

REPORT TO: Children, Young People & Families
Policy & Performance Board

DATE: 13th September 2021

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, People

PORTFOLIO: Children & Young People

SUBJECT: Halton's response to Sexual Violence and
Sexual Harassment between children in
schools and colleges

WARD(S) All

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 A presentation will be delivered to Members on Halton's response to Ofsted's review into sexual violence and sexual harassment (SVSH) in schools and the DfE's subsequent updated statutory guidance.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

2.1 **i) Members are asked to consider the presentation and raise any questions they may have on the current arrangements for schools, children and their families.**

3.0 SUMMARY

3.1 The Education, Inclusion and Provision Department have provided safeguarding support, training and materials to all schools in Halton in relation to identifying and responding to allegations of sexual violence and sexual harassment both in and out of school (including incidents which occur online).

3.2 Members will be provided with a full update by presentation at the Board meeting on 13th September 2021.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None identified.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None identified.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children & Young People in Halton

Ofsted's national review into SVSH between children in schools identified that sexualised behaviours have become normalised. They found that senior leaders under-estimated the size of the issue and children did not report the abuse for fear of repercussions, uncertainty around responses and lack of understanding that the behaviours are inappropriate and potentially harmful.

The report concluded with a set of recommendations, which are reflected within the DfE's updated statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021' and made clear that it must be assumed SVSH is happening in every school and plan accordingly.

Therefore schools must ensure that instances of SVSH between children in Halton are identified and responded to appropriately and effectively, supported by clear policies, rigorous procedures and effective multi-agency working in line with the expectations within the statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children.

6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

The DfE has set an expectation that all staff within schools receive high quality training on SVSH during an INSET day in 2021/22. It will be important to ensure this is delivered in all Halton schools.

A National campaign will also raise awareness of normalised behaviours, which must be challenged and acknowledged as inappropriate and potentially harmful. It will be important to share this message within Halton to reinforce the messages from schools.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

SVSH can have an inevitable impact on the mental health and wellbeing of victims, (alleged) perpetrators, their families and those staff responding to incidents of SVSH with children. With an increased awareness and improved identification of incidents of SVSH, it will be important to ensure appropriate support from health, police and social care, for example, are equipped to support where necessary.

6.4 A Safer Halton

To identify and respond more rigorously and robustly to incidents of SVSH between children in order to protect them from harm.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None identified.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 To identify patterns and trends in types of abuse of harm within reports of incidents of SVSH within our schools.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 Children with SEND are 3 times more likely to be victims of SVSH and are also more likely to display harmful sexual behaviours themselves. This therefore much be considered in the support provided to children and a consideration taken by taken when identifying students vulnerable to SVSH. Students who are LGBTQ+ (and those who are perceived to be LGBTQ+) are also more likely to be victims of SVSH and schools need to provide additional support and opportunities to report abuse for these students.

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Safeguarding Children in Education 2021	DFE Website - https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2	Benjamin Holmes – Safeguarding Children in Education Officer, Education, Inclusion and Provision Division.
Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment of children in schools and colleges	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sexual-violence-and-sexual-harassment-between-children-in-schools-and-colleges	As above
Working together to safeguard children	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2	As above
Sharing nudes and semi nudes: advice for education	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people	As above