ABA SEN/disability Programme

During its three years of operation, the Anti-Bullying Alliance SEN/Disability programme has developed and delivered a programme of training to 2,617 school practitioners, as well as 1,782 practitioners from across the children's workforce, and 714 parent carers of disabled children and young people and those with SEN.

The aim of the programme is to reduce the disproportionate amount that disabled children and those with SEN experience bullying in school. Disabled children and those with SEN are twice as likely to experience persistent bullying in school as their non-disabled peers[1].

ABA's SEN/disability programme has been borne out of the social model approach[2]. Time and again when raising bullying and disability with teachers we would find a barrier in teacher's attitude to bullying where they would focus on the victim's behaviour and impairment as a way of resolving bullying. We'd hear things such as 'they wouldn't bully them if only they'd make friends better' or 'if only they'd stop making that noise'. The victim has to change not the behaviour of those bullying him or the whole school. This sent a message to the person who has been bullied that the bullying was their fault and irrelevant what someone thinks about the morality of that, fundamentally, the bullying would not stop.

ABA believes that using a combined social model approach - where the school focuses on stopping the bullying behaviour and changing the behaviour of the person who has experienced the bullying - and a whole school approach to tackling bullying, where the school reviews and learns from incidents, is the most effective method to reducing bullying in schools. We believe that this approach will be of benefit to all young people particularly the groups most vulnerable to experience bullying, 'bully-victims' and the 6% of all pupils who experience bullying every day.

In 2015/2016, its third year, ABA established and supported 12 Champion areas across England, through which it successfully delivered its training programme to target numbers of practitioners. Delivery of the programme through Champions appears to have been very successful, utilising established communication streams to recruit workforce and school participants, and leading to benefits for local authorities themselves as well as for training recipients.

Training and resources have been well received by delegates, and seen as practical and illustrating learning points very effectively

The Wellbeing survey, a survey of all children in schools we worked in, was administered in schools at two time points before and after interventions. Despite the short timeframe this indicated that disabled children and those with SEN felt safer at school and enjoyed school more at the time of the second data collection.

- *"We have used every bit of the delegate pack, it's had a huge impact. It's the first thing I go to to find a resource, it's pitched perfectly. I was able to take these materials and deliver directly to staff, I've barely tweaked them, when I have it's only because of time limits"* (Primary school)

- *"Amazing, beyond outstanding…got so much more out of it than thought"* (Secondary school)

- *"It's the best training I've been on for a long time, because I've seen a direct result in my school"* (Infant school)

You can find out more about the programme via www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/send-programme and you can access our online training via www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/onlinetraining

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[1] Institute of Education, 2014

[2] The social model of disability says that disability is caused by the way society is organised, rather than by a person's impairment or difference. It looks at ways of removing barriers that restrict life choices for disabled people. When barriers are removed, disabled people can be independent and equal in society, with choice and control over their own lives.