Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the scoping session on bullying & harassment.

The Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) is Scotland’s largest and longest-established teaching union with over 55,000 members in all sectors of education. We have a very active member-led Equality Committee, with sub committees taking forward action on Gender Issues, Anti-Racist Issues, and the Impact of Poverty on Education. We also have a vibrant LGBT Network, and a growing national network of Equality Representatives.

**Our locus in this inquiry**

We have a keen interest in bullying and harassment as it affects children and impacts on their learner experience. Also, as a membership organisation representing teachers, we are concerned about teachers’ experiences of bullying, both as educators working to challenge it and support pupils, and as professionals at work who may be experiencing it themselves.

We note that the aim of the scoping session is to consider these 3 issues:
1. The nature and extent of prejudice and bullying in schools
2. How schools respond to bullying and how are they supported in that role
3. What needs to change to ensure schools can deal with cases of bullying and promote inclusivity in schools.

**Q1. Nature and extent of prejudice and bullying**

We define bullying in our Policy in Bullying and Harassment as "Persistent, offensive, abusive, intimidating, malicious, or insulting behaviour, abuse of power, or unfair penal sanctions which make the recipient feel upset, threatened, humiliated or vulnerable, which undermines their self-confidence and which may cause them to suffer stress."

Bullying among children and young people is still too prevalent in Scotland. We note that the 2014 respectme study of Bullying in Scotland, which gathered survey data from 7,839 children and young people aged 8-19, found that:

- 30% of children and young people had experienced bullying in the previous year, and “a number of children” (no. not specified) had more than one experience of bullying, with over 12,000 incidents described
- Only 10% of bullying was online only; 49% happened in person
- The vast majority of children who had experienced bullying knew the person bullying them (92%)
- The most effective anti-bullying initiatives are embedded within a positive ethos and culture and not focused on individual incidents
Teachers are providing support to a high number of children who are bullied.

Our own work confirms that some forms of prejudice-based bullying are particularly emergent at present. Bullying arising from misogyny, racism, Islamophobia and homophobia are issues of serious concern to the EIS.

**Misogynistic attitudes**

Our recent report on misogynistic attitudes among children and young people, “Get It Right For Girls” highlights various forms of gendered harassment which are now commonplace in schools e.g.

- Casual though often vindictive use of overtly sexualised and derogatory language - ‘slut’, ‘skank’ and ‘whore’ were widely used against girls or women staff
- Dismissive, contemptuous attitudes of some boys towards female pupils and staff, and towards their mothers; and mockery and derision when women and girls adopt non-stereotypical gender roles e.g. football fans
- Objectification of women and girls on the basis of their looks
- Joking about the sexual abuse of and physical violence against, women and girls, or framing conversations about the issue in such a way as to blame victims
- Overt sexual propositioning of girls and young women through to boys’ pushing, grabbing and groping of girls
- Sending/sharing through social media sexual images of women and girls either with or without consent, and use of social media to target sexual innuendo at girls and young women

Although the focus of this report was on children’s attitudes and behaviour regarding peers, our focus-group research indicated that there are significant issues regarding misogyny directed at teachers. One Secondary teacher told us, "A pupil in my class called me a ‘fat f***ing whore.” Another teacher had been called a ‘feminazi’ for raising concerns about misogyny.

**Racism and Islamophobia**

We are very concerned about the ‘Prevent’ duty contained in the 2015 Counter Terrorism and Security Act. (The duty for certain public bodies to have, in the exercise of their functions, “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.”) ‘Prevent’ has been widely criticised, not least for creating conditions in which racism and Islamophobia will be exacerbated. We are particularly concerned about the degree of scrutiny to which Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) learners and families may be subjected because of this legislation and its implementation.

We know that, for example, when a Glasgow school was recently informed about Prevent, a support staff member then said, "We will need to keep an eye on [Muslim pupil] now". There are other well reported incidents of race and faith-based discrimination. See e.g. the case studies in the “Preventing Education?” report.
A further concern is that the current political discourse around immigration is creating a climate which will exacerbate bullying and harassment of refugee & asylum seeking children, and children from visible/audible ethnic minorities, who are or are perceived to be refugees or migrants. We will soon publish materials for teachers on the ‘Myths of Immigration’ to assist them in challenging this harmful discourse. We note that hate crime in Scotland increased after the ‘Brexit’ vote; we fear that current narratives about ‘migrants’ in e.g. the tabloid media put certain children at greater risk of bullying and harassment.

**Homophobia, biphobia and transphobia**

We recently surveyed our members about their experiences of homophobia and transphobia in education and found that 42% of respondents had indirectly experienced homophobia or transphobia, as an employee, in an educational establishment. 17% had directly experienced this.

Of those who had *indirectly* experienced homophobia or transphobia:
- 84% had heard prejudicial language about staff or learners e.g. insults or abuse, from learners
- 29% had seen homophobic/transphobic graffiti in the establishment
- 30% had witnessed bullying of staff or learners based on sexual orientation or gender identity
- 24% had witnessed discrimination towards staff or learners based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

**Teachers’ experiences of bullying**

As a Trade Union, we believe that all employees have a legal right to work in an environment that is safe and to be protected from all forms of abuse, violence and harassment, and that among the array of pressures facing teachers and lecturers, none is so insidious or so sapping of self-esteem as the threat of violence, intimidation or harassment which many face daily.

Teachers are at risk of bullying and harassment from a wide range of sources: it can come from colleagues, management, students and pupils, members of the public or from parents. Multiple strategies therefore need to be put in place to prevent and challenge the harassment of teachers.

**Q2. How schools respond/how schools are supported**

Schools respond to bullying in a wide variety of ways, including but not limited to:
- developing and implementing establishment-level policies, created with involvement of pupils, staff and parents
- fostering of strong school ethos of tolerance and inclusion
- taking a curricular focus on bullying, for example within Personal and Social Education and the study of particular texts in English
- running themed weeks
- setting up buddy or peer mediation schemes
• enacting discipline policy where bullying behaviour is identified
• monitoring the number of bullying incidents
• deploying teachers on a voluntary basis and playground assistants and active breaks workers to supervise break and lunchtime activity
• engaging with parents on the issue
• providing additional support for children who have been bullied.

There is a wide range of policy to support this, including the GTCS standards for teachers, which directly address the themes of equality and social justice, in addition to the wellbeing of learners. Local authority employment policies on e.g. dignity at work would apply to teachers as employees experiencing bullying. Education Scotland also provides advice to schools on anti-bullying strategy as do third sector organisations.

It is important for teachers and lecturers to have opportunities to access quality professional learning on equality matters to enable them to respond effectively to prejudice-based bullying. The current austerity climate has led to budget cuts which has affected teachers’ access to CPD. The lack of budget for cover and the shortage of supply teachers also affects uptake of professional learning.

School are also supported by L.A. policies and resources but these are under resourced and are not consistent. For example, we know that some L.A.s do not have an active anti-racism strategy in place.

Q3. What needs to change

1. There is scope for more content on equalities in Initial Teacher Education, so that teachers are better enabled to challenge prejudice from the start of their careers; and for more ongoing, career long equalities-focused professional learning opportunities.
2. Teaching needs to be a more representative workforce. For example, BME people and people with disabilities are currently under-represented in the Scottish teaching workforce.
3. School budgets, particularly for professional learning, should be increased.
4. Any new initiatives to target bullying, including prejudice-based bullying, should be adequately resourced, and take account of the pressures on teacher workload.
5. Local Authorities should have anti-bullying policies and should ensure that these are being developed into establishment level polices which take account of the specific needs and circumstances of the school.
6. In light of ‘Prevent’, it will be important for schools to monitor the numbers of racist incidents in educational institutions and take action if a pattern of increased incidents is noted, and to pay extra attention to safeguarding Muslim pupils or students, or pupils or students who may be perceived or misrecognised as Muslim, through a whole-school approach.
7. We encourage EIS members to make use of equality resources and to encourage open discussion of issues around racism, Islamophobia, sexism and misogyny, and homophobia and transphobia.
8. Given that the most effective anti-bullying initiatives are embedded within a positive ethos and culture and not focused on individual incidents, we encourage whole-school approaches to creating a positive, inclusive ethos.

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ii http://issuu.com/respectme/docs/bullying_in_scotland_2014 - summary?e=0/12648674
v http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/police-scotland-report-increase-hate-8688744