



Office of the  
Deputy Prime Minister

Creating sustainable communities

# *Risk Watch: Findings from a pilot study in the UK*



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September 2004

East House Research

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister: London

The views expressed in this report are those of the author, not necessarily those of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (nor do they reflect Government policy).

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# 1. Introduction

The Fire and Rescue Service in recent years has begun to look beyond its traditional fire suppression role to making a wider contribution to the safety of the community. Various reports have drawn attention to the need to focus attention on community fire safety as a means to preventing fire (Audit Commission, 1995; Community Fire Safety Task Force, 1997; HMFSI, 2000). Recent developments signal a renewed emphasis on fire prevention. The Independent Review of the Fire Service (2002) re-emphasised the importance of community fire safety as a key element in the Government's modernisation agenda:

*'The aim must be for the Fire Service to move from a predominant culture of responding to fires to one of preventing their occurrence. Over time, the need for intervention should be seen as a failure...'*

The subsequent White Paper *Our Fire and Rescue Service* (2003) states: 'Prevention is better than cure'. It identifies community fire safety as one of three main strands to the Government's fire prevention strategy.

One of the key components in the move to a prevention culture is improving the delivery of fire safety education, particularly for children. On average, around 50 children under the age of 11 are killed in fires in the UK every year and a further 1,634 are injured<sup>1</sup>. Against this background, Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service and the Highland Council in Scotland, with the support of the National Community Fire Safety Centre, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) and the Fire Service Research and Training Trust, implemented a pilot of a generic safety education programme. The programme, known as *Risk Watch*<sup>2</sup>, was adapted and used under licence from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) in the US. The Fire and Rescue Service already undertake a number of initiatives with young people (see HMFSI Joint Thematic Review *The Fire and Rescue Service – Working with Young People in the Community*). *Risk Watch*'s generic approach to safety education would enable the Fire and Rescue Service and other organisations to play a more consistent and active role in community safety.

This report presents the findings from a short term, small-scale evaluation of the *Risk Watch* pilot. The aim of the evaluation was to determine the feasibility of a wider rollout of the programme. The report sets out the background to *Risk Watch* and its implementation, and summarises the evaluation process and findings. A larger pilot of *Risk Watch* is recommended. The report concludes with a number of specific recommendations, which are designed to inform such a pilot.

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1 Source: ODPM Fire Statistics, UK, based on fires attended by fire brigades. Figures quoted are based on a five-year average (i.e. 1998 to 2002 inclusive).

2 *Risk Watch* is a registered trademark of National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) in the US.

## 2. Key Findings

- Risk Watch has the potential to make an important contribution to community safety education through involving children and their families
- Risk Watch has the potential to promote inter-agency collaboration
- Risk Watch has the potential to allow many safety agencies to fulfil a community safety or other educational remit
- Taking part in Risk Watch was reported to have been associated with an increase in pupils' application of safety knowledge and improved attitudes towards their own safety and that of others
- Further piloting of Risk Watch is recommended to capitalise on the potential of the programme
- A larger number of schools and Local Authorities should be involved in this next pilot, resulting in a wider cross section of schools and pupils
- New evaluation procedures should be developed, including the generation of improved standardised materials and practices
- Content of the Risk Watch package should be reviewed

## 3. Background

Risk Watch is a school-based safety education programme that links teachers with community safety experts and parents. It was originally developed by the NFPA for use across North America and caters for children aged three to 14. Teachers deliver the Risk Watch package in a classroom setting. Eight topics are covered: water safety; motor vehicle safety; bike and pedestrian safety; fire and burn prevention; choking suffocation and strangulation prevention; poisoning prevention; falls prevention and firearms injury prevention. These areas correspond to the major causes of accidental injury in children in the US.

The original package is presented in five progressive age related stages (known as modules) and was designed so that injury prevention could be taught as a stand-alone unit or integrated into core curriculum subjects. Teachers are advised that as they are not safety experts, they should enlist help from the appropriate community safety 'advocates', who can assist in delivery of particular lessons. The programme itself can be delivered in one of three ways:

- A 9-Hour Intensive Programme – this involves teachers taking one hour each week, over a period of eight weeks, to present lesson card information for one risk area per week, followed up in Week 9 by one activity from 'Risk Watch in Action'<sup>3</sup>.
- 20-Hour Comprehensive Programme – this can run throughout the school year and involves covering one risk area for one to two hours per month, culminating with activities selected from the 'Risk Watch in Action' section.
- A 'Variable Programme' – this allows a student centred approach to be adopted, combining student learning from the 'Risk Watch in Action' section with teacher input based on Risk Watch content information.

In addition, resource boxes that contain materials for supporting classroom teaching of safety topics are also supplied. Each topic has its own resource box. For example, the fire and burn prevention resource box might contain a smoke alarm, telephone, oven gloves, flammable materials, match boxes, a range of relevant safety booklets, safety posters and information on the local Ambulance Service.

The management of Risk Watch is based on the concept of a Coalition. In North America, where the programme was first developed, a coalition of local safety advocates, (e.g. public educators from the fire department, public health department, police department and others who work collaboratively to implement Risk Watch locally) introduce Risk Watch to teachers and schools. Once the programme is used in the classroom, personnel from these departments actively support Risk Watch lessons through classroom visits and presentations.

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3 'Risk Watch in Action' is a series of complementary extension activities. It was part of the original North American package.

## 4. The Present Study

With the agreement of the NFPA in the US, the Risk Watch package was adapted for use in Scotland and England. In this form, it was delivered to just over one thousand children in seven primary schools (two in Nottinghamshire and five in the Highlands and Islands) during the Autumn/Winter term of 2003 and the Spring term of 2004. The evaluation was conducted in parallel with the delivery of the programme.

Teachers were asked to use the specially adapted Risk Watch package over a school term and to invite local representatives of the safety agencies to visit pilot schools to make safety inputs, as required, to the pupils. This programme followed the 9-hour 'Intensive Programme' described above. Support was provided to teachers through Safety Agency and/or Coalition members. The composition of the Coalition differed between the two pilot areas. The Nottinghamshire Coalition comprised only representatives of agencies involved in delivering or actively supporting safety education with 'hands-on' involvement. Highland Council's Coalition reflected a wide grouping of bodies, who formed a sub group of Highland Council's 'Wellbeing Alliance'<sup>4</sup>. Table 1 shows which agencies were involved in the pilot Coalition and the Risk Watch areas for which they were responsible.

**Table 1: The Coalition Members and their Input**

Risk Watch area	Support agency	Basis of input
Motor vehicle safety	Road Safety agencies (e.g. Local Authority or Police Road Safety Units)	Risk Watch fulfils a small part of Road Safety Education remit
Bike and pedestrian safety		
Fire and burn prevention	Fire and Rescue Service	Risk Watch will facilitate Fire and Rescue Service's work in schools
Choking, suffocation and strangulation prevention	Health agencies <sup>5</sup>	Risk Watch work can be subsumed under "Healthy Schools" umbrella
Poisoning prevention		
Falls prevention		
Firearms injury prevention	Police	Risk Watch links to educational remit of police
Water safety	British Waterways; Maritime and Coastguard Agency <sup>6</sup>	Education is a small part of these agencies' remit: Risk Watch has stimulated and increased interest in pilot schools.

<sup>4</sup> The 'Wellbeing Alliance' was a community planning partnership of the Highland Council, NHS Highland, Communities Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage, Northern Constabulary, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Scottish Council for Development and Industry and representatives from the Voluntary Sector.

<sup>5</sup> Individual representatives varied between areas and included School Nurses, Community Paediatric Assistants/Nurses, Doctors, Health Visitors, Accident and Emergency staff and Health Care Assistants.

<sup>6</sup> British Waterways was the agency involved with water education in Nottinghamshire (inland waterways), whereas the Maritime and Coastguard Agency was involved with water safety education in the Highland and Islands.

In addition, Nottinghamshire had appointed a Schools' Co-ordinator, whose role was to facilitate the pilot in a range of ways, including liaison between schools and safety agency members, and supporting teachers who were using the Risk Watch package.

The aim of the evaluation of the Risk Watch pilot was to determine the feasibility of a wider rollout of the package. Four objectives informed this aim:

1. To identify elements relevant to successful implementation of schemes such as Risk Watch.
2. To identify any increases in children's knowledge of and attitudes towards safety that might be attributed to Risk Watch.
3. To explore the relative merits of Risk Watch in terms of its usability, usefulness, relevance and other features.
4. To conduct an assessment of the role of the Risk Watch Coalition in promoting Risk Watch.

In order to meet these objectives, information was collected from a range of sources using various methods.

Focus group meetings were held with at least one group of pupils in each of the seven pilot schools. Twelve focus groups were held involving 87 pupils in all. Each age group was represented in the final sample of groups. In addition, most pupils taking part in the evaluation were tested, using the same test sheets at the start and the end of the Risk Watch programme, in an effort to ascertain whether taking part in Risk Watch had had any effect on their knowledge of safety issues<sup>7</sup>. Pilot schools were advised that pupils should be tested before starting the Risk Watch programme (pre tests), and re-tested once the programme had been completed (post tests). Schools were also asked to invite parents of pupils involved in Risk Watch to the school to meet with a researcher and feed back their own views on Risk Watch. One of the schools was unable to do this, but researchers met with parents in the six other schools.

Interviews were held with at least two representatives of each agency involved in Risk Watch. Twenty-one Coalition members in total were interviewed, either face-to-face or by telephone.

Each of the seven pilot schools nominated one teacher who fed back colleagues' views of the Risk Watch programme, based on a set of open-ended questions devised and piloted by the researchers. In addition, telephone interviews were also carried out with ten Education Advisers (or equivalent posts) and with three members of the Schools Inspectorate (one in England, one in Wales, and one in Scotland). While the latter group had no direct role in the Risk Watch pilot, they would be involved in decision-making or 'gate keeping' as to whether or not Risk Watch had a place in schools. Also, an interview was held with the Section Head of an Initial Teacher Training Institute and with the Education Officer of the Scottish Road Safety Campaign, which is a part of the Scottish Executive.

Outcome measurement in terms of injury reduction was not feasible as this was a short term and small-scale pilot (it lasted no more than ten weeks and involved only seven schools) and longitudinal research methods (the most appropriate to measure injury reduction) would not be possible here. A literature review provided a wider framework in which to set the findings of the research.

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<sup>7</sup> 981 pupils completed both pre and post-test papers. The discrepancy between the number of pupils taking part in the scheme and numbers tested being attributed to pupil absence, or incomplete papers.

## 5. Main Findings

The main findings draw from the experiences of:

- Pupils and parents
- Coalition members
- Education professionals

These experiences are explored below.

### 5.1 Pupils' and parents' experiences

Pupils who had taken part in Risk Watch gave every sign of having enjoyed the programme and of having learned from it. Many of the pupils identified the input of 'Experts' (i.e. Coalition members) as a particularly positive aspect of the programme:

*"It was much better when we have people in because teachers don't know as much as the experts"*

*"The visitors [i.e. Coalition members] were brilliant because you could say I knew that or I didn't know that"*

*"I really liked it when we had visitors [i.e. Coalition members], it was great fun"*

Part of the philosophy of Risk Watch is to involve parents and/or carers in safety education, thus helping educate the wider community. Many of the children in the present study reported taking ideas and information home with them:

*"I had looked at bottles under the sink and asked Mum what they were for and we found some poisons"*

*"We made a fire safety plan for our house"*

*"I told my dad to wear his seat belt"*

*"I told my mum to check our smoke alarm"*

Gielen et al (1996) found that when children carry safety messages home to their parents, parents tend to respond to these. Similarly, Risk Watch parents verified acting on safety information brought home by children. Many parents reported that they would have covered safety topics with their own children as these arose, at whatever stage the children happened to be, but some felt that there was a structure provided by the Risk Watch programme. While Risk Watch had reportedly helped most parents consolidate what they would normally have done, some of the information brought home was new to parents:

*“We did get some new information – specifically the fire exit plan and smoke alarms and ‘Stop, Drop and Roll’”<sup>8</sup>*

Even if the parents were already aware of the safety issues raised by their children, they saw a difference in their children’s approach to safety issues. One parent suggested that *“My child seems to have a lot more awareness and sense [as a result of the programme] and tells me when there are problems”* and other parents agreed with this.

Parents were mostly very positive about Risk Watch. All parents considered that safety education had a place in the school curriculum, but one emphasised that it is also very much the responsibility of the parents who *“can’t leave everything to the school”*.

Risk Watch draws on children’s own experiences and environments, by contextualising safety education in the familiar (home and school) environments. Previous research (Green and Hart, 1998; Harden et al, 2000) suggests that the most effective safety interventions are those that draw on children’s own competencies and knowledge, and that allow the children to engage in their own risk assessments. Many pupils indicated that taking part in Risk Watch had empowered them and given them a feeling of being able to help should an emergency arise.

*“It [i.e. Risk Watch] means that I know that I wouldn’t be expected to do more than I can but could always go and find an adult to help. After all, we are just children”*

*“It gives ideas on how to help by telling the Police and Fire and Ambulance”*

*“It lets us know more about danger and how to avoid it”*

*“It lets us know how to help others”*

*“It has made me feel I could help people and maybe save a life”*

There was also some evidence of transferability and of risk assessment taking place amongst the older children who had participated:

*“I’ve stopped playing ball games in the street”*

*“The lesson from Risk Watch that has had the greatest impact not only for me but also for my family is accidents in the home. I learned that the place that we think is safe could be so dangerous and that more accidents occur here than anywhere else. As we were learning of the risk in the home, I thought these accidents couldn’t happen in my house and that is where I was wrong”*

Interwest Applied Research (2001) found that older children may be resistant to learning about safety, but Pringle (2000) suggests that their attitudes may change when they see this knowledge as a tool for teaching younger children. In the present study, older pupils reported that they were using their new knowledge to help keep younger children safe:

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<sup>8</sup> Stop Drop and Roll involves recommended action in case of fire on a person’s clothing. It involves stopping, falling to the ground and rolling self round in an attempt to extinguish flames.

*“I can help with my little sister and stop her doing dangerous things like chewing paper or swallowing beads”*

*“I told my little sister not to sit in the front of the car”*

*“Talking to younger children made it easier to learn and taught the younger children to live a safer life”*

Pre and post-tests were carried out on pupils involved in the pilot, but a number of issues concerning the sample and lack of standardisation in administering the tests means that there is very low confidence in the results. Variation was found, for example, between schools in terms of testing practice, timetabling and time lapsed between completion of the programme and pupils taking the post-tests. In addition, there was no correlation that could be made between a strong performance in the test and a demonstration of corresponding ‘Correct’ behaviours when risk was present. However, where pre and post-testing was executed rigorously, the statistical findings were indicative of a promising effect of the Risk Watch programme on children’s performance in tests.

Nevertheless, it is suggested that other means of monitoring children’s performance be considered. The Oxford Evaluation Team (2003) and Frederick et al (2000) recommended that children should be assessed on increase in safety knowledge and changes in attitude and/or behaviours through the use of mixed media, interactive assessment. It is suggested that, in any future attempts to quantify the effect of Risk Watch on pupils’ knowledge, the standard Risk Watch tests should be replaced by assessments that draw on a range of evidence and that might also monitor pupils’ behaviour and attitudes.

In addition, while the testing of individual pupils might inform a pilot of a safety initiative such as Risk Watch, this may not provide the key to a long-term assessment of the success of such a programme. A departure from traditional techniques is recommended when evaluating the overall success of initiatives such as Risk Watch. Millward et al (2003) suggested that the nature of the evidence that would prove success may not be easily identified, collected, nor available in the short term, being more amenable to a long term study and using a range of evidence.

## 5.2 Coalition working

The agencies involved in supporting Risk Watch are Road Safety agencies, the Fire and Rescue Service, Primary Care Health bodies, the Police, British Waterways, and the Maritime and Coastguard agency. Coalition members were enthusiastic about Risk Watch. For example, one Coalition interviewee noted:

*“I am very enthusiastic about Risk Watch and I have heard other agencies comment that it takes their efforts out of the random unprogrammed presentation into a structured presentation which matches the needs of any particular group of children to the experience and expertise available [locally]”*

The different agencies involved in supporting Risk Watch had different remits, and accordingly had different capacities to support this type of work in terms of resources (staff and time) and expertise. This would have an effect on the ability of the different agencies to become involved with Risk Watch. For example, involvement in Risk Watch

allows the Police and the Fire and Rescue Service to support a community safety role, which is part of their remit. At the other end of the spectrum, the Water agencies, which have a limited remit, would be challenged to meet all potential requests for help and input that could be generated by schools' involvement in Risk Watch. The Health personnel involved with delivering Risk Watch would be able to do so through National Healthy Schools Standard (NHSS) programmes, where these exist<sup>9</sup>. The NHSS is jointly funded by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the Department of Health (DoH) and hosted by the Health Development Agency (HDA). The overall aim is to help schools become healthy and effective providing an environment that is conducive to learning and that encourages pupils to achieve. Guidance has been provided to education and health partnerships in the form of Standards for developing local healthy schools programmes.

One interviewee, working in a rural area where it would be difficult to release personnel to make an educational input to schools, suggested a role of 'validation' by safety agency members. These people would visit schools where Risk Watch had already been delivered and would speak with the children to confirm (or validate) the safety input that had been received. One agency member might be able to do this for other agencies as well as his or her own. Risk Watch could, in this setting, promote and enhance inter-agency collaboration.

Different agencies already had different levels of involvement in working with schools and educating pupils in aspects of safety. Road Safety Education is already further developed than any of the other areas covered by Risk Watch and the relevant agencies have a greater number of dedicated personnel to help support work in schools. Road Safety was the only agency that indicated there might be substantial duplication between Risk Watch and existing provision and that, as it stands, the Road Safety element of Risk Watch conflicts with current thinking and resource development in Road Safety Education. The Scottish Road Safety Campaign (the SRSC), a branch of the Scottish Executive, had developed road safety resources in line with the Scottish curriculum. The view of the SRSC was that the adoption of the Road Safety elements of Risk Watch into the Scottish curriculum would be a confusing and retrograde step for teachers and road safety professionals. This was because Risk Watch was seen not to link with the curriculum nor tie in with Road Safety priorities in Scotland.

Agencies such as the Police and Fire and Rescue Services would welcome the opportunity to make an input to schools. It was felt that the Risk Watch package would give such agencies an opportunity to make an input where staffing permitted or, at the very least, to have a presence in the safety curriculum of schools.

Findings from the present study pointed to the importance of a clear means of liaison between schools and Coalition members. Many Coalition members reported feeling unsure as to what their role was, and as to how they should link with schools involved in the Risk Watch programme. Rather than waiting to be contacted by the schools, as they had been told to do, many would have preferred to initiate contact. They would then have liked information on what they would be expected to do in the schools, with which stage of pupils and the level of pupils' knowledge. Standardised procedures would have been welcomed by some of the Coalition interviewees and it was suggested that a Co-ordinator would have been valuable, both to support the schools and to liaise with agency members.

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9 Further information at: <http://www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk/PDF/Brochurenew.pdf>

Two papers support the need for Coalition members to be well informed. Thurston et al (1999) suggested that when a group such as a Coalition is used in a project such as Risk Watch, all Coalition members should be aware of their own role, at all stages of the process, and of their individual and collective responsibilities. This links with NFPA documentation on the training and information requirements of Coalition members<sup>10</sup>. A Co-ordinator would provide the focus for training, information and liaison work between schools and agencies.

### 5.3 Educational considerations

A number of resources exist for teaching specific safety topics, such as road safety and fire safety. Risk Watch offers a means of tackling a range of safety topics using a generic approach and acting as a foundation for further safety work to be undertaken in specific areas. Indeed, a literature review that covered, *inter alia*, school-based injury prevention programmes, gives weight to the claim of the NFPA, who developed Risk Watch, that the package is the *first comprehensive injury prevention program available for use in schools*.

There are a number of strategic documents that could endorse the Risk Watch approach and support the inclusion of the programme into the school curriculum. For example, in December 1999, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) developed a new *General Teaching Requirement for Health and Safety*<sup>11</sup>. This statutory statement recommends that pupils be taught to recognise hazards, assess risks and take steps to control the risks for themselves and others. In 2001, DfES published its *Guidance for Schools on Safety Education*. The guidance suggests that effective safety education should include a range of contexts appropriate to the age and developmental stage of the pupils. Following research conducted by Graham (1999), the Scottish Road Safety Campaign is currently producing policy documents and liaising with Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS), the body responsible for issuing curricular guidance to schools in Scotland, to optimise safety teaching. Also, many links exist between the delivery of Risk Watch and the requirements of the National Healthy School Standard (NHSS) referred to earlier in this report (see Section 5.2). Participating in Risk Watch would enable schools to meet some of the criteria for being accredited as a Healthy School. Risk Watch provides a possible context for working within these government guidelines and towards government targets such as those found within the NHSS.

Research in the field of experiential learning also support a more integrated approach to safety and risk education. The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) recently published its findings from an evaluation of LASER (Learning About Safety by Experiencing Risk) schemes. LASER schemes provide opportunities for children to learn about safety and the prevention of accidents in realistic and interactive settings. The findings were published as a series of good practice guidelines, which includes an evaluation toolkit (see RoSPA, 2003).

Risk Watch has the potential to play an important role in supporting further developments in safety education in the UK. With this in mind, the present study interviewed education professionals who would be involved in deciding whether

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10 Further information at: <http://www.nfpa.org/riskwatch/pdfs/leaderguide/RWCOALITIONS.PDF>

11 See: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/education/qca.htm>

or not the programme had a place in schools. Their views are examined below. First, the findings from interviews with teachers from pilot schools are explored.

Risk Watch was very well received in the pilot schools, with many teachers noticing some sort of positive effect on their pupils:

*“Our kids enjoyed Risk Watch very much – they have taken the messages on board. They are very enthusiastic and knowledgeable as to how to follow rules...and are keen to point out dangers such as an untied shoe-lace, suggesting that they are thinking Risk Watch.”*

One of the pilot schools, situated in an area of multiple deprivation had involved its pupils in a Healthy Eating initiative, which had started by educating the children but the school had noted its effect in the wider community. Interviewees in this school felt that Risk Watch had the same potential to educate the community.

Recognising the enthusiasm of pupils and parents for the Risk Watch package and its potential as a tool to educate the wider community, it is important to identify and establish structures that would allow Risk Watch to be implemented successfully on a wider scale. In order for this to happen, funding, training and curricular issues must be addressed.

Most teacher interviewees recommended strongly that support and training issues should be tackled before any wider adoption of the Risk Watch programme were undertaken. Teachers reflected:

*“Schools using Risk Watch would benefit from having a Co-ordinator, especially the small schools. A Co-ordinator could organise outside agencies, would know where to get resources, and could do training.”*

*“If the [Risk Watch] programme is to go ahead training is ESSENTIAL or the file will remain on the shelf in most cases. Training should comprise the core elements plus further ideas, practical activities, resource list. Communication between schools and resource centres is required. It would probably require two levels of co-ordination – one teacher in school to oversee programme and one person to co-ordinate between schools. This person should be a seconded teacher, and made available for a three year period while the safety programme is established.”*

Teachers saw Risk Watch as having the potential to link with the curriculum but suggested that more work would be required on the package before any wider rollout took place. This additional work should address areas of curricular links and appropriateness of content of the Risk Watch materials. ‘Firearms injury prevention’ was the component that was regarded as most controversial by teachers, especially those in Scotland. In addition, the Education Officer of the Scottish Road Safety Campaign (SRSC) reported that the Road Safety element of Risk Watch did not reflect the current state or philosophy of Road Safety Education. The SRSC recommended that the current road safety content should be deleted, the section rationalised under the heading ‘Road Safety’, and links made directly to the Streetsense<sup>12</sup> package, SRSC website and other useful contacts/resources. Rather than the two discrete sections (Motor Vehicle Safety, and Bike and Pedestrian Safety) covered at present, the Road

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<sup>12</sup> A road safety resource for primary schools developed by SRSC.

Safety section should refer to those areas covered at appropriate stages by Streetsense. If these changes were made, the SRSC would then be able to support the road safety references within the package. Road Safety and the relevance of Firearms Education should be addressed in the package review.

Local Authority Education Advisers reiterated the three main areas (training, funding, and existence of links to the curriculum) raised by teachers, as critical to any future implementation of Risk Watch. The HMIs who were interviewed provided an overview of safety education in schools and appeared to give Risk Watch a cautious welcome. They all suggested that further work be done with teachers, curriculum bodies, Local Authorities and HMIs to ascertain that a need for Risk Watch exists and that it links with the National Curriculum in England and Wales and with the 5-14 National Guidelines in Scotland. HMIs also drew attention to the need for funding to support training and development work.

## 6. Conclusions and Recommendations

The pilot described in the preceding sections was small scale and short-term, but it sets out some pointers for a larger scale implementation of Risk Watch. The enthusiasm shown by the participating pupils and their reported ability to inform their parents or carers who, in turn would be enabled to inform the wider community about safety issues, underline the potential of Risk Watch as a valuable community education tool. This finding also points to the possible benefits to pupils in terms of personal development and citizenship. This section addresses how best to capitalise on that enthusiasm and potential.

It is recommended that a wider pilot be undertaken, involving active monitoring of the use of the Risk Watch package. This should involve different types of school, particularly inner city, deprived area and some independent schools. Evaluation strategies different from those used in the current pilot should be adopted. The following stages are recommended:

- **Review of Risk Watch materials**

Review and, as appropriate, revise the Risk Watch package to ensure links with the curriculum, no duplication of other safety resources and inclusion of appropriate topics.

Once curricular links had been established, Risk Watch would be identified as a relevant and appropriate means of meeting curricular criteria. Any testing of children would take on a much less significant role, as any increase in safety knowledge would not be the sole criterion for undertaking Risk Watch: the programme would have been subsumed within an educational framework where it helped to support specified goals within the curriculum.

This review should also address the issue of content appropriate for users. Whether or not 'Firearms Injury Prevention' should be included, and the need for modification of the Road Safety content of the package have been identified as the two main issues. Additional areas for inclusion in the pack might also be considered, perhaps on the basis of frequency of causes of accidents to children.

It is recommended that teachers with an interest in and experience of safety education conduct the review. Input may also be made by HMIs with relevant experience and interests.

- **Standardised procedures**

Standardised procedures should be drawn up for:

*Training*

This should cover the Risk Watch package and the role of all participants. Additional training may be required for Coalition partners with no experience of teaching or training. A small training needs analysis might be considered for such people. The training programme should be designed to withstand any turnover in staff in participating schools and a cascade training model is recommended. Only those people who hold relevant training qualifications should provide training to Risk Watch participants and the process should be standardised.

*Means of monitoring the pilot*

Testing of pupils may not be the most appropriate means of monitoring the success of an initiative such as Risk Watch. Literature has suggested that a variety of means should be used, but in order to provide evidence that Risk Watch works, interactive test instruments might be applied to a representative sample of pupils taking part in the pilot. The test instruments should be designed using the conclusions drawn and the recommendations made by Frederick et al (2000), the Oxford Evaluation Team (2003) and other relevant studies. In addition, a matched control group should be set up. Test instruments to elicit the views of both participating teachers and parents should be designed. Standard forms should be developed for all participants to monitor the parts of the programme in which they are involved.

*Information documents*

A short leaflet should be prepared, providing information on the Risk Watch scheme, explaining what would be involved in the pilot, and providing a contact from whom further information could be obtained. This should include pointers to curricular links and possible integration with Healthy Schools programmes.

- **Recruitment of Fire and Rescue Services and Local Authorities to the pilot**

Fire and Rescue Services might volunteer or be invited to take part in the pilot. Once these had been identified, contact should be made with the relevant member(s) of Education Authority/ies within those pilot Fire and Rescue Service areas.

Interested Local Authorities should be asked to suggest schools that might be involved, providing both the names of schools as well as further information that would allow a sample of schools to be drawn up. This should comprise a mix of socio-economic groups, geographic factors, large through to small schools, special and independent, urban, suburban and rural schools, and might include some pupils (up to the age of 14) at lower secondary stage. Theoretically, there should be no limit on the number of schools to be involved, but practical considerations will intervene, such as the availability of Risk Watch materials and availability of personnel to support programme delivery and to monitor the pilot. A named person within each school should act as Risk Watch contact person for that school.

In addition, the Local Authority should be asked to provide the name of at least one person who could act as Risk Watch Co-ordinator for the area. The Local Authorities should be advised that someone with similar existing responsibilities (Healthy Schools, PHSE for example) might act as area co-ordinator so that Risk Watch work might be subsumed within the existing role. A provisional list of pilot schools could then be drawn up and Co-ordinator names confirmed.

- **Organisation of local information seminars for all intending participants**  
Information sessions should be organised, to inform new participants about Risk Watch and also to raise awareness of the programme. The new pilot should be presented as an opportunity to make any necessary changes and to develop a programme that would be made more responsive to schools' needs. It is advisable that emphasis should be placed on perceived pupil behavioural and attitudinal changes that have emerged from qualitative evidence in the first pilot.

Coalition/safety agency members might also be invited to speak about their roles, expectations and preferred means of working with schools.

- **Monitoring**  
The steps above should be supported by close liaison with HM Inspectors of schools across the UK.

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