

**SAFER RECRUITMENT IN EARLY YEARS UPDATE**

To: **Audit and Accounts Committee**

Date: **09 March 2020**

From: **Cambridgeshire Early Years Service**

Electoral

Division: **All**

Purpose: **Early Years Safer Recruitment Update**

**Key Issues:** To update the Committee on the Early Years Service monitoring of safeguarding, including safer recruitment.

**Recommendation: To note and comment on the report.**

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## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2017 is mandatory for all early years providers, maintained schools, independent schools, all providers on the Early Years register and all providers registered with an early years childminder agency. Section 3 of the Framework - Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements clearly sets out the steps providers must take to keep children safe. Providers must also have regard to Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.
- 1.2 The Early Years Service is part of the Education Directorate of the Local Authority. The Service supports the quality of teaching and learning, provides training, advice and guidance to early years and childcare providers and schools, delivered by specialist experts. The Service commissions the Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY) and works in partnership with them to ensure effective support is provided to childminders.

## **2. MAIN ISSUES**

- 2.1 The Committee requires assurances that Cambridgeshire early years settings are compliant with safer recruitment procedures and the wider leadership of safeguarding.
- 2.2 It was agreed at the last Audit and Accounts Committee that a safer recruitment report would be provided by the Early Years Service.

## **3. SENIOR ADVISER INTERVENTION AND SAFEGUARDING REPORT**

### **3.1 Training, support and monitoring**

All early years providers can purchase a membership package from the Local Authority. The package enables providers to access training and support from a range of specialist advisers in the Early Years Service.

The Early Years Service provides a wide range of safeguarding and child protection training which is validated by the Safeguarding Children's Board. Safer recruitment training is offered by the Early Years Service and 231 practitioners have attended this face to face training during the last 3 years. Providers can also access National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) online training or training provided by accredited trainers and private companies.

There is a Business Governance Team who provide advice and guidance and specialist support to employers, including committees and trustees. Support can take the form of telephone, email or face to face and will vary depending on the need of the provider. Roles and Responsibilities training is also available to committee members, trustees and owners, and includes a detailed section on safer recruitment, induction and supervision.

### **3.2 Safeguarding Evaluation Tool**

All early years providers have access to the Safeguarding Evaluation Tool (SET). The document is designed to enable providers to evaluate their safeguarding practice. It is regularly reviewed and updated to reflect changes to local procedures, statutory guidance and legislation. The document should be completed by the setting Child Protection Designated Person/s with input from the management and staff team. The SET is available to all providers and is a compulsory element of the intervention process for settings judged requires improvement or inadequate by Ofsted.

The SET covers the following areas of safeguarding:

- Safeguarding policies and procedures
- Staff safeguarding training
- Induction, supervision and appraisal
- Early intervention and multi-agency working

- Confidentiality and information sharing
- Safe environment and protective ethos
- Allegations management

### **3.3 The Knowledge Hub**

This web based resource is available to all early years providers in Cambridgeshire. There are a wide range of documents stored within the Knowledge Hub, including the recently updated 'Safeguarding Policy and Support Pack'.

### **3.4 Jigsaw Magazine**

Jigsaw is a termly magazine produced by the Early Years Service that is available to all early years providers. It includes sections on Business Governance and Safeguarding and features regular articles regarding Safer Recruitment. Providers also contribute to the magazine by providing articles to share best practice.

### **3.5 Child Protection Information Networks (CPINS) and Leadership and Governance Briefings**

These meetings take place termly and include focus topics. Safer recruitment and committee/owner roles and responsibilities was a focus of the summer term CPINS 2019 and has been identified as a topic for the leadership and Governance Briefings in summer 2020. The allegations management process was the CPIN focus topic in the autumn term 2019.

### **3.6 Allegations Management**

The Early Years Service has produced allegations guidance and an allegations flow chart. There is an expectation that all providers will display the allegations flow chart and that staff know how to access it and respond appropriately and in a timely manner in the event of an allegation. Child Protection training includes a section on protective ethos and managing allegations.

Safer recruitment procedures do not always prevent allegations being made against adults who work with children. If concerns reach the allegations threshold, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will convene an Allegations Management Meeting (AMM). The Senior Adviser Intervention and Safeguarding attends the meetings and has an effective working relationship with the LADO and Ofsted. Support is provided by the Early Years Service to settings who are required to undertake internal investigations as an outcome of an AMM and until the allegations process has concluded.

### **3.7 Ofsted Outcomes**

None of the settings inspected by Ofsted in Cambridgeshire in 2019 or to date

have had requires improvement or inadequate judgements linked to safer recruitment processes. Safer recruitment continues to be a strong focus at inspection.

OFSTED judgements from two recently published reports are copied below.

*“Managers and staff implement robust and effective procedures and place a strong emphasis on ensuring children are cared for in a safe environment. This includes an extremely comprehensive recruitment, selection and induction process.”*

*“Staff have a good knowledge of wider safeguarding issues, including the risk to children of being exposed to extreme views and behaviour. Leaders follow robust recruitment processes to help assure the suitability of adults working with children.”*

### **3.8 Intervention**

The Senior Adviser Intervention and Safeguarding follows up any safeguarding complaints or concerns that come to the attention of the Early Years Service. The response includes working in partnership with Ofsted, the LADO and other key agencies.

Intensive support is provided by the Early Years Service for all providers who do not have an Ofsted judgement of good or better. These providers do not have an automatic right to Nursery Education Funding, Funded 2's grant or Early Years Pupil Premium. Part of the Local Authority's role is to assess each case to determine if funding will remain.

A setting improvement plan (SIP) is created based on the recommendations or actions set by Ofsted. The support takes the form of bespoke training linked to Ofsted actions and recommendations, brokered visits to other providers, and/or coaching and mentoring within the setting. The support can be provided at a whole setting level; can be focussed on particular members of staff. Intervention support remains in place until the setting achieves an Ofsted outcome of good or better. Safeguarding support is a compulsory element for all providers in intervention.

The Early Years Service also implements an Enhanced Support Process (ESP). This process enables an increased level of support to settings who have been judged good or outstanding by Ofsted, but where the Service or other professionals have identified concerns since the last inspection. Where required, the service will escalate concerns to the Regulator (Ofsted).

### **3.9 Conclusion**

We continue to see a positive safer recruitment picture across Cambridgeshire early years settings. Ofsted inspection outcomes would indicate that settings are implementing robust recruitment processes.

However, there is no room for complacency and the Early Years Service will continue to provide and further develop Safer Recruitment support, training and guidance.

Source / background Documents: None