



# West Dunbartonshire: Healthy Relationships

## Contents

ADAPT Research Conversations .....	2
Timeline of events .....	5
Week 1.....	5
Week 2.....	10
Week 3.....	11
Week 4.....	12
Week 5.....	13
Week 6.....	14
Conclusion .....	21
Recommendations for Future Pilots .....	21



## ADAPT Research Conversations

includem conducted research interviews with dozens of organisations across Scotland, including social work, Police Scotland, education, and other third sector organisations. As well as building a comprehensive picture of justice provisions in Scotland, this process established good relationships with these organisations. In June 2024, includem conducted a research conversation with police officers from the West Dunbartonshire command area of L Division. The conversation touched on many topics, from the seasonal pattern of offending behaviour to a sharp rise in instances of sexual exploitation. Part of the conversation discussed a rise in misogynistic behaviour and language use by primary aged children. This is a trend that includem had seen across Scotland with professionals from several other local authority areas making the same observations. With this in mind, includem arranged to interview police officers linked with schools and youth work.

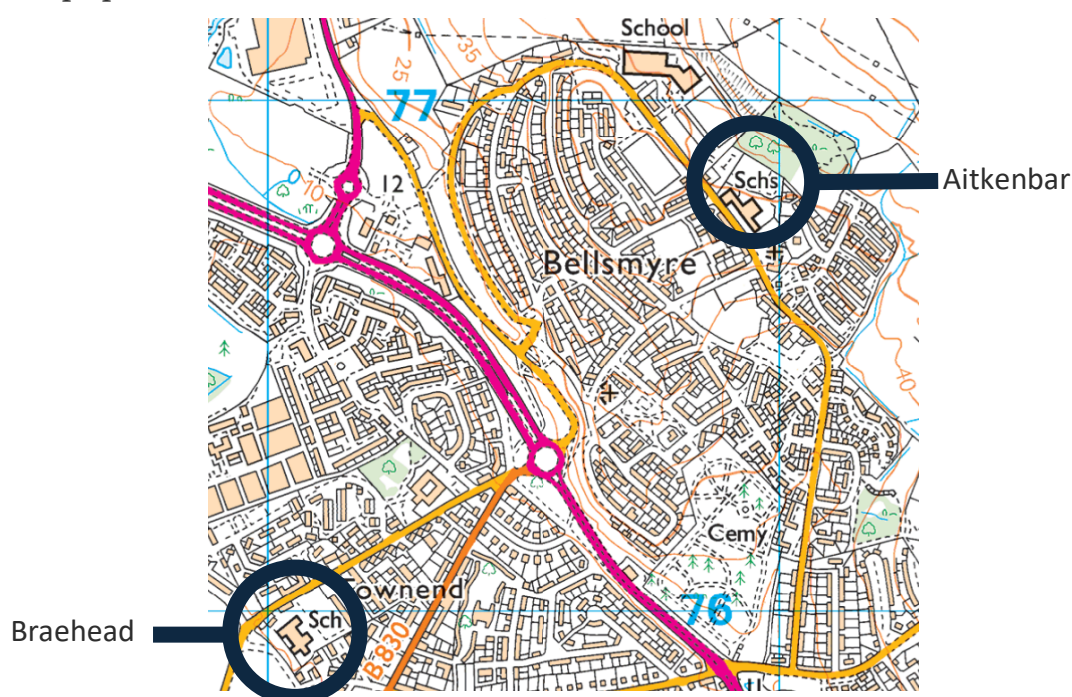
Another two conversations took place with Police Scotland to establish the extent and the severity of the issue. The conversations revealed that the level of misogynistic language use and behaviours was very high, especially for the primary age group. While no specific incidents were referenced, a major concern for everyone involved in the conversation was the impact that the age of criminal responsibility might have for these young people if this behaviour was not addressed. The types of behaviour being observed would be classed as offending behaviour once these young people turned 12-years-old. The group discussed the idea of developing an early intervention tool to try to educate young people on the harm that such language and behaviour can have. This would firstly help to support young people to find healthier modes of communication, and it would protect the young people who are currently subjected to this language.

The ADAPT Scoping Team used the information garnered from the research conversations with Police Scotland to plan how to move forward with designing a pilot. Several options were discussed that ranged from taking individual referrals from Police Scotland to hosting drop-in sessions over the summer holidays. The idea of designing school-based group sessions was chosen as the most viable solution. Being school based meant that individual young people were not targeted and isolated from their peers, which might have singled them and attracted negative attention. Along with this, the Scoping Team agreed that young people's relationships with misogynistic behaviours is not one dimensional, and those who are engaged in such behaviour might also be subjected to them in other contexts. Because of the age of the young people and because the pilot would focus on early intervention, the Scoping Team decided to try to take a soft-touch approach that did not use the term "misogynistic behaviour" or "misogynistic language." The reason for this was to avoid confusion from the young people and potentially from their parents. The word "misogyny" is a term loaded with cultural and political connotations. It is a word that means many different things to many different people and groups. Instead, the pilot would focus on "healthy relationships." While this term is also subject to a range of possible interpretations, they are not as culturally and politically charged. These initial sessions



gave the overall shape to the pilot: school-based, group sessions, focussed on supporting young people to understand and form healthy relationships with their peers.

Having the shape of the pilot sketched out allowed for changes to be made as and when they were needed, and it offered partner organisations something tangible to work with. This pilot would require input and collaboration with primary schools. Teaching and education staff have told includem that having a project sketched out beforehand gives them a clearer idea of the kind of support that is on offer, it allows them to think of ways that the support can work in their school, and it saves them time having to build something from scratch. Primary schools across West Dunbartonshire were contacted about the pilot through Police Scotland. Aitkenbar Primary and Braehead Primary responded with interest very quickly. An initial conversation took place with the schools to establish whether the need for such a pilot was there and whether the two schools could accommodate a group work programme in their timetables. Each school had slightly different experiences with regards to student behaviours, with one school observing problematic behaviours amongst current P7 pupils and the other school having observed them in the previous cohort of P7 pupils but not so much in the current cohort. Because this issue is so widely reported in Scotland and because of each school's experiences, they both agreed that running a healthy relationships pilot would be beneficial.



**Fig 1: Braehead and Aitkenbar map**



School Name	Pupil roll	Attendance	Students from SIMD Q1	Students from SIMD Q5	Percent ASN	Pupil Teacher Ratio
Aitkenbar	148	93.0%	13.5%	0.0%	33.8%	15.4
Braehead	276	93.5%	11.6%	1.8%	22.1%	18.5

**Fig 2: School Data Comparison (2024, gov.scot)**

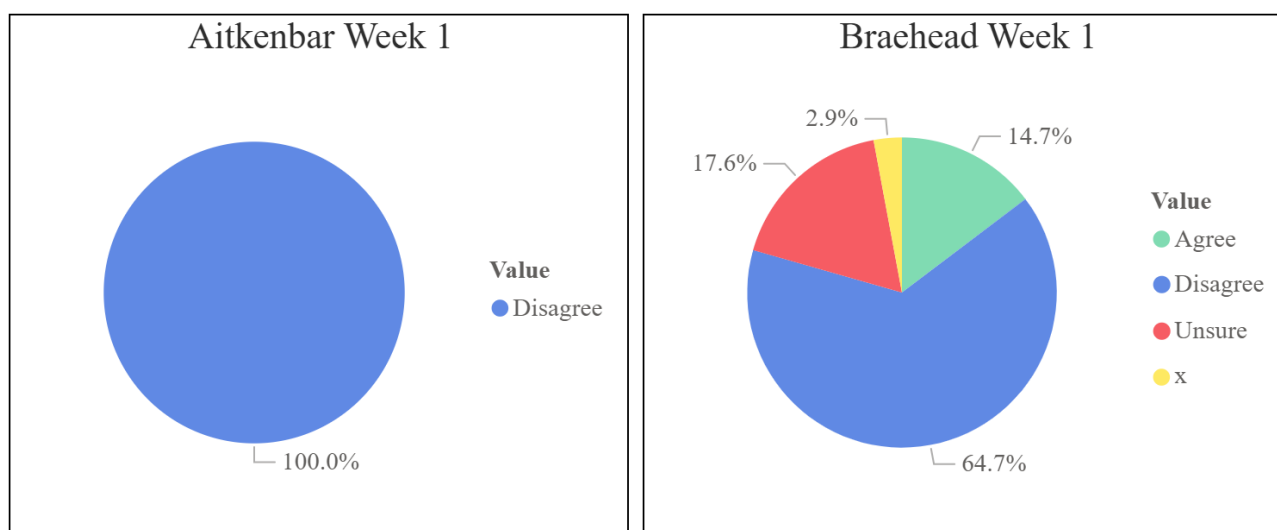
With this agreement in place, the Scoping Team presented the proposal to the Steering Group who unanimously agreed to go ahead with the pilot. The proposal contained much more details, such as the length of the pilot, the materials being taught, and the require resources. It was agreed that this intervention should not “reinvent the wheel”, as it were. Many of other organisations across the UK have created group work sessions for healthy relationships and have conducted evaluations on their effectiveness. This pilot drew from dozens of other programs designed by organisations such as the NSPCC, the Mental Health Foundation, Childnet, Mentally Healthy Schools, Children in Need, The Gender10 Toolkit, Equally Safe, and many more. Through desk-based research and consultation with team managers and delivery staff at includem, a program was put together than addressed healthy relationships, aligned with the Curriculum for Excellence, and incorporated many components of includem’s bespoke support package the A Better Life Toolkit (ABL). The 6-week program was sent to the two schools along with an FAQ list for parents. Both schools approved of the program and agreed to set aside a block of time on Wednesdays for six weeks. One school would run a morning session and the other would run an afternoon session. Delivery staff from the ADAPT Project who were involved with the design of the pilot were also part of the delivery team. With the materials approved and a date set, the pilot began on the 26<sup>th</sup> of February.



## Timeline of events

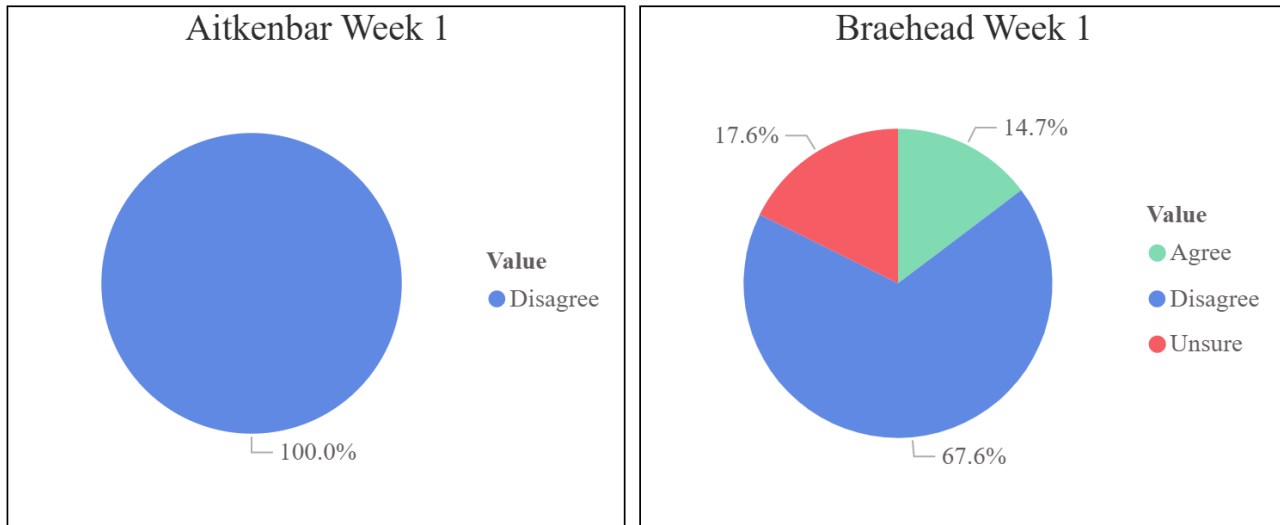
### Week 1

In Week 1 of the pilot, pupils explored unconscious bias and gender equality through various interactive activities. The activities also served as a baseline for each school, with week 6 duplicating these activities for a before and after comparison. The session began with an introduction by includem staff, followed by a questionnaire and a drawing activity where pupils expressed their thoughts on gender roles. The questionnaire contained statements such as “It is ok for boys to cry” and “Girls should not fight”, and asked the pupils if they agreed, disagreed, or if they weren’t sure. The pupils were then asked to draw a picture of a boy or a girl on the back of the questionnaire. No names were taken, but the pupils were asked to write their gender. There were clear differences between the two schools based on the results of the questionnaire. Take, for example, the results for the question “A husband can tell his wife what to do”:



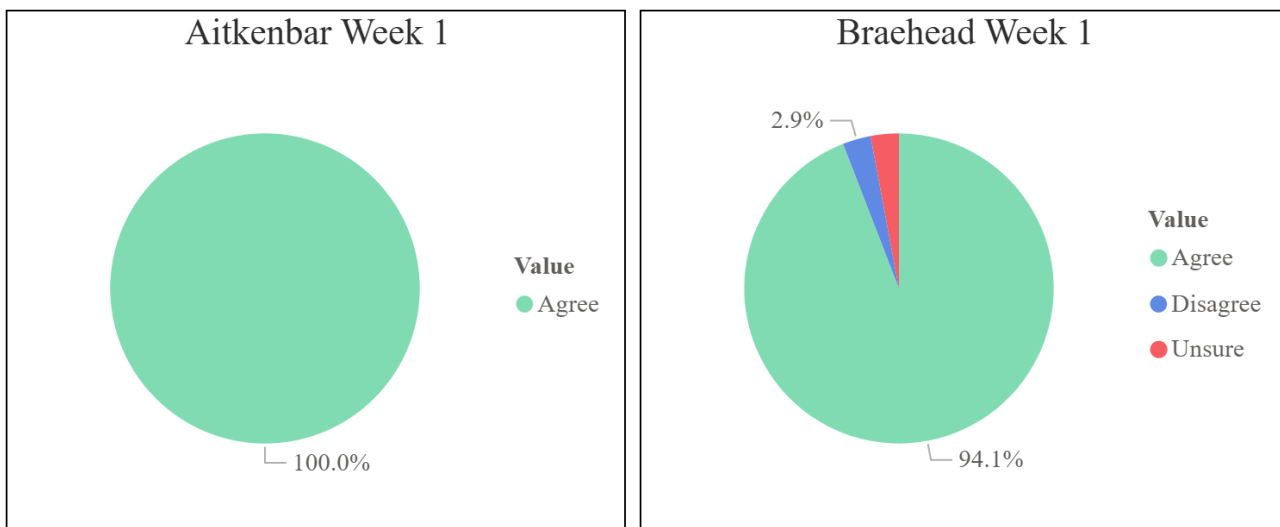
**Fig 3: A husband can tell his wife what to do (week 1 - school)**

Less than two-thirds of the pupils at Braehead Primary School disagreed with this statement, whereas all of the pupils at Aitkenbar Primary School disagreed. A similar difference can be seen with the statement “It’s a woman’s job to do the housework”:



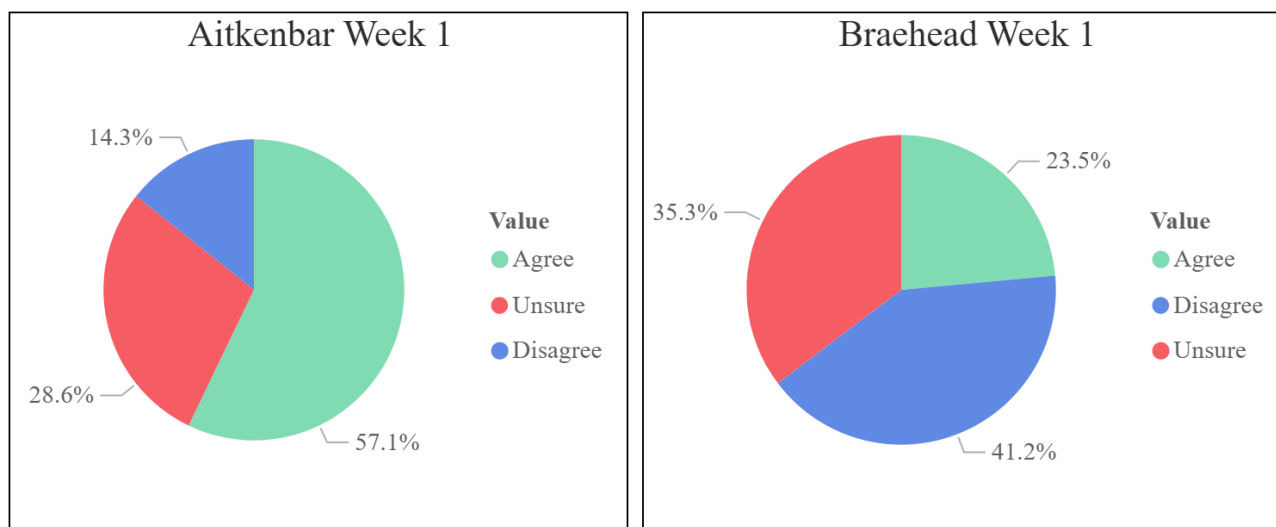
**Fig 4: It's a woman's job to do the housework (week 1 - school)**

Despite the differences with these two statements, a more general statement about equal rights saw a much more similar response:



**Fig 5: Men and women should have equal rights (week 1 - school)**

A statement that did evoke a range of responses was "I am happy to show affection to someone of the same gender":



**Fig 6: I am happy to show affection to someone of the same gender (school)**

Some pupils from both schools talked about how they don't like showing affection to anyone, but they didn't want their answer to come across as being related to gender. Pupils also talked about how they weren't sure what was meant by "affection," whether this meant compliments or holding hands or more romantic behaviours such as kissing. Another point raised by some pupils was that their response depended on who the individual was more than their gender. For example, being okay with showing affection to a parent but not showing affection to a teacher.

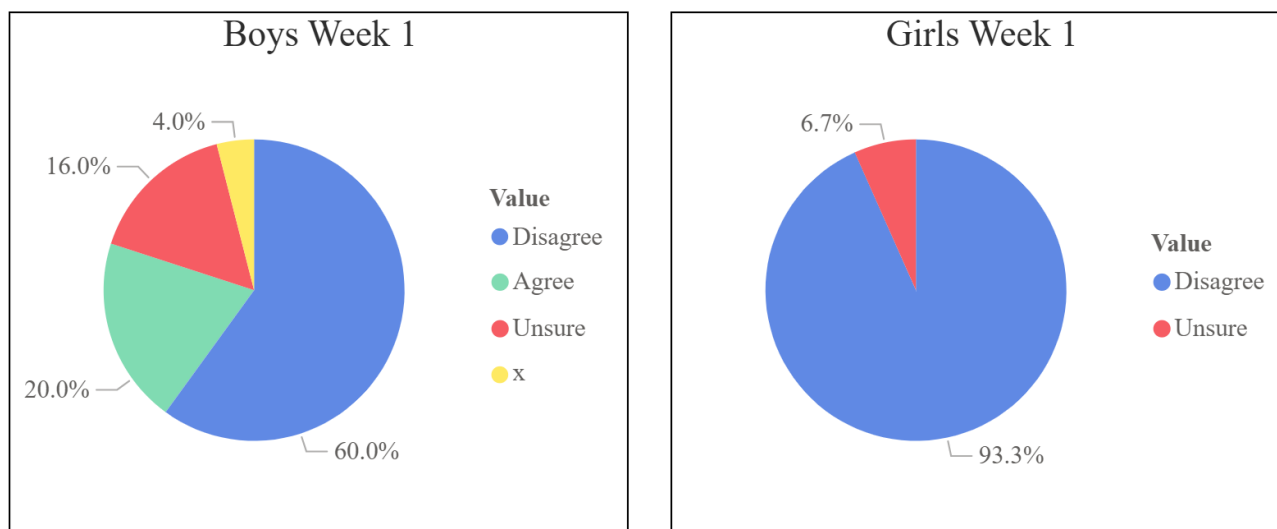
Another thing to note is that some of the pupils responded to certain statements, such as "it is okay for a man to hit a woman," with extra emphasis. Rather than simply circling their response in the same way that they had with all the other statements, the pupils would sometimes circle their response several times or they would scribble out the answer entirely (see Fig 7).

Men are more successful at work than women	Agree	Disagree	Unsure
Girls should look pretty	Agree	Disagree	Unsure
It is ok for a man to hit a woman	Agree	Disagree	Unsure
Girls should not fight	Agree	Disagree	Unsure
Only men are violent	Agree	Disagree	Unsure
Men who like dancing are gay	Agree	Disagree	Unsure
A husband can tell his wife what to do	Agree	Disagree	Unsure
Only men should fight in the army	Agree	Disagree	Unsure
Men and women should have equal rights	Agree	Disagree	Unsure
I am happy to show affection to someone of the same gender	Agree	Disagree	Unsure

**Fig 7: Sample response**

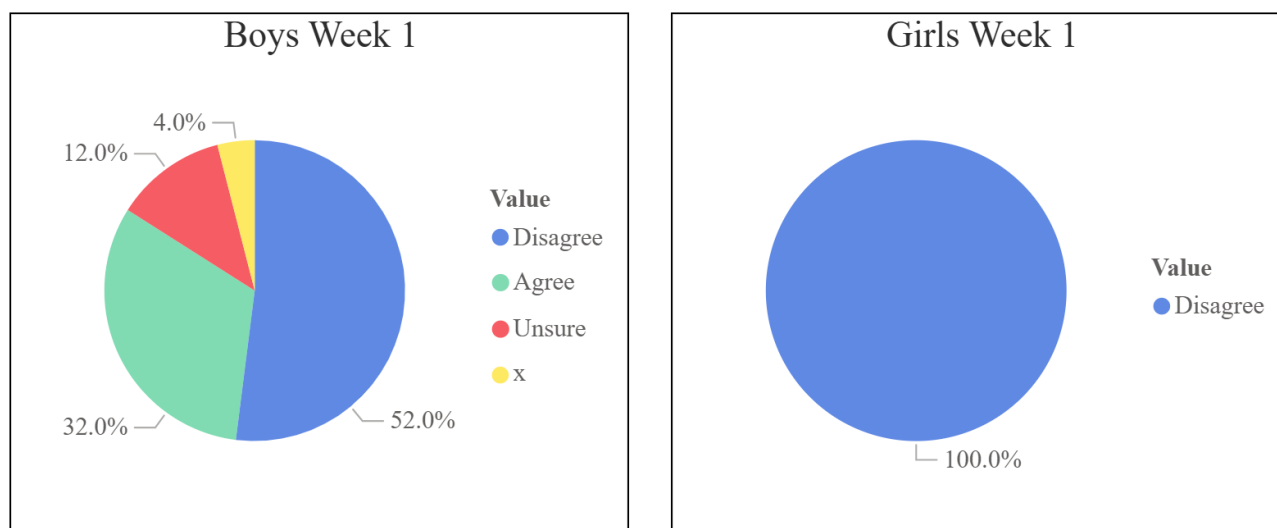


What should be noted is how the results of the questionnaire differ when sorted by gender. Take, for example, the results to the statement “A husband can tell his wife what to do”:



**Fig 8: A husband can tell his wife what to do (week 1 - gender)**

A more drastic difference can be seen with the results of the statement, “Men are more successful at work than women”:

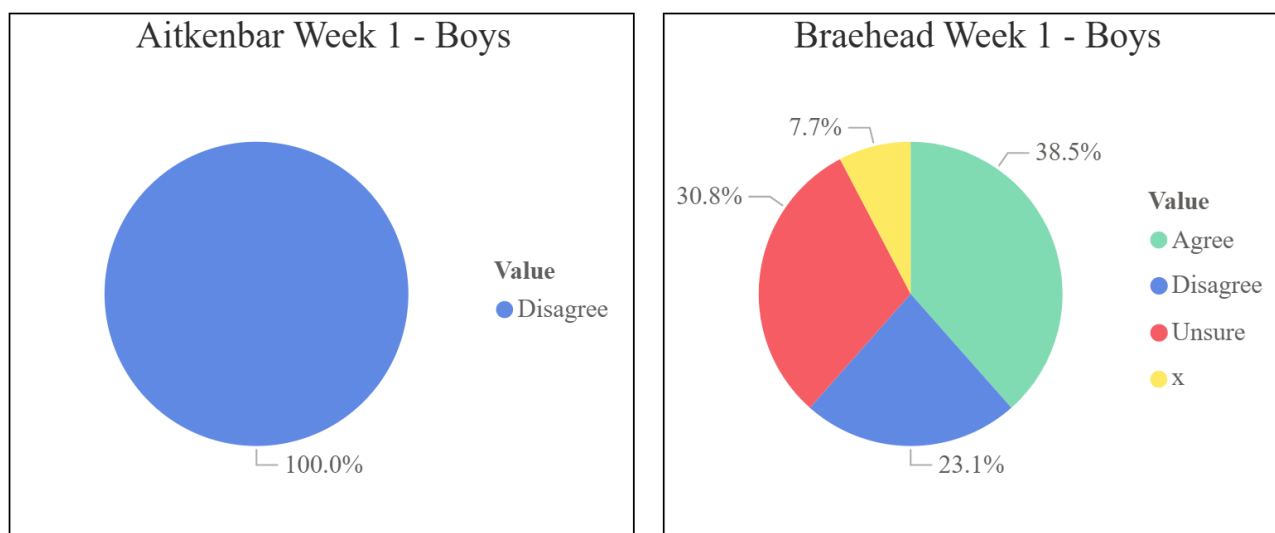


**Fig 9: Men are more successful at work than women (week 1 - gender)**

Broken down by gender and by school, the data shows that the main source of the disparities in the questionnaire results comes from a group of boys at Braehead Primary



School. The following charts compare the responses for the boys at Braehead and the boys at Aitkenbar for the statement “A husband can tell his wife what to do”:



**Fig 10: A husband can tell his wife what to do (week 1 - boys)**

The nuances of where the disparities in the data come from will be discussed later in the evaluation when the results of week 1 are compared to the results of week 6.

Following on from the questionnaire, the pupils then participated in a sorting activity, categorising images of people, descriptions of emotions, colours, and so on into hula hoops labelled “Boys,” “Girls,” or “Both.” Finally, pupils engaged in an agree/disagree line activity, responding to statements about gender roles and discussing their reasoning. These activities aimed to create a safe space for pupils to share their ideas and understand gender stereotypes. The sessions at Braehead Primary School involved a large class of around 40 pupils, which made managing the activities challenging. The pupils were excitable, and some were keen to share their opinions. A few of the boys often dominated the discussions that they were a part of and expressed some stereotypical views. There was a significant difference in opinions between boys and girls, with boys leaning more towards traditional gender roles. Some boys expressed disbelief that men could be teachers, despite having a male teacher present. The girls were more assertive in the sorting activity, insisting that all items could be for both genders, despite pushback from the small group of boys.

At Aitkenbar Primary School, the sessions were more manageable with a smaller class size of about 22 pupils. The pupils were generally more respectful and had more nuanced views on gender roles. They had recently completed a workshop on equality and diversity, which seemed to influence their views. There was a mix of opinions, but overall, the pupils were more open to discussing and challenging stereotypes. The pupils said that they enjoyed the activities and were engaged throughout the session. There were fewer



challenges in managing the class due to the smaller size and the pupils' prior exposure to similar topics.

## Week 2

In Week 2, pupils examined gendered job roles and stereotypes through a series of activities. The session began with a riddle to warm up, followed by a baseline check to ensure understanding of stereotypes. Pupils then participated in a "Guess the sports person" activity, where they matched athletes to their sports based on descriptions. Next, the "Stand up job game" had pupils standing or sitting based on personality traits, revealing job roles at the end. Finally, pupils wrote down stereotypes about their own and the opposite gender, discussing their accuracy and impact.

The sessions at Braehead Primary School showed some improvement in managing the large class and the facilitators had a better understanding of the class dynamics and adjusted the activities accordingly. The pupils were keen to engage, although the small group of outspoken boys continued to dominate discussions and held strong opinions. For example, during the "Guess the sports person" game, some of the boys refused to believe that David Weir was a successful Paralympian because he "didn't look disabled" and refused to believe that Emily Campbell was a successful Olympian because she was "fat".



**Fig 11: David Weir and Emily Campbell**

The other boys and the girls were more open to different perspectives and were more active in their participation. The facilitators noted that the boys who were not part of the smaller, louder group of boys were more willing to listen to different opinions this week, especially during the activity where they matched sportspeople to descriptions. However, the class became bored during the last activity (the Stand up job game), and it was challenging to



maintain their attention. The facilitators planned to mix up the groups for future sessions to ensure more balanced participation.

At Aitkenbar Primary School, the sessions continued to be smooth and engaging, with the pupils showing a good understanding of stereotypes and respectful behaviours. The class was respectful towards each other and the facilitators. The pupils participated well in the activities and discussions, demonstrating their understanding of the topics. The facilitators noted that the pupils were confident and used positive words to describe themselves and their peers. The class enjoyed the interactive activities and showed a clear understanding of the importance of respectful behaviour and challenging stereotypes. The pupils generally interacted well during the session, and the class size made it easier to facilitate more nuanced discussions with this group than with the larger group from Braehead. The pupils expressed their enjoyment of the previous week's decision line activity and requested similar interactive activities for future sessions.

### Week 3

In Week 3 of the pilot, pupils focused on mental and emotional wellbeing, learning about respectful and unacceptable behaviours. The session began with a short video on mental health, followed by a group activity where pupils placed behaviour cards on a scale from respectful to disrespectful. Pupils then discussed strategies to respond to hurtful behaviours, both for themselves and others. In the “Head, Heart, Hands” exercise, pupils analysed scenarios to understand thoughts, feelings, and actions. The session concluded with a recap and signposting to support resources, emphasising the importance of reporting hurtful behaviour.

During Week 3 at Braehead Primary School, the video on mental health and feelings sparked some laughter but generally held their attention. The facilitators split the class for the activities to manage the large group better, with some pupils needing extra attention. The pupils engaged well in discussions about respectful behaviours and consent. Despite showing a good understanding through the activity, some pupils continued to act disrespectfully towards each other. For example, at one point in the session, one of the girls punched one of the boys, even though the girl had shown a good understanding of respectful behaviour during the activities. The facilitators noted that some of the pupils had a good understanding of the topics but struggled to apply respectful behaviour consistently. There were instances of teasing and disruptive behaviour, which required careful management.

In both schools, the pupils participated in sorting incident cards into categories of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours, discussing respectful and disrespectful actions. This activity sparked meaningful conversations about how to treat friends and the importance of respect in friendships. The facilitators noted that the pupils were generally engaged and thoughtful during these discussions. At Braehead Primary School, managing the larger group remained challenging at times, with some pupils needing extra support to stay focused. However, the facilitators were able to address these challenges and ensure that all pupils could participate in the activities.



At Aitkenbar Primary School, the sessions were more successful, with pupils keen to participate and showed more respectful behaviours towards each other. The pupils engaged well in discussions about emotions, mental health, and respectful behaviours, demonstrating their understanding of the topics. The facilitators noted that the pupils were confident and self-content, showing a good understanding of positive qualities in friendships. The class enjoyed interactive activities, such as moving to different parts of the room to indicate their stance on statements about respectful and disrespectful behaviours. The pupils were generally well-behaved and supportive of each other, making the sessions smooth and productive.

#### Week 4

Week 4 focused on the concept of friendships. At Braehead Primary School, the session began with a group discussion to define what makes a good friend. The pupils were enthusiastic and shared various qualities they believe are important in friendships, such as trust, kindness, and support. The facilitators noted that the pupils were engaged and contributed actively to the discussion. Following this, the pupils worked in small groups to answer questions about friendships and write down key characteristics. This activity allowed them to reflect on their own experiences and understand the qualities that make a good friend.

The pupils then created “friendship face frames,” decorating them with traits they believe they possess as friends. This activity was well-received, with pupils showing enthusiasm and creativity. They used various materials to decorate their frames and wrote down positive qualities such as being a good listener, being supportive, and being trustworthy. The facilitators observed that the pupils were proud of their creations and enjoyed sharing them with their peers.

At Aitkenbar Primary School, the session followed a similar structure, with pupils engaging in discussions and activities about friendships. The pupils were respectful and supportive of each other, making the sessions smooth and productive. They participated actively in the group discussion, sharing their thoughts on what makes a good friend. The small group activities allowed them to reflect on their own experiences and understand the qualities that make a good friend. The “friendship face frames” activity was also well-received, with pupils showing enthusiasm and creativity in decorating their frames.

Overall, the activities aimed to help pupils understand different kinds of friendships and recognise behaviours that enhance positive peer relationships. The sessions highlighted the importance of respect and empathy in friendships, with pupils actively participating and sharing their thoughts. The facilitators observed that the pupils were beginning to apply these concepts in their interactions with each other, showing progress in their understanding of healthy friendships. Pupils in both classes were showing signs that they were becoming more comfortable with the facilitators by making friendly jokes about the material. For example, when a facilitator described empathy as “when you can put yourself in someone else’s shoes to understand how they are feeling,” the pupils joked about putting on their friends’ shoes to see how they felt.



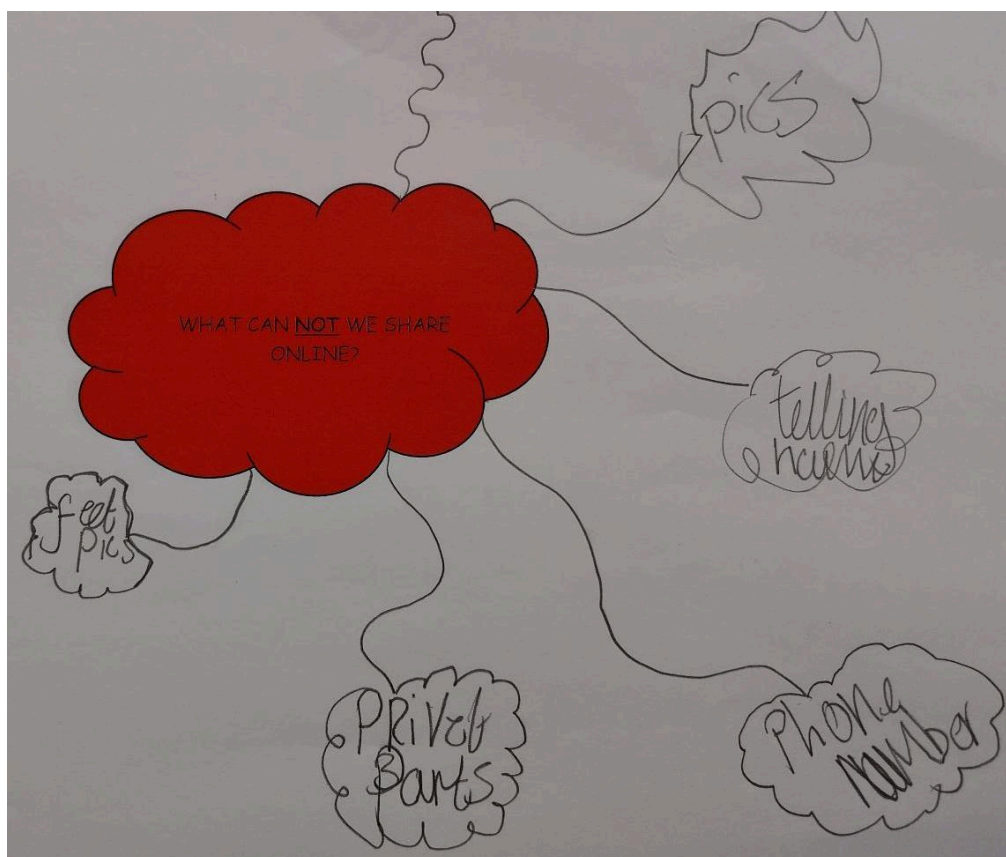
## Week 5

In Week 5 of the pilot, pupils focused on online relationships, learning how to stay safe and manage healthy friendships online. The session began with an icebreaker where pupils chose between different social media platforms. This was followed by group discussions on their usage of various apps. Pupils then engaged in a broader discussion on verifying online friends and staying safe online, including tackling online bullying. The session concluded with signposting to support services, emphasising the importance of safe online interactions and the differences between online and in-person relationships.

At Braehead Primary School, the icebreaker helped to engage the pupils and set the tone for the discussion. The pupils were enthusiastic and shared their experiences with various apps, highlighting their preferences and usage patterns. The facilitators noted that the pupils were keen to discuss their online interactions and the importance of staying safe online. Following the icebreaker, the pupils participated in the group discussions about verifying online friends and managing healthy friendships online. The facilitators observed that the pupils had a good understanding of the risks associated with online interactions and were able to articulate strategies for staying safe. The discussions were lively, with pupils sharing their thoughts on online bullying and the differences between online and in-person relationships. The facilitators noted that some pupils needed extra support to stay focused, but overall, the group was engaged and contributed actively to the discussions.

At Aitkenbar Primary School, the pupils were respectful and supportive of each other. They shared their experiences with social media platforms and discussed the importance of verifying online friends and staying safe. The facilitators observed that the pupils were confident and had a good understanding of the risks associated with online interactions. The discussions were thoughtful, with pupils expressing their views on online bullying and the differences between online and in-person relationships.

Both schools had pupils who were willing to engage in discussions and activities. Pupils at both schools were generally unaware of the age restrictions on social media apps. This is an important thing for this age group to know because the safeguarding measure for each app are designed for people of a certain age. With the pupils being three to four years too young to use certain social media apps, this knowledge can be used to help keep them safe while online. The main difference between the two schools was, again, in the class size and the pupils' behaviour. Aitkenbar Primary School had a smaller class size and pupils who were more respectful and supportive of each other, making the sessions smoother and more productive. Another difference was in some of the responses to the staying safe online activity. When asked what should not be shared online, the Braehead pupils made reference to sex related activities, such as sharing intimate photos, much more frequently than the pupils from Aitkenbar. The image below shows the kinds of answer we saw in Braehead and did not see in Aitkenbar:



**Fig 12: What we cannot share online (Braehead)**

The facilitators concluded the sessions by signposting to support services, emphasising the importance of safe online interactions and the differences between online and in-person relationships.

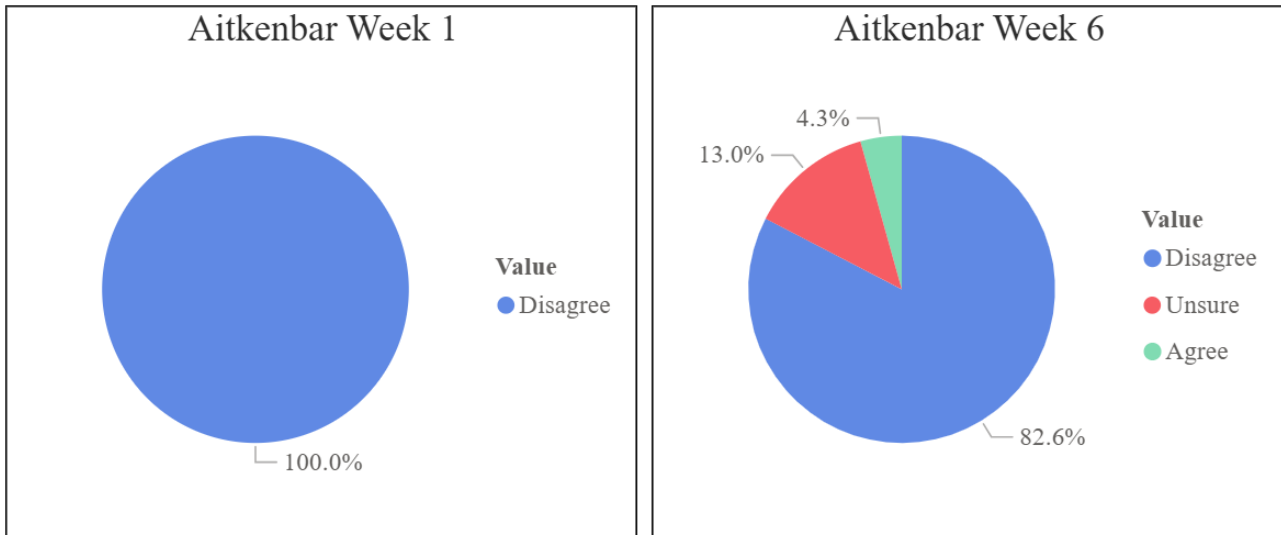
## Week 6

Week 6 repeated the activities of week 1. One reason for this was to see if the group sessions had a discernible impact on how the pupils thought about healthy relationships, stereotypes, and gender roles. Another reason was to provide the pupils the opportunity to reflect on what they had learned and to go through the activities again with this new knowledge. What follows is an overview of the data taken from the agree/disagree/unsure questionnaires from week 1 and week 6. This data will be accompanied with the observations made by the facilitators.

Before adding the context of what was happening and what was said during the group sessions when the questionnaires were completed, the following charts could be interpreted as showing that the group sessions had a negative effect on the pupil's understanding of healthy relationships, stereotypes, and gender roles. For example, in week 1 at Aitkenbar, none of the pupils agreed with the statement "It's a woman's job to do

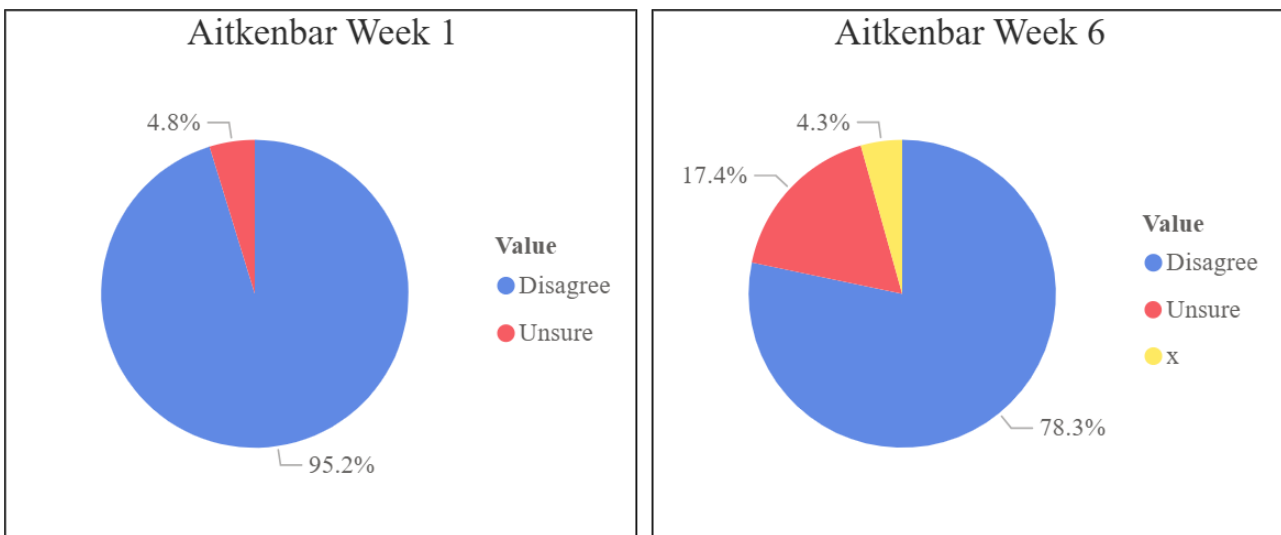


the housework.” In week 6, however, only 82.6% disagreed with this statement, with 13% being unsure 4.3% agreeing with it:



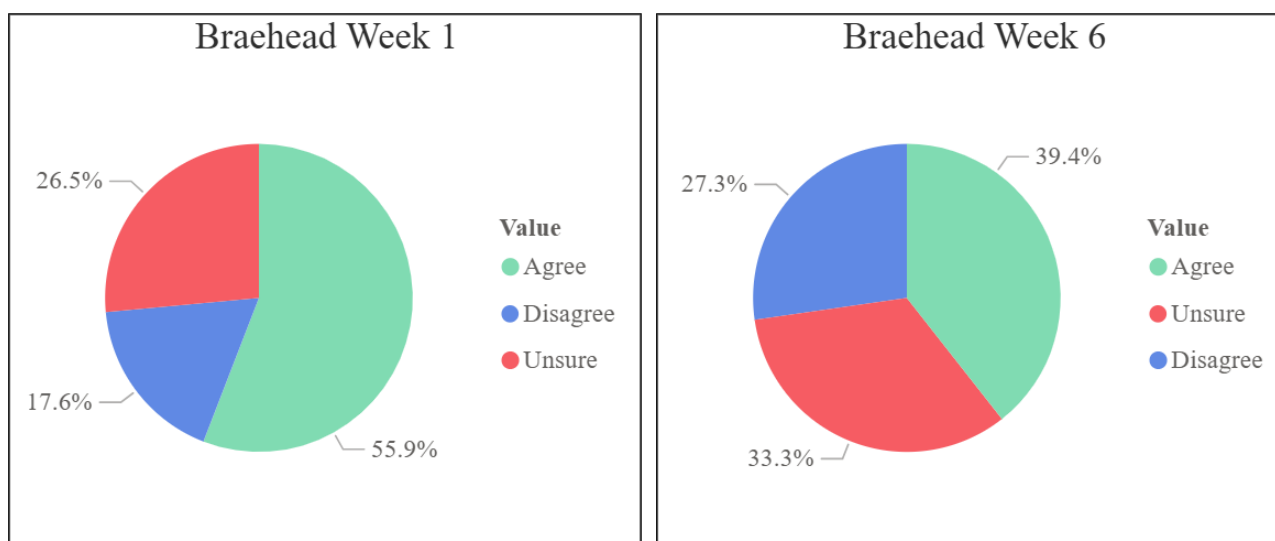
**Fig 13: It's a woman's job to do the housework (Aitkenbar comparison)**

A similar statement saw the same change. The following charts show the data for the statement “Women should stay at home”:



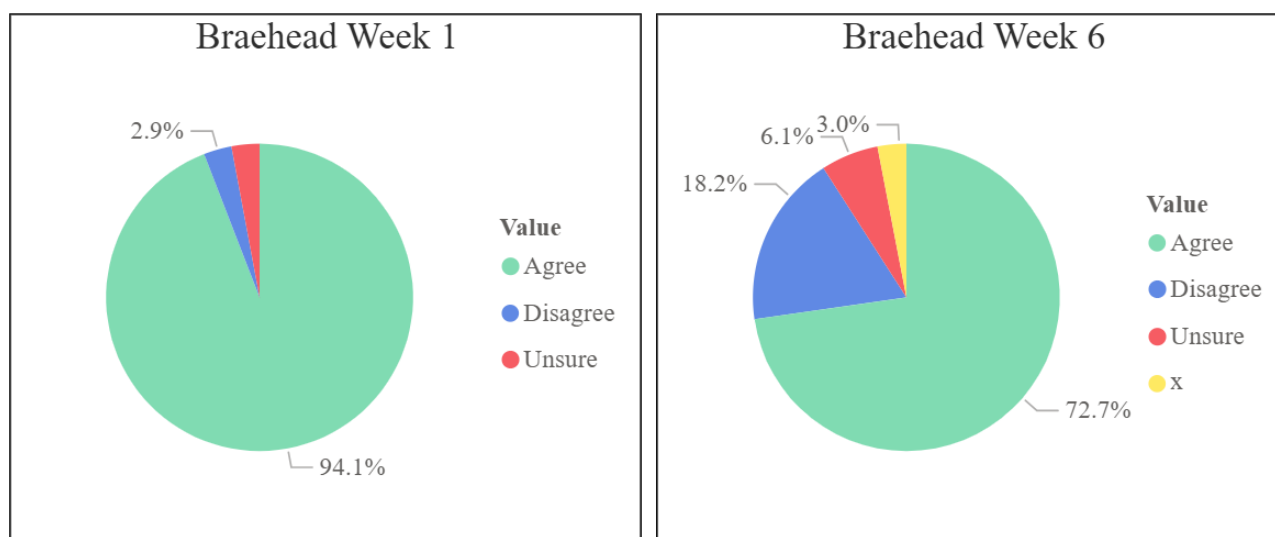
**Fig 14: Women should stay at home (Aitkenbar comparison)**

A similar story can be seen with Braehead Primary School. The following charts compare week 1 responses with week 6 responses for the statement “It is okay for a man to marry a man”:



**Fig 15: It is okay for a man to marry a man (Braehead Comparison)**

In week 1, 55.9% of pupils agreed that it is okay for a man to marry a man, but in week 6 only 39.4% agreed with this statement. Pupils also showed more disagreement with general statements about gender equality. The following charts compare the week 1 and week 6 responses for the statement “Men and women should have equal rights”:



**Fig 16: Men and women should have equal rights (Braehead Comparison)**

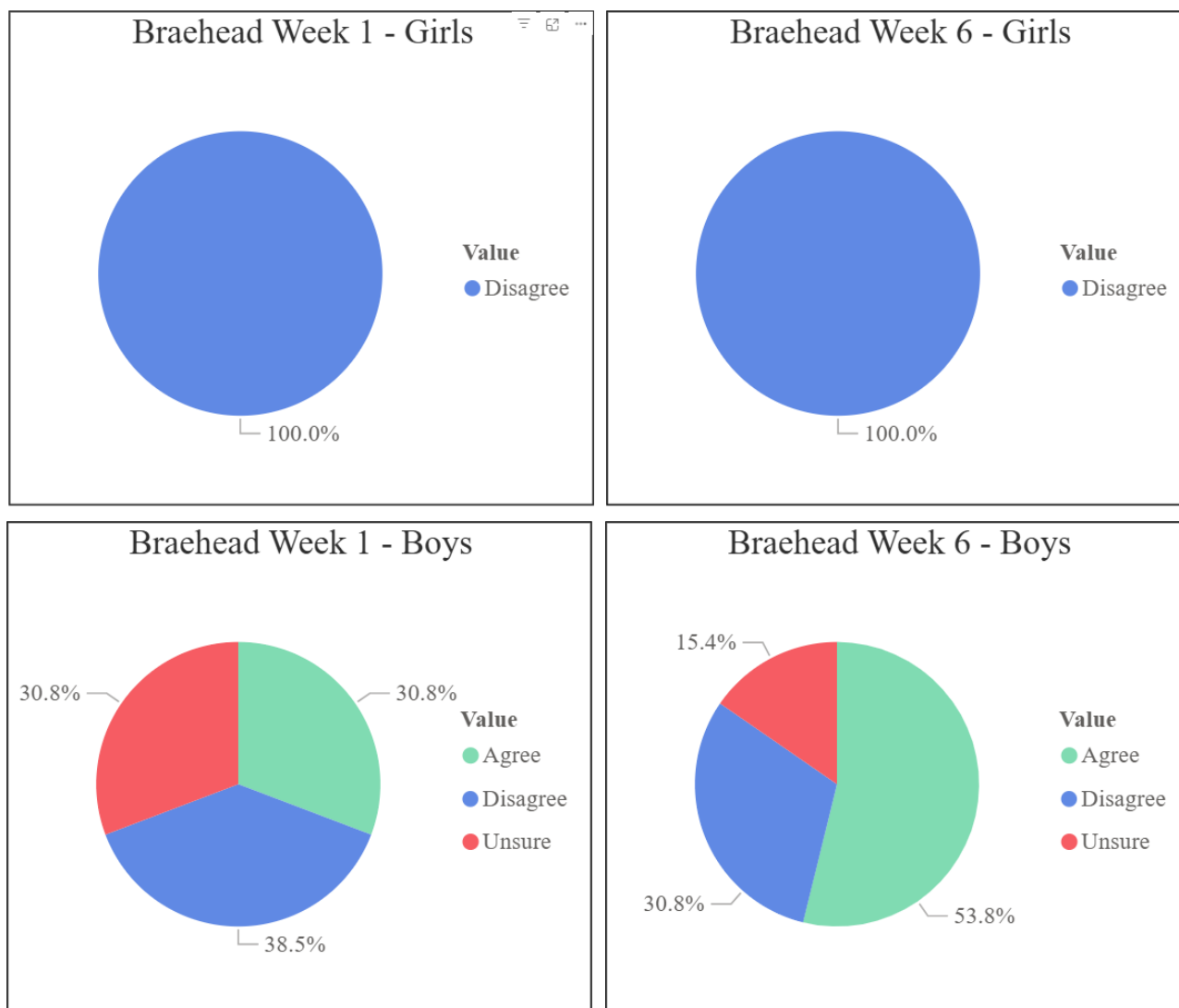
Before going through the healthy relationships group sessions, 94.1% of P6/P7 pupils from Braehead Primary School agreed that men and women should have equal rights, but after going through the group sessions, only 72.7% agreed with this statement.



Looking at the data without information about the environment and context in which it was collection could raise questions about the content of the program, the delivery of the material, and so on. How is it that both schools showed a decline in the number of pupils agreeing with statements about gender equality? Looking at the qualitative insights gained from the shift notes made by the facilitators we can see that each school has a very different reason for the changes seen in the questionnaire data.

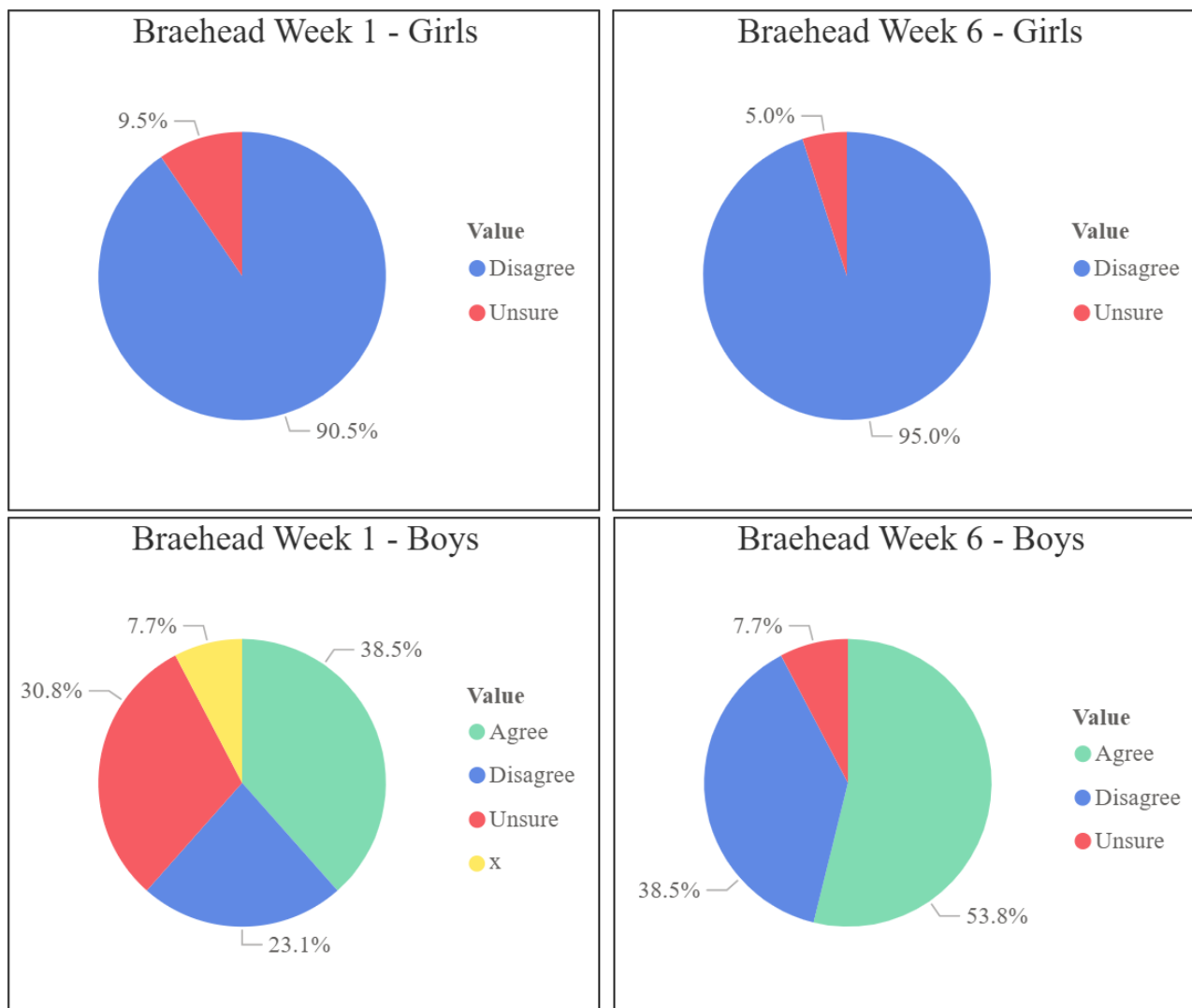
For Aitkenbar Primary School, week 1 saw many of the pupils showing a high level of agreement with statements about gender equality. In week 6, however, there is much more uncertainty. One reason for this is during the group session in week 6, many of the pupils took issue with the generalised nature of the questions. For example, during a game about whether boys and girls could do certain jobs, the pupils insisted that choosing to do a job is a personal decision rather than one based on gender. This meant that they were unsure about the coherence of the statement rather than being unsure whether, for example, girls could be builders. In other words, the pupils did not want to base their answers on stereotypes about different genders. Another, closely related, reason for the change in results for the pupils at Braehead came down to pupils using personal experience over gender stereotypes to help them answer the questions. For example, with regards to pupils being more uncertain or agreeing with the statement “It’s a woman’s job to do the housework,” some pupils spoke about how bad their dads are at housework! The pupils were not thinking in terms of fixed gender roles and were instead thinking on the level of individual characteristics and how these relate to the statement they were responding to. A third reason for some of the changes in the data came down to a misunderstanding of the statements. In relation to the statement “men can be nurses”, some of the pupils disagreed with this statement because they thought that a nurse was a female doctor. When they realised that a doctor and a nurse are different jobs, they agreed that anyone can be a doctor or a nurse.

The reason that pupils from Braehead Primary School showed more of an aversion to statements about gender equality is very different. The following chart shows the changes between week 1 and week 6 for the statement “women should stay at home.” The results have also been broken down by gender to show where the main changes come from:



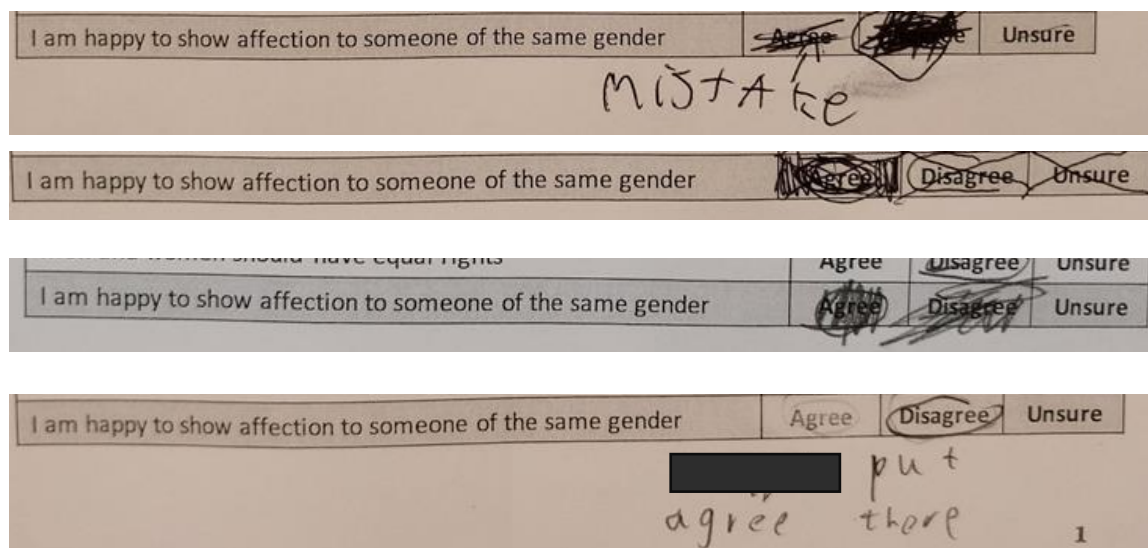
**Fig 17: Women should stay at home (Braehead Comparison – Gender)**

What Fig 17 shows is that the girls from Braehead did not change in their opinion that they disagree with the statement “Women should stay at home.” However, the proportion of boys who agreed with this statement increased from less than a third in week 1 to over half in week 6. The same dynamic can be seen with for the statement “A husband can tell his wife what to do”:



**Fig 18: A husband can tell his wife what to do (Braehead Comparison – Gender)**

Looking at the shift notes from the facilitators, what’s clear is that a significant change occurred in how the room was divided. In week 1, the smaller groups on each table had a mix of genders, whereas in week 6 one of the tables had all of the boys who were being outspoken, and at times disruptive, throughout the weekly sessions. During the activities in week 6, the boy’s group could be heard laughing at the idea of women being builders and the idea that men could be cooks, and they all agreed that men who cut hair are “jessies.” When filling out the questionnaires, the statement “I am happy to show affection to someone of the same gender” was used by the boys to poke fun at each other. For example, the boys would fill in the “agree” box on each other’s questionnaires, as seen in Fig 19:



I am happy to show affection to someone of the same gender	<del>Agree</del>	<del>Disagree</del>	Unsure
MISTAKE			

I am happy to show affection to someone of the same gender	<del>Agree</del>	<del>Disagree</del>	Unsure
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I am happy to show affection to someone of the same gender	Agree	Disagree	Unsure
Agree			

I am happy to show affection to someone of the same gender	Agree	Disagree	Unsure
[redacted] put agree there 1			

**Fig 19: I am happy to show affection to someone of the same gender (Braehead – Boys)**

What also comes out of the observations made by the facilitators is the specific relationship that these boys had with the questionnaire. It's clear that they understood the cultural sensitivities of certain statements, and they understood that "going against the grain" of the group sessions would evoke strong emotional reactions from their peers and from adults. The boys seemed to enjoy testing and exploring the boundaries of social conventions more than cared for engaging with their actual opinions of the statements. This is evident from the discussions they had with the facilitators. When the boys laughed at the idea that men could be cooks, the facilitator asked them what they thought of Gordon Ramsey. The boys quickly conceded that men can, in fact, be cooks. When the boys laughed at the idea that girls could be builders, the facilitators asked them why this was. Discussing it between themselves the boys agreed that while there are probably more builders who are men than women, there's no reason why women couldn't be builders.

In short, the responses from the group of boys shows that the statements in the questionnaire served different social functions, from being reflections of someone's true opinion to being a reflection of a social norm. When the boys engaged with the statements as reflections of their actual opinions, they expressed approval of statements supporting gender equality. When the boys engaged with the statements as reflections of social norms, they tested the boundaries of those social norms. The data taken from the questionnaires need to be contextualised in order to understand which function the statements are serving. The combination of data and context shows that when the pupils engaged with the material, the overwhelming majority supported ideas of equality and healthy relationships. That being said, the "going against the grain" behaviour of the boys at Braehead should not be taken lightly. While they showed that they did not actually hold these beliefs, they still subjected their peers to comments and statements that can cause harm, and they risked spreading these ideas through peer pressure. What should be taken from week 6 is that some of the pupils were able to engage with the material in a meaningful way in smaller groups.



## Conclusion

The health relationships pilot in West Dunbartonshire aimed to address the rise in misogynistic behaviour and language use among primary-aged children through school-based group sessions. The evaluation of the pilot revealed several key insights:

1. **Engagement and Participation:** The programme successfully engaged pupils from both Aitkenbar and Braehead Primary Schools. Pupils participated actively in discussions and activities, demonstrating a willingness to explore and challenge gender stereotypes and behaviours. The smaller class size at Aitkenbar facilitated more nuanced discussions, while the larger group at Braehead presented challenges in managing participation and maintaining focus.
2. **Behavioural Insights:** The pilot highlighted significant differences in attitudes and behaviours between different groups of pupils. Aitkenbar pupils showed a more respectful and open approach to discussing gender roles and stereotypes, likely influenced by their prior exposure to equality and diversity workshops. In contrast, a small group of boys at Braehead exhibited disruptive behaviour and resistance to challenging traditional gender roles. The main insight gained from working with this group of boys is a need for more targeted interventions.
3. **Impact on Attitudes:** The data collected from the questionnaires indicated a complex picture. While there was a general trend towards more nuanced and critical thinking about gender roles, some responses suggested a reinforcement of traditional stereotypes, particularly among boys at Braehead. This underscores the importance of context and the influence of peer dynamics on pupils' attitudes, and it highlights the importance of understanding how misogynistic language is used. There is no place for misogynistic language and behaviour in schools or anywhere else. To tackle it in a meaningful way, facilitators must be able to understand the nuances of group dynamics and language use in order to deploy the most effective interventions.
4. **Programme Structure and Delivery:** The structure of the pilot, with its focus on interactive and reflective activities, was well-received by pupils. However, the effectiveness of the sessions varied depending on class size and the existing behavioural dynamics within the groups. The facilitators' observations highlighted the need for adaptable delivery methods to cater to different classroom environments.

## Recommendations for Future Pilots

1. **Tailored Interventions:** Future pilots should consider tailoring interventions to address the specific needs and dynamics of each school, as well as adapting to different class sizes. This could involve smaller group sessions for schools with larger class sizes or more targeted support for pupils exhibiting disruptive behaviour. Tailoring the approach will help ensure that all pupils can engage meaningfully with the material.
2. **Longitudinal Follow-Up:** Implementing a longitudinal follow-up with pupils who participated in the pilot can provide valuable insights into the long-term impact of the



programme. Regular check-ins and follow-up sessions over the course of a year can help reinforce the lessons learned and provide ongoing support. This approach would also allow for the collection of data on the sustained effectiveness of the interventions, helping to refine and improve future programmes.

3. **Parental Involvement:** Increasing parental involvement in the programme could help to reinforce the messages of healthy relationships and gender equality at home. This could include providing parents with resources and information about the programme, as well as opportunities for them to engage in related activities with their children. Parental involvement could help create a supportive environment for pupils to apply what they have learned.

By implementing these recommendations, future pilots can build on the successes of the West Dunbartonshire programme and further enhance their impact on promoting healthy relationships and challenging gender stereotypes among young people.