

Staying Safe

Consultation Response Form

The closing date for this consultation is: 31
October 2007

Your comments must reach us by that date.

department for
children, schools and families

THIS FORM IS NOT INTERACTIVE. If you wish to respond electronically please use the online or offline response facility available on the Department for Children, Schools and Families e-consultation website (<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations>).

The information you provide in your response will be subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations, which allow public access to information held by the Department. This does not necessarily mean that your response can be made available to the public as there are exemptions relating to information provided in confidence and information to which the Data Protection Act 1998 applies. You may request confidentiality by ticking the box provided, but you should note that neither this, nor an automatically-generated e-mail confidentiality statement, will necessarily exclude the public right of access.

Please tick if you want us to keep your response confidential.

Name **Colin Green on behalf of ADCS**
Organisation (if applicable) **Association of Directors of Children's Services**
Address: Ellen Wilkinson Building
University of Manchester
Oxford Road
Manchester. M13 9PL

If your enquiry is related to the policy content of the consultation you can contact the Staying Safe Consultation Team by e-mail: staying.safe@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk.

If you have a query relating to the consultation process you can contact the Consultation Unit on:

Telephone: 01928 794888

Fax: 01928 794 113

e-mail: consultation.unit@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk

Which of the following best describes you:

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Child (Under 13) | <input type="checkbox"/> Young Person (Under 18) | <input type="checkbox"/> Parent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Professional working with children and young people | <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer working with children and young people | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify) |

Please Specify:

ADCS is the national leadership organisation in England for directors of children's services appointed under the provisions of the *Children Act 2004* and for other children's services professional in leadership roles.

If you work with children or young people, which best describes the organisation you work in:

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local Authority | <input type="checkbox"/> School | <input type="checkbox"/> Further or Higher Education Institution |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Private Sector Organisation | <input type="checkbox"/> Voluntary and Community Sector Organisation | <input type="checkbox"/> Health Organisation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Justice Organisation | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify) | |

Please Specify:

General Questions

1 a) How safe do you think children are?

| | | |
|---|-------------------------------|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Very safe | <input type="checkbox"/> Safe | <input type="checkbox"/> Not very safe |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure | | |

Comments:

We would agree with the assessment in paragraph 2.2 that children today are safer in many ways than previously.

Nevertheless as children's overall safety improves we are more conscious of a range of old and new threats to their safety and security and of our obligation to reduce these threats to children's safety as much as we can.

1 b) How good are we at giving children and young people the opportunity to explore, understand risks for themselves and to learn the skills vital for their development?

Comments:

We could do significantly better in engaging children, young people and their families in a debate about understanding risks. We would agree children and young people need opportunities to learn to manage risks themselves.

2 If you are a parent, what concerns do you have about your children's safety and how do you address these?

Comments:

3 If you are a child or young person yourself, are the views of children and young people included here the same as yours and those of your friends?

Comments:

4 a) As a member of the public, do you feel a sense of responsibility for protecting children?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

Promoting the role of all adults in safeguarding children and young people whether in their work or in community lives would be one of the ways to make children and young people safer. It might also help promote a more positive view of children and young people.

4 b) How can we build this sense of responsibility in local communities?

Comments:

1. Promoting positive images and dialogue with and about children and young people.
2. Training in workplaces e.g. shop workers on how to help children and young people.
3. Create public spaces which are "owned" locally and promote public guardianship.

5 If you work with children and young people, do you know what your role is in keeping children safe?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

Director of Children's Services are very actively aware of their leadership role in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and their accountability for improving the wellbeing of all children in the local authority they are appointed to.
The DCSs accountabilities are clearly spelt out in legislation and guidance.
ADCS welcomes this clarity.

6 Have we got the right balance between keeping children safe and also allowing them the freedom to develop?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

The legislation and guidance strikes the right balance, however the public debate tends to swing between extremes. It is bringing balance to the debate on safety that is needed, not further development of the framework of legislation and guidance.

7 a) Are the roles and responsibilities set out in Chapter 2 correct?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

7 b) What should the role of central Government be, and what is the responsibility of local organisations and communities?

Comments:

Accurately and succinctly set out in the diagram on page 24.

8 How can local and central Government do more to protect all children by reaching out to minority communities and those speaking minority languages?

Comments:

By encouraging all statutory local partners to commit the necessary resources to LSCBs to enable them to work effectively with local communities. DCSF should encourage this at a national level through other government department including the Home Office and Department of Health.

Central Government can set the tone for the work but it can only be delivered locally, often very locally. Important to ensure consistency of message i.e. priority is safeguarding & for example in engaging supplementary schools in Moslem communities not tackling extremism.

9 Are the areas we have identified for new action right? What other areas could be considered and what more could we do?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

Stay focused on these areas, the development of good practice, developing understanding of parents, children, young people and those working with children, young people and families.

Do not pursue further legislation and statutory guidance. This is already very complex and there are risks of diminishing returns in further elaboration.

Chapter 3 – Helping all children and young people to stay safe

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

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

ADCS believes parents are receptive to such campaigns sensitively presented and locally tailored.

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

Comments:

Provision of well designed and located play space. Location to allow informal adult oversight especially important.

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

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

Scope for further development of the school role in helping children and young people manage risks and stay safe. However, needs to be integrated with the rest of the curriculum and not an add on.

13 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?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

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

Comments:

Wide awareness raising in media supported by brief tailored information to the settings professionals work in.

15 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?

Comments:

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

Comments:

1. Resourcing of LSCBs remains a significant issue. All agencies need to resource with the time of staff, expertise and financial resources.
2. Ensuring LSCBs are used as a main route for Government to distribute safeguarding messages.
3. National assistance in raising LSCB profile and understanding of their role.

Chapter 4 – Protecting vulnerable children and young people

17 How could training and development for social workers be improved?

Comments:

1. Promoting of value of social work
2. Raise bar for quality and standards required to obtain a social worker qualification
3. Clear career pathway for social workers built around newly qualified social worker status, Post Qualifying Child Care Award and Post Qualifying Advanced Awards.
4. Requirements for continuing professional development made more rigorous
5. Funding to enable 1 to 4 to happen in terms of training and to pay the higher salaries a more rigorous training should command.
6. The approach to raising the status and quality of the teaching profession is a good model.

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

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

However awards are marginal to overall profile of children's safety.

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

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

Not substantial or rigorous enough either in evaluation of what is good practice or in ensuring effective dissemination.

20 How can we tackle inequalities in prevention of accidents? What role could national or local organisations play?

Comments:

Potentially a role for LSCBs in running local campaigns.
Children's Centres and schools could play a more central role if this was placed more firmly on their agendas.

21 What problems do professional face in trying to address the needs of both the adults and children in the family?

Comments:

1. Training and professional culture and organisational arrangements have reduced professionals confidence in working with whole families. Focus for many is the child/young person.
2. Engaging families in change as a whole system is a very complex task - a core social work task. This task is why we need well trained and very capable social workers who can undertake the complex assessments, analysis and interventions families with complex and multiple problems face.

22 Do some parents need help to access support available to them?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

There is a great deal of evidence from SureStart and other projects that some of the more vulnerable parents need assertive support to enable them to access services.

23 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?

Comments:

LSCBs have a role in developing local protocols as a framework to guide work between children's and adults services. However, unless thresholds for adult services in health and social care can be lowered there will be many parents with very significant difficulties in terms of mental health, learning disabilities or substance misuse, or in combination, who will not be eligible for services adult agencies.

24 What is the best way to reach parents who might need help with problems that are affecting their children's welfare? Would national or local communications help?

Comments:

Best way is through local access in services parents and children already use e.g. Children's Centres, schools, youth services, Connexions.
Not sure national communication would help.

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

Comments:

Tackling bullying needs to be part of the work of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership as part of its work in promoting children's wellbeing.
This is part of the wider work to promote more positive relationships with and between children.

26 What role could LSCBs play in tackling gun and knife crime? Are there examples of good local or international practice which could be considered in more detail?

Comments:

A limited role. This is better tackled through Community Safety Partnerships with which LSCBs should have good links, including clarity about respective roles on public protection issues.

Chapter 5 – Responding when children and young people have been harmed

27 How can we make sure children have somewhere to turn to if they are being harmed?

Comments:

Providing a variety of routes e.g. help lines, schools, Children Centres, Connexions etc. all of whom create a tone and atmosphere that make it possible for children to turn to them. However main effort is raising public awareness so that adults provide such a person for the children and young people in their family and friendship circles.

28 a) 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?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

Need to demystify the process to give people permission to ask children obvious questions if they see a child in distress or have indications something is wrong.

28 b) What effect would this have on local services, such as children's social care and the police?

Comments:

Not sure necessarily a major impact as effective family intervention may help deal with the issue. Only more serious matters would be referred on to police or children's social care as now.

29 How can we protect children crossing our borders from harm? How can immigration officers work best with others in their local area?

Comments:

Good assessment and recording at point of entry is very important if we are to protect children travelling between countries.

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

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge individual responses unless you place an 'X' in the box below.

Please acknowledge this reply x

Here at the Department for Children, Schools and Families we carry out our research on many different topics and consultations. As your views are valuable to us, would it be alright if we were to contact you again from time to time either for research or to send through consultation documents?

Yes No

All UK national public consultations are required to conform to the following standards:

1. Consult widely throughout the process, allowing a minimum of 12 weeks for written consultation at least once during the development of the policy.
2. Be clear about what your proposals are, who may be affected, what questions are being asked and the timescale for responses.
3. Ensure that your consultation is clear, concise and widely accessible.
4. Give feedback regarding the responses received and how the consultation process influenced the policy.
5. Monitor your department's effectiveness at consultation, including through the use of a designated consultation co-ordinator.
6. Ensure your consultation follows better regulation best practice, including carrying out a Regulatory Impact Assessment if appropriate.

Further information on the Code of Practice can be accessed through the Cabinet Office Website: <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/regulation/consultation-guidance/content/introduction/index.asp>

Thank you for taking time to respond to this consultation.

Completed questionnaires and other responses should be sent to the address shown below by 31 October 2007

Send by post to:

Consultation Unit
Area 1A
Castle View House
East lane
Runcorn
Cheshire
CW8 4LZ

Send by e-mail to: staying.safe@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk.