Appendix 1

Please provide evidence in the form of a written response addressing the matters detailed below:

History of the organisation

1. Please describe the events that led to the establishment of respectme in 2007.

In 2005 the Scottish Executive issued a specification for an enhanced anti-bullying service to lead the national agenda for development of Scottish anti-bullying services to children. No decision was made to appoint a service in 2005, and they repeated the commissioning process for this service in 2006.

Following a robust procurement process, Scottish Action for Mental Health (SAMH) and LGBT Youth Scotland were successful in securing the contract and this was formally announced by the Scottish Executive in October 2006.

Thereafter, the staff team were recruited, infrastructure determined and the service was formally launched in March 2007.

2. Please describe the work of the organisation from its inception to the present day, and how it has evolved overtime.

Since 2007, our role has been to work with all adults who have a role to play in the lives of children and young people to give them the practical skills and confidence to respond to children who are bullied and those who bully others. We are remitted to work beyond schools and education settings to include, for example, engagement across youth work, clubs and organisations, residential settings and with parents and carers.

These principles remain unchanged, however over the intervening period there has been significant change in the world at large, and a greater understanding developed of the structural and societal context against which bullying behaviour plays out. This global shift is reflected in the Scottish Government's guidance 'Respect for All: The National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People' (2024). Additionally, since 2007 digital safety, online bullying, a myriad of social media platforms and now the influence of AI technology has altered the landscape of bullying, providing new methods and 'geographies' where peer-to-peer harm is prevalent.

As a capacity-building service with a focus on children's rights, we provide **policy support** to local authorities, schools, youth clubs and national bodies working with children and young people. We are relentlessly innovative, capturing and measuring the impact of anti-bullying policy and practice through our unique, rigorous, certificated **'respect*me* reward'** validated self-assessment programme which 36 schools have now completed. Our Anti-Bullying Learning Academy offers access to **professional learning** via a range of free eLearning modules augmented by live, interactive sessions throughout the year. This work is of particular interest to organisations looking to support consistent, high-quality workforce development opportunities. We are also a **campaigning** service, leading with a unique theme for Scotland in the UK-wide

Anti-Bullying Week initiative every November, responsive to the prevailing social climate and issues of greatest concern to our audiences.

Management and organisational oversight

1. **The organisation's website states that respectme is wholly funded by the Scottish Government and jointly managed by Scottish Action for Mental Health (SAMH) and LGBT Youth Scotland. How do these funding and management arrangements influence the organisation's priorities and approaches?**

SAMH and LGBT Youth Scotland formed a Management Partnership to prepare the initial tender submission for the service in 2006, and the partnership is contractual for the duration of the programme. The Partnership meet formally every 6 weeks and the annual Business Plan and priorities for the operating year are set out in advance by the Service Director and then ratified by both the Management Partnership and Scottish Government funding directorate. Given the business areas of each Managing Partner, priorities can be reflective of the mental health impacts of bullying on children and young people as well as being representative of all equality, diversity and inclusion strands.

2. **How many staff members currently work at respectme? Describe their roles, as well as professional qualifications and experience.**

There are currently four members of staff and they are as below:

- **Director**: Experienced senior leader providing strategic leadership and operational management to the respect*me* service which embodies and promotes the vision of the service through the development and delivery of an annual work plan. Creates innovative and dynamic opportunities for respect*me* to maximise its impact across Scotland. Establishes partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders and provides regular briefings and reports to the Managing Partners and Funders regarding all aspects of the service's work, including financial and budgetary information. Delivers visible and impactful leadership in promoting respect*me* externally as a credible authority on anti-bullying through media work, membership of national working, steering and advisory groups, when invited by the Scottish Parliament to appear at Committees and prepare responses to consultations and relevant conferences. Ensures the longer-term aspirations of the service focus on the development of positive peer relationships and behaviour.
  Background in Economic Development/Global Marketing, moving into anti-bullying/safeguarding role in 2008. Qualified psychotherapist, PgDip in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and Groupwork (2018).

- **Learning and Engagement Manager**: Lead professional on the development, delivery and promotion of an engaging programme of anti-bullying training, resource development and information dissemination to key audiences in Scotland. Delivery of high quality and accessible training and learning opportunities to ensure that a diverse range of needs are met to enable adults to develop confidence and tools to prevent and respond to bullying by creating inclusive environments where bullying is less likely to thrive. The role includes refreshing existing resources, project managing the delivery of a national, digital Anti-Bullying Resource Hub, and developing an ongoing creative,

resourceful approach to the promotion of respectme products and services. The postholder has a BA in Communication Mass Media.

- **Policy and Improvement Officer:** This role applies evidence and experience from stakeholders to advance policy and practice and further progress the anti-bullying agenda in Scotland. This involves working alongside key national and local partners, advising and supporting them to trial and embed their approaches to addressing bullying, and developing new resources for a range of audiences. The role requires skills in developing positive and constructive relationships with stakeholders and the courage and confidence to take on a 'critical friend' role, where a respectful balance of support and challenge is an essential characteristic given that we are neither inspectors or enforcers with any statutory role.

  The key role is in the roll out of the respect*me* reward programme, which drives policy development, influences improvement and acknowledges successful anti-bullying policy and practice across education and youth settings in Scotland. Through application of improvement methodology, self-assessment frameworks and behaviour change approaches, the post holder works alongside key stakeholders to benchmark progress, validate outcomes and suggest recommendations for quality improvement. Data gathered through the process provides evidence of the impact of anti-bullying work by measuring across several indicators, most notably how safe children report feeling in their setting. The role aims to promote respect*me* as an innovative and credible authority on anti-bullying in a wide range of external engagements and relationships. The postholder has a MA in International Relations and is currently undertaking a MSc. Enhanced Practice in Education.

- **Business Support Officer:** This role is responsible for ensuring that respect*me* has efficient and effective, high-quality systems, processes and procedures which support programme-wide delivery, monitoring, reporting and evaluation and provides executive support where required. The role includes planning, monitoring and reporting against progress on respect*me*'s annual work plan and the production of regular reports. The postholder is responsible for planning, organising and administration of events across the programme and provides a professional first point of contact to a diverse range of stakeholders by responding to a range and high volume of enquiries appropriately and sensitively. The production of statistical and narrative reports to internal and external stakeholders as well as the collation, analysis and reporting on programme outcomes are central to the role.
  Postholder has worked with respect*me* since November 2007 and their professional qualifications include a ScotBec Certificate in Secretarial Studies.

National guidance

1. **Describe how Respect for All: The National Approach to Anti-bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People has evolved from its introduction in 2010 to its most recent update in 2024.**

Each iteration of this document has improved and enhanced the one preceding it. Most notably, the 2024 guidance is recognised and embedded across several other policy areas of Scottish Government related to Relationships and Behaviour in Schools, as well as being cited in national child protection guidance, hate crime strategy/community cohesion, violence against women and girls, transgender guidance, anti-racism and mobile phone guidance. The 2024 update was authored by a wide-ranging group of national stakeholders drawn for the Scottish

Advisory Group on Behaviour in Schools (SAGRABIS) which is jointly chaired by COSLA and the Cabinet Secretary for Education et al.

2. Prior to the publication of Respect for All, what measures were in place in Scotland to prevent and respond to bullying between children?

An Advisory Panel (SABS: Scottish Anti-Bullying Steering Group) was established in 2007- 2010 to provide advice, guidance to the respect*me* Service Director and Managing Partnership. This group brought together key representatives from Scottish Government, Local Government, voluntary organisations, professionals and regulatory and training bodies involved in work with children and young people.

In 2009 the Scottish Government issued a consultation paper on introducing a National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People, which was developed by the Scottish Anti-Bullying Steering Group (SABS).

The work of respect*me* and its proposed relational/developmental approach to anti-bullying work, as opposed to traditional punitive measures which were ineffective in achieving behavioural change, informed and influenced the resulting document published in 2010.

In parallel, around 2010-12 Curriculum for Excellence and GIRFEC frameworks were launched presenting a holistic model to look broadly at all aspects of children's wellbeing. These acknowledged that behaviour was not an isolated factor, but most likely influenced by other wellbeing indicators and structural issues like housing, poverty etc.

The first wave of the Behaviour in Scottish Schools Research (BISSR) longitudinal study was published in 2006, and we imagine that the findings would have contributed to the topic, although we cannot be certain on the historical sequencing or main influences prior to then.

State of knowledge

1. What information is currently collected on the nature and extent of bullying between children in Scotland?

It is set out within 'Respect for All' that Local Authorities in Scotland are expected to record every allegation and incident of bullying. These should be reported using the 'Bullying & Equalities' module within SEEMIS, which is the universal digital recording platform used in public schools to capture management information across a variety of headings. The principle of local recording, local monitoring and local solutions is well-established, with local authority education/quality improvement officers aggregating local data for review. There is no national aggregation of data and no requirement to report outside of the LA. HMIe will examine individual school data during their inspections. Local authority data is not routinely shared with respect*me*, although we do enquire about what the statistics indicate in terms of volume, trends and types of bullying.

Outside of LAs, the most recent data sweep was in the 2021/22 Health & Wellbeing Census conducted by the Scottish Government, where 16 LAs took part, reaching 134,000 P5-S6 aged young people (58% of target population). 31% of respondents reported they had been bullied, which is reflective of the UNESCO global average figure of 30% of young lives blighted.

Historically, respect*me* conducted research to obtain a picture of how children and young people were experiencing bullying in Scotland in 2014. This research was designed to:

- Identify the types of bullying that is experienced by children and young people.
- Give a clear picture of where bullying happens and where online and offline/face to face experiences differ or crossover.
- Identify from children and young people's own experience what they feel works and what is less helpful.
- Identify where children and young people go online and what technology they use to get there.

An online questionnaire was designed and tested and distributed to all Schools in Scotland in May and June 2014. In total, there were 8310 responses of which 7839 were useable. Responses came from all over Scotland with all 32 Local Authorities represented. Respondents were aged between 8 and 19 years old. This was an open survey and the findings presented only represented the views of the children who took part. Main findings were:

- 30% of children experienced bullying between August 2013 and June 2014. Of the 30%, 49% experienced bullying in person, 41% bothe in person and online and 10% online only.

- 92% of children knew the person bullying them, both online and offline, making the argument for anonymity a myth.

- Behaviours such as name calling, hurtful comments and spreading rumours happen both face-to-face AND online.

- Children use a range of strategies to cope with bullying, some more successful than others. Almost half (48%) tell their parents, with friends and teachers also providing support.

- Most successful anti-bullying interventions are embedded within a positive ethos and culture, and don't just focus on managing through individual incidents.

- Children's use of mobile technology is woven into their everyday lives.

- The majority of children (81%) consider their online friends to be all or mostly the same as their friends in real life.

- Google, Snapchat, Instagram and Facebook are the most popular apps. (**Note:** TikTok and WhatsApp were not available then)

2. **What does this information indicate about the nature and extent of bullying between children in Scotland?**

a. Are there particular findings relating to children in residential care, including foster care and boarding schools?

The information indicates that there remains a body of work necessary to maintain the profile and impact of anti-bullying work across Scotland. The nature of the problem is complex and relational, and the extent has widened through social media platforms.

respect*me* is aware of the research evidence that speaks to the care-experienced sector and the specific nuances of bullying for the children affected. Notably ABA literature search bullying and Looked After Children_0.pdf and The Silent Crisis: Bullying Within the Foster Care System - Chrysalis

respect*me* has worked historically with the foster care association and a range of children's residential care settings.

Practice

1.What support and resources do respectme provide to guide the development of anti-bullying approaches and support the implementation of the national guidance?

The respect*me* website is the national hub for Policy Support and guidance, learning resources, publications, videos and podcasts for professionals, parents and carers, and children and young people. We also provide an extensive library of self-directed eLearning modules and run live webinars on relevant topics throughout the year for professionals, and parents and carers.

respect*me* can support local authorities, children's services and youth/sports organisations to develop their anti-bullying policy for onward cascade to schools, services and clubs as appropriate. Following the launch of the refreshed guidance in 2024, we developed a Model Policy template which reflects the minimum recommended requirements for a policy statement as set out in 'Respect for All', which is available to download for all Scotland's schools and children's services.

Each year, during Anti-Bullying Week, we lead a themed campaign for Scotland and produce tailored learning resources, templates and activities for children and young people. More recently, we have introduced live lessons, mainly for primary-aged pupils, to attend with their teachers, engage directly with the campaign and take part in anti-bullying activities both online and offline.

Whilst we do not operate a helpline or provide personalised case support for individuals or families, we offer practical guidance and information to professionals, parents, and carers by email and telephone. This service is widely used, and we receive a substantial number of enquiries each year from those seeking advice and support on bullying related matters.

2.How is the effectiveness of these supports and resources monitored? Please provide supporting evidence.

We monitor our support and resources using an Evaluation survey on competition of our eLearning modules, attendance at webinars and Anti-Bullying Week activities. These evaluations are monitored and reviewed regularly. The Evaluation monitors the undernoted:

- Participant satisfaction and learning outcomes.

- Understand what participants found most valuable.
- Identify areas for improvement.
- Gather evidence of impact for reporting to funders and stakeholders.
- Inform future content, resources, and campaign development.

Website analytics are compiled monthly to track volume and provide management information on resource download figures, popular resources and total website visitors both local and international.

3.How does respectme engage with school and organisations, including local authorities, in relation to the creation and implementation of anti-bullying approaches? Is this engagement proactive, reactive or both?

respect*me* provides a holistic service where typically our entry-point is when a LA, school or organisation is reviewing its anti-bullying policy. We can advise on content, share the Model Policy template and offer to be a 'critical friend' to review their final draft.

respect*me* then supports implementation and consistent workforce development through our Professional Learning offer and resources to download for our audiences, ie Professionals/Practitioner, Parents/Carers and Children & Young People.

respect*me* gathers good practice through the 'reward' programme and shares this on an interactive map and in a published report to encourage national learning and replication. The website hosts videos, worksheets and a wealth of material across specific topic areas such as Online Bullying and Prejudice-Based bullying, as well as trauma-informed conversation guides for adults to use with children who have been bullied or are bullying others.

Engagement is a mix of proactive and reactive as sometimes parents, schools and settings contact us when they have an emerging problem/crisis.

4.Please describe any direct engagement respectme has had with residential care settings, including secure care. Detail the support provided and the outcome of these activities.

Our host organisation, Scottish Action for Mental Health (SAMH) was the victim of a major criminal cyber-security incident in 2022, causing a major data loss for respect*me*. In the absence of data, from memory we can recall direct engagement with t Seafield (Quarriers) and Balikinrain children's care settings, as well as a cluster of three care homes managed by West Dunbartonshire Council. We supported these settings with staff training, policy support and resources to facilitate conversations with young people. Seafield featured as a case study in our external evaluation which will form part of our submission. The work at Seafield is especially memorable because of the approach taken to engage the entire staff community from catering teams right through to senior leaders as well as, most importantly, the children themselves. The boys in the care setting were educated at Seafield and some were fully residential, whilst others returned to family homes each evening. Seafield outcomes were outstandingly successful, with the young boys fully engaged in the anti-bullying work and able to have the language and tools to challenge and report bullying openly, confident that the staff were trained and equipped to respond to it promptly and consistently.

Pre-Covid, our training programme was mainly face-to-face delivery. We ran around 40 training events per year and they were a mixture of planned calendar events or in response to Organisational enquiries. Staff from residential care settings have attended these events and we have delivered "in-house" training direct to staff from Spark of Genius and Balinkinrain.

respect*me* had an Interim Director during 2020/21, who had a professional background in Social Work with a specific expertise in Significant Case Reviews, some of which had related to suicides where bullying had been cited as a factor. We are aware that the Interim Director held meetings with both Social Work Scotland and the Care Inspectorate to promote respectme's offer of professional learning, etc, however we have no documented outcomes from these discussions.

5.Please, provide any data respectme gathered over the years on:
a. the types and numbers of schools and organisations respectme engaged with directly

From 2007 to date, **26,667** adult delegates have engaged directly with respect*me* through a range of learning and development opportunities, including direct classroom style learning, eLearning modules, events and conferences.

Over the past five years, since we began formally recording participation, **27,788** children and young people have engaged with respect*me's campaigns*.

b. the types and numbers of schools and organisations that have downloaded respectme resources, and how these resources are being utilised;

Since the introduction of our new website in 2024, **27.3k** resources have been downloaded. Unfortunately, we're unable to provide comparable data for earlier years. Our previous systems did allow us to extract this level of information, but historical data was lost because of a cybersecurity incident in 2022.

The types of organisations downloading our resources is wide-ranging across a range of settings supporting children and young people including, **primary** and **secondary** schools, **youth clubs**, and **social care** settings.

c. feedback on, and evaluation of, the services offered.

In 2012, the Managing Partnership commissioned an evaluation of respect*me's* first three years in operation, collating views from partners in Local Authorities, schools and other organisations of the impact and effectiveness of respectme in raising awareness and building partner's capacity to deal with bullying behaviour. The evaluation generated substantial evidence that we had laid strong foundations in all of our key objectives through our direct work in campaigning, training, policy development and publications.

2021 – Jenny Reekie – Evaluation of Reward pilot
2024 – Jenny Reekie – Evaluation of Reward

Engagement with children

1.How does respectme engage with children in relation to anti-bullying work?

Predominantly, respect*me* is a service for adults who have a role to play in the lives of children and young people. While our primary focus is equipping adults with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to address bullying, we do engage directly with children and young people to seek their views to inform and bring authentic youth voices to our campaigns, resources and eLearning modules.

For example, for the 2025 campaign, *"Bullying: The Power of One"*, young people played an important role in shaping the campaign film through sharing their experiences and perspectives. The Director alongside the Learning and Engagement Manager worked closely with the young people throughout the process to ensure their voices were heard, valued, and meaningfully reflected in the campaign materials and messaging.

Previously in year 2022/23 our campaign work shifted with the introduction of a two-year campaign model, instead of yearly. This involved recruiting a Participation Officer and establishing our first ever Youth Action Group (YAG), with members supported throughout by the Participation Officer. The Participation Officer was line managed and supported by the Director. The Youth Action Group played a central role in shaping the campaign, and the creativity, insight and commitment demonstrated by the young people was exceptional.

2.How is this engagement managed and monitored?

The Director, alongside the Learning and Development Manager, work closely with young people throughout our campaign development process to ensure their voices are heard, valued, and meaningfully reflected in the campaign materials and messaging.

The post of Participation Officer previously created to oversee and support the work of the Youth Action Group, was funded on a two-year fixed-term contract, however, due to funding constraints, we were unfortunately unable to sustain the post beyond this period.

3.What feedback, if any, have children provided regarding what they learned through their engagement with respectme?

Example:

"I've absolutely loved working with respectme and the Youth Action Group. I had a really negative experience in school because of bullying and being part of the YAG has allowed me to use my personal experiences to make a positive nationwide campaign that will help people all over the country. I have made so many friends and have felt supported the whole way through our journey. Working with respectme has given me experiences I don't think I would have had anywhere else, such as being interviewed on TV and speaking in parliament with Shirley Anne Somerville. We as young people are helping make the changes that young people need, not what adults think young people need."

Responses

1.What are adults working with children expected to do when they become aware that a child in their care may have been bullied by another child?

All responses to alleged bullying incidents should be child-centred and reviewed individually, rooted firmly in the values of rights, fairness, respect, equality and inclusion. Consideration should be given to how to support the child or young person experiencing the bullying behaviour, and also the person displaying this behaviour, to prevent similar behaviour happening in the future. A school's relationships and behaviour policy is core to communicating the school's expectations of behaviour and how it will manage any situations which arise. It is likely that a range of different practices may be adopted before finding one that is an effective response, as what works for one person may not work for another. Schools and organisations should be clear on how they will communicate their response to all relevant parties (children and young people involved and their parent(s)). There may be instances where privacy concerns relating to the other child or young person involved means information cannot be shared with the person affected. This lack of information may make the child or young person affected, or their family members, feel that nothing has been done in response to the incident. In such instances the need to respect privacy should be explained and reassurance given that corrective action has been taken. *****A full section on expectations around 'response' is included in 'Respect for All' pages 30-37.**

a. Does the response differ depending on the nature or severity of the behaviour, the setting, or the characteristics, and needs of the children involved?

In Scotland the national approach is designed as a standard reponse to the majority of young people. However, Additional Support Needs are acknowledged in the context of anti-bullying work. The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 provides a comprehensive legal framework for the provision of additional, targeted support for children and young people who face barriers to learning. Social emotional or behavioural needs which can arise from bullying, may be considered an additional support need if the bullying is having an impact on the child's or young person's learning. This includes children and young people who are demonstrating bullying behaviour as well as those who may be on the receiving end of it. Children with additional support needs may experience bullying differently and may be targeted because of their additional support needs. They may face additional barriers to understanding or communicating about bullying they are experiencing. Practitioners should fully take into account the additional support needs, including how support needs intersect, and the principles of inclusion in order to deliver sensitive and holistic measures that address bullying. This includes consideration of how children and young people's views can be included in decisions about what will happen next, and how planned outcomes and actions are communicated clearly to children and young people in a way that works for them following an incident.

b. What factors determine whether incidents should be reported to the police and how is the threshold for police involvement assessment?

There is no legal (only an accepted) definition of bullying in Scotland and bullying is not, in itself, considered a crime. Understanding the individual facts and circumstances present in any situation is important to distinguish between bullying and potentially criminal offences.

Potential criminal offences may include: theft, assault, breach of the peace, etc and some online behaviour may be illegal. Further guidance on supporting awareness of safe and secure use of mobile technology is contained within the Scottish Government's Guidance on mobile phones in Scotland's schools.

It is the decision of the individual School/Organisation to determine if the threshold for criminality has been reached and adults should seek immediate support from Police Scotland if they have reason to believe that a crime may have occurred or that a child or young person has been seriously harmed. Schools/organisations should follow national child protection procedures in these cases and should work closely with their education authority and colleagues in core agencies (Social Work, Health and Police Scotland) to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

Further improvements

1. **Are there particular interventions, programmes, or approaches that have been shown to be effective in preventing bullying between children and promoting their safety and wellbeing?**

respect*me*'s online self-assessment toolkit guides participants from schools/organisations through a five stage evaluation process towards gaining a "**respect*me* reward**". The reward recognises the serious thought that goes into successful anti-bullying policy and practice, and the intentional efforts needed to ensure stakeholders have consistent and positive experiences in their setting. The reward also acknowledges the energy that a whole-school approach to anti-bullying can generate, and the real difference it can make to the lives of children and young people across Scotland. Participants are asked to evidence their practice across Prevention, Response and Inclusion. This data is correlated with live surveys sent to pupils, parents and staff. respectme requires a 70-805 response rate from the young people and 'reward' applicants may only proceed if a minimum of 70% of the children/young people report feeling safe in their setting. This is reflective of the reality that 30% of children are bullied, however we need to be confident that the substantive majority are not and feel safe due to the anti-bullying measures being taken in the school/setting. No participant has ever returned a sub-70% result, and because schools/settings self-select to take part in the 'reward' it is fair to assume that they are confident that their anti-bullying work is of a high quality and can withstand the rigorous scrutiny required to validate their work.

2. **Are there particular challenges associated with preventing online bullying? If so, what are these challenges?**

Bullying in general thrives in the darkness, through secrecy and often the shame associated with reporting it. Online bullying adds another layer to that aspect, with situations playing out on platforms largely hidden to adults who could be helpful in intervening. Key challenges lie with young people who have not yet developed the critical thinking skills, relationship management and social skills in real-life settings, who are then expected to be able to navigate themselves safely through online and somehow know how to stay resilient and discern harmful actors and content in a highly sophisticated digital landscape.

3. **How can children in care be supported to keep safe and to develop healthy, respectful relationships with peers, both within care settings and in the wider community, including online?**

The most successful anti-bullying interventions are embedded within a positive climate, ethos and culture that clearly articulates and embeds inclusion, diversity and human rights. By creating inclusive, safe and consistent environments, bullying can be openly acknowledged, candidly discussed and universally challenged as a form of unacceptable behaviour. Organisational cultures that promote respect, recognise, celebrate and normalise difference, highlight the importance of equalities, social justice and rights, and encourage positive relationships serve as both protective and preventative interventions in anti bullying work. RSHP education is intended to help children and young people build positive relationships as they grow older and presents facts in an objective, balanced and sensitive manner within the framework of curricular values and an awareness of the law. School staff can embed education on healthy relationships and respect using a range of resources and programmes including the Compassionate and Connected Classroom and Cool in School resources, for example

4. **In respectme' s view what further steps, reforms, or improvements are needed to strengthen protection for children, and in particular children in the care system, from bullying by other children? INQ.Section 21 Notices.01547**

respectme believes that consistent and fair application of policy that translates into daily practice is central to the care and protection of all children. As part of workforce development for the care system, as well as in education settings. we would suggest that anti-bullying training should be considered as mandatory CPD for all staff. This would enable practitioners to have a clear understanding of what bullying is, the signs to look out for, how to support young people and respond well to get the bullying to stop. respectme would also like to see significant reform in the priority given to anti-bullying policy across Scotland's local authorities. Since the publication of the updated guidance in 2024, our understanding is that only around 1/3rd of LAs have updated their policy position to reflect the national guidance. This, in our view, creates and constitutes an avoidable risk to children's safeguarding and wellbeing and compromises the duty of care set out in legislation.

5. **Are there gaps and potential improvements in relation to**:

    a. policy, guidance, regulation training and resources;

In relation to Policy, as noted above, Local Authority Leadership in this area is variable. Free training is readily available online or in person through our service offer and our suite of resources has been expanded to include specific information on hot topics, eg mental health & bullying, AI, Online, Trauma, Early Years, etc

    b. identification, reporting, and prevention of bullying; and support for children affected by bullying.

Local level recording at school with aggregation at Local Authority level remains inconsistent. Children and young people have asked for clear, safe and simple pathways to report bullying and we have seen some good practice in this area, but not universally applied. Respect for All provides detailed guidance across all aspects of anti-bullying, however its implementation is not tracked by Scottish Government or COSLA as it is non-statutory guidance, expected rather than enforced.