NIABF Strategic Plan 2017-2020

In order to work towards our Vision and Mission we have adopted the following outcomes and these will drive our work over the next 3 years.

**Outcomes**

1. **Schools and other settings have effective anti-bullying policies which include appropriate prevention and response strategies to address bullying behaviour**
   - Working with the Department of Education to develop guidance regarding the Addressing Bullying in Schools (Northern Ireland) Act 2016 and thereafter disseminating the guidance
   - Working with our Education Authority partners to ensure that the Right to the views and contribution of children and young people is actively sought, respected and taken into account
   - Ensuring that all available support and training is displayed on our website
   - Promoting engagement with schools and other organisations who have not previously benefited from support
   - Delivering workshops in schools and other organisations with and for children and young people

2. **Parents, carers, teachers and other practitioners working with children and young people have the skills and knowledge to address bullying behaviour and its impact effectively**
   - Developing a systematic approach to delivering anti-bullying messages to children and young people
   - Delivering workshops in schools and other organisations with and for children and young people
   - Building an evidence base of the nature and incidence of bullying behaviour in schools and other settings as well as good practice regarding what works and experiences of children, young people and parents/carers
   - Developing an evaluation matrix to report on the impact of the forum's work

3. **Children and young people are empowered to become valued participants in anti-bullying policy and practice**
   - Developing anti-bullying messages to children and young people
   - Developing workshops in schools and other organisations with and for children and young people

4. **The Northern Ireland Anti–Bullying forum is well regarded and practice informed by evidence of need**
   - Building an evidence base of the nature and incidence of bullying behaviour in schools and other settings as well as good practice regarding what works and experiences of children, young people and parents/carers
   - Developing an evaluation matrix to report on the impact of the forum’s work
   - Reporting on impact and annual performance
   - Working with other Anti-Bullying organisations to ensure added value and sharing of resources
   - Reviewing membership on a regular basis to ensure it reflects children, young people and parents/carers
   - Reaching out to parents and children and young people to promote awareness
   - Exploring how to engage more directly with children and young people
   - Working with our Education Authority partners to ensure that the Right to the views and contribution of children and young people is actively sought, respected and taken into account
   - Ensuring that all available support and training is displayed on our website

**Who we are:**

The Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum was established in 2004 and brings together 25 statutory and non-statutory organisations from across Northern Ireland to reduce bullying and create a safer environment for children and young people.

**Our Context:**

NIABF has been the lead driver in anti-bullying policy and practice across Northern Ireland over the past 13 years. The forum brings together a collection of regional statutory and charitable organisations working towards a society free from bullying. Our members are committed to and experienced in partnership working and putting the best interest of children first.

We lobbied for many years for the introduction of anti-bullying legislation in Northern Ireland and lobbied for the Adoption of the Addressing Bullying in Schools Northern Ireland Act received Royal Assent. This local legislation marks a sea change for how we tackle bullying in the school environment.

The Act will be implemented with greater effect when accompanying statutory guidance is both accessible and practical and speaks directly to pupils, parents, teachers and boards of governors in schools across Northern Ireland.

We are committed to using our extensive expertise, and welcome the opportunity to influence the Department of Education’s work on the development of the guidance to accompany the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act Northern Ireland Act 2016 through the Steering Group and Sub-Committee. We have always been committed to ensuring the effectiveness of both the Act and the accompanying statutory guidance to help our audience better understand the rights of children and young and the responsibilities of adults to protect and fulfil these rights.

We are committed to evidence based practice. The most recent piece of research on the nature and extent of pupil bullying in schools in Northern Ireland was conducted in 2011. This is now outdated and does not reflect the experiences of our young people. We look forward to the contribution which the implementation of the Addressing Bullying in Schools (Northern Ireland) Act and the accompanying statutory guidance can make to the local evidence picture. However, contemporary research on the prevalence of bullying behaviour and the impact it has on pupils and their parents is also needed.

Recognising that the lived experience of children and young people has changed over the past decade, we liaise with other leading anti-bullying organisations at a national level to share information of developments and to coordinate approaches to anti-bullying policy and practice.

Bullying behaviour in online environments is acknowledged as an increasing problem for children and young people across the UK and Ireland.

Our Mission Statement:

To work towards a safer society where children and young people can live free and feel safe from bullying.

Our Vision is to contribute towards a society where:

- Bullying is culturally unacceptable and where every child and young person is safe and feels safe from bullying
- Every child and young person’s diversity is celebrated
- Prevention, response and restorative anti-bullying efforts is developed
- The views and contribution of children and young people are actively sought, respected and taken into account
- Everyone understands that they have a role to play in preventing, tackling and ending bullying.

Values:

The following values will inspire all of NIABF’s work:

- We believe that bullying is in any form is wrong and should not be tolerated, and that any environment that encourages bullying or shows how it is acceptable is unacceptable.
- We should respect and celebrate diversity in our children, young people and society in general and our work should be inclusive of all.
- Children and young people should be empowered to actively participate in decisions that affect them.
- The needs of children and young people are best served by organisations working together, understanding each other strengths and avoiding duplication of effort.