

# Standing Up To Bullies

Local MP John Penrose was on hand to help deliver a giant anti-bullying petition to 10 Downing Street, following a national conference at the Winter Gardens in Weston-super-Mare.



## Threat To Further Education Places

**John Penrose is pressing the Government to stop cuts in Further Education training for the over 25's. Changes in Government funding mean that FE Colleges like Weston will have to axe places on courses above level 2 (GCSE) for the over 25s.**

An investigation by Mr Penrose has revealed that the number of places for people over 25 on courses in Weston College has been cut from 5,307 in 2005/06 to 3,247 in 2006/07.

Last December, John raised the issue in the House of Commons with the Education Secretary Alan Johnson, who has agreed to "look into the matter".

John said: "Older students have traditionally relied on these courses to help them reskill and re-enter the workplace.

"Many of these students are parents returning to work once their children are old enough; people who have been made redundant and need to reskill; and people nearing retirement age.

"When I first raised this in Parliament, I was surprised that the Minister didn't seem to understand the effect his policies are having in places like Weston-super-Mare. Now I've sent him the evidence, I hope he'll make good on his promise to take a closer look into the matter and perhaps he'll think again".



John has also tabled a motion in Parliament urging the Government to help stamp out bullying. He wants all new teachers to get intensive anti-bullying training and for experienced teachers to get specialist anti-bullying advice.

John, who is a governor of Weston College said: "Young people suffer thousands of incidents of bullying every week.

"It's not just the weak or the unpopular who get bullied. David Beckham, Ms Dynamite, Tom Cruise, Gareth Gates, and Sara Cox have all revealed that they were bullied when they were young.

"They prove bullying can be beaten, with the right support.

John continued: "I believe our teachers and lecturers need specialist training to cope with the problem of bullying.

"I find it deeply disturbing that local children are subject to bullying at school. What's worse, some children report

that adults are passive onlookers while they are being tormented.

"Children and young people only get one chance at their

"But it's not just about young people and schools. Bullying occurs in every environment and at every age.

"Last year, the Work and

people taking part in their study said they had experienced verbal abuse, intimidation or physical attacks because of their disability.

"More than a third of these incidents were physical attacks. Almost a third of the disabled people said they experienced attacks at least once a month.

"Experts found there was a general perception among disabled people that the police could not help. Only 40% of victims report incidents to the police.

A third of those questioned had to avoid specific places and change their routine due to attacks, while one in four had moved home.

"I think this is the one of the worst possible forms of bullying. It is usually underreported, often because the victims feel ashamed. It can destroy lives and it desperately needs publicising".



education. They are around 20 per cent of our population but represent 100 per cent of our future. Adults must not stand by when they see someone being bullied - they must intervene.

Pensions Committee, of which I am a member, carried out a review of incapacity benefits.

"As part of my research, I came across a report from the Disability Rights Commission. Nearly half of the disabled

Every week **John Penrose MP** holds a surgery at different locations around the constituency.

For help, advice or to make an appointment, please contact

**Grace Roper** in John's constituency office on

**01934 613841**

**John Penrose MP - Working for you all year round**