

Press release: Schools around the country to stamp out LGBT bullying

Over 1,000 schools this academic year are launching projects to stamp out homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (HBT) bullying in the classroom, the Minister for School Standards and Equalities Nick Gibb confirmed today.

The £3 million initiative led by the Government Equalities Office aims to ensure children are free from being bullied for their sexual orientation or gender identity, as part of the duty all schools have to ensure effective measures are in place to protect pupils from bullying.

The programme will see primary and secondary schools across the country partnered up with organisations such as Stonewall, Barnardo's and the National Children's Bureau, to educate young people to accept and respect each other's individuality in an age-appropriate way.

It is part of the government's drive to deliver further progress on LGBT equality and to help prepare young people for life in 21st century Britain.

Minister for School Standards and Equalities Nick Gibb said:

Bullying at school is cruel, particularly at a time when LGBT pupils are coming to terms with their sexuality or gender. I am determined that we stamp out the use of the word 'gay' as a pejorative term and prevent bullying of all kinds so pupils feel safe and able to achieve their full potential.

I'm delighted that so many schools across the country will be participating in this programme. By creating a culture of acceptance and respect in our classrooms we can support young people as they discover who they are.

Levels of HBT bullying and language reported in Stonewall's 2017 School Report have decreased by almost a third since 2012. However, further action is needed to teach students about the impact of bullying and to support teachers to spot HBT bullying in schools.

The anti-HBT bullying programme builds on the success of the 2015/16 pilot, which included a range of innovative projects such as Barnardo's providing group support to pupils who had been bullied or had bullied someone and supporting schools to develop policy. In addition, Stonewall's Train the Trainer courses provided resource packs of posters, curriculum guides and DVDs to help teachers discuss HBT bullying in an interactive way.

Barnardo's Chief Executive Javed Khan said:

Barnardo's Positive Identities Service worked in two school clusters on the pilot programme in 2015/16, trialling new approaches to tackle and prevent HBT bullying and embed good practice to create inclusive school environments. We worked directly with young people, parents, governors, senior leadership teams, teaching and non-teaching staff to develop programmes that would increase awareness and knowledge of LGBTQ+ identities. We successfully started groups in schools to empower and support young people, enhancing our learning of what they required.

Through this learning and direct practice we developed two separate models of work that could assist schools in tackling HBT bullying. We also examined ways to tackle HBT bullying and attitudes when justified by a religious, faith or cultural belief. We are delivering the current programme, utilising our learning to now work with schools across Yorkshire and Humber. The response has been phenomenal and we have engaged with over 220 schools who want to take part.

We are excited to be a part of this programme and proud to be able to contribute to help make schools safer and more representative of LGBTQ+ young people.

Michelle Colledge-Smith, Vice Principal at Outwood Grange Academy said:

Outwood Grange Academy has benefitted from the work with Barnardo's and the development of the faith toolkit. The success has allowed students to be able to express themselves more freely. Personal and sensitive areas are effectively discussed in school with staff who feel confident in the conversations they are having. The staff and student training has been the cornerstone to the work and its success, as we continue to challenge language and preconceived ideas.

Dominic Arnall, Head of Projects and Programmes at Stonewall said:

We welcome the Department of Education's continued dedication to tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (HBT) bullying in schools. We work with over 1,000 schools across Britain, empowering teaching staff to celebrate difference and acceptance in their classrooms. We also train teachers to go on and train other groups of teaching professionals, not just on how to tackle anti-lesbian, gay, bi and trans bullying, but how to prevent it in the first place.

When bullying is not tackled, it can have a deeply damaging and long-lasting effect on young people. Our School Report (2017) shows that although anti-LGBT bullying has decreased, half of LGBT pupils say they hear HBT slurs 'frequently' or 'often' at school. This is

unacceptable. We will continue to support the DfE, as we work towards a society in all LGBT people can be accepted without exception.

The programme is part of the government's wider work to deliver greater equality for the LGBT community. In July, the government announced the launch of a national LGBT survey to drive further progress in LGBT equality, along with proposals to streamline and de-medicalise the process for changing legal gender. Over 95,000 people have already taken part in the survey. If you are LGBT, have your say by filling out the survey [here](#) before 15 October.

Earlier this year, the Department for Education made [relationships and sex education](#) mandatory in all secondary schools and age-appropriate relationships education will be taught in all primary schools. The department is also updating its guidance so it reflects the challenges pupils face today, including LGBT issues.