

Safer Recruitment in Schools Update

To: Audit and Accounts Committee

Date: 23 March 2021

From: Senior Adviser for Leadership

Electoral Division(s): All

Purpose: Schools Safer Recruitment Update

Key Issues: To update the Committee on the Schools Intervention Service monitoring of the Leadership of Safeguarding including safer recruitment in maintained schools for the period September 2020 to the end of February 2021.

Recommendation: To note and comment on the report.

Officer contact:

Name: Diane Stygal
Post: Senior Adviser for Leadership
Email: Diane.Stygal@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
Tel: 01223 507115

1. Safeguarding Reviews rolling programme

- 1.1 The rolling programme of Safeguarding Reviews ceased last March 2020 as a result of the Corona Virus Lockdown and the need for the Leadership Advisers to become involved in the Local Authority emergency response to the situation.
- 1.2 From September 1st 2020 however, these reviews recommenced and, in order to strengthen the Leadership and Management of Safeguarding across Cambridgeshire Schools, the Leadership Team has been involved in carrying out Safeguarding Reviews and Health Checks for all LA maintained primary schools in Cambridgeshire, as well as some secondary academies and Special schools following our already established biannual cycle, plus for some additional schools cancelled due to COVID. From January 2021 the team also began conducting Safeguarding Reviews for all Peterborough maintained schools.
- 1.3 Given that Safeguarding is a priority for the School Improvement Team generally, these reviews have been split across the year into three priority groups against agreed criteria. Some of these have been in-school face to face meetings, but many have been held virtually because of social distancing, etc. It is intended that, once restrictions are lifted, all virtual reviews will be followed up with short visits to double check key documents and files including the Single Central Record, Employment and Child Protection File, as well as to follow up on any areas of weakness identified in the review documentation.
- 1.4 Academies and multi-academy trusts who purchase the Leadership Adviser offer continue to have a free safeguarding review annually and these have now been completed. Other Cambridgeshire academies sometimes purchase reviews on a 'pay as you go basis', however many wish to source such reviews from other providers or from within their own Trusts. We have also recently concluded our commitment to the DEMAT Trust where we have supported their Leadership of Safeguarding training as well as carried out independent safeguarding reviews and health checks for their schools.
- 1.5 Between September 1st 2020 and March 1st 2021 (6 months) the two leadership Advisers have completed:

- 78 Safeguarding Reviews across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

Of these:

- 59 were primary schools across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough
- 50 were primary schools in Cambridgeshire
- 9 were primary schools in Peterborough
- 1 was a Peterborough Secondary School

- 3 were special schools in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough
- 15 were academy primary schools

1.6 Key themes emerging from these reviews:

General strengths:

- Safeguarding Policies and Website Compliance with Essential Documents on File
- Monitoring of Vulnerable Groups including vulnerable groups
- Safer Recruitment
- Provision for GDPR

General weaknesses:

- Complaints and Allegations in respect of application of policy and procedure
- Health and Safety in respect of Risk Assessments for inner/Outer Site Areas

2. Training, support and monitoring

2.1 The Local Authority Safeguarding and Child Protection Team provides a wide range of Child Protection related courses to nearly all maintained schools, academies and independent schools in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

2.2 The Leadership Team also offers a full range of training for all schools and education providers across both Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Currently all of this training is delivered 'virtually' in line with Government COVID guidance, and the programme includes:

- Half-day conferences
- Safer Recruitment Training – both full and refresher courses
- Complaints and allegations training
- Governor Services organised training and briefings for governors and Cam Clerks
- Induction for Peterborough Schools re- Complaints Policy
- Academy Schools general safeguarding training.
- Bespoke Training for individual Governing Bodies
- New Headteacher Induction Programme – Safer Recruitment and the Wider Safeguarding Culture
- Deputy Heads Leadership Course - Policy compliance and the Wider Safeguarding Culture

3. Safer Recruitment Training

3.1 The Governor Services team continues to offer well attended Safer Recruitment Training across the county, which the Leadership Advisers conduct on their behalf. Both refresher and full training is offered, and the training is based on nationally accredited materials.

- 3.2 Diane Stygal and Phil Nash are both nationally accredited trainers and deliver the Safer Recruitment training for the Schools Intervention Service.

4. Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

- 4.1 The Leadership Advisers continue to work with schools and the LADO when allegations are made against adults who work with children. We are kept informed of allegations and often attend Allegations Meetings.
- 4.2 In the last 6 months we have attended 29 LADO Allegation Management Meetings ranging across primary, secondary and special schools.

5. Outcomes

- 5.1 All of the maintained schools inspected in Cambridgeshire have had 'effective' judgements for safer recruitment since the start of the academic year. One school received an 'inadequate' judgement last June 2020 during a Section 5 inspection. The School Improvement Service and Leadership Team were swift to intervene however and during their re-visit in October 2020 this judgement was reviewed and the school found to be 'effective' again.

6. Intervention

- 6.1 The School Improvement Advisers and English and maths advisers are also ensuring that Safeguarding is at the heart of their work and comment on safeguarding after each visit. There is now a box for Safeguarding comments added into the Note of Visit format.
- 6.2 All SIS team members have a safeguarding objective as part of their Performance Appraisal and also:
- Ask questions of senior leaders to probe the Wider Safeguarding Culture of a school
 - Check the SCR and HR files
 - Enquire about CP records
 - Ensure that schools have sufficient, recently trained DSLs
 - Update chronolators as appropriate (chronolators are evidence based tables where concerns are listed in respect of information sharing across teams).
 - Have checked off COVID risk assessments
 - Ensure Safe and Well checks are taking place
 - Analyse school Recovery Plans
 - Look at Remote Learning Plans
 - Support schools to improve attendance rates
 - Ensure members of the Governing Body are fulfilling their safeguarding responsibilities

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 We continue to see a positive safeguarding picture across Cambridgeshire schools. The reviews demonstrate that there are usually minor improvements that schools can make. The picture across Peterborough is not quite as easy to summarise given we have only just begun our work there.