

REPORT TO: Children and Young People Policy and Performance Board
DATE: 20 October 2014
REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise
PORTFOLIO: Children, Young People and Families
SUBJECT: Safeguarding Compliance in Halton's Schools
WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To provide SMT/PPB with an overview of safeguarding compliance across schools in Halton, as reported to Halton Safeguarding Children Board.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That:

i) The Board receives the report

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Section 175/157 of the Education Act 2002 outlines a school's duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The organisational responsibilities for schools in relation to safeguarding children are set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children: a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (2013). Keeping Children Safe in Education (2014) contains statutory guidance for schools, including the role of the staff body, and specifically the Senior Designated Person, regarding safeguarding, safer recruitment and allegations management.

One of the objectives of Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) is to ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each person or body represented on the Board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area. Schools are required to complete Section 175/157 Audits to provide information to the Board on the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements in their settings. This includes maintained schools including nursery schools, academies, independent and free schools.

In addition, the Safeguarding Children in Education Officer offers a limited number of 2 day on-site safeguarding audits to schools, the findings of which are reported to the school and the LSCB.

The LSCB also receives performance information from the Safeguarding Unit and the Local Authority's Children's Services Performance Team in relation to schools' engagement in safeguarding processes from early intervention to child protection; for example, the number of schools where the Lead Professional for a CAF plan (Common Assessment Framework) is from a school, attendance and reports to Child Protection Case Conferences from schools.

3.2 The Section 175/157 Audit is a self-evaluation audit for schools to evidence their compliance against statutory safeguarding requirements. The sections within the Audit document relate to:

- Senior/Deputy Designated Persons - all schools must have a named Senior Designated Person for safeguarding who is a member of the Senior Management team and has undertaken the appropriate level of safeguarding training within the previous two years.
- Children in Care – all schools must have a Designated Teacher for Children in Care with lead responsibility for promoting the educational achievements of Children in Care.
- Governance Arrangements – all schools must have a specific Designated Governor for Safeguarding who has undertaken the appropriate level of safeguarding training within the last three years.
- Whole School Safeguarding Training – all staff in the school community should have undertaken basic awareness in safeguarding training in the last three years; safeguarding should be included in the induction of any new staff or volunteers.
- Safeguarding Quality Assurance – the Governing Body should receive termly reports to enable them to scrutinise safeguarding practice within the school; the Governing Body should also review the effectiveness of all safeguarding related policies & procedures, and ensure that the school follows guidance in respect of record keeping.
- Safeguarding related Policies & Procedures – the school should have the statutory safeguarding/child protection policy in place, available to all staff, pupils & parents.
- E-Safety – there should be a statutory policy on E-Safety including Acceptable Use, available to all staff, pupils & parents; there should be a named E-Safety lead.
- Managing allegations of abuse against staff – the school should be compliant with Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2014 statutory guidance and follow Local Authority procedures.
- Safer Recruitment & Single Central Record - the school should be compliant with Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2014 statutory guidance.

- Safeguarding Ethos – the school promotes the safety and wellbeing of children across the school community.

3.3 Following completion of the S175/157 Audits, schools are issued with an action plan. Progress against the action plan is reported in the following year. The LSCB receives a report on the findings from the audits. The findings are shared with the Local Authority who have agreed to support the process by reminding schools of the submission requirements and supporting oversight of the action plans via the Cross Service Monitoring Group and School Improvement Team.

3.4 In addition to the S175/157 Audits, the LSCB has received the following assurances from the Local Authority in relation to oversight of safeguarding arrangements across schools in Halton:

- The School Improvement Team act as Link Advisors to all schools. This includes monitoring safeguarding which is discussed and recorded at each visit.
- Quality Assurance visits to Newly Qualified Teachers where safeguarding is discussed and recorded.
- Moderators undertaking moderation assessments in primary schools have received safeguarding training as part of their training to be moderators.
- Staff from services regularly working in schools, for example Educational Psychologists, Attendance & Behaviour Service and SEN staff, have received safeguarding training and know how to spot risks and how to report concerns.
- The LSCB ensures that single agency safeguarding training is available free to all schools regardless of their status via the Safeguarding Children in Education Officer; this includes whole school Basic Awareness, and more specialised training for Senior/Deputy Designated Persons, Designated Governors and full Governing Bodies. This offer also includes accredited Safer Recruitment and Safer Recruitment refresher training.
- The termly Cross Service Monitoring Group considers safeguarding and multi-agency relationships as part of the categorisation judgements of schools, which in turn identifies the level of support and intervention each school receives from all agencies.

3.5 Each local authority should have a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) who must be informed of all allegations relating to adults working with children, including volunteers. The LADO should be informed when the worker has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;

- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.

Working Together 2013 amended the role of the LADO to remove issues of suitability from the LADO's remit. It is now the responsibility of the employer to determine and investigate issues of suitability and take appropriate action. The exception is in the event that Children's Social Care deems that the individual's actions have harmed a child and as a consequence the threshold for LADO involvement is met.

Halton's LADO is Katherine Appleton, Senior Manager for Safeguarding & Quality Assurance in the Safeguarding Unit. There is a LADO duty system in place, staffed by Child Protection Conference Chairs, to ensure that someone is available in the Safeguarding Unit during office hours. The duty LADO will provide consultation to schools regarding allegations. Both Head Teachers and Chairs of Governors have received briefings from the LADO on managing allegations.

In order to ensure a robust but swift resolution to allegations reported to the LADO, there are timescales to be adhered to within the process. A strategy meeting should take place within 5 working days of the initial referral, and the majority of cases are resolved within 1 month. Cases which conclude after a significant length of time are usually where court proceedings are taking place. The LSCB receives 6 monthly reports from the LADO that include information on timescales and outcomes, along with themes identified which can lead to actions being undertaken such as dissemination of safe working practices in relation to use of social media.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 With the recent change to statutory guidance issued from the Department for Education (Keeping Children Safe in Education 2014), schools are required to have updated their policies in line with this guidance. They are also required to ensure that they now have a statutory Staff Behaviour Policy / Code of Conduct. The last Section 175/157 Audit was completed in December 2013 and was prior to the issue of this guidance, therefore the LSCB will now require confirmation from schools that they have addressed these areas. This will be addressed within the 2014-15 action plan update process and will be reported to the Board accordingly.

5.0 OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Safeguarding forms part of the inspection framework for Ofsted and

if there are serious failings during an inspection, it could result in the school being placed in an Ofsted category. The result of this would then have financial implications in terms of the level of support and guidance the Local Authority would be required to offer the school.

6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

Although not all of Halton's children attend schools in the borough, the safeguarding duties apply to all schools. In addition, all LSCBs are responsible for ensuring the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements in their local area.

6.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

In order for children to develop the skills and achieve the qualifications necessary to eventually take up employment opportunities, children need to feel safe in the school setting. School based staff also need to be able to identify early signs of safeguarding concerns as children who are at risk of harm may find it more difficult to engage at school, adversely affecting their learning and future prospects.

6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

The safeguarding of children is fundamental to their health and well-being.

6.4 **A Safer Halton**

The effectiveness of Safeguarding Children arrangements is fundamental to making Halton a safe place of residence for children and young people. Operation Encompass which improves information sharing between the Police and schools of incidents of domestic abuse, allowing support to be given the next day that the child is in school, has been piloted in Widnes. The schools have engaged positively and the outcome of the pilot will be reported to the LSCB later in the year.

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

None identified.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 No risk assessment required for this report.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not required for this report.

9.0

**LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Children Act 2004	DfE Website	Tracey Holyhead
Education Act 2002	DfE Website	Tracey Holyhead
Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013	DfE Website	Tracey Holyhead
Keeping Children Safe in Education 2014	DfE Website	Tracey Holyhead