommendations for changes. These will help LSCBs understand where they can improve practice in their local area, for example in the ways in which adults and children's services work together (see paragraph 3.22 onwards). Practitioners were positive about plans for LSCBs to establish child death reviewing functions, but raised concerns about their ability to find time to ensure this work had a positive effect on children's safety.
- 2.56** To support LSCBs to make a difference to children's safety in their local area we will:
- **provide funding for child death review processes (local authorities will receive £7.2 million in 2008-2009, £7.4 million in 2009-2010 and £7.7 million in 2010-2011) which are a responsibility of LSCBs. Additional NHS monies of £10 million per annum over the same period will be provided to support health professionals in their participation in these processes. Findings from these reviews will feed into local, regional and national safety initiatives;**
 - **use the findings from the forthcoming Child Death Review report published by the Confidential Enquiry into Maternal and Child Health to inform future developments;**
 - **host a second national event for Local Safeguarding Children Boards in March 2008 to allow LSCBs to share experience of how they have handled some of the critical issues they have faced and how they have encouraged more effective local delivery of multi-agency work;**
 - **issue a collection of readily accessible resources to clarify issues on LSCBs' roles and responsibilities and facilitate improvement of LSCBs' performance and effectiveness: non-statutory practice guidance, a good governance toolkit and exemplars of effective practice; and**
 - **identify and promote best practice in joint working between children's and housing services – we will publish research in Spring 2008 currently being undertaken on behalf of Communities and Local Government and the Department for Children, Schools and Families.**

²¹ *Safeguarding Disabled Children – a resource for Local Safeguarding Children Boards* is available from <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/IG00048/>
Working Together to Safeguard Children is available from <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/socialcare/safeguarding/workingtogether/>

ROAD SAFETY

2.57 Many children and young people, as well as parents and practitioners, expressed concern about road safety.

"[I'm] not very [safe] because I don't want to get run over." – Young person

2.58 In particular people were concerned about:

- children being involved in road traffic collisions as pedestrians or as passengers; and
- older teenagers having accidents whilst driving.

2.59 Road safety was felt by many respondents to be a barrier to young people pursuing activities outside.

"Traffic and traffic speed are the main reasons why parents do not let their children play out..." – Charity

2.60 Some respondents were positive about the increased safety of children on roads and Department for Transport statistics show that the number of children aged 0-15 killed or seriously injured in road accidents in 2006 was 3,294, of which 169 were killed – this is 52% below the 1994-98 average (which is the baseline for the Government's target of a 50% reduction by 2010). However, within this age group, there has been more progress with those aged 0-11 than for those aged 12-15. There has been even less of a reduction for those aged 16-18, which include a much higher proportion of young drivers and their passengers.²²

THINK! road safety campaign

THINK! was launched in 2000 as the Government's overarching road safety campaign, uniting messages on road safety under one banner. As well as overall road safety, THINK! campaigns cover specific themes such as drink driving, seat belts, fatigue and mobile phone use.

Government road safety campaigns aim to reinforce the need for drivers and other road users to take responsibility for their own safety and for the safety of others on the road.

In 2007, THINK! won the special 20th anniversary award at the Prince Michael International Road Safety Awards. Judges said its campaigns on issues such as drink driving, speeding, motorcycling and teen and child road safety, have been some of the most successful initiatives in reducing road casualties since the awards were launched 20 years ago.

2.61 To make further progress on road safety over the next three years, we will:

- **implement the 2007 child road safety strategy. This includes a full range of road safety materials for all age groups in schools by 2011, continuing publicity campaigns aimed at parents, children, teenagers and young drivers, and a dissemination programme to inform local authorities about the benefits of Kerbcraft child pedestrian training;**
- **consult in early 2008 on a new driver training and testing system to address the safety of drivers and passengers aged 16-18, including proposals for an overhaul of the current**

22 Statistics from *Road Casualties Great Britain 2006*, available from <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/accidents/casualtiesgbar/>

system for learning to drive, covering pre-driver education, testing and maintaining driving skills through life;

- **encourage local authorities to create more 20 mph zones (which have been shown to reduce child pedestrian deaths by 70 per cent) where appropriate; and**
- **encourage local authorities to support applications for Home Zones – areas where people can share road space more safely with traffic, through traffic calming measures and redesign of communal areas.**

HEALTH VISITING SERVICES

2.62 Another important point raised by many participants in the consultation, especially by practitioners, is the value of the health visiting service, particularly in the area of universal safeguarding and in identifying and supporting vulnerable families and children and young people in need.

“Health visitors are absolutely brilliant. I think it’s a good thing they have the drop-in clinics where you can go and talk to them about any concerns or anything... they could give you much more information.” – Parent

2.63 Many practitioners who attended the regional events spoke about the balance between universal, targeted and responsive safeguarding and felt that health visitors were a key part of universal support for families. Respondents felt that health visitors provide a unique service by:

- visiting every family with a new-born baby;
- giving basic parenting support;
- identifying potential health and/or safeguarding problems early, before they become serious; and
- supporting families when problems arise.

2.64 There was some concern from practitioners that systems are currently good at tackling severe cases, but there may be issues *“bubbling under the surface”* which do not get addressed – health visitors are often key to early intervention in these situations.

2.65 Over the next three years, we will take forward work outlined in the Government’s response to *Facing the Future: a review of the role of health visitors*²³ including:

- **a new guide on the Child Health Promotion Programme (CHPP) to be published in Spring 2008;**
- **a series of regional workshops to promote the revised CHPP;**

²³ *Facing the Future: a review of the role of health visitors*, is available from http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_075642

- new investment of £30 million over the Comprehensive Spending Review period (2008-2011) in the Family Nurse Partnership Programme – an intensive nurse-led home visiting programme for the most at risk families with children under two years old;
- fund a project to test and develop the CHPP leadership role in children’s centres;
- consult on the post-registration framework including the proposed career pathway for professional staff working in ‘children, family and public health’; and
- work with Strategic Health Authorities to remind them of the importance of the health visitor workforce and the need to increase such resources in deprived communities.

THIRD SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

2.66 Many respondents felt that the third sector has a key role to play in providing positive activities for young people and giving them opportunities to experience risk in a managed environment. They can also engage with groups who do not or cannot access statutory services.

“The voluntary sector can provide a safe environment where children and young people can share concerns and build self-confidence, as well as skills in negotiation and relationships – in a safe and protected space...” – Voluntary organisation

2.67 However, several respondents also raised concerns, feeling that:

- third sector organisations are not always included in safeguarding work;
- volunteers do not have access to the same child protection training as professionals; and
- many parents and carers do not know what requirements to look for when sending their children to activities run by the third sector.

“VCS [Voluntary Community Sector] organisations need appropriate support to assist them in keeping young people safe.” – Voluntary organisation

“It is important that the statutory and the voluntary sector work together. We have to conclude that the aims and objectives outlined in Every Child Matters must be the way forward as professional and voluntary sector organisations work together to oversee the welfare of the child in the context of all the influences upon the individual family.” – Charity

Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU)

The CPSU is a partnership between the NSPCC, Sport England, SportScotland, the Sports Council for Northern Ireland and the Sports Council for Wales.

It was founded in 2001, with the mission to safeguard the welfare and promote the well-being of children and young people in sport.

The CPSU helps sports and other organisations to:

- recognise their responsibility to protect children and young people left in their care;
- develop strategies and standards to protect children and young people;
- identify and respond to adults who are a threat to children and young people; and
- develop child protection knowledge and skills among all staff and volunteers.

DCSF and DCMS have also issued a leaflet *Helping keep your child safe in sport* aimed at parents and carers, to help them to ask the right questions about child protection measures when they are choosing sports activities for their children. This is available at www.culture.gov.uk

2.68 To help the third sector safeguard children and young people effectively, we will:

- **set up a new National Safeguarding Unit for the Third Sector to provide advice and assistance to all third sector organisations on safer recruitment procedures, risk management in activity provision and anti-bullying policies. The Unit will also explore ways to help reassure parents about their children taking part in activities run by the third sector and how to choose a club or society; and**
- **ensure that the details of the Independent Safeguarding Authority scheme are properly communicated to third sector providers – including through the new National Safeguarding Unit for the Third Sector.**

3. Protecting vulnerable children and young people

“The Government has an important role in ensuring the safety and well-being of the most vulnerable members of society...” – Charity

Summary

Evidence shows that some groups of children and young people are more vulnerable to harm than others, including looked after children, children from families facing multiple disadvantage, disabled children, young offenders and children growing up in deprived areas.

Areas for new action covered in this chapter are:

- Improving practice in children’s social care
- Reducing numbers of accidents
- Addressing parental problems which impact on children’s welfare
- Improving safety on the streets
- Disabled children
- Safeguards for children who are employed
- Youth justice and children involved with the courts
- Young runaways and missing children
- Substance misuse by young people

In this chapter, we announce the following new commitments for the next three years:

- fund **a new home safety equipment scheme** totalling £18 million over three years, targeted at families in disadvantaged areas, as announced in the Children’s Plan;
- **a Priority Review of local area accident prevention** which will make a number of recommendations about how accident prevention work might be improved;
- new guidance and training for **tackling bullying which takes place outside schools**;
- new guidance on **safeguarding disabled children**, in line with *Working Together to Safeguard Children*; and
- **a new safeguarding strategy for the youth justice sector.**

3.1 Some children and young people are more at risk of harm than others – groups such as disabled children, looked after children, unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, traveller children,

children living in deprived areas, and children whose parents experience problems such as domestic violence, substance misuse or have mental health needs.

- 3.2 Alongside universal services which create safe environments for all children and young people, it is important that we recognise the vulnerability of particular groups of children and target support to help reduce these risks. This support may be provided in universal settings or within more specialist services, whichever is more appropriate given individual circumstances.
- 3.3 Some children may have additional needs, beyond what would normally be provided in a universal setting. Professionals working with children may use a Common Assessment Framework to look at a child's additional needs and how these might be met. Tools such as ContactPoint will play an important role by ensuring that practitioners know who else is working with a child or young person. These processes, often carried out in universal settings, can help to identify children who are more vulnerable to harm.
- 3.4 It is important that universal services are able to identify children who may have additional needs. In this chapter we set out actions to reduce risks for certain groups of children, such as disabled children or those in the youth justice system, and to improve targeted support services.

Areas for new action

IMPROVING PRACTICE IN CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

- 3.5 During the consultation, this issue was discussed predominantly by practitioners and organisations. Respondents had a perception that social services would only get involved in very serious cases and would also be concerned of an over-reaction from social workers if they did call them, although this tended to be from respondents who had little or no direct experience of social workers in their own lives.

"Based on, not on any experience, but based on things that you read in the press, TV programmes etc, they tend to rush in like a bull in a china shop." – Parent

- 3.6 Many respondents, including parents and young people, recognised the vital role played by social workers and their dedication to children and young people's safety and well-being. Respondents who had personal experience of social workers often praised their work.

"My support workers are always there when I need them." – Young person

"Catherine... she helps you a lot and she don't judge you, don't look down at you or nought like that, do you know what I mean? If she can help you she'll help you... she's a human being." – Parent (misusing substances)

- 3.7 At the consultation events, some professionals who work with children felt that more could be done to help the general public understand their work and the challenges they face in relation to child protection issues. This included those working in health services, as well as children's social care and other settings. As part of our communications approach over the next three years,

we will look at how we can improve wider understanding of the role of professionals who are undertaking child protection work.

3.8 Respondents were primarily concerned about:

- low recruitment and retention rates for social workers in some areas;
- the negative perception of social workers in the media;
- low staff morale; and
- the need for social workers to have more training to help improve practice.

“Social work in children’s services is a very specific type of social work and needs more detailed and specific training for those people who wish to work in this area.” – Local Safeguarding Children Board

3.9 There was a mixed response to the proposals in the *Staying Safe* consultation document, in particular the local authority beacon scheme and the national awards scheme for highlighting good safeguarding practice. Some respondents felt an awards scheme would be beneficial, raising the profile of work undertaken to improve children’s safety:

“An opportunity to highlight the good work that is undertaken by social care, health, probation, police, housing, road safety, community groups etc to keep children safe in the media should not be missed. We need to change the profile of what keeping children safe is about.” – Local Safeguarding Children Board

“A national safeguarding awards scheme could help to raise the profile of work and share examples of good practice...” – Charity

3.10 Other respondents expressed concern about resources:

“We were not in favour of this, feeling it would add little value to the current situation – rather it would divert resources and attention away from the real business.” – Local Safeguarding Children Board

3.11 There were more favourable responses to the idea of a local authority beacon scheme from practitioners, although many parents, children and young people and the general public felt they did not know enough about these schemes to comment. A beacon scheme for Local Safeguarding Children Boards was also suggested as an alternative by several respondents.

3.12 There was a relatively low response around the issue of local authority inspection, although those who did respond felt that it is important to ensure safeguarding is included in any inspection criteria.

Inspection of children's services from 2009

The current system of local authority inspection (Joint Area Reviews and Annual Performance Assessments of children's services) will be replaced by Comprehensive Area Assessments from 2009. This was announced in the 2006 Local Government White Paper, *Strong and Prosperous Communities*.

This will mean few rolling programmes of inspection of local authority services, with most inspections triggered on an authority-specific basis following an annual risk assessment.

The case for separate programmed inspection of safeguarding is currently being considered and a decision will be made in Spring 2008. A separate programme of inspection for looked after children has already been agreed.

The Local Government White Paper made clear that any such programmes will incorporate proportionality in individual inspections.

For more information on the new Comprehensive Area Assessments see

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/performanceframeworkpartnerships/>

3.13 To help improve practice in children's social care over the next three years, we will:

- **publish the Children's Workforce Action Plan in early 2008, which will include proposals to tackle recruitment and retention and to accelerate the pace of workforce re-modelling in social care. The Children's Workforce Development Council will be a key delivery partner for this work, and will shortly be publishing its business plan for 2008-2011. The Children's Workforce Action Plan will also build on the announcements we made in the Children's Plan to:**
 - **pilot a newly qualified social worker status from 2008-2009, offering induction support underpinned by outcome indicators and appraisal;**
 - **establish a national marketing campaign and pilot a fast track entry route aimed at mature graduates to encourage more people into children's social work;**
 - **establish a framework for professional development for the children's social care workforce;**
- **improve appropriate referrals to social care by health professionals – the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence will publish guidelines for health professionals in 2009 on the identification of children with suspected abuse;**
- **work to embed in practice the recently revised Children Act 1989 guidance provided to local authorities, to improve outcomes for children who become the subject of care proceedings in the family courts:**
 - **the revised Children Act 1989 'Court Orders' regulations and guidance and the judiciary's 'Public Law Outline' (underpinned by a revised Practice Direction) are to be implemented from April 2008. Both are intended to ensure timelier decision-making for children whom local authorities believe have suffered significant harm;**

- to support these new arrangements, we will work with Cafcass, the Legal Services Commission, local authority organisations and others during 2008 and 2009 to develop practitioner toolkits and deliver training to ensure that the new guidance is fully implemented by social workers and other professionals. This will help ensure that care proceedings in the family courts can be managed effectively without unnecessary delay;
- work with partners to establish awards for safeguarding – to recognise and celebrate good practice in keeping children safe;
- put forward for consideration in 2008 a theme for the local authority beacon scheme, which would recognise partnership working through LSCBs, showcase good practice, and help to share learning across local areas;
- disseminate widely the overview reports which draw together the learning from Serious Case Reviews, to help local agencies improve their practice; and
- consider the implications for policy and practice of the next joint Chief Inspectors’ report on safeguarding children, due to be published in Summer 2008.

REDUCING NUMBERS OF ACCIDENTS

3.14 Accidents were an area of concern for many participants, and in particular the effect of inequalities on accident rates. The majority of young respondents did not cite accidents as their main concern, but several did acknowledge the potential harm from accidents.

“You do forget how dangerous things like knives and boiling water can be... I had an accident last week with a sharp knife when I was cooking.” – Young person

3.15 It was also clear from the consultation responses that, whilst there is very good provision in some areas, there is considerable local variation in work on accident prevention.

“I am concerned that my children have not got access to an education programme that teaches first aid, injury minimisation and accident prevention. Other schools in the area have access but due to funding my local school is unable to attend.” – Parent

3.16 A range of different services and agencies contribute to accident prevention work. For example the Fire and Rescue Service have invested in reducing the risks from fire in the home – installing 1.3 million smoke alarms over three and a half years. In some areas, Sure Start and health visitors have helped vulnerable families to access home safety equipment.

3.17 It is clear from the consultation responses that we need to find out more about the work of local agencies in accident prevention, and promote local partnership working including front-line health and community services, Sure Start and other children’s services, Fire and Rescue Services and housing services. LSCBs have an important role to play, both to promote partnership working of this kind and to establish child death review functions.

3.18 Responses to the proposals made in *Staying Safe* were generally positive. However, some respondents had reservations and felt that:

- the proposals in *Staying Safe* did not recognise the true seriousness of accidental harm and did not go far enough;
- any communications campaigns targeted at vulnerable families would have to be sensitively managed and tailored to meet their needs; and
- information in itself was not enough and safety equipment needs to be provided for vulnerable families.

"Families in disadvantaged communities sometimes need more than advice and information. They need practical help and material resources e.g. a free stairgate and help to fit it safely." – Adult

3.19 Several organisations also said that there was not currently enough information on accident rates – more data needs to be collected – and they would like to see one agency leading on accident prevention.

3.20 The recently published overview reports of serious case reviews highlighted two areas of accidental harm in particular – overlaying in babies and risks of scalds and burns in the home due to water temperature. We will be working to incorporate further action on these issues within broader accident prevention work, as outlined below.²⁴

3.21 To make further reductions in the rates of accidents, particularly amongst more vulnerable groups, we will:

- **fund a new home safety equipment scheme totalling £18 million over the three years 2008-2011, targeted at families in disadvantaged areas, as announced in the Children's Plan;**
- **carry out a Priority Review of local area accident prevention: the Review will consider a small number of local areas in detail to see what accident prevention work is undertaken and which agencies are involved, and make a number of recommendations about how accident prevention work might be improved;**
- **include communications about home safety targeted at disadvantaged families within the broader communications campaign (see paragraph 2.25 above);**
- **publish new guidance for professionals on common risks in the home, and the most effective forms of intervention to prevent accidents and injuries;**
- **continue to invest in making social sector homes decent and safer. Since 1997 over £20 billion has been invested and by 2010 this figure will rise to over £40 billion;**
- **take action to reduce overcrowded housing as part of the overcrowding action plan published in December 2007, working with 38 pathfinder authorities; and**
- **continue to promote fire safety messages through Child Safety Week as part of Communities and Local Government's overall 'Fire Kills' campaign.**

24 Overview reports on Serious Case Reviews available from www.ecm.gov.uk/socialcare/safeguarding/seriouscasereviews/

ADDRESSING PARENTAL PROBLEMS WHICH IMPACT ON CHILDREN'S WELFARE

3.22 This issue attracted a wide range of interest and responses during the consultation. Respondents were broadly positive about the proposals, and particularly highlighted domestic abuse and substance misuse as issues which impact on children's welfare.

"[Domestic abuse] has a huge impact on children – their social skills are affected, the way they interact with other peers, other adults, in future intimate relationships... Domestic abuse has a huge impact on the child at an early stage and for their future." – Practitioner

"I thought: what if she sees what's happening?...it's not fair on her." – Parent (who has experienced domestic abuse)

Impact of parental substance misuse on children and young people

There are an estimated 250,000 to 350,000 children affected by parental drug misuse in the UK and an estimated 750,000 to 1.3 million children in England living in families where a parent is a problematic drinker and the effects on these children are significant.

Those that experience abuse or neglect because of parental substance misuse can go on to experience long-term developmental problems and poor outcomes. It has been estimated that over 60% of children being taken into care have at least one parent with a substance misuse problem (Family Drug and Alcohol Courts research, Dr. J. Harwin) and many will take on caring responsibilities for a parent with a substance misuse problem.

Children living in families where a parent is a problematic drinker are at greater risk of experiencing domestic violence and foetal alcohol syndrome.

3.23 Whilst representatives from some areas said that adult services would routinely enquire about children when undertaking an assessment of a parent, others said that this did not happen, and so were concerned that children's needs were not being systematically addressed.

"In my previous role as a staff nurse in acute adult mental health services I did not feel there was any importance placed on child protection unless a child was visiting a parent/relative on the ward. They, and their needs, tended to remain 'invisible.'" – Adult

"Engaging adult services and ensuring these focus on children where adults are the parents/carers. Essential when supporting adults not to lose focus on the children." – Local Safeguarding Children Board

3.24 As with other communications proposals, many respondents supported them in principle but were concerned that they need to be tailored to all groups, including those who do not speak English.

"Develop a toolkit to assess the accessibility of services. No 'hard to reach families' just 'hard to access services.'" – Charity

3.25 Many responses also raised the broader issue of the interaction between children's and adults' services, and the effect on young people as they make the transition between them.

- Many respondents felt that different thresholds mean that vulnerable young people may no longer qualify for continuing support when they become adults (and then may not be receiving support they need if they become parents).
- Several respondents highlighted the role of the Further Education (FE) sector in supporting young people through periods of transition.
- A number of respondents also spoke about the need for better support for care leavers.

The Families at Risk Review

The Social Exclusion Task Force is leading a cross-Government review on families at risk. The Review has shown that often, families with complex needs are not getting the most effective support – and that when parents face difficulties in their own lives, the impact for both themselves and for their children can be severe and enduring.

Think Family: Improving the Life Chances of Families at Risk sets out a vision for a local system that improves the life chances of families at risk and helps to break the cycle of disadvantage. It outlines the key characteristics of a system that ‘thinks family’ at all levels, from governance to the frontline. The Review highlighted the importance of joining up adults’ and children’s services to support the needs of the whole family and announced the launch of £16 million Family Pathfinder project which will develop the ‘think family’ approach on the ground.

For more information, please see www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_exclusion_task_force.aspx

- 3.26** Respondents also raised the issue of young carers – those children aged under 18 who provide substantial personal and/or emotional care to another family member affected by illness, disability or substance misuse – and the impact their caring responsibilities can have on their welfare, including missing out on educational and other opportunities. Young carers may also be more vulnerable to bullying, harassment or discrimination because of their caring role. The needs of young carers are being considered as part of the review of the Carers Strategy.
- 3.27** MARACS (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences) can provide a model of identifying high and very high risk in domestic violence cases and implementing effective multi agency responses.
- 3.28** To support parents with problems and develop better links between services for parents with problems and children’s services, we will:
- **ask the Families Information Services to inform parents of safeguarding issues they could consider when choosing childcare;**
 - **implement Parent Know How – which draws together new and existing information and support services for parents into a co-ordinated programme;**
 - **implement the National Delivery Plan for Domestic Violence, including:**
 - **promoting cross-agency collaboration;**
 - **reviewing inclusion of domestic violence in Joint Area Reviews, as it affects children and young people;**

- implement the provisions in Part 1 of the Children and Adoption Act 2006 which will enable a court to order that parents take up contact activities designed to improve their contact with children in general, including where necessary addressing violent behaviour;
- publish the revised *Children's Needs – Parenting Capacity (1999)*²⁵ report updated from the available research findings on the impact of parental mental illness, alcohol and drug misuse and domestic violence on children's development;
- ensure that Nominated Health Professionals (NHPs), working with Family Intervention Projects, are in place and able to deliver their role effectively by:
 - publishing a resource manual by Spring 2008;
 - developing a common referral pathway by Spring 2008;
 - providing regional workshops in Spring 2008;
- pilot new National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE)/Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) guidelines on practice in five areas to test alternative approaches to improving the life chances of people with chaotic lives and multiple needs;
- disseminate NICE/SCIE cross-cutting practice guidelines on parenting. A national conference for frontline multi-agency professionals to underpin this guidance is planned for April 2008;
- publish a new drug strategy in Spring 2008, a key part of which will be addressing problems caused by parental substance misuse (see paragraph 3.60 below);
- build on existing plans for Family Pathfinders and Extended Family Pathfinders for Young Carers, extending them to model more effective, preventative support around families affected by illness, disability or substance misuse, who rely on the care of a child; and
- expand Family Nurse Partnerships and Family Intervention Projects

IMPROVING SAFETY ON THE STREETS

3.29 This was the primary area of concern for many children and young people who responded to the consultation, and many identified bullying, crime and anti-social behaviour as specific fears. Young people said generally that they felt safe at home but not outside.

"I've seen innocent people of my age being mugged, beaten up etc." – Young person

"The accommodation is safe, but the alley ways are dark and can be dangerous." – Young person

3.30 Respondents raised the following issues:

- bullying outside school, on public transport and in the community;

²⁵ H. Cleaver, I. Unell & J. Aldgate, *Children's Needs – Parenting Capacity: The impact of parental mental illness, problem alcohol and drug use, and domestic violence on children's development* (The Stationery Office, 1999)

- intimidation from adults and other young people (gangs and older teenagers); and
- crime and anti-social behaviour.

Bullying

3.31 This was raised as a concern by many young people and by parents in the discussion groups, as they felt it was a traumatic experience for children and young people.

3.32 We know that certain groups of children and young people are more vulnerable to bullying and so have published guidance to help schools deal with specific issues, including *Bullying Around Racism Religion and Culture* (March 2006) and guidance on tackling homophobic bullying (2007).²⁶ Disabled children are also more vulnerable to bullying.

3.33 There was support for the proposals to extend anti-bullying policies to other settings.

"[We] welcome the proposal to extend bullying policies and training used in schools to other settings, including extended school services, FE Colleges, youth groups and children's homes. This is important because it recognises the importance that policies and training can play in tackling the causes of bullying and addressing bullying." – Trade Union

3.34 However responses indicated people were unclear about who should be responsible for tackling bullying outside schools, with different respondents identifying the police, schools, and parents. One suggestion was for the provision of mediation services for children who are bullied outside schools. Several respondents also referred to the specific concerns of bullying of disabled children and children with SEN in the community, and homophobic bullying.

"... [we] think the schools and the [local authority] could take responsibility for this, as long as they are given appropriate powers. If a crime is committed, obviously this is a police matter." – School

"Reducing bullying is fundamentally the responsibility of communities, parents and families, who should be supported to do so. The [assignment] of responsibility to agencies instead of families is the first step towards the problem, not its solution." – Charity

"Has to be a collective activity involving schools, parents, the police, transport providers, community organisations and the children themselves. The general public could do much by just showing or expressing their explicit disapproval and, where necessary, intervening." – Organisation

Gangs and Groups

3.35 Many respondents spoke about gangs and groups. Some, especially children and young people, said that groups were good from a 'safety in numbers' viewpoint. Others found groups of young people threatening, and some young people said they were dispersed when they tried to hang around together.

"...if you're in big groups keeping each other safe you get split up and taken home by the police." –

Young person

²⁶ Guidance on tackling racist and homophobic bullying is available from <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/tacklingbullying>

3.36 Participants in the discussion groups were concerned about gang, gun and knife crime but were unsure how this should best be tackled, due to the complexity of the issue. Some respondents felt that LSCBs do have a role to play in this area, but some LSCB representatives were concerned that they do not have the expertise or resources to deal with this issue.

3.37 Young respondents suggested the following ways they would feel safer on the streets:

- more community policing (this was also supported by many adult respondents);
- better street lighting;
- more widespread use of CCTV; and
- officials (possibly police) to protect them on public transport, particularly after dark.

"Having safe places to hang around and meet mates, somewhere that's well lit and maybe CCTV." –

Young person

3.38 Respondents highlighted the link between young people being victims of crime and subsequently (and/or simultaneously) offending themselves. *Aiming High*, the Government's 10 year strategy for positive activities, highlighted that access to safe places to go and positive activities reduces the likelihood of involvement in anti-social behaviour or crime. *Aiming High* and the Children's Plan make clear the importance that Government places on tackling youth crime – we want to help young people to stay out of trouble and to feel safer in their communities.

3.39 To respond to young people's concerns and improve safety on the streets, we will:

- **launch new guidance and training for tackling bullying, including cyberbullying, which takes place outside schools, including children's home, FE colleges, extended school services and youth groups;**
- **continue the programme of work on tackling cyberbullying, including working with industry partners and, in Spring 2008, launch a new pack for school staff to support them in dealing with cyberbullying;**
- **expand the existing peer mentoring programme in schools. An ongoing peer mentoring pilot will:**
 - **develop a range of high quality sustainable models of peer mentoring for use in schools;**
 - **publish good practice resources for schools and local authorities;**
- **continue to provide support for parents of children who are bullied, working with Parentline Plus for whom we provide a grant to support parents worried about bullying;**
- **consider the recommendations of the 11 Million (previously Office of the Children's Commissioner) report on schools' bullying complaints systems;**
- **implement actions from the Flanagan Policing Review, due to report in 2008, in particular produce an action plan to improve neighbourhood safety through the integration of**

Neighbourhood Policing with wider local authority work such as neighbourhood management;

- continue the development of a youth crime prevention strategy as part of the forthcoming Youth Crime Action Plan, focusing on:
 - the factors that lead young people to offend (including the factors that can predict prolific or career offending);
 - the interventions that are most effective in tackling these factors;
 - how the ‘system’ can identify risk early, deliver holistic yet meaningful assessment, and tailored and effective interventions;
- continue to support the work of the police, local authorities and transport operators to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour on public transport;
- provide additional investment for positive activities programmes in 2008-2009 in 15 local authorities particularly affected by gang culture. These areas will develop valuable learning about how best to use such programmes to prevent young people becoming involved in violent gangs, which will then be shared across all areas. They will also be exploring new ways of addressing concerns over the safety of activities available in their areas, including greater involvement of young people in local planning decisions; and
- work on ways to better identify and support young people who are victims of crime, as a key strand of the forthcoming Youth Crime Action Plan (and as announced in the Children’s Plan).

DISABLED CHILDREN

3.40 Around 770,000 children in the UK (7%) are disabled and many respondents were concerned that, as this group of children and young people are particularly vulnerable, their needs should be reflected more strongly in the *Staying Safe* strategy.

“Disabled children are:

3.4 times more likely to be abused

3.8 times more likely to be neglected

3.8 times more likely to be physically abused

3.1 times more likely to be sexually abused

3.9 times more likely to be emotionally abused” – Charity for Disabled Children

*“Whilst we welcome some specific mention of the increased vulnerability of disabled children and young people to abuse, neglect and bullying, we are concerned that the document does not propose any specific targeted action to help keep them safe. [We] welcome the *Staying Safe* document but needs to see the government take specific action to ensure that children and young people with learning disabilities are effectively safeguarded from bullying and abuse...” – Charity*

3.41 It was particularly felt that all play facilities, PSHE provision, and communications campaigns should be designed with the requirements of disabled children in mind.

“There is a particular need to make sure that disabled children are enabled to seek help when they need it.” – Local Safeguarding Children Board

3.42 We acknowledge the need to target policies to protect disabled children and to promote their welfare. The Government’s strategy for disabled children, *Aiming high for disabled children: better support for families*,²⁷ sets out our plans to improve the lives of disabled children and their families.

3.43 To respond to concerns raised in the consultation and provide better protection for disabled children, we will:

- **launch new practice guidance on safeguarding disabled children, in line with *Working Together to Safeguard Children*;**
- **publish guidance in Spring 2008 to help schools tackle the bullying of children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities;**
- **publish guidance in Spring 2008 for health professionals on transition which includes a reference to personal safety in a self-assessment tool for young people;**
- **ensure the needs of disabled children are covered in the new guidance on tackling bullying outside school;**
- **work with the Healthcare Commission on measures to hold Primary Care Trusts to account in providing services for children and young people, including those with disabilities; and**
- **expect to see parents’ forums in all areas shaping local services for disabled children.**

SAFEGUARDS FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE EMPLOYED

3.44 Another area which was raised by several respondents, in particular by practitioners, was child employment. This was a concern in terms of the risks to children of accidents, for example road accidents while delivering newspapers. Respondents raised concerns that some Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children may not be in secondary school including young men (aged 13-16) who may be working with their fathers in manual work instead.

3.45 To provide better safeguards for children who are employed, we will:

- **publish new guidance on child employment to help employers and young people more easily and effectively follow the legal requirements.**

3.46 Some respondents were also concerned about the role of children in reality television programmes about parenting and family life, particularly where the children involved were babies or toddlers. They felt that there might be negative impacts with possible long-term effects for children taking part in these types of programmes. There are currently strict rules governing

²⁷ *Aiming high for disabled children: better support for families* is available from www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/socialcare/disabledchildren/

the participation of under-18 year olds in television. In December 2007 Ofcom published new guidance for broadcasters on the participation of young people in programmes, reflecting the desire for children and young people's welfare to be at the heart of editorial and production decisions. The guidance follows research by Ofcom and supports the existing Broadcasting Code rules.²⁸

YOUTH JUSTICE AND CHILDREN INVOLVED WITH THE COURTS

3.47 Many respondents were concerned about youth justice and children involved in court proceedings – including issues around young offenders' welfare as well as children and young people who are the victims of crime and anti-social behaviour, and children and young people who are witnesses.

"A high proportion of young people who go through the youth justice system have been maltreated or suffered very traumatic life experiences... There are few services for young people in Young Offenders Institutions (YOIs) to address their needs." – Charity

"Safeguarding children and young people remanded or sentenced to secure accommodation is an important issue..." – Government Agency

3.48 Several respondents spoke about young offenders having a variety of needs:

"Young people who offend often themselves have a wide range of welfare and safeguarding needs that in turn can be directly related to their offending behaviour." – Government Agency

"The Initial Evaluation of the Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme (a community-based programme designed for use with more persistent and serious young offenders) showed:

- 9% of those on the scheme were known to have attempted suicide and 15% were said to be deliberately self-harming;*
- 3 in 10 were thought to have experienced abuse in the past; and*
- drug use was prevalent, with 14% of the sample having used heroin and 12% having used crack cocaine."*

From Government Agency response

3.49 We also recognise that young people who appear in court as witnesses require particular assistance to support them and enable them to give their best evidence. A range of special measures is available for this purpose, including video-recorded evidence in chief, giving evidence by live link from outside the court room, screens round the witness box, clearing the public gallery in cases involving a sexual offence or witness intimidation and communication aids.

3.50 To assist children with communication difficulties to give evidence in court, the Government is also in the process of rolling out nationally the 'intermediary special measure'. Intermediaries act as a 'go between' to improve communication and understanding when the witness is being interviewed by the police during the investigation and when being questioned in court.

28 Ofcom's research and guidance is available from: http://www.ofcom.org.uk/research/tv/reports/children_in_programmes/

3.51 To respond to concerns raised about youth justice, young offenders, and children and young people involved with the courts, we will:

- **work with the Youth Justice Board on a new safeguarding strategy for children and young people in the secure estate;**
- **take a fundamental look in the Youth Crime Action Plan at the way we treat young offenders in the criminal justice system, in terms of both community disposals and custody. The Plan will set out our long-term strategy and the detailed actions we will take with and through our delivery partners to tackle youth crime – from prevention to criminal justice interventions;**
- **support the Bradley Review which will examine the extent to which offenders with mental health problems or learning disabilities could, in appropriate cases, be diverted from custody;**
- **develop a strategy to improve health and social care services for young people subject to the criminal justice system. This is part of a wider strategy to inform an initial three year development programme. The consultation on the strategy *Improving Health, Supporting Justice* (DH November 2007) ends in March 2008;²⁹**
- **support the independent review of restraint in juvenile secure settings. This review will examine the operational efficacy, safety, (including medical safety), and ethical validity of restraint methods and the circumstances in which they may be used. The review is currently consulting a wide range of stakeholders and will report to Government in April 2008; and**
- **issue a response in early 2008 to the consultation on the way young witnesses give evidence, and publish a toolkit on how to set up local support services for young witnesses based on good practice from existing schemes.**

YOUNG RUNAWAYS AND MISSING CHILDREN

3.52 Some respondents raised concerns about those young people who run away from home or care, and the greater risks of harm for these children. They felt that there needed to be more effective joined-up working around children who run away or go missing from care, and expressed concern that the police often see this is a social work issue and not a police matter.

“We still need to work on supporting children who run away...” – Local Safeguarding Children Board

3.53 We agree that there need to be effective services in place to support young people who run away, and that co-ordinated working across voluntary and statutory bodies is key to this.

3.54 In Autumn 2007 we received a report from The Children’s Society (*Stepping Up: The Future of Runaway Services*)³⁰ which set out proposals for a ‘safety net’ for young runaways, with safe people, safe places, and safe processes at local, regional and national level. In response to this report, a cross-Departmental working group has been established to drive progress in improving

²⁹ Improving Health, Supporting Justice is available from http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations/Liveconsultations/DH_080816

³⁰ Available from www.childrenssociety.org.uk/resources/documents/policy/Stepping_Up_The_Future_For_Young_Runaways_5305.html

services for young runaways, including representatives from the Department for Children, Schools and Families, Home Office, Department for Communities and Local Government, as well as key stakeholders such as the English Coalition for Young Runaways. This working group will be supported by a consultative group made up of experts from the third sector who are engaged in providing services for young people who run away.

3.55 To address these concerns about young runaways, we will work through the cross-Departmental working group to:

- **develop an action plan to implement the principles set out in The Children’s Society recommendations, which will be published in June 2008;**
- **initiate an early review of emergency accommodation provision, to consider how local authorities can best provide safe places and ‘breathing spaces’ for young runaways; and**
- **revise the *Missing from Home and Care* guidance, in conjunction with the review of the Children Act 1989 regulations and guidance. This process will provide the opportunity to update and improve the current guidance issued in 2002, making explicit reference to services for particularly vulnerable groups such as children from abroad who may be trafficked.**

3.56 Our commitment to improving services for young runaways is also demonstrated by the inclusion of a new indicator on the number of young people who run away from home or care in the National Indicator Set for local government (to be measured from 2009-2010). This will ensure that the effectiveness of work to help young runaways is monitored at a national level.

SUBSTANCE MISUSE BY YOUNG PEOPLE

3.57 Many respondents, particularly parents but also some children and young people themselves, felt that drugs and alcohol were major issues for children and young people’s safety.

“My chief concerns are alcohol, sexual exploitation and drugs.” – Parent

3.58 Many parents – mothers and fathers – were concerned about the impact of drug and alcohol use, not just in terms of negative health effects for children and young people, but also as a catalyst for other risky activities (including gang-related, violence, crime, etc). It was also felt that more vulnerable young people were more at risk of becoming involved in drugs.

“One of the groups [of young people] identified alcohol and specifically alcohol-related violence as something which posed a danger to them and their safety.” – Charity

“[gun & knife crime] was felt to be closely associated to alcohol use amongst young people – we need to tackle that first as a way of reducing violent crime. Drinking culture – young people being given drink at home, buying it – [it’s the] centre of their social life.” – Local Safeguarding Children Board

“Your report pays scant attention to binge-drinking and the drinking culture of young teenagers which we believe is worsening. The ambulance service provides valuable data on the numbers and ages of young people taken off the streets worse for wear and a publicity campaign highlighting the

vulnerability of these young people to physical attack and sexual abuse would not go amiss.” – Local Safeguarding Children Board

3.59 Some respondents mentioned PSHE as a route for teaching children and young people about the dangers of substance misuse, while others felt that parents and carers would appreciate more information to enable them to teach their children.

“My experience in working with parents around drugs education suggests that parents want to know the facts rather than tabloid headlines relating to risks of harm faced by their children. They also want advice as to how to talk to their children about how to manage those risks.” – Local Healthy Schools Programme

3.60 We revised the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy in June 2007, through the publication of *Safe. Sensible. Social*.³¹ We will build on this and respond to the concerns raised in this consultation by:

- **announcing the detail of additional Government action – specifically on young people and alcohol – in April 2008, which may include actions to:**
 - **improve alcohol education in schools;**
 - **tackle parental alcohol misuse which can influence young people’s own consumption; and**
- **publishing a new drug strategy in Spring 2008. As stated above, this will address problems caused by parental substance misuse (see paragraph 3.28) and will also highlight young people as a priority whether they are at risk from harm from their own substance misuse or from parental substance misuse.**

31 *Safe. Sensible. Social* is available from http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_075218

4. Responding when children and young people have been harmed

*“We’ve got to respond to the children that are already damaged...
Kids need help immediately.” – Practitioner*

Summary

Some children and young people do come to harm, and whilst we must make every effort to reduce the chances of this happening, we must also make sure there are services in place to respond as quickly and effectively as possible where children are harmed.

Areas for new action covered in this chapter are:

- Highlighting the role of the public in children and young people’s safety
- Better safeguards for children coming into/going out of the country
- Sexual exploitation of children and young people
- Forced marriage

In this chapter, we announce the following new commitments for the next three years:

- work with NSPCC to deliver **improved listening services for children** over the four years 2007–2011 through the £30 million grant, announced in July 2007;
- **new guidelines on cross-border issues** to help raise awareness amongst all children’s services professionals; and
- implementation of the **Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007** by Autumn 2008.

4.1 Some children and young people are harmed and it is important that they receive appropriate, timely support in response. It may be that they have an accident, such as breaking an arm, which although serious at the time, will not necessarily have a lasting effect on their lives. Other harm, such as that caused by child abuse or neglect, can have long-term effects as well as an immediate impact.

4.2 One particular type of harm which can have devastating effects is self-harm. This can particularly affect children and young people in vulnerable groups such as children in care and young offenders and at its most extreme can result in suicide. Effective mental health services are vital to supporting children and young people with emerging or existing conditions. The independent review of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, as announced in the

Children's Plan, will identify priority actions to be taken forward at a national, regional and local level. Child death review panels will consider suicides of children and young people in each local area and identify lessons which can be learned to prevent future serious cases of self-harm and suicide.

- 4.3 Where children have suffered abuse or neglect, they may become subject to a Child Protection Plan. From 1 April 2008 the Child Protection Register for children at risk will be replaced by Child Protection Plans. A Child Protection Plan is detailed and needs co-operation from other agencies to deliver the changes needed to safeguard a child from harm.
- 4.4 Whatever the type of harm a child or young person has suffered – such as sexual exploitation or abuse, child trafficking, female genital mutilation or forced marriage - it is important that professionals in particular know what signs to look for and where to go for more specialist information. The public also has a key role to play in identifying children who may be at risk of harm and helping keep children and young people safe.
- 4.5 We need to ensure that children who are harmed are fully supported and that those who harm children are dealt with effectively. This chapter focuses on areas for new actions which can reduce the long-term, as well as immediate, impact of harm to children and young people.

Areas for new action

HIGHLIGHTING THE ROLE OF THE PUBLIC IN CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SAFETY

- 4.6 During the consultation, this area generated a high level of response from all groups and the overwhelming view was that children and young people's safety is everyone's responsibility, whilst still recognising the key role and responsibility of parents.

"It's your [the parents'] responsibility first and foremost and we are here to help." – Practitioner

- 4.7 Many respondents stressed that whilst we are all responsible for keeping children and young people safe, parents – mothers and fathers – retain ultimate responsibility for their own children and have the primary role in ensuring their safety.

- 4.8 Respondents felt that people have a responsibility to safeguard other people's children and should intervene if they see a child in danger. However, although many respondents said they would intervene if they saw a child at risk of accidental harm (and have done so), many also expressed reservations about intervening in a situation when an adult was mistreating a child in public.

"you would just try and stop it happening...like in the example of if you saw a kid run out into the road, you would step in to drag them back if you could..." – General public

- 4.9 People said that they would feel scared of reprisals from the adult and be afraid of seeming interfering, or of people being suspicious of their motives. People also said they would be reluctant to intervene in situations where they felt there was a risk of harm to themselves.

"I do keep an eye on children who appear to be on their own in public places, but even though I'm a children's services professional and am CRB checked, years of paedophile panics and a climate of suspicion against blokes who take an interest in children mean that I would be very wary about intervening to help a child who seemed lost or distressed in public." – Practitioner

4.10 The majority of respondents welcomed the proposal of a communications campaign to highlight the role of the public in keeping children and young people safe, and suggested a variety of media for this, including television (adverts and soap opera storylines), newspapers, magazines, radio, billboards, and milk cartons.

4.11 At the practitioner events, several people raised the issue of the particular vulnerability of black and minority ethnic children. Research suggests that some communities may be less willing to talk about and report child abuse,³² so any communications campaign would have to take into account the need to target specific groups.

4.12 Respondents also felt that:

- general information would be useful in such a campaign, for example a non-emergency number to ring if you are concerned about a child;
- it would be important to tailor the message to those from different cultural backgrounds and in minority groups, such as non-English speakers and those with poor literacy skills;
- as with other proposed communications campaigns, it is important to back up the publicity with routes for people to access support or report concerns; and
- the campaign should have 'substance', for example a route for people to find out information in their local area.

"Every now and again, posters, billboards and that, to remind people that, they might think, oh yeah I can actually phone that number anonymously, if there's somebody, a neighbour, that they're concerned about and perhaps wouldn't do anything otherwise, unless they have a poster staring at them." – General public

"[I feel responsible for children] and it is important that the Government makes it clear how ordinary citizens can report any concerns. Many do not know what to do and this should be advertised." – Parent

4.13 Several respondents agreed with the importance of listening services, such as ChildLine, and supported funding for these. There was also some discussion of a helpline for mothers and fathers to get non-judgemental support and advice, such as Parentline Plus, as well as a non-emergency number to call with concerns about children.³³

4.14 Several respondents, particularly practitioners, were concerned that a widespread publicity campaign would increase the rate of referrals to social services and so generate an additional burden on them.

³² See www.nspcc.org.uk/inform for more information.

³³ ChildLine can be reached on 0800 1111, the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline on 0808 800 5000 and Parentline Plus on 0808 800 2222.

"I think there'd be a lot of reports from the general public about concerns for children's safety if there was some kind of campaign to make them more aware." – Practitioner

4.15 However, some of these respondents also recognised that if, ultimately, this improved child protection, and so helped local authorities fulfil their duties to safeguard children in their area, it would be a positive step. Some respondents also felt that it would be important for a communications campaign to be combined with work to raise the profile of social workers, as currently people are afraid that if they call "social services" with a concern this will result in very negative outcomes for the family.

"It's possible to change attitudes if you are persistent enough...look what has happened with drink driving." – General public

4.16 To support the public to take responsibility for children's safety, we will:

- **continue to work with NSPCC to deliver improved listening services for children and for adults concerned about the welfare of children over the four years 2007–2011 through the £30 million grant announced in July 2007; and**
- **include public communications about taking responsibility for children's safety within the broader communications campaign (see paragraph 2.25 above).**

BETTER SAFEGUARDS FOR CHILDREN COMING INTO/GOING OUT OF THE COUNTRY

4.17 This area was raised as a concern by a variety of respondents to the consultation, and many welcomed the proposals.

"Frontline staff would welcome greater information and guidance about immigration procedures." – Charity

4.18 This was particularly a concern for respondents in regions with large ports or airports. Several respondents also talked about:

- airlines taking some responsibility for unaccompanied children coming into the country; and
- forced marriage and concerns about safeguarding issues (which were also raised by schools and colleges).

4.19 Unaccompanied asylum seeking children were discussed at the consultation events as a particularly vulnerable group, including while they are waiting for a decision on their asylum claim and living in local authority care. These young people, as children in care, will benefit from the reforms outlined in the *Care Matters: Time for Change* White Paper.³⁴ In addition, the Border and Immigration Agency (BIA) has recently announced its plans for improving support to unaccompanied asylum seeking children, and trafficked children who claim asylum, by locating them with specialist local authorities who will assess and meet their needs for support and

34 Available from www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/timeforchange

protection, whilst BIA resolves their immigration status more quickly, helping to remove the uncertainty faced by many young people in this situation.³⁵

4.20 Several respondents suggested posters at airports with information for immigrants, including how to access services, and information about cultural norms in UK.

UK Action Plan on Tackling Human Trafficking

The UK Action Plan on Tackling Human Trafficking has a specific section on child trafficking. The purpose of this Plan is to:

- raise awareness of the problem;
- carry out research to improve knowledge of the scale and nature of the issue;
- develop further child safeguarding and protection systems – providing child/victim-focused policy, guidance and training;
- provide advice for professionals and frontline services through a child trafficking helpline funded by Home Office, in partnership with the NSPCC, CEOP and ECPAT,³⁵ and Comic Relief;
- develop a means of recording child sponsors who may pose a risk of harm to children at ports of entry and at Asylum Screening Units;
- agree safe arrangements for trafficked children to be accommodated within the Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children reform programme; and
- work with airlines and their representative organisations to develop a code of practice on the carriage of minors;

For more information, see www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/human-traffick-action-plan

4.21 To provide better protection for children and young people coming in/going out of the country, we will:

- **publish new guidelines on cross-border issues to help raise awareness amongst all children’s services professionals;**
- **implement reforms as set out in *Better Outcomes: The Way Forward. Improving the care of unaccompanied asylum seeking children and trafficked children*;**
- **issue a Code of Practice on keeping children safe from harm, following placing the Border and Immigration Agency’s duties towards children on a statutory footing; and**
- **disseminate recently published guidance for practitioners on child trafficking and how to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who may have been trafficked: *Working together to safeguard children – safeguarding children who may have been trafficked*.**³⁷

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

4.22 A number of responses raised the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse of children and young people, and felt this did not have sufficient coverage in the consultation document.

35 *Better Outcomes: The Way Forward. Improving the care of unaccompanied asylum seeking children* available to download from www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/aboutus/consultations/closedconsultations/uasc/

36 For more information about ECPAT (End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and the Trafficking of Children) see www.ecpat.org.uk.

37 This is available on the Every Child Matters website: <http://publications.everychildmatters.gov.uk/>.

As mentioned earlier, parents were concerned about the potential harm arising from early sexual activity, including the risk of young people becoming involved in coercive or abusive relationships with older partners.

“Good practice includes recognition that children are victims of sexual exploitation and are not truly consenting parties to sexual activity and prostitution but abused, in need of protection and have multiple needs.” – Charity

4.23 Respondents were also concerned about children and young people being exposed to the risk of sexual exploitation through the internet.

“I am very concerned about my grandchildren entering [web]sites... which have no effective age verification and where they will be vulnerable to paedophiles and abusers.” – Grandparent

4.24 To respond to concerns raised in the consultation and ensure the support and protection of children and young people at risk of sexual exploitation, we will:

- **implement the Government’s Co-ordinated Prostitution Strategy, which includes work on prevention, protection, support and ensuring justice in relation to child sexual exploitation. This includes publishing updated guidance on tackling sexual exploitation of children, following the *Safeguarding Children Involved in Prostitution* guidance.³⁸ This will set out a clear direction on the way in which children and young people at risk of, or suffering, sexual exploitation should be supported or protected;**
- **implement the Cross-Government Sexual Violence and Abuse Action Plan;**
- **implement actions from the review of protection of children from sex offenders, including:**
 - **disclosure of information on sex offenders to the public – launch pilots for the new arrangements for disclosure to individuals with registered child protection interest;**
 - **introduction of new legislation creating a duty on MAPPA (Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements) to consider disclosure of an offender’s convictions to members of the public in certain circumstances;**
- **develop national service guidelines through the Victims of Violence and Abuse Prevention Programme (VVAPP), to be published by Summer 2008. Guidance to include:**
 - **national service guidelines on therapeutic and preventive interventions;**
 - **guidance for Primary Care Trusts and local authorities on commissioning services for children and adults affected by sexual violence and abuse;**
 - **guidelines on the forensic and medical examination and support of victims of rape, sexual assault and child sexual abuse (with the Royal College of Physicians Faculty of Legal and Forensic Medicine and the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health);**
 - **a national framework for the development of services for young people who sexually abuse;**

38 Available from www.dh.gov.uk/en/PublicationsandStatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyandGuidance/DH_4006037

- **guidelines on developing Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) which have already been published;**
- **a guide for SARCs providing services for children; and**
- **pilot a stepped-care approach to mental health treatment and care for individuals affected by domestic and sexual violence and abuse (supported by implementation of the VVAPP guidelines).**

FORCED MARRIAGE

4.25 Several respondents were concerned about children and young people being forced to marry against their will and either remaining in this country or being taken abroad.

4.26 A forced marriage is one where people are coerced into a marriage against their will and under duress (duress includes both physical and emotional pressure). Forced marriage is an abuse of human rights and cannot be justified on any religious or cultural basis. It is, of course, very different from arranged marriage, where both parties give consent.

4.27 There were regional variations in the level of concern about this issue, with some practitioners feeling that there were not a high number of forced marriages in their area. However, they were still concerned and felt that as this is an issue they do not come across very often, they would welcome guidance in supporting those involved.

"...for example those subjected to forced marriages, where children are taken out of school and leave the country. There needs to be a better system to protect and track vulnerable children." – Trade Union

Forced Marriage Unit (FMU)

The FMU was established in 2005. Its role includes:

- casework;
- researching and developing effective Government policy; and
- awareness raising and training.

The FMU handles 5,000 enquiries and around 300 cases per year, including both young women and men (who constitute 15% of their cases). The majority of individuals it deals with are aged 15-24, but 30% of the cases involve minors, some as young as 10 years old.

The FMU's work in the UK includes:

- providing support, information and contacts (lawyers, social services, refuges, counsellors, voluntary organisations);
- working with police, social workers, teachers, welfare officers and health professionals in UK to protect people at risk;
- arranging safe accommodation in the UK; and
- providing information on options and services after a forced marriage.

The Unit's work overseas includes:

- liaising with posts and Non-Governmental Organisations overseas;
- speaking to individuals alone;
- helping individuals to get to High Commission/Embassy;
- arranging safe accommodation overseas;
- organising repatriation – and rescues in extreme cases; and
- organising emergency flights and travel documents with safe pick-up and transport from airport.

To contact the FMU, call: 020 7008 0151 or email fmu@fco.gov.uk

4.28 To address the concerns raised about forced marriage, we will:

- **implement the Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007 by Autumn 2008. This will place FMU guidelines, including for social workers, police, education and health professionals, on a statutory footing. It will also give courts the power to make Forced Marriage Protection Orders;**
- **develop a coherent national policy for improving the safeguarding of children at risk of forced marriage including through building the capacity of schools to recognise and handle the issue; and**
- **continue the work of the Forced Marriage Unit to improve the prevention of forced marriage and to provide assistance to forced marriage victims within the UK and overseas.**

5. Conclusion and evaluation

- 5.1** Improving children and young people's safety will be a key priority across Government over the period 2008-2011. Keeping children and young people safe is not the responsibility of a single department or agency and in this Action Plan we have set out the work we will all take forward together over that period to drive improvements in children's safety. In this chapter, we discuss how this work will be evaluated and monitored over the next three years. Annex B sets out the timescales for implementing these actions.
- 5.2** The new **PSA to improve children and young people's safety** will drive delivery of the actions set out here and underlines the priority which the Government attaches to this issue. The PSA will be monitored using the following indicators:

Indicator 1: Percentage of children who have experienced bullying

Bullying is a primary safety concern for children and young people. The data for this indicator will be collected by the Tell Us local area user perception survey. Data from the survey will be used to evaluate whether current policies are having the desired effect on reducing bullying with action taken to improve outcomes. We would want to see a reduction against this indicator over the next three years.

Indicator 2: Percentage of children referred to children's social care who received an initial assessment within seven working days

Initial assessments, which take place after a child is referred to children's social care, are an important indicator of how quickly services can respond when there are concerns about a child's welfare and in particular when a child is thought to be at risk of significant harm. As the assessments (led by children's social care) may involve a range of local agencies, this indicator also shows how well multi-agency working arrangements are established in the local area. We would want to see an improvement against this indicator over the next three years. If there is a risk to the life of a child or a likelihood of serious immediate harm, an agency with statutory child protection powers (the local authority, the police or the NSPCC) will act quickly to secure the immediate safety of the child. Emergency action might be necessary as soon as a referral is received by children's social care, or at any point in their involvement with children and families.

Indicator 3: Hospital admissions caused by unintentional and deliberate injuries

Accidents are the leading cause of injury to children and disproportionately affect children from lower socio-economic groups. Injuries caused by accidents and deliberate harm, including those injuries which present at hospital as accidents but which may in fact be caused deliberately, are an important indicator of the effectiveness of local agencies in working to prevent accidental and deliberate harm to children. We would want to see a reduction against this indicator over the next three years.

Indicator 4: Preventable child deaths, as recorded through child death review panel processes

Child death review panels, which will be a statutory requirement from April 2008, will consider information from each unexpected child death in their area to ascertain the causes of death, learning what could have been done to prevent the death where possible. The panel will review all cases of child death, irrespective of its cause. A core dataset will be collected by all panels, which for the first time will provide data on all preventable child deaths. We would want to see a reduction against this indicator over the next three years.

- 5.3 Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) will have a crucial role to play at local level in delivering improvements against the PSA. LSCBs will need to be able to secure support from partners in driving local change and improving frontline practice. Central Government is committed to supporting LSCBs in their work (see paragraphs 2.48 to 2.56 above).
- 5.4 Within central Government, delivery of the PSA will be monitored by a new Child Safety PSA Board, which includes representatives from across Government within its membership. The PSA Board will include representatives from the Department for Children, Schools and Families; Home Office; Ministry of Justice; Department of Health; Department for Communities and Local Government; Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills; Department for Culture, Media and Sport; HM Treasury; Prime Minister's Delivery Unit; Cabinet Office; Department for Transport; and the Border and Immigration Agency. The PSA Board will ensure that the work of each Government Department represented relating to children and young people's safety is co-ordinated and coherent. The PSA Board will also ensure that delivery of this Action Plan meets the timescales set out in Annex B and is effective in driving improvements in children and young people's safety. We will also draw on the expertise and advice of stakeholders throughout the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) period (2008-2011) to help to achieve the PSA.
- 5.5 The Child Safety PSA Board will report directly to a group of the Permanent Secretaries of key Departments. PSA delivery will be overseen by the Cabinet Sub-Committee on Domestic Affairs (Families, Children and Young People), chaired by the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families.
- 5.6 Central Government announced a suite of 30 new PSAs in October 2007, and there are other PSAs which will also have a positive impact on children and young people's safety. These include:
- PSA 9: Halve the number of children in poverty by 2010-2011, on the way to eradicating child poverty by 2020
 - PSA 12: Improve the health and well-being of children and young people

- PSA 14: Increase the number of children and young people on the path to success
- PSA 16: Increase the proportion of socially excluded adults in settled accommodation and employment, education and training
- PSA 21: Build more cohesive, empowered and active communities
- PSA 23: Make communities safer
- PSA 25: Reduce the harm caused by alcohol and drugs

5.7 The ambitions set out in this Action Plan and in the PSA delivery agreement reflect and are informed by the General Principles and Articles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Since ratification of the UNCRC in 1991, the Government has pursued implementation through amendments to statute law, free standing legislation and non-legislative government programmes such as Every Child Matters. The UNCRC articles in relation to civil rights and freedoms, family environment and alternative care, and in particular the special protection measures are all linked to this Action Plan.

5.8 At a local level, the PSA will be reflected in the new **National Indicator Set for Local Government** (the NIS). The NIS will measure national priorities, and the number of indicators has been radically reduced, from over 1,200 current indicators to 198. For children and young people’s safety, there are 16 indicators in the NIS, as follows:³⁹

NI 47 People killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents (includes young people aged 16-18)
NI 48 Children killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents (covers children aged 0-15)
NI 59 Initial assessments for children’s social care carried out within 7 working days of referral
NI 60 Core assessments for children’s social care that were carried out within 35 working days of their commencement
NI 61 Timeliness of placements of looked after children for adoption (following an agency decision that the child should be placed for adoption)
NI 62 Stability of placements of looked after children: number of moves
NI 63 Stability of placements of looked after children: length of placement
NI 64 Child Protection Plans lasting two years or more
NI 65 Children becoming the subject of a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time
NI 66 Looked after children cases which were reviewed within required timescales
NI 67 Child protection cases which were reviewed within required timescales
NI 68 Referrals to children’s social care going on to initial assessment
NI 69 Children who have experienced bullying
NI 70 Hospital admissions caused by unintentional and deliberate injuries to children and young people
NI 71 Children who have run away from home/care overnight
NI 147 Care leavers in suitable accommodation

³⁹ The NI reference refers to the number of the indicator in the National Indicator Set. Further information is available from www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/nationalindicator

- 5.9** Performance against the 16 indicators relating to children and young people's safety will be part of each local area's discussions about Local Area Agreement (LAA) priorities. These discussions take place between local authorities and regional Government Offices. Where a local area's performance against an indicator is poor and improvement is considered a local priority, the local authority and its partners will agree a specific local target against that indicator as part of the LAA process.
- 5.10** As well as indicators for local authorities and their partners, we have included a specific focus on safeguarding children within the performance framework for police forces. The police play a fundamental role in child protection, often working jointly with child protection social workers, and child abuse as a crime type has not previously been incorporated in the national assessment or measurement of police performance.
- 5.11** Following the recommendations of the 2005 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) *Keeping Safe, Staying Safe* report⁴⁰, a new set of strategic and key performance indicators on child abuse cases is being developed by the Home Office, the Association of Chief Police Officers and HMIC, to be included in the new *Assessments of Policing and Community Safety* framework being introduced by the Home Office in 2008. This will be in place by 2010, giving prominence to child abuse investigation, ensuring it receives adequate resourcing and improving performance.
- 5.12** Measuring the impact of the policies set out in this Action Plan will not be limited to numerical information gathered through local and national indicators. We will also be evaluating the implementation and effectiveness of the specific projects outlined here. We will ensure that baseline data is identified so that the effectiveness of the policies can be evaluated. In addition, the DCSF is providing funding for the Centre for Economics of Education to carry out an 18 month project looking at:
- links between different outcomes under Every Child Matters; and
 - how Every Child Matters outcomes can be valued in terms of social and economic benefits, including their links to improving social mobility.
- 5.13** This work will include a specific focus on children's safety, which will add considerably to our evidence base for measuring the impact of the *Staying Safe* strategy. In addition, DCSF and DH are jointly funding the Safeguarding Research Initiative, which aims to improve our knowledge of effective practice across a range of child safety issues, including neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and LSCB work. A series of research projects has been commissioned under the Initiative which will report between 2008 and 2009.
- 5.14** The structures, measurement, evaluation and research outlined above will help to:
- monitor the implementation of this Action Plan, as set out in Annex B; and
 - assess whether or not the collective impact of these actions is improving children and young people's safety – and if not, take further action to improve outcomes.

40 *Keeping Safe, Staying Safe*: HMIC Thematic Report is available from www.inspectorates.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/inspections/thematic/ks-ss1/

Annex A

Risks faced by children and young people today

Risk	Likelihood
Road accidents	Land transport accidents were the most common cause of accidental death for children and young people in 2005 (52% of all deaths by external causes). ⁴⁰ In England, children in the 10% most deprived wards are three times more likely to be hit by a car than children in the 10% least deprived areas. ⁴¹
Accidents in the home	The vast majority of accidents occur in the home. Children under five years old carry a disproportionate burden of injuries from falls and fires. Children of parents who have never worked or who are long-term unemployed are 13 times more likely to die from unintentional injury, and 37 times more likely to die as a result of exposure to smoke, fire and flames than children of parents in higher managerial and professional occupations. ⁴²
Abuse or neglect by parents	Most (around two in three) homicides of children aged under 16 years were committed by their parents. ⁴³
Abuse by strangers	Abuse by strangers is rare – in one survey only 5% of sexual abuse was carried out by an adult stranger or somebody the victim had just met. ⁴⁴ The real extent of abuse and neglect may be higher than we know. In a study carried in 2000, 7% of children had experienced serious physical abuse at the hands of their parents or carers during childhood and 6% experienced serious absence of care at home during childhood. ⁴⁵

40 Office for National Statistics, Table 2 series DH2 no.32 – Underlying external causes of child injury deaths, aged 0-19, in England and Wales 2005

41 Audit Commission and Healthcare Commission, *Better Safe than Sorry*, February 2007

42 Audit Commission and Healthcare Commission, *Better Safe than Sorry*, February 2007, DTI Home and Leisure Accident Surveillance System

43 Home Office Statistical Bulletin, *Homicides, Firearm Offences and Intimate Violence 2005-6*

44 Cawson et al, *Child maltreatment in the United Kingdom: a study of the prevalence of child abuse and neglect*, 2000 (London, NSPCC)

45 Cawson et al, *Child maltreatment in the United Kingdom: a study of the prevalence of child abuse and neglect*, 2000 (London, NSPCC)

Risk	Likelihood
Bullying	In the TellUs2 survey in 2007, 30% of children said that they had been bullied in school in the last four weeks, with 5% of all children saying that they were bullied on most days. Estimates of the prevalence of bullying vary from 31% to nearly 70%. ⁴⁶
Victim of crime	The most common forms of personal crime reported by children and young people were assaults without injury and personal thefts. ⁴⁷ Gun and knife crime is still relatively rare in England, although we recognise that it causes serious concern for some communities.
Parents with problems	Children whose parents have problems such as substance misuse or domestic violence are at a higher risk of harm: alcohol is involved in 33% of child abuse cases and in at least 40% of domestic violence cases the children in the family have also suffered physical or sexual abuse. ⁴⁸
Internet safety	Parents underestimate the risks their children face online: 57% of children have come into contact with pornography online (but only 16% of parents say their children have) and 46% of children claim to have given out personal information online (but only 5% of parents realise this). ⁴⁹
Suicide and self-harm	In 2006-2007, 4,241 children under 14 were admitted to hospitals in England with self-inflicted injuries. Some, but not all, of these would have been suicide attempts. ⁵⁰

46 Information on Tellus 2 survey is available from www.ofsted.gov.uk

47 Home Office Statistical Bulletin, *Young People and Crime: Findings from the 2005 Offending, Crime and Justice Survey*, December 2006

48 H. Cleaver, D. Nicholson, S. Tarr & D. Cleaver, *Child Protection, Domestic Violence and Parental Substance Misuse: Family Experiences and Effective Practice* (Quality Matters in Children's Services, JKP, 2007)

49 *UK Children Go Online* survey 2004 (LSE)

50 From Hospital Episode Statistics, www.hesonline.nhs.uk

Annex B

Action Plan: commitments 2008-2011

When	Who will do what?	Where in the Action Plan?
Spring/ Summer 2008	DCSF launches new Out and About package	Play and taking part in positive activities Para 2.10
	Byron Review reports findings to Government	Addressing new threats to children's safety Para 2.47
	Second national event for LSCBs	Helping LSCBs to make a difference – Para 2.56
	DfT consults on new driver training and testing	Road safety Para 2.61
	DH ensures Nominated Health Professionals are in place and able to work effectively	Addressing parental problems which impact on children's welfare – Para 3.28
	DH holds national conference to help disseminate NICE/SCIE guidelines on parenting	Addressing parental problems which impact on children's welfare – Para 3.28
	DCSF launches new anti-cyberbullying pack	Improving safety on the streets – bullying – Para 3.39
	DCSF publishes guidance on tackling bullying of children with disabilities	Disabled children – Para 3.43
	Review of restraint in juvenile secure settings reports to Government	Youth justice and children involved with the courts Para 3.51
	DCSF implements revised guidance on children who become the subject of care proceedings in the family courts	Improving practice in children's social care Para 3.13

When	Who will do what?	Where in the Action Plan?
	DH develops national service guidelines through the Victims of Violence and Abuse Prevention Programme	Sexual exploitation of children and young people Para 4.24
	CEMACH publishes Child Death Review Report	Helping LSCBs make a difference – Para 2.56
	DCSF and CLG publish research on joint working between children's and housing services	Helping LSCBs make a difference – Para 2.56
	DH publishes new revised Child Health Promotion Programme	Health visiting services – Para 2.65
	DCSF publishes Children's Workforce Action Plan	Improving practice in children's social care – Para 3.13
	Government publishes new drugs strategy	Addressing parental problems which impact on children's welfare – Para 3.28 Substance misuse by young people – Para 3.60
	MoJ responds to consultation on young witnesses	Youth justice and children involved with the courts Para 3.51
	Government responds to consultation on alcohol and young people	Substance misuse by young people Para 3.60
	DCSF and DCMS publish Play Strategy	Play and positive activities Para 2.10
	DCSF publishes results of review of safety education materials for PSHE	Understanding and managing risk Para 2.25
	Joint Chief Inspectors' report on safeguarding children published	Improving practice in children's social care – Para 3.13
	DCSF carries out Priority Review of local area accident prevention	Reducing numbers of accidents Para 3.21
	DCSF publishes good practice guidance for LSCBs	Helping LSCBs make a difference – Para 2.56
	DCSF/SETF Family Pathfinders go live	Addressing parental problems which impact on children's welfare – Para 3.28

When	Who will do what?	Where in the Action Plan?
Autumn/ Winter 2008	DCSF introduces new ICT curriculum for KS3	Addressing new threats to children's safety – Para 2.47
	DCSF puts forward safeguarding theme for the local authority beacon scheme	Improving practice in children's social care – Para 3.13
	Government implements Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007	Forced marriage Para 4.28
	DCSF launches new guidance on tackling bullying outside schools	Improving safety on the streets – bullying Para 3.39
	DCSF launches new guidance on safeguarding disabled children	Disabled children Para 3.43
	Early Years Foundation Stage comes into force	Play and positive activities Para 2.10
2009	Government starts to measure indicator on young runaways	Young runaways Para 3.56
	National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence publishes guidelines for health professionals on recognising child abuse	Improving practice in children's social care Para 3.13
2011	DfT completes review of road safety materials	Road safety Para 2.61
Ongoing – over CSR period	DH invests £30m in the Family Nurse Partnership Programme	Health visiting services Para 2.65
	DCSF funds play initiatives	Play and positive activities Para 2.10
	CLG continues to promote the neighbourhood management approach	Play and positive activities Para 2.10
	DH works with Strategic Health Authorities to emphasise the importance of the health visitor workforce	Health visiting services Para 2.65
	DCSF and DH provide funding for child death review processes	Helping LSCBs make a difference Para 2.56
	DfT encourages local authorities to create 20mph zones	Road safety – Para 2.61
	DCSF continues to support parents of children who are bullied	Improving safety on the streets – bullying Para 3.39
	HO and CLG continue work in response to the Flanagan Policing Review	Improving safety on the streets Para 3.39

When	Who will do what?	Where in the Action Plan?
	Government implements reforms as set out in <i>Better Outcomes: The Way Forward. Improving the care of unaccompanied asylum seeking children</i>	Better safeguards for children coming into/ going out of the country – Para 4.21
	Government develops action plan in response to The Children’s Society recommendations	Young runaways Para 3.55
	DCSF revises <i>Missing from Home and Care</i> guidance	Young runaways Para 3.55
	DCSF continues work with the NSPCC through £30 million grant	Highlighting the role of the public in children and young people’s safety – Para 4.16
	DCSF continues to disseminate guidance on child trafficking	Better safeguards for children coming into/ going out of the country – Para 4.21
	Forced Marriage Unit continues its work to tackle forced marriage	Forced marriage Para 4.28
	DCSF launches new communication campaign on children’s safety	Understanding and managing risk – Para 2.25
	DCSF works with the Children’s Workforce Development Council on new guidance and training on safer recruitment	Safe workforce – Para 2.31
	DCSF sets up a new National Safeguarding Unit for the Third Sector	Third sector engagement – Para 2.68
	DCSF, HO and DH continue development of ISA scheme	Third sector engagement Para 2.68
	DCSF works with partners to establish awards for safeguarding	Improving practice in children’s social care Para 3.13
	DCSF funds new home safety equipment scheme	Reducing numbers of accidents – Para 3.21
	CLG continues to invest in making social sector homes safer	Reducing numbers of accidents – Para 3.21
	CLG promotes fire safety messages	Reducing numbers of accidents – Para 3.21
	DIUS works with CEL and NCSL to roll out safer recruitment training for the post-16 education sector	Safe workforce – Para 2.31
	DCSF, Home Office and DH complete policy development and launch Independent Safeguarding Authority scheme	Safe workforce – Para 2.31

When	Who will do what?	Where in the Action Plan?
	Home Secretary's Taskforce on Child Protection on the internet continues to work with industry and children's charities	Addressing new threats to children's safety Para 2.47
	Government implements National Delivery Plan for Domestic Violence	Addressing parental problems which impact on children's welfare – Para 3.28
	DH pilots new NICE/SCIE guidelines on improving the life chances of people with chaotic lives and multiple needs	Addressing parental problems which impact on children's welfare – Para 3.28
	SETF Families at Risk review	Addressing parental problems which impact on children's welfare – Para 3.28
	DCSF continues to expand the peer mentoring programme in schools	Improving safety on the streets Para 3.39
	Government works with the Healthcare Commission on measures to hold PCTs to account in providing services for children and young people	Disabled children – Para 3.43
	DCSF publishes new guidance on child employment	Safeguards for children who are employed – Para 3.45
	Government works with Youth Justice Board on new safeguarding strategy	Youth justice and children involved with the courts Para 3.51
	HO produces Youth Crime Action Plan	Youth justice and children involved with the courts Para 3.51
	DH consultation on health and social care services for young people subject to the criminal justice system	Youth justice and children involved with the courts Para 3.51
	Government publishes new guidelines on cross-border issues	Better safeguards for children coming into/going out of the country – Para 4.21
	Government implements actions from review of protection of children from sex offenders	Sexual exploitation of children and young people Para 4.24
	DH pilots stepped-care approach to mental health treatment for those affected by domestic and sexual violence	Sexual exploitation of children and young people Para 4.24
	DCSF continues to promote positive activities for young people through <i>Aiming High: the 10 Year Youth Strategy</i>	Play and positive activities Para 2.10
	DCSF sets up new Child Safety Education Coalition	Understanding and managing risk Para 2.25

When	Who will do what?	Where in the Action Plan?
	DCSF reviews the delivery of sex and relationships education in schools	Understanding and managing risk Para 2.25
	Government targets positive activities programmes on 15 local authorities particularly affected by gang culture	Improving safety on the streets – Para 3.39
	Government implements Co-ordinated Prostitution Strategy and Sexual Violence and Abuse Action Plan	Sexual exploitation of children and young people Para 4.24
	DCSF and MOJ develop practitioner toolkits and deliver training to help ensure the revised Children Act 1989 guidance and Public Law Outline are fully implemented	Improving practice in children's social care – Para 3.13
	DCMS works with delivery partners to ensure the £100 million additional investment into physical activity opportunities reaches the maximum number of young people	Play and positive activities – Para 2.10

Annex C

Consultation process and statistics

This section includes details of the written and online consultation, regional practitioner events and discussion groups, as well as a summary of the consultation analysis.

The consultation was launched on 18 July 2007 and closed on 31 October 2007.

Written and online consultation

The consultation documents, including the summary booklet and young people's versions, were available on the DCSF and Every Child Matters websites. Hard copies were available to order and were made available at all of the consultation events.

The adults' and young people's versions received a combined total of 1,039 written and online responses. A breakdown of respondents by gender, age and ethnic group is shown below.

Young People's version – 709 responses⁵¹

Age (years)	Number of respondents
Under 11	134 (19%)
11 – 12	119 (17%)
13 – 14	217 (31%)
15 – 16	134 (19%)
17 – 18	45 (6%)
19 and over	60 (8%)

Gender	Number of respondents
Female	446 (63%)
Male	263 (37%)

⁵¹ 7 responses were from groups, representing a further 177 children and young people

Regions	Number of respondents
Yorkshire and Humberside	181 (26%)
South East	126 (18%)
London	121 (17%)
Eastern England	90 (13%)
East Midlands	57 (8%)
North East	48 (7%)
North West	19 (3%)
South West	15 (1%)
West Midlands	13 (1%)
Other	39 (6%)

Ethnic Group	Number of respondents
White British	576 (80%)
Other Ethnic Group	30 (3%)
Black or Black British African	22 (2%)
Black or Black British Caribbean	22 (2%)
Mixed Heritage White/Black Caribbean	14 (2%)
Asian or Asian British Indian	12 (2%)
Mixed Heritage Other	6 (1%)
Black or Black British Other	5 (1%)
White Irish	5 (1%)
White Other	5 (1%)
Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi	3 (1%)
Asian or Asian British Other	3 (1%)
Chinese	3 (1%)
Asian or Asian British Pakistani	2 (1%)
Mixed Heritage White/Black African	1 (1%)

Adults' version – 330 responses

Type of respondent	Number of respondents
Professional working with young people	126 (38%)
Charity	43 (13%)
National/Commercial organisation	38 (12%)
Parent	30 (9%)
LSCB	29 (9%)
Young person (Under 18)	18 (5%)
Other	18 (5%)
Professional Association	13 (4%)
Volunteer	13 (4%)
Child (Under 13)	2 (1%)

Regional practitioner events

In addition to the written and online consultation, we worked with the independent research company, Ipsos MORI, to hold eight regional events for practitioners who work with children and young people (see chart below for dates and locations). Each event lasted for one day and consisted mainly of table discussions with brief presentations by officials from the Department for Children, Schools and Families.

A total of 408 people attended the events, for a breakdown of this by event, please see the chart below.

Timetable of practitioner events

Region	Location	Date	No. of attendees
West Midlands	Coventry	24 September 2007	78
East Midlands	Nottingham	28 September 2007	37
London and East of England	London	2 October 2007	42
South East	Brighton	4 October 2007	28
North West	Manchester	8 October 2007	78
South West	Bristol	11 October 2007	42
Yorkshire and Humber	York	15 October 2007	59
North East	Newcastle	18 October 2007	44

Reports from these events will be available on the Every Child Matters website: www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/stayingsafe

Attendees were also invited to contribute examples of good practice in safeguarding, a selection of which will be published on the Every Child Matters website.

Discussion Groups

We also commissioned Ipsos MORI to conduct qualitative research with parents and carers, children and young people, the general public, and hard to reach groups. The majority of this research was conducted between 25 September and 30 October 2007, the final group was conducted on 13 November 2007.

Ipsos MORI held 18 discussion groups as follows:

Parents and carers – 7 x 2½ hour extended discussion groups (these sessions were longer than those with children and young people and the general public, as it was anticipated that parents would have more to say on this subject)

Age of children	Parent	Socio-economic Group	Ethnicity	Area
0-10	Mothers	DE	Locally representative	York
0-10	Fathers	C2DE	Locally representative	Newcastle: rural
0-10	Mothers	ABC1	Locally representative	Brighton
11-18	Fathers	DE	Locally representative	Coventry
11-18	Mothers	C2DE	Locally representative	Bristol: rural
11-18	Fathers	ABC1	Locally representative	Manchester
Mix	Mothers	Mix	Asian	Nottingham

Additional sample criteria:

- representation of married, cohabiting and lone parents across the sample;
- representation of a full range of children’s ages within each age break and different numbers of children within each group; and
- representation of full time carers/guardians (e.g. grandparents who look after children and foster carers) within each child age break.

Young people – 7 x 1½ hour friendship pair discussion groups

Age of children	Socio-economic Group	Gender	Ethnicity	Area
Years 7 & 8 (11-13yrs)	Low educational attainment (Lower than level 4)	Mixed	Locally representative	Manchester
Years 7 & 8 (11-13yrs)	Medium-high educational attainment (Level 4 and above)	Mixed	Locally representative	Brighton: rural
Years 9 & 10 (13-15yrs)	Low educational attainment (Lower than level 5)	Mixed	Locally representative	Peterborough: rural
Years 9 & 10 (13-15yrs)	Medium-high educational attainment (Level 5 and above)	Mixed	Locally representative	Bristol
16-18yrs	Low educational attainment (Fewer than 5 GCSEs at grade A*-C)	Mixed	Locally representative	Coventry
16-18yrs	Medium-high educational attainment (At least 5 GCSEs at grade A*-C)	Mixed	Locally representative	Newcastle
16-18yrs	Mixed educational attainment	Female	Asian	London

General public – 4 x 1½ hour discussion groups

Age	Socio-economic Group	Gender	Ethnicity	Area
25-45	ABC1	Mixed	Locally representative	York
45-65	ABC1	Mixed	Locally representative	Peterborough
25-45	C2DE	Mixed	Locally representative	London
45-65	C2DE	Mixed	Locally representative	Nottingham

Additional sample criteria:

- none with children living at home aged below 19 years old;
- all groups including a mix of those who are single/cohabiting/married without children or without children at home, including some grandparents in two groups; and
- all groups representing a range of attitudes towards safeguarding issues.

Hard to reach sample

Audience	Sample & methodology	Location
Recent immigrant arrivals	1 x 1½ hour discussion group with young people from the Roma community 1 x 1 hour paired depth with parents from the Roma community (using an interpreter to speak to the parents)	London
	1 x 1½ hour discussion group with Slovakian parents and young people (encompassing break out sessions to distinguish feedback from parents/young people)	Dover
Children and young people with SEN	1 x 1½ hour discussion group with parents of children with SEN 1 x 1½ hour discussion group with young people with SEN	London
Looked after children	1 x 1½ hour mini-discussion group with looked after children	Manchester
Children and young people with negative outcomes	1 x 1½ hour mini-discussion group with parents of children with negative outcomes 1 x 1 hour paired depth with young people with negative outcomes	Reading
Parents with problems that impact on children	1 x 1½ hour discussion group with parents who misuse substances	Doncaster
	1 x 1½ hour mini-discussion group with mothers who have experienced domestic violence	London

Consultation Analysis

In *Staying Safe* we proposed 11 areas for new action, based on our analysis of cross-Government work on safeguarding, as well as asking key questions about safeguarding. This section sets out the headline messages from the consultation responses under each area for action, including a summary of other areas proposed by respondents.

KEY QUESTIONS

1. How safe do you think children are?

Young people's version: 704 people responded to the question, 87% felt that children are currently very safe, fairly safe or safe, the remaining 13% felt children are not at all safe.

Adults' version: 293 people responded to this question, 49% felt that children are safe or very safe, 25% were not sure and 26% felt children are not very safe.

2. Whose responsibility is it to keep children safe?

Adults' Version: we asked "As a member of the public, do you feel a sense of responsibility for protecting children?" 94% of those answering this question said 'yes' and only 1% said 'no' (the other 5% were 'not sure').

Young people's version: 515 children and young people (of 709 respondents) gave suggestions for how they keep friends and sisters and brothers safe.

3. *How can we balance keeping children safe with allowing them the freedom to develop independence?*

Adults' version: We asked "Have we got the right balance between keeping children safe and also allowing them the freedom to develop?" 239 people responded to this question, 57% said 'no', 15% said 'yes' and 28% said 'not sure'.

Young people's version: We asked "How can we get the right balance between keeping children and young people safe and also allowing them the freedom to develop?" 33% said access to 'more safe, supervised fun activities i.e. youth club' would help, 26% suggested 'parenting/trust/set standards-time limits', 25% suggested more 'freedom to develop/learn by experience' and 24% wanted to 'talk about or be shown dangers'.

Areas for action in *Staying Safe* consultation document

PLAY AND POSITIVE ACTIVITIES

Proposals:

- Launch a new communications campaign to encourage parents to let their children play outside in safe environments and take part safely in positive activities.

This area received a large number of responses, particularly from young people. Both young people and organisations who responded were positive about our proposal for a communications campaign to encourage parents to let their children play outside. However, respondents also said more facilities for play and activities were needed, that local authority planners need to take play areas into account in their work and that provision of supervised play is more likely to encourage parents to allow their children to use play facilities.

In the consultation we asked:

- *Would parents welcome a communications campaign and information on play and positive activities in their local area?*

225 responses to this question – 82% yes, 5% no and 13% not sure

- *What more should be done to enable children and young people to play safely and explore the outside world?*

166 responses, of which 51% suggested providing more places to play

- *What more could we be doing to help children and young people to stay safe?*

116 responses to this question, of which 49% suggested 'more to do to stop boredom'

UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING RISK

Proposals:

- *Carry out a research study into the best PSHE materials for teaching about safety, helping teachers to identify which resources will be most helpful for their particular school.*

- *Create a module of Continuing Professional Development for teachers of PSHE about how to teach children to keep themselves safe.*
- *Provide information for parents about risks of harm faced by children and through Sure Start children's centres ensure information is given to families of young children.*
- *Communicate to parents about keeping their children safe in sporting activities.*

Most responses in this area were positive about the need for children and young people to be taught about risks to their safety, and welcomed our proposals around the PSHE curriculum. Some respondents asked for PSHE to be made a compulsory part of the curriculum, others said that safety issues should be covered in all areas of the curriculum, not just PSHE. Parents and other respondents welcomed the proposal for communications to parents about risks of harm to their children.

In the consultation we asked:

- *Are children and young people taught enough in school about how to manage risks and stay safe?*

238 responses to this question – 19% yes, 48% no, 33% not sure

- *Is teaching safety education in Personal, Social and Health Education a good way to increase children and young people's resilience to harm? Are there other ways we could do this?*

246 responses – 82% yes, 7% no, 11% not sure

- *Do you think parents know enough about how to keep their children safe?*

699 responses – 68% yes, 13% no, 19% not sure. Additionally 10% of respondents qualified their answer – saying 'some do and some don't'

A SAFE WORKFORCE

Proposals:

- *Implement the new vetting and barring scheme and communicate duties under the scheme and the opportunities afforded by it to all employers of people working with children and young people, in both paid and voluntary work, and to parents.*
- *Promote safe recruitment practices in all sectors working with children and young people, extending the recent guidance issued to education settings.*
- *Help employers to be aware of signs of abusive intent or behaviour in the recruitment process and beyond.*

There were fewer responses to this area than others, although generally positive responses to our proposals for action. Young people generally felt they are able to trust adults who work with them. Younger children in particular showed high levels of trust for medical staff – nurses and doctors. Third sector groups raised concerns about their ability to access child protection training and embed safer recruitment and employment policies with limited resources.

In the consultation we asked:

- *In your experience, do the people who work with children and young people (teachers, nurses, doctors) make them feel safe?*

651 responses, 68% yes, 10% no, 22% not sure

ADDRESSING NEW THREATS TO CHILDREN'S SAFETY

Proposals:

- *Work with CEOP, Becta and other partners to inform parents of potential risks online and help them to get involved with their children to help them stay safe.*

This area received a large number of responses from children and young people, parents, professionals and organisations. Issues raised included the good and bad sides of children owning mobile phones – that they are useful for safety but can also make children a target for crime and cyberbullying. Many respondents raised the issue of perceptions of young people in the media, which often portray young people in a negative light. The proposal to provide information for parents was widely supported, but respondents said that children also needed information on internet safety, and that professionals should be taught routinely about internet safety, including as part of the Initial Teacher Training curriculum.

In the consultation we asked:

- *How can e-safety be promoted to all professionals who are responsible for children's safety?*

80 responses to this question and all suggested continued training

- *What information would parents welcome about risks of harm faced by their children and how to manage them? What areas mentioned here would parents like more specific information about?*

107 responses to this question, 46% wanted more information on internet safety

HELPING LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARDS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Proposals:

- *Publish non-statutory practice guidance for LSCBs in summer 2007 that will provide best practice case studies and further clarify some of the guidance on LSCBs as set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children guidance.*
- *Emphasise the importance of participation in LSCBs for a range of local agencies.*
- *Define the framework for measuring LSCBs' progress – understanding what a 'good' LSCB looks like.*
- *Clarify the place of LSCBs in the local area performance cycle.*
- *Trial the development of national templates for local protocols.*
- *Undertake a further LSCB stocktake in 2008.*

The main responses received on this area were from organisations and professionals. The proposals made were supported, but other issues raised included resources for LSCBs (or a centrally imposed

funding formula for participating agencies), the need for communications to highlight the role of LSCBs to practitioners and the public, and the involvement of the third sector, who may find it difficult to engage with LSCBs.

In the consultation we asked:

- *What more could be done to help Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) to make a difference?*

61 responses, 61% mentioned more funding and 51% mentioned more training for staff (some responses mentioned both)

IMPROVING PRACTICE IN CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

Proposals:

- *Look at ways that social work training, both qualifying and post-qualifying could better prepare social workers to work within the new Integrated Children's System, the guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children and Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families.*
- *Carry out further work with the Children's Workforce Development Council to improve management and supervision in children's social care.*
- *Consider the case for regular inspection of safeguarding services for children under the new inspection arrangements from 2009.*
- *Launch a new national safeguarding awards scheme to celebrate success and highlight individual contributions to improving children and young people's safety. A panel of experts would be responsible for identifying individuals and organisations in all sectors who have excelled in protecting and promoting the welfare of children and young people. An annual awards ceremony would be held celebrating success in improving children's safety.*
- *Put forward for consideration in 2008 a theme for the local authority beacon award scheme, which would recognise different aspects of safeguarding, showcase good practice and help to share learning across local areas. This could include outreach to minority communities to ensure that all children are receiving the support they need to stay safe.*

Responses to this area were predominantly from organisations and professionals working with children and young people. Proposals around improved training for social workers were supported. The proposal for a national safeguarding awards scheme received a mixed response, although overall respondents were marginally in favour of such a scheme. Concerns were raised about continuing issues around recruitment and retention of children's social workers.

In the consultation we asked:

- *How could training and development for social workers be improved?*

90 responses, of which 93% backed more training

- *Would a national safeguarding awards scheme help to raise the profile of work to improve children's safety?*

212 responses, 44% said yes, 37% not sure and 19% no

- *Will the beacon council scheme help to promote learning from good local practice?*

191 responses, 50% yes, 43% not sure, 7% no

REDUCING NUMBERS OF ACCIDENTS

Proposals:

- *Launch communications targeted at parents in high risk households, advising them about the causes of accidents, and how to prevent them.*
- *Work with relevant partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors to provide both parents and professionals with improved support and information on common risks in the home, and the most effective forms of intervention to prevent accidents and injuries.*

Responses to this area were positive about the proposed communications on preventing accidents to families at risk. However, many said this would not be enough to address this important issue. Provision of safety equipment for vulnerable families was suggested as well as the need for more data/research. Some organisations said there was a need for an identified lead agency in each local area for reducing accidents.

ADDRESSING PARENTAL PROBLEMS WHICH IMPACT ON CHILDREN'S WELFARE

Proposals:

- *Work with the relevant inspectorates and Departments to develop and deliver the new risk-based Comprehensive Area Assessment, and consider how issues around links between adults' and children's services should be reflected.*
- *Work with local authorities and their partners to support targeted communications to parents with problems that may affect their children about the support available for them – including considering how these issues could be addressed through the development of local Parents' Charters and the implementation of Parents Know-How (a new multi-channel information service for parents).*
- *Put forward for consideration in 2008 a theme for the local authority beacon award scheme, which would showcase good practice in reaching families, including within minority communities, whose children may be at risk of harm, and help to share learning across local areas.*

There was a relatively high rate of responses to this area from all types of respondents, including a positive response to the proposals for action. Child poverty was an issue raised by many respondents as a barrier to improving children's safety. Some local areas seemed to routinely ask about children when carrying out assessments for mental health or domestic violence issues for adults, whilst others did not.

In the consultation we asked:

- *How can local areas ensure that children's and adults' services work collaboratively to safeguard and promote the well-being of children and young people affected by substance misuse, domestic violence or mental illness problems within their families?*

112 responses, 95% said organisations need to work together better and 11% said more funding (some respondents mentioned both).

IMPROVING SAFETY ON THE STREETS

Proposals:

- *Extend bullying policies and training used in schools to other settings, including children's homes, extended schools services, FE colleges and youth groups.*
- *Identify anti-bullying strategies for children's services and disseminate good practice examples that could be adopted by the children's trusts and LSCBs where relevant.*
- *Identify good local and international practice in addressing the risks of harm to young people involved in gangs – including members of their family who may be affected and consider the scope for piloting and evaluating similar working local areas in England.*
- *Consider the role that children's trusts and LSCBs could play in reducing knife and gun crime and the wider issue of safety on the streets.*

This area received a high response rate from all types of respondents, but particularly from young people who are very concerned about this issue. Respondents were broadly positive about the proposals. There was no clarity on whose responsibility it should be to address bullying outside schools, with most respondents believing a multi-agency approach would be needed. Several respondents mentioned the positive and negative aspects of young people spending time in groups. Most young people, parents and professionals thought this could be a positive thing (safety in numbers) whereas some young people were scared of other young people who spent time in groups and were intimidated by them. Young people called for more visible community policing (several mentioning Police Community Support Officers as a positive example) and more CCTV to make them feel safer.

In the consultation we asked:

- *Whose responsibility should it be to address bullying that happens outside school? How could local agencies work together to address this problem?*

176 responses, 51% said everyone, 30% parents, 28% school and 26% police, some respondents identified more than one agency.

HIGHLIGHTING THE ROLE OF THE PUBLIC IN CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SAFETY

Proposals:

- *Provide additional support for listening services for children via ChildLine.*
- *Launch a public education campaign to improve the public's ability to identify and report concerns about children's safety, and raise awareness of the need to take responsibility for safeguarding children and young people.*

There was a high level of response to this question, with all respondents agreeing that the public does have a role to play and should take responsibility for all children (although some responses underlined the importance of parents' responsibility for their own children). The proposal for a public

education campaign was supported across all types of respondent, although the nature of these communications was viewed as very important. Some practitioners and organisations were concerned about additional burdens/referrals which public communications could bring, but others said that this is ultimately acceptable as children and young people would be better protected.

In the consultation we asked:

- *Does the Government need to communicate with the public to improve people's ability to identify and know how to act on concerns about children's safety?*

231 responses, 89% yes, 6% no and 5% not sure

BETTER SAFEGUARDS FOR CHILDREN COMING INTO/GOING OUT OF COUNTRY

Proposals:

- *Ensure immigration staff dealing with children are alert to child welfare and safety issues, and refer information relating to child safeguarding issues quickly, carefully, and lawfully to appropriate parties.*
- *Raise awareness amongst professionals about cross-border issues including forced marriage, private fostering, trafficked children and child abduction.*

Responses to this area came mostly from organisations and practitioners, who were supportive of the proposals. Other ideas were to start a poster campaign at airports and give information to immigrant families on arrival about acceptable and unacceptable behaviour towards children in this country.

In the consultation we asked:

- *Would professionals working with children and young people welcome clear information about cross-border issues to help with potential concerns?*

164 responses, 83% said yes, 16% not sure and 1% no

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