

SAFER RECRUITMENT IN SCHOOLS UPDATE

To: **Audit and Accounts Committee**

Date: 28.11.2019

From:

Electoral Division(s): **All**

Purpose: 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

Recommendation:

The Committee is asked to note and comment on the update provided.

<i>Officer contact:</i>	
Name:	Chris Meddle
Post:	Senior Leadership Adviser
Email:	Chris.meddle@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
Tel:	01223 703564

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Safer recruitment is a statutory safeguarding requirement for schools. Expectations are outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019. This document was updated by the Department for Education in September 2019. Keeping Children Safe in Education has 4 sections with section 3 giving schools extensive guidance on safer recruitment.

2. MAIN ISSUES

- 2.1 **The Committee requires assurances that Cambridgeshire maintained schools are compliant with statutory safer recruitment procedures and the wider leadership of safeguarding.**
- 2.2 **The Education Directorate carries out regular safeguarding reviews in schools, which include a major focus on safer recruitment.**

- 2.3 To facilitate this the Education Directorate Safeguarding and Safer Recruitment Report is presented each term to the Audit and Accounts Committee.**

3. EDUCATION ADVISER SAFEGUARDING REPORT

3.1 Safeguarding Reviews rolling programme

The two Leadership Advisers continue to maintain a programme of Safeguarding Review visits to maintained schools. A rolling programme monitoring list is maintained and schools are prioritised according to the following risks:

Inspection risk
New head risk
Training risk
Schools causing concern.

The list tracks the last three years reviews and outlines which schools will be reviewed each academic year.

The safeguarding review tool was updated in the summer following the update of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019. The content is matched to other resources available from Local Authority teams. Lessons learnt from OFSTED (The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) inspections and briefings have also informed the document.

Maintained schools have also received an updated template to enable them to maintain a comprehensive Single Central Register (SCR) in which they record the details of their safer recruitment procedures. The register continues to cover statutory requirements as well as having non-statutory sections which allow schools to record additional aspects of safer recruitment and their wider safeguarding culture. We see the Cambridgeshire model SCR widely adopted beyond maintained schools which is encouraging and the quality of the record keeping continues to improve.

The review covers the following areas related to the leadership of safeguarding in addition to safer recruitment:

Safeguarding policies and website compliance
Monitoring of vulnerable groups
Health and safety
Safer recruitment
Complaints and allegations
Wider safeguarding culture

Critical Incidents

A Leadership Review Toolkit was published last year for maintained schools. That toolkit includes a dedicated section on the leadership of safeguarding. It has been well received and a second print run will be available for distribution to schools in the New Year. A number of academies and independent schools have purchased the pack.

3.2 Academies

Academies and multi-academy trusts who purchase the Leadership Adviser offer can have a free safeguarding review and some other academies both in Cambridgeshire and other counties purchase reviews on a pay as you go basis.

The Leadership Advisers have a contract with one major Multi-Academy Trust to deliver their safeguarding reviews and their safeguarding training on the Leadership of Safeguarding. The Trust runs over 30 schools in Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and Norfolk.

The income from our work with schools in other counties helps us to achieve our earnings targets as well as providing us with the experience of other authorities approaches to safer recruitment.

3.3 Training, support and monitoring

Maintained nurseries, primary schools, academies and special schools are independently governed and managed and are free to purchase their training support from a range of providers including the Local Authority. For example, Safer Recruitment training is offered by the Local Authority) LA Governor Services Team, the NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children) who provide online training and private providers including accredited trainers and private companies.

The LA Safeguarding and Child Protection Service provides a wide range of Child Protection related courses to nearly all maintained schools academies and independent schools in Cambridgeshire.

The Leadership of Safeguarding

Leadership of Safeguarding workshops are being delivered this year on a traded basis by the two Leadership Advisers.

The areas covered are:

Wider safeguarding culture
Safer recruitment

Complaints and allegations
Monitoring of vulnerable groups
Health and safety and contractor control
Safeguarding policies and website compliance
Critical Incidents.

New Heads Induction

The New Heads Induction Training delivered by the Schools Intervention Service has a module on the leadership of safeguarding and new heads in Cambridgeshire receive a safeguarding review tailored to their circumstances. For example we have just completed a review of the Single Central Record for an experienced, but new head in Cambridge City.

Safer Recruitment Training

It remains a statutory requirement for all appointment panels in schools to have a safer recruitment trained person on the panel

The Governor Services team continues to offer well attended Safer Recruitment Training across the county. Both refresher and full training is offered. Schools are free to access their training from a range of sources. The training is based on nationally accredited materials.

Chris Meddle currently delivers the Safer Recruitment training as well as leading on the safeguarding reviews for the Schools Intervention Service.

One multi-academy trust and one large independent school have requested safer recruitment training for leaders in all of their schools. These are done on a traded basis.

1:1 support on safer recruitment issues is also provided on the phone to all schools and sometimes providers of services in schools, by email and in school when requested.

Governor training also covers safer recruitment as part of the wider leadership of safeguarding agenda and sessions are planned this academic year on "Creating a Safeguarding Culture". This training emphasises the governor's strategic leadership role in ensuring that safer recruitment and safeguarding is a strength of the school and not just a compliance matter.

The Education Safeguarding team Annual Governor's Safeguarding Monitoring report includes a significant section on safer recruitment as does the Governor Service's Annual Monitoring report. These have a completion and return rate of over 90% to the Local Authority from all Cambridgeshire state schools, including academies.

The Leadership Advisers are currently carrying out an analysis of the take up of training. This will be reported on in the spring term.

3.5 Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

As members will appreciate, sometimes safer recruitment procedures do not prevent adults who work with children having allegations made against them. There are clear processes outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (part 4). If concerns reach the threshold, allegations meetings are held. The Senior Leadership Adviser continues to attend as many meetings as he can and therefore has a strong working relationship with the LADO and a detailed understanding of the issues occurring in schools. This informs the review process and the way we work with schools. Allegations meeting notes and action points are shared with the Senior Leadership Adviser if they involve school professionals.

3.4 Outcomes

None of the schools inspected in Cambridgeshire have had inadequate judgements for safer recruitment in 2019.

There is now a new OFSTED framework which continues to focus on safer recruitment and employment files as well as other aspects of safeguarding. OFSTED reports have changed their style and so far this term only one Cambridgeshire maintained school has had a full inspection under the new framework. The focus has been on academies.

The one maintained school inspected did not have a comment on safeguarding, but the school was reviewed by us before the inspection and safer recruitment was effective.

OFSTED judgements from two published reports are copied below. Both academies have bought in our safeguarding review offer:

“Governors monitor leader’s actions to be certain that the correct checks are made on everyone who works in school. Leaders seek the advice of external agencies whenever the need arises”.

“Governors ensure that safeguarding pupils is high on their agenda and check the schools safeguarding processes regularly”.

Intervention

The two Leadership Advisers continue to follow up OFSTED safeguarding complaints that are passed to the Local Authority and sometimes these are linked to safer recruitment and staff conduct. This enables us to work in partnership with Cambridgeshire academies and independent schools that we would not otherwise come into contact with.

We are increasingly being asked by Trusts and schools beyond Cambridgeshire to support the leadership of safeguarding which is increasing our knowledge and experience and contributes to traded income.

3.5 The Knowledge Hub

This web based resource is freely available to maintained schools and academies in Cambridgeshire. It is also available nationally. It continues to be updated with resources that school leaders and business managers can access to support safer recruitment processes.

3.6 Conclusion

We continue to see a positive safer recruitment picture across Cambridgeshire schools but the reviews demonstrate that there are often improvements that schools can make and it is important that we do not consider the job to ever be completed. We are aware from some work that we have done in authorities that where there is no review process then schools can be judged as not doing all they can to keep children safe.

Source Documents: None