

CHANGE STARTS WITH



**A report outlining recommendations
to address bullying face to face
and online**



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“

A message from O₂

Working with the Anti-Bullying Alliance to create this report has been truly eye-opening. Bullying is still a serious issue. It's a serious issue for our young people, who are dealing with it in schools, in the community and online – but it's also leaving a lasting imprint on those affected, well into adulthood. It's time we all stood up and did more to protect our young people, keeping them safe and happy and fostering the kind of positive culture that will make bullying a thing of the past. And if we work together, we can do it.



The pages of this report show that bullying isn't an isolated problem. It's happening in our playgrounds, in our classrooms, on journeys to and from school, and online. It's stopping its victims enjoying school, time with friends and online interaction. From educators, parents, and young people themselves, to government, tech companies, influencers and the media: no one group has the answer. Working collaboratively is the only way we're going to tackle it, which is why we're so proud to have been involved in creating the Change Starts With Us report, and being a part of such an important catalyst for change.

The message of encouragement from the young people involved is clear, and I'd like to thank them for their hard work and insights in putting this report together. They've given us all some concrete recommendations to help create safer spaces – on and offline – for everyone. Now, it's up to each one of us to listen to the voices of the young people they represent, to take these findings and turn them into real action to stamp out bullying once and for all.

Change starts with all of us.

**Ann Pickering, Chief HR Officer and Chief of Staff,
Chair of Responsible Business Taskforce, O2**

”



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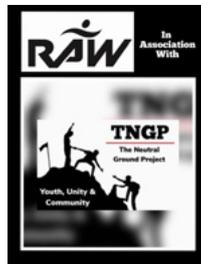
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Thank you to all the young people that took part in our Young Advisory Group for the Change Starts With Us project. Your insights and hard work have made this campaign what it is.

Thank you to the following organisations who helped develop this report:



Thank you to O2 for being the official partner for this year's Anti-Bullying Week.



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A message of encouragement...

This poem was written with the young people who helped us write this report.

You can also watch it being performed [here](#). 



Face to face or through a smart phone,
bullying leaves marks and makes people feel alone.
To make a real change within society,
we must work together, united, in solidarity.



Schools, change starts with what we need,
support us to take the lead.
It does still happen face to face,
help us make a safer space.

Influencers, change starts with more than popularity,
everyone is different but we all have similarities.
Before that comment, DM or text,
think about the repercussions, what will be next?

Government, change starts with research,
think about children when you're on your perch.
Use your platform and your responsibility,
support or make a change and prevent hostility.

Parents, change starts with guidance,
talk to us, we don't want silence.
Help us to find our way,
and be there when we need to say.

Online platforms, change starts with protections,
we love getting involved but guide our connections.
Be clear with us what you expect,
and stop the hate that you detect.

Finally, young people, change starts with us,
it starts with the people we trust.
It doesn't matter 'bout followers and likes,
Or the labels you wear, or the logo, or the price.

Change starts with me, us, them, and you,
it's up to all of us to see it through.
We need to stop, think, rearrange,
it's up to us bring about change.

Change starts with us!





SUMMARY OF 'CHANGE STARTS WITH US' RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations below were written in coproduction with young people and look at evidence of what works to address bullying, both face to face and online. They are framed around the six groups we've called 'stakeholders' that young people believe have the power to make changes to address bullying.

We call on all of these groups to consider these recommendations and understand that change starts here, it starts now and it starts with us.



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Children and young people

Change starts with ...

1. being an 'upstander'
2. considering the impact of your words and actions
3. knowing you can make a difference
4. saying hello and being empathetic
5. focusing on what's on the inside instead of someone's appearance
6. including everyone



Parents and carers

Change starts with ...

1. taking the time to talk and find out about our day
2. understanding the technology we use
3. improving relationships with our siblings
4. teaching us about empathy
5. putting yourselves in our shoes and being aware of the issues we face



Schools and educational settings

Change starts with ...

1. listening to and involving young people in the solution
2. knowing how much bullying is going on and recording it
3. training for school staff about bullying and online bullying
4. helping pupils to understand each other when bullying does happen
5. seeing bullying as a barrier to learning and a risk to our mental health
6. ensuring all children are included in school, and that school staff have respectful and caring relationships with pupils
7. knowing about 'hotspot' areas of bullying where it's more likely to happen (e.g. on the way to and from school and online)



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Government and parliamentarians

Change starts with ...

1. parliamentarians acting as role models for how we treat each other
2. being able to access help when we need it
3. understanding the links between bullying and mental health
4. legislation to define bullying and requiring schools to record levels of bullying
5. knowing how much bullying is going on online and in school
6. funding for anti-bullying resources and training in schools
7. seeing the links between bullying online and face to face



Technology Companies

Change starts with ...

1. clarity about the behaviour that is acceptable on your platforms
2. knowing and being transparent about what type of bullying is going on
3. using new technology to tackle bullying
4. being better and more consistent when handling reports of bullying and removing harmful content
5. applying the highest possible privacy settings automatically for under 16s when they sign up, rather than expecting young people to set it themselves
6. thinking about children's safety on your platforms at inception not when you become multi-million user platforms

Media and influencers



Change starts with ...

1. using your power responsibly and positively
2. thinking about the impact of what you say
3. portraying real life and not just an ideal
4. not just thinking about how many followers you have but the impact you have on them



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DEVELOPING THE CHANGE STARTS WITH US **REPORT**



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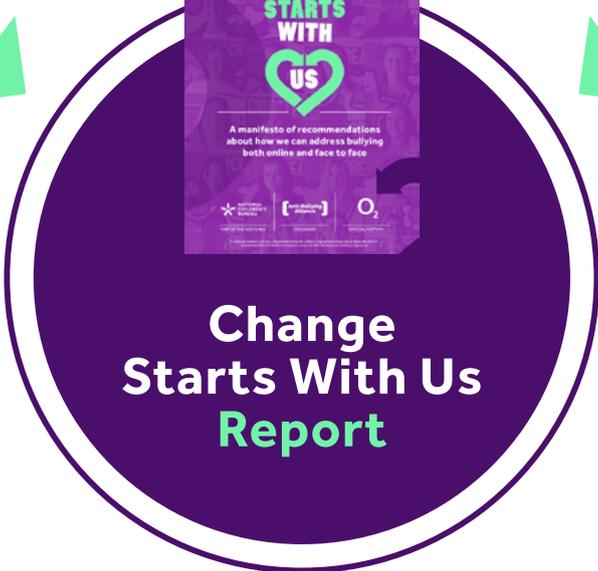


The Anti-Bullying Alliance, supported by O₂, worked intensively with a group of 25 young people, aged 13-22 years old from across the country to formulate the core elements of this report. The young people were brought together with help from the Unique Voice, National Children's Bureau, Kidscape, Diana Award, Henley College and Raw Mentoring.

Research and evidence

Work with Young Advisory Group

Poll of 1,000+ young people



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The process took place over three stages:

STAGE 1

Young Advisory Group

Dr Peter Smith of Goldsmiths University conducted a **literature review** into how to address bullying in school and online. We worked with the young advisory group to analyse the findings.

STAGE 2

Poll of 1000+ young people

We asked over 1000 young people aged 11-16yrs for their views on and experiences of bullying. The Young Advisory Group helped us write the questions

STAGE 3

Work with Young Advisory Group to make recommendations

We worked with the Young Advisory Group to develop a set of recommendations about the changes we need to make to address bullying both online and offline.



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The stakeholders we believe can make changes to address bullying



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HOW MUCH OF A PROBLEM IS BULLYING?



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PREVALENCE OF BULLYING

A range of research has been published about the prevalence of bullying in recent years. This page summarises some of that published research.

Data from over 13,000 pupils aged between 7 and 15 years old from the Anti-Bullying Alliance's pupil wellbeing questionnaire in 2016¹ found:

1 in 4 children reported being bullied a lot or always

Disabled children and those with SEN are around twice as likely to be bullied



The risk of being frequently bullied declines with age



Children and young people who are involved in school bullying go to school less, have poorer relationships with their teachers, and are less likely to feel safe or included within the school.

Bullying and cyberbullying remains the top reason under 11s call Childline and in the top 4 reasons that 11-16 year olds call Childline².



Children who are eligible for free school meals are more likely to be victims of frequent bullying.



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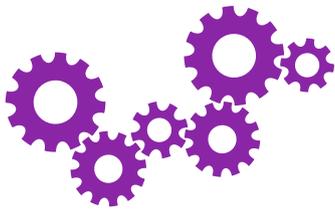
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IMPACT OF BULLYING

Short-term impact

Children and young people who have experienced bullying are more likely to:



Face barriers to learning³

Miss school (research found that at any one time over 16,000 young people aged 11-15 are missing education primarily due to bullying⁴)

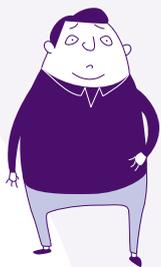


Experience a range of physical symptoms such as sleepless nights, bedwetting, abdominal pain and headaches, and psychological symptoms such as depression, self-harm, suicidal ideation and anxiety⁵



Long-term impact

King's College London research from 2015 shows the substantial long-term effect of being bullied (especially if they fall into a 'frequently bullied' category) where people in their 50s who were bullied as children were more likely to:



experience a range of mental health issues as an adult including suicide ideation



earn less money



be obese (particularly in women)

not be in employment, education or training into adulthood



not gain qualifications



not be in stable relationships



WHAT ABOUT ONLINE BULLYING?

Research about online bullying varies greatly.

17%

One report from Public Health England showed that 17% have experienced cyberbullying in the previous year⁷.

There is evidence that cyberbullying may have unique negative effects on self-esteem, and increase depression and anxiety symptoms¹⁰.

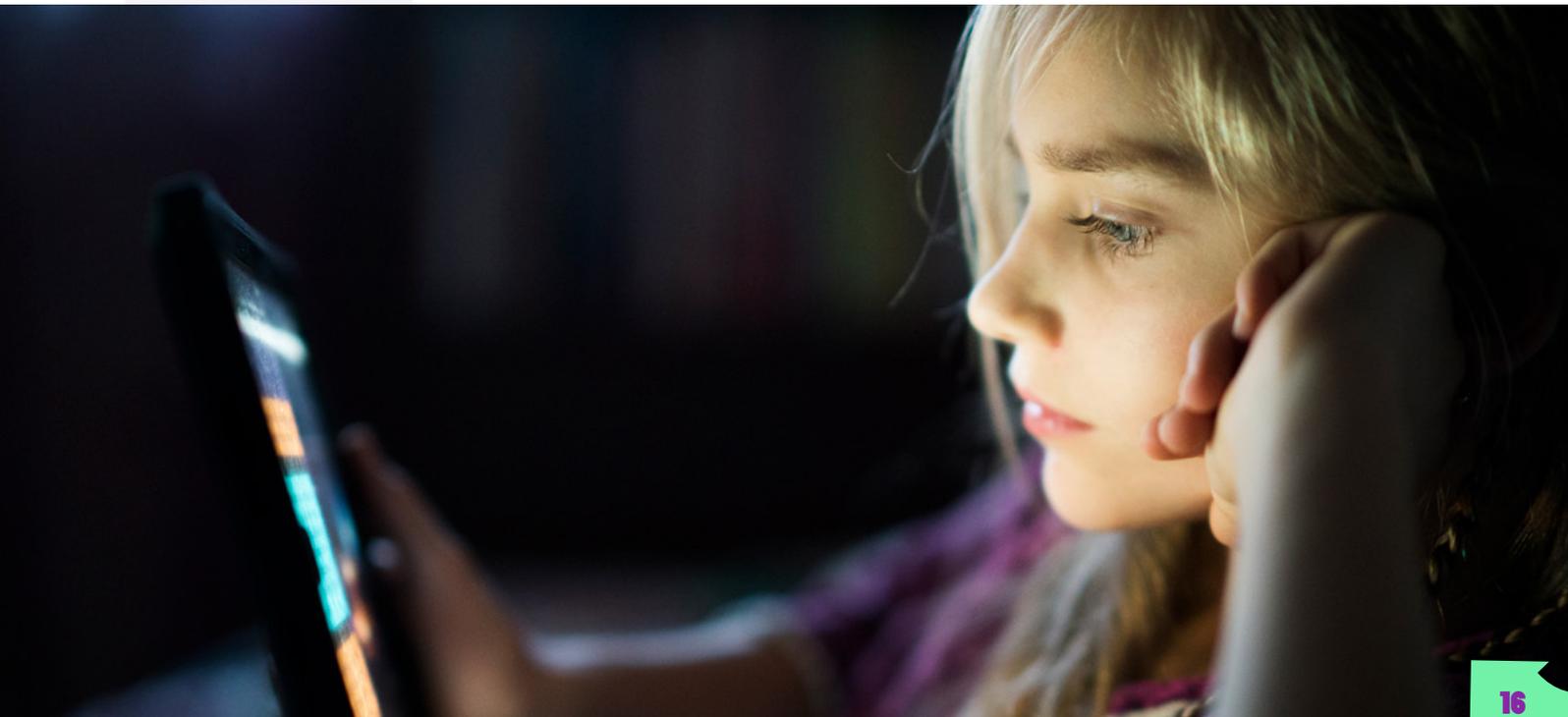


9 / 10

Studies have shown that online bullying creates very few new victims. It generally starts face to face and then 'goes' online⁸. Research suggests that 9 out of 10 adolescents who report experience of cyberbullying are also bullied by traditional (face to face) forms of bullying⁹.



Both disabled young people¹¹ and LGBT young people¹² are more likely to be cyberbullied.



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WHAT DID OUR POLL FIND?

The survey of over 1,000 11 to 16-year-olds shows the scale of bullying children are experiencing on a day-to-day basis.

24%

Nearly a quarter (24%) said they were bullied once per week or more in the last six months.

1 PER CLASS

Roughly one child per class (3%) said they had experienced bullying every day in the last six months.

Children appear to be negatively changing their behaviour due to experiencing bullying, with:

1 in 10

one in ten children (11%) saying they have missed school due to bullying

1 in 7

one in seven (14%) saying they have changed their route to school due to bullying

1 in 5

nearly one in five (19%) saying they have steered clear of spending time with friends to avoid being bullied

1 in 5

nearly one in five (19%) have avoided social media and online gaming because of bullying



While many of the children who had been bullied said it happened in school (83%), other flashpoints included their journey to and from school (26%) and time spent online (30%).

Three quarters (73%) of children said that adults needed to step up to help tackle the problem, and a quarter (25%) said grownups were not good role models for online and face-to-face behaviour.



Children highlighted where they thought change should start, with over three-quarters (76%) of those polled saying that social media and gaming platforms should change the way they address bullying, and nearly half (48%) saying their schools could do more.

Nearly a quarter of children (23%) said their parents had not spoken to them about bullying.





CHANGE STARTS WITH US RECOMMENDATIONS

This section of the Change Starts With Us Report outlines the recommendations that we hope will be the catalyst to a new approach to address bullying both online and face to face. We take each of the six stakeholders one by one.



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CHANGE STARTS WITH... YOUNG PEOPLE

Recommendations:

Change starts with...

1. being an 'upstander'

Research has clearly demonstrated that bystanders play a significant role in bullying. Proactive and preventative interventions implemented at individual, class, school and community level have the potential to reduce bullying, alongside reactive strategies to deal with bullying incidents when they occur. The young people we worked with wanted to know about 'safe' ways of becoming an 'upstander' such as discreetly telling a teacher, reporting online, asking if the target is ok after the event.

2. considering the impact of your words and actions

3. knowing you can make a difference

4. saying hello and being empathetic

5. focusing on what's on the inside instead of on someone's appearance

6. including everyone



“ It doesn't matter 'bout followers and likes. Or the labels you wear, or the logo, or the price. ”

Taken from the Young Advisory Group's Change Starts With Us poem

“ If we stand back and watch, nothing will change. ”

Young person on the Young Advisory Group



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CHANGE STARTS WITH...SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION SETTINGS

Recommendations:

Change starts with...

1. listening to and involving young people in the solution
2. knowing how much bullying is going on and recording it
3. training for school staff about bullying and online bullying
4. helping pupils to understand each other when bullying does happen

The young people we spoke to were keen on schools providing a supportive framework to help them understand each other. They tended to want to move away from a 'sanction-based' approach to bullying of punishment and instead preferred a more 'restorative' approach where they looked at the root causes of bullying.

"
We need help to understand each other, not just punishments.
"

Young person on the Young Advisory Group

5. seeing bullying as a barrier to learning and a risk to our mental health
6. ensuring all children are included in school and pupils have respectful and caring relationships with school staff
7. knowing about 'hotspot' areas of bullying where it's more likely to happen (e.g. on the way to and from school and online)

Research from our literature review shows that schools with clear expectations about behaviour and caring and respectful relationships between school staff and pupils have less bullying.

Bullying is more likely to happen at times of less adult supervision and at times of transition. The results of our poll and literature search, show that bullying tends to start face to face (often at school) and then 'goes' online. Our poll also shows that bullying on the way to and from school is almost as prevalent as online bullying. It is vital that schools know what type of bullying is happening, who it's happening to (e.g. are disabled children more likely to experience bullying?) and where it's happening.





CHANGE STARTS WITH... GOVERNMENT AND PARLIAMENTARIANS

Recommendations:

Change starts with...

1. parliamentarians acting as role models to young people on how we treat each other

The young people we worked with were clear that they wanted parliamentarians to treat each other better and set an example to children and young people.

2. being able to access help when we need it
3. understanding the links between bullying and mental health
4. legislation to define bullying and requiring schools to record levels of bullying

5. knowing how much bullying is going on online and in school

We need more research about what works to address bullying and especially online bullying and bullying on home to school transport.

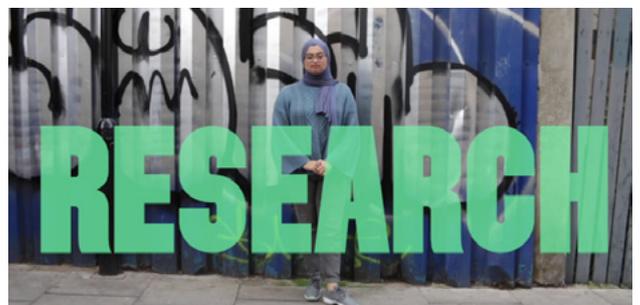
6. funding for anti-bullying resources and training in schools
7. seeing the links between bullying online and face to face

“

I believe that members of parliament should respect each other and treat one another gracefully, getting a point across without belittling others.

”

Young person on the Young Advisory Group





CHANGE STARTS WITH...PARENTS AND CARERS

Recommendations:

Change starts with...

1. taking the time to talk and find out about our day

The young people we spoke with talked a lot about wanting to have warm conversations with their parents and a relationship where they felt they could talk about what they were worried about. The literature review showed that having a warm and authoritative parenting style rather than harsh or overly authoritarian approach can help protect children

2. understanding the technology we use

3. improving relationships with our siblings

The literature review showed us that there is some evidence that improved relationships with siblings can help protect children from experiencing bullying

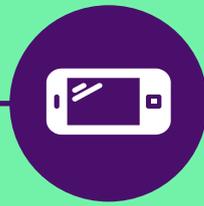
4. teaching us about empathy

5. putting ourselves in our shoes and being aware of the issues we face

“
Change starts with guidance.
Talk to us, we don't want
silence.
”

Taken from the Young Advisory Group's
Change Starts With Us poem





CHANGE STARTS WITH... TECHNOLOGY COMPANIES

Recommendations:

Change starts with...

1. clarity about the behaviour that is acceptable on your platforms

The young people we've worked with talked about not always understanding policies on platforms or knowing what content is acceptable.

2. knowing and being transparent about what type of bullying is going on

We have very little reliable data about what type of bullying is going on and to whom it's happening. We ask that social media companies publish data about the amount of bullying that is happening on their platforms and if there are any groups more likely to experience it.

3. using new technology to tackle bullying

" Social media platforms should monitor their content more and act appropriately. "

Young person on the Young Advisory Group

4. being better and more consistent when handling reports of bullying and removing harmful content

Our young advisory group had very mixed feelings about handling of reports, with some having them dealt with quickly and others not knowing anything about how reports were handled, even on the same platforms.

5. making default settings for under 16 year olds the highest privacy security as a default rather than expecting young people to set it themselves

6. thinking about children's safety on your platforms at inception not when you become multi-million user platforms



" Online platforms, change starts with protections. We love getting involved, but guide our connections. "

Taken from the Young Advisory Group's Change Starts With Us poem



CHANGE STARTS WITH... MEDIA AND INFLUENCERS

Recommendations:

Change starts with...

1. using your power responsibly and positively
2. thinking about the impact of what you say
3. portraying real life and not just an ideal

The young people talked about the media and influencers or celebrities reinforcing 'ideal bodies and lifestyles'. They wanted to see people's real lives more on TV programmes and in influencer posts. They felt this reinforced pressures for children and young people about needing to 'look or act a certain way'

4. not just thinking about how many followers you have but the impact you have on them



“

I think the media should show young people reality not just the fake – we know that it takes hard work to be successful but they pretend you can get an amazing car just like that.

”

Young person on the Young Advisory Group

“

I think being an influencer comes with responsibility, like spreading positivity.

”

Young person on the Young Advisory Group

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