



FINAL REPORT: MAPPING OF ANTI BULLYING PROGRAMMES AVAILABLE TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ACROSS SLIGO AND LEITRIM.

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## **Background to Sligo Leitrim CYPSC:**

CYPSC are county-level committees that bring together the main statutory, community and voluntary providers of services Tusla (Chairperson), Local Authorities (Vice Chairperson), HSE, ETB, An Garda Síochána, Irish Primary Principals Network (IPPN), National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals (NAPD), Third Level Institution, Probation Service, NEPS, Young Person 18-24 years, Local Development Company, City/County Childcare Committee, Family Resources Centre, Other C&V sector e.g. Youth service to children and young people aged 0-24 years.

Locally CYPSC provides a forum for joint planning and co-ordination of activity to ensure that children, young people and their families receive improved and accessible services. Nationally there are 27 CYPSC across Ireland supported by the National CYPSC Office at Tusla Child and Family Agency. Approximately 774 organisations across the statutory, community and voluntary sector are actively engaged and working together for children and young people through the CYPSC model of inter-agency working. Policy and strategic direction for CYPSC is provided by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. Operational leadership of CYPSC is provided by Tusla – Child and Family Agency.

CYPSC follow the Blueprint for the Development of CYPSC 2015 - 2017; align with the Better Outcomes Brighter Futures: National Policy Framework for Children & Young People 2014 - 2020; and the CYPSC Shared Vision, Next Steps 2019 - 2024, which provides a basis for a work programme for CYPSC from 2019 up to 2024.

As part of Sligo Leitrim CYPSC, there are five working groups aligned to the five national outcomes for children and young people (National Policy Framework). These five working groups were established to identify the emerging needs for children and young people in County Sligo and Leitrim. These five working groups are known as: Active and Healthy Working Group; Achieving in Learning and Development Working Group; Safe and Protected from Harm Working Group, Economic Security and Opportunity Working Group and Connected, Respected and Contributing to their World Working Group.

### **The Safe & Protected from Harm Working Group**

The Safe & Protected from Harm Working Group is the group I have been involved with during my time on work placement with Sligo Leitrim CYPSC. This group aims to achieve the priority actions contained within Sligo Leitrim Children and Young Peoples' Plan 2020 - 2022.

The Safe & Protected from Harm Working Group has for the terms of reference:

#### **Aims:**

The aims for all children and young people are that they:

- Have a secure, stable and caring home environment.

- Are safe from abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- Are protected from bullying and discrimination.
- Are safe from crime and anti-social behaviour.

### **Role/Purpose of the Safe & Protected from Harm Working Group:**

To implement actions assigned within Sligo Leitrim Children & Young People's Plan (CYPP) 2020 - 2022

To review the safety of children & young people

To identify trends which may be used to inform the strategic direction for CYPSC

To consider feedback regarding identification of needs relative to the safety and protection of children and young people, which will in turn provide strategic direction for CYPSC

To ascertain needs which may be addressed collectively by partner agencies.

One of the priority actions for this working group, is a focus on Bullying.

For the duration of my placement experience I have been working closely alongside Maeve Whittington, the Sligo Leitrim CYPSC Coordinator. As part of my placement experience with Children and Young Peoples Services Committee (CYPSC) I have undertaken a mapping exercise on behalf of CYPSC's Safe and Protected from Harm Working Group. The mapping exercise will identify anti-bullying programmes, including online, and supports available to children and young people in Sligo and Leitrim. This mapping exercise will be discussed in detail throughout the report and the key findings will be presented in the report.

**Priority Action:** Violence, Physical Emotional and Psychological

**Objective:** Identify Anti- bullying programmes (including online) and supports available across Sligo and Leitrim.

**Indicator:** Number and range of anti- bullying programmes implemented.

**Activities:** Collate information from schools and youth organisations on anti- bullying supports available (include sporting bodies).

Conduct a needs analysis of anti- bullying supports in Sligo and Leitrim.

Provide information on the supports available.

## Introduction & Rationale

Bullying in childhood is becoming more and more common in recent times and it can often lead to serious physical and mental effects on both the bully and the victim (Stephens et al, 2018). Bullying is a form of violence towards another person over a period of time (Olweus, 1993). Bullying can be defined as a 'deliberate behaviour that harms, hurts or embarrasses another person either emotionally or physically. This behaviour is usually repeated although it can be a one off' (Pacer, 2016), with the bully having an advantage over the victim. Bullying can take place in numerous locations such as at school, in the community, at home or nowadays online. It can also happen at any age. Bullying is affecting thousands of Irish teenagers on a daily basis and is a problem that any child or young person can experience and one that they should not have to go through alone.

There are six main types of bullying. These include **verbal bullying**. This type of bullying is when the bully calls the victim names or says hurtful or nasty things. **Physical bullying** involves any physical harm; things such as kicking, hitting and hair pulling. **Gesture bullying** is the type of bullying where the bully looks or stares at the victim to intimidate them or as a threatening gesture. **Exclusion** can be another form of bullying. This type of bullying is where the victim is isolated and left out of things such as games or left alone at lunch times. **Extortion bullying** is the type of bullying where the victim is threatened by the bully to do as they say, or they will be hurt. And finally **cyber bullying** which is becoming more and more common in younger people in recent times. Cyber bullying is when the victim is attacked online in the form of texts or targeted on social media platforms (Spunout, 2018). Bullying can have an impact on a person's physical and emotional health in the short term and the long term. This impact can lead to social problems, emotional issues and physical injury and in severe cases it can lead to death (Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015). Children and young people who are bullied or have been bullied have an increased risk of developing mental health issues such as anxiety or depression along with other health issues such as headaches and also problems adjusting in school (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005). Bullying has been linked to a strong association with suicide related behaviours (Reed et al., 2015).

Bullying also leads to long term damage to the victim's self-esteem (Korioth, 2016). Children and young people who are the bullies can have academic problems in school along with an increased risk of substance abuse as they get older (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005). Both children and adults can experience bullying.

Back in 2010 verbal bullying was reported to be the most common form of bullying with 70% of young teens in Ireland reporting being verbally bullied or exclusion bullied (Barnardos, 2010). Nowadays, cyber bullying is the most common form of bullying in 2020, in Ireland. From 2007 to 2019 the percentage of young people who have experienced cyber bullying has more than doubled from 18% to 37% (Patchin & Hinduia, 2019).

A study carried out by DCU's National Anti-Bullying Research and Resource Centre (2020) found that cyberbullying among Irish children increased by almost 30% in children 10 to 18

years of age during the first lockdown, leaving Ireland with one of the highest rates of cyber bullying in Europe. It also found that younger the children were more likely to become victims of cyber bullying. Cyber bullying was seen to be more prevalent among young males compared to females.

## Mapping Exercise & Results

The aim of this work is to identify Anti-bullying programmes (including online) and supports available across Sligo and Leitrim. The target population included children and young people in schools, along with services who work with children and young people in Sligo and Leitrim. This research was carried out using a Survey Monkey questionnaire with a mix of 18 open-ended and closed ended questions. From using this online questionnaire, I received 44 responses, 19 from services and 25 from schools across Sligo and Leitrim.

### Respondents Included:

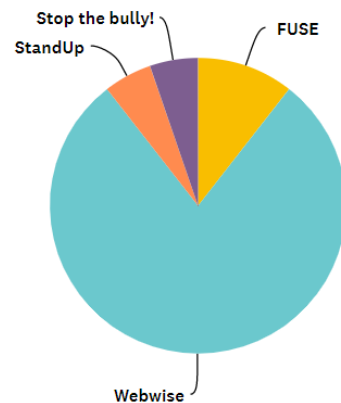
Schools	Services
Corran College Ballymote	Sligo/Leitrim Home Youth Liaison Service
St. Ronan's N.S. Sligo	Sligo Springboard Family Support Service
St Clare's Comprehensive Leitrim	An Garda Siochana
St Edward's NS Sligo	Donegal Youth Service
Ballinode Community College	West Sligo Family Resource Centre
Summerhill College Sligo	Youth Work Ireland - North Connaught
Fatima NS Leitrim	Foróige Sligo / Leitrim
Drimina NS	Diversity Sligo
Kilross NS	TESS
St.Joseph's National school	HSE Social Inclusion
Gaelscoil Chluainín	School Completion Programme Sligo/Leitrim
Corballa NS	Sligo Family Resource Centre
S.N. Réalt na Mara	Mohill FSC
St Brigid's NS, Drumcong	Leitrim Development Company
Gaelscoil Chnoc na Re	Sligo Community Training Centre

St Michaels	
Scoil Naomh Muire, Keash	
St Paul's NS	
Scoil Mhuire Naofa	

## Key Findings: Schools

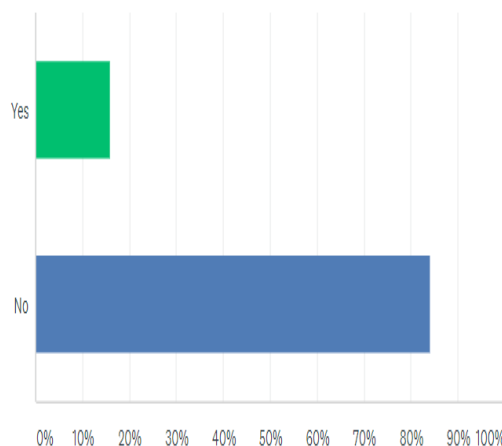
### Programmes offered to children and young people from schools.

- Stop the bully- 5.26%
- Stand Up- 5.26%
- FUSE- 10.53%
- Webwise- 78.95%
- Other-
  - ✓ Stay Safe
  - ✓ Lockers
  - ✓ Cool School



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### Quantity of online supports available to children and young people.



16 % of schools provided online supports to children and young people. With 84% of schools not providing online supports.

Some of the online supports offered included:

- Report bullying tab is on the school website.
- General wellbeing supports are available to access on our school website.
- Access to web wise resources

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### Information of online programmes/ services available

Schools were asked if they were aware of any additional online programmes or services. 84% of respondents stated they were not aware of any additional programmes or services available in the Sligo and Leitrim areas. With only 16% of respondents saying yes to being aware of other in person or online programmes or services in the Sligo and Leitrim. Some of these additional services/ programmes included Jigsaw, Turn to me, Webwise and Spunout.

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### Willingness to provide additional supports.

80% of respondents stated they would be willing to provide additional supports in their school, but with 16% of these stating only if the need arises. With only 12% stating that they



would not be willing to provide additional supports than what they already provide in their schools.

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## How schools support children and young people being bullied

### Pastoral Care

#### School's code behaviour & anti-bullying policy

Restorative practice with the children involved and teach the Stay Safe and Webwise programmes.

#### Adheres to the anti-bullying policy

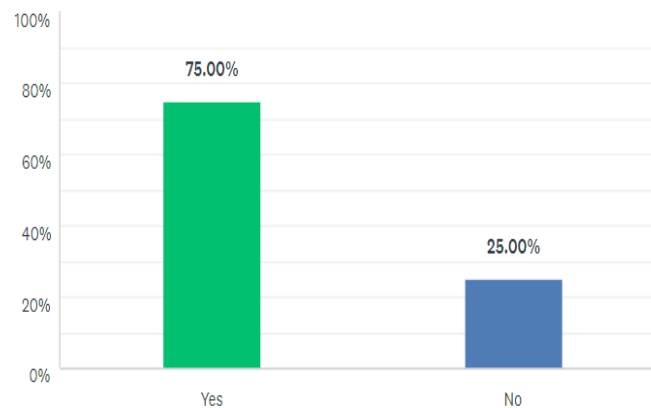
Monitor the situation constantly with child and parents.

Communicate with parents and children and take a pragmatic approach.

1:1 work with project workers (School Completion Programme)

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## Engagement of families and parents with schools and services

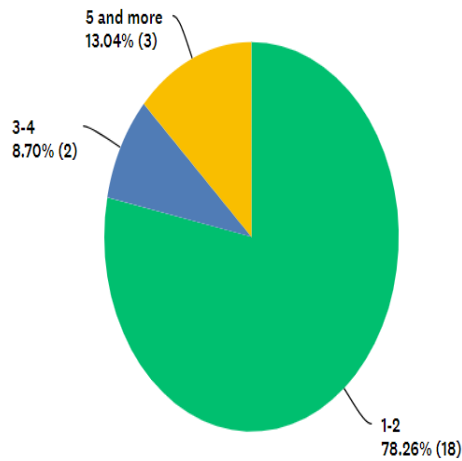


The graph above represents the levels of engagement of schools with the families and parents of the children who are involved in the anti-bullying programmes. It shows 75% of school do engage with the families and parents of the children and 25% do not engage with the families and parents of the children participating in these programmes.

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## Frequency of anti-bullying programmes in schools

Schools were asked how often they provide the anti-bullying programmes each year, the results can be seen in the pie chart below.



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### Gaps in programmes

The main gaps reported from schools in relation to the anti-bullying programmes in which they provide were as follows:

**More support around online bullying out of school needed.**

**Lots more needed in addition to Stay Safe and Webwise**

**Need for Gender Studies**

**Outside professionals would be welcomed**

**The bullies need help and support as much as the bullied.**

**Lack of home school community liaison**

**No gaps seen in programmes which was mentioned by a number of schools**

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## Barriers to participating in anti-bullying programmes

Schools reported that the main barriers for children and young people to participating in anti-bullying programmes were as follows:

**Don't want to be seen as a 'rat'**

**Poor mental health and as a result lack motivation.**

**Knowledge of the programmes and support to help them to participate.**

**Physically bringing children to programmes or helping them to log on if programmes are being delivered remotely.**

**Time, too much on the school curriculum. 'I think that online is a great way to proceed...one of the obvious outcomes of the pandemic'.**

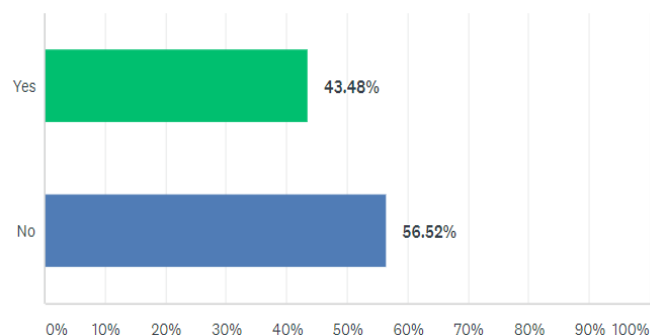
**Denial of problem at family level, pressure of too many services being involved with families in some cases where the parents find it hard to try and manage appointment etc**

**Fear of stigmatization**

**Transport to the venue.**

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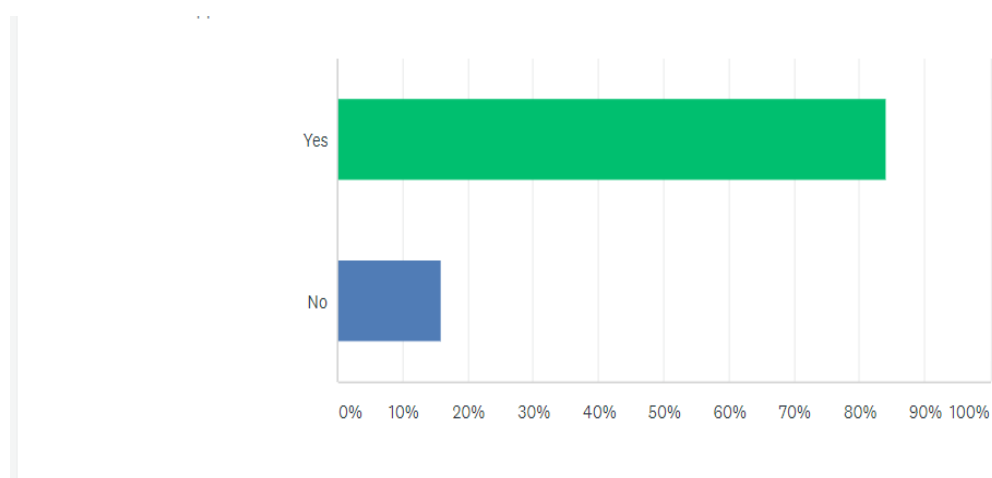
## Training and upskilling of staff.



Schools were asked if they provided any forms of training and upskilling to staff who support children and young people who are being bullied with 43.48% of respondents provide training or upskilling. The training provided included Department of Education & Skills training, Continuing Professional Development, FUSE (anti-bullying programme) as part of Croke Park hours (2021-2022), Refresher courses in Restorative Practice and also books purchased for teachers and classes. The remaining 56.52% not providing any forms of training or upskilling.

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### **Willingness to provide further training.**

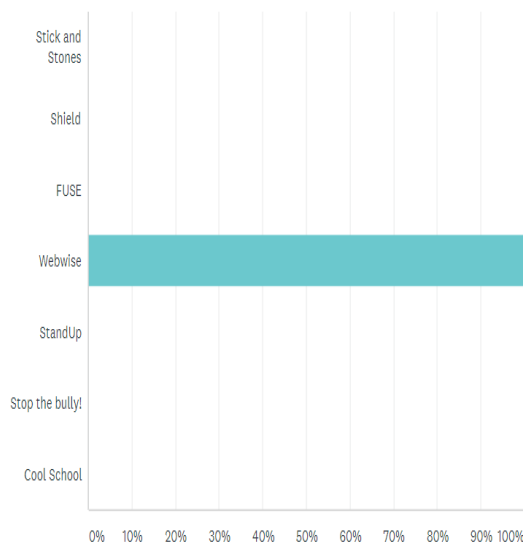


Schools were asked if they would be willing to further engage in training linked to supporting children and young people who have been bullied or who are being bullied. Results from this stated that 84% would be willing to engage in further training and 16% would not be willing to provide further training.

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## Key Findings: Services

### Programmes offered to children and young people from services.



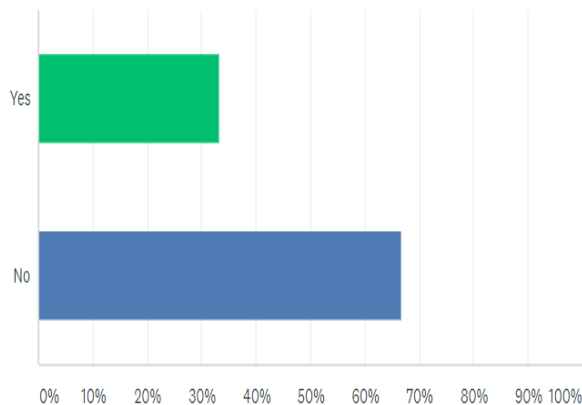
100% of school respondents used Webwise as an anti-bullying programme.

Others included:

- Respecting differences
- Garda Primary School Programme
- Let's Beat Bullying
- Parents plus working things out
- Stand Up
- Foroige against bullying
- Cyber Safety

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### Quantity of online supports available to children and young people



33.33% of services provided online supports to the children and young people with 66.67% not providing any online supports.

Some of the online supports offered included:

- One to one supports
- Family supports being provided online and over the phone
- Programmes delivered on social media
- Webinars

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### Information of online programmes/ services available

Services were asked if they were aware of any additional online programmes or services. 73.33% of respondents stated they were not aware of any additional programmes or services available in the Sligo and Leitrim areas. With only 26.67% of respondents saying yes to being aware of other in person or online programmes or services in the Sligo and Leitrim.

Some of these additional services/ programmes included CYPSC directory, Home Youth Liaison Service Support Programmes, Working Things Out, In-School support, Play therapy, Counselling, Brief intervention services, Gardai.

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### **Willingness to provide additional supports.**

63.15% of respondents stated they would be willing to provide additional supports in their service. With only 47.36% stating that they would not be willing to provide additional supports than what they already provide in their schools.

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### **How services support children and young people being bullied.**

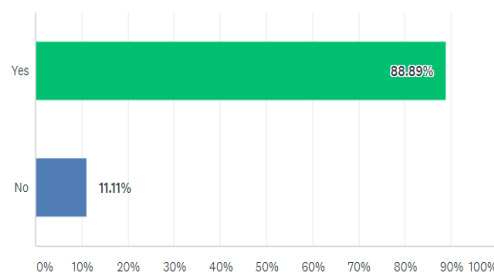
<b>Provide 1:1 support to the young person</b>
<b>Link with the school and advocate on behalf of the child</b>
<b>Family Support Services</b>
<b>Sign posting to programmes</b>
<b>Family support worker will meet with the family to develop a plan to respond to the family's needs</b>
<b>Counselling service</b>
<b>Conduct a Needs Assessment</b>
<b>Onward referral</b>

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### **Engagement of families and parents with schools and services**

Does your service engage with the families and parents of the children/ young people involved in these programmes/ supports?

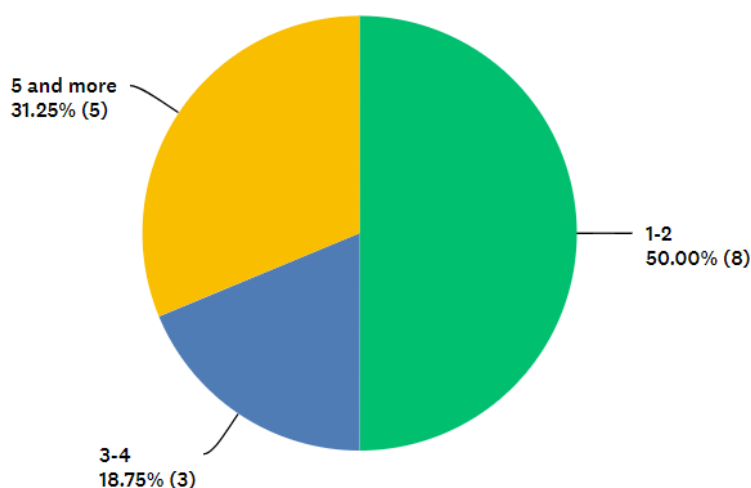
Answered: 18 Skipped: 1



The graph above represents the levels of engagement of services with the families and parents of the children who are involved in the anti-bullying programmes. It shows 88.89% of school do engage with the families and parents of the children and 11.11% do not engage with the families and parents of the children participating in these programmes.

### Frequency of anti-bullying programmes in schools

Services were asked how often they provide the anti-bullying programmes each year, the results can be seen in the pie chart below.



### Gaps in programmes

The main gaps reported from services in relation to the anti-bullying programmes in which they provide were as follows:

<b>Independent advocate for children</b>
<b>Follow on and lack of independent mediation between parties</b>
<b>Schools/ services could be more proactive in addressing bullying issues and in involving parents along with children</b>
<b>Schools/ services need more guidance on early interventions to prevent bullying</b>
<b>Need for consistent Programmes that allow children to receive the same message from schools &amp; services</b>
<b>Need a standardized approach for schools &amp; services to tackling bullying</b>

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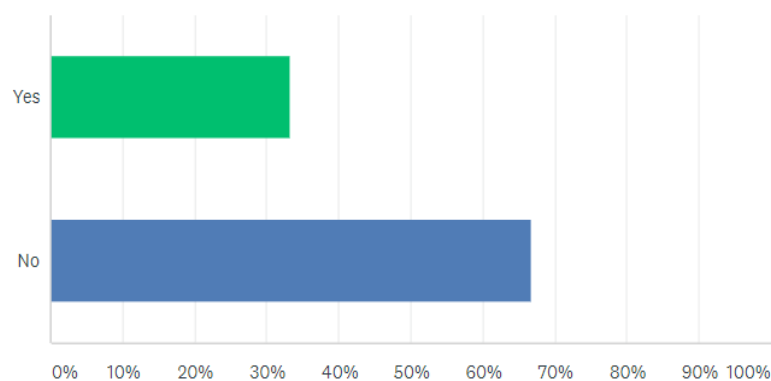
### **Barriers to participating in anti-bullying programmes**

Services reported that the main barriers for children and young people to participating in anti-bullying programmes were as follows:

<b>Non-availability of these programmes.</b>
<b>Peer pressure</b>
<b>Lack of awareness</b>
<b>Parental consent</b>
<b>Scared to reach out</b>
<b>Fear of taking part</b>
<b>Language barriers</b>
<b>Lack of transport</b>
<b>Stigma</b>

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### **Training and upskilling of staff.**



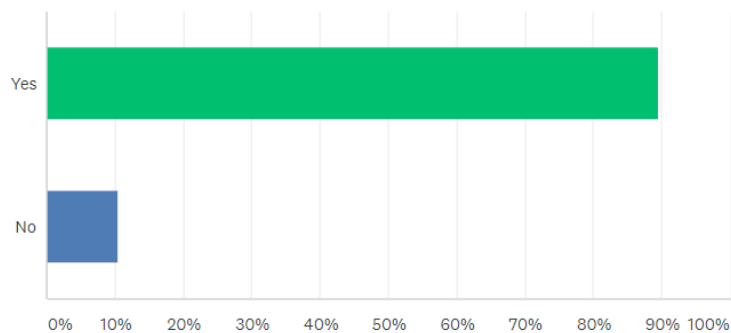


Schools were asked if they provided any forms of training and upskilling to staff who support children and young people who are being bullied with 33.33% of respondents provide training or upskilling. The training provided included training with the National Youth Council, Belongto (youth services) along with in house training provided by a number of organisations. The remaining 66.67% not providing any forms of training or upskilling.

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### **Willingness to provide further training.**

Services were asked if they would be willing to further engage in training linked to supporting children and young people who have been bullied or who are being bullied. Results from this stated that 89.47% would be willing to engage in further training and 10.53% would not be willing to provide further training.



## **Recommendations**

From carrying out this piece of research I have some recommendations which I believe may benefit the Safe & Protected from Harm working group in the future. These recommendations include:

- That schools and services would increase their knowledge of the online supports and programmes available to children and young people who are experiencing bullying.
- School and services need to engage more with family and parents in relation to bullying.
- Schools and services need to consider the gaps and barriers and how these can be overcome.
- There needs to be a more positive relationships between schools and services in relation to the information they are providing about anti-bullying programmes.
- The working group needs to work with schools and services to increase the numbers of schools and services providing online supports.
- Schools are willing to provide online supports particularly to parents in relation to bullying as bullying does not only affect the child but can have an impact on the family as a whole.

## **Conclusions**

Bullying is a substantial problem affecting children worldwide. My placement with Sligo Leitrim CYPSC has enabled me to highlight the need for services and schools to work together to develop a consistent message for children and young people and their parents in Sligo and Leitrim in relation to anti-bullying supports and programmes.

With the number of children and young people experiencing some form of bullying, especially with an increase in cyber bullying due to the current Covid - 19 restrictions, this issue needs to be given attention. There needs to be consideration of some online support services. This was highlighted in the mapping exercise. The lack of online services and programmes needs to be addressed.

I have really enjoyed completing this piece of work as part of my placement, as it has allowed me to develop my knowledge and awareness regarding the issue of bullying. It has also informed me of the bullying and anti-bullying services and programmes available to the children and young people across Sligo and Leitrim.

## **Appendix**

### **Link to Schools Survey**

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Z8Z68PN>

### **Link to Services Survey:**

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ZYDBT2W>

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