

STAKEHOLDER COMMENT FORM

Stakeholder Comments

Please use this form to submit comments or suggestions.

1. Please put each new comment in a new row.
2. Please do not paste other tables into this table, as your comments could get lost - type directly into this table.
3. **Please always refer to section numbers (and not page numbers.)** Insert the **section number** and paragraph (within each section) in the first column (see examples).
4. If your comment relates to the document as a whole, please put **'general'** in this column. (See examples).

To be considered your completed form MUST be returned by 28 February 2008.

Name:	Stephen Shellard
Organisation:	Dumfries and Galloway More Choices More Chances Partnership
6.4 and 9.5	Comments I notice a couple of references in the document to the importance of schools as a context where we should be concerned about the context for mental health and well being. I would wish to add both a concern and an opportunity to this discussion. The concern is that school exclusions are rising across Scotland and even if this were not the case, stand at a level which is a concern even in Dumfries and Galloway where figures are certainly not at the highest levels. Without the need to research the background to this we can be sure that school exclusion represents in many cases a disengagement from the school curriculum and a disaffection to the point where unmanageable or unacceptable behaviour has resulted. Young people are resilient and in most case instinctively seek engagement which promotes their own well being. For many however, compulsory schooling, particularly at the secondary level, presents a well being challenge. Too many pupils fail to find interest or purpose in their lessons with the natural consequence that they seek diversionary interests which often challenge the smooth running of the class. School exclusions evidence the more extreme examples of this diversionary activity; in many cases the excluded young people may be the product of a chaotic home life; however there is a great deal of effort devoted to behaviour

	<p>management in schools which is testimony to levels of disaffection which cannot always be explained by problems outwith school, and which though containable should nevertheless be of concern.</p> <p>Such disaffection has relevance to the on-going mental health and well being of young people.</p> <p>There is almost certainly a social class aspect to school disengagement, with young people who see themselves as “university material” applying themselves for the most part positively, while those whose aspiration is to leave at age 16, value school more for its social nexus than for its educational offer.</p> <p>Even where young people are positively engaged with the curriculum, there may be reason to be concerned for their mental health and well being. To what extent are young people driven by pressures to succeed in the future without a proper regard for an enjoyment of the present? Such pressures may come from parents, from teachers and from the young person themselves.</p> <p>In raising these issues, I would wish to strike a positive note by drawing attention to the opportunity presented by the <i>Curriculum for Excellence</i> which aspires to broaden the appeal of schooling and in so doing to address many of the problems I have identified. http://www.curriculumforexcellencescotland.gov.uk/</p> <p><i>“The purpose of the (Curriculum for Excellence) is to improve the learning, attainment and achievement of children and young people in Scotland. It is also about ensuring that pupils achieve on a broad front, not just in terms of examinations. It is important to ensure that children and young people are acquiring the full range of skills and abilities relevant to growing, living and working in the contemporary world. Curriculum for Excellence aims to ensure that they will enjoy greater choice and opportunity to help realise their individual talents.”</i></p> <p>If properly implemented, the <i>Curriculum for Excellence</i> will make an important contribution to establish a foundation of well being and mental health in young people. It is an initiative which challenges the methods of the traditional school and seeks to engage all young people actively and spontaneously in the curriculum.</p> <p>The progress of this initiative should I think therefore be of interest to those who wish to promote a positive culture for well being and mental health.</p>

Please return to: Nicola Radley, Area 3ER, Mental Health Division, St Andrews House, Regent Road, Edinburgh, EH1 3DGB
 Email: nicola.radley@scotland.gsi.gov.uk