

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Education, Skills and Culture Cabinet Board

17th January, 2019

Report of the Head of Participation – Chris Millis

Matter for information

Wards Affected: All

SAFEGUARDING UPDATE

Purpose of the Report

1. To update Members in relation to safeguarding activities within Schools and the wider Directorate.

Background

2. This report provides Members with an update of safeguarding related activities across schools and the wider directorate taken place over the past 12 months and also outlines areas of work identified to take place over the coming 12-18 months.

Safeguarding

3. Attached as Appendix A is a copy of the directorate's self-evaluation document 'Safeguarding in Neath Port Talbot 2018-2019'. This document was produced from the Estyn self-evaluation template and formed the basis for discussion around the safeguarding element of the LA inspection in December, 2017. The document is regularly updated to reflect progress made and is used as a steer to drive development and improvement across the directorate.

4. Key points extracted from the document that are worth highlighting include:
- i) During 2018 the appointment of a replacement Safeguarding Officer allowed for the role to be refreshed and post title updated. Despite the loss of an experienced and knowledgeable member of staff and initial concern of service disruption, Schools and Directorate Managers have overwhelmingly welcomed the new appointment who is well qualified and quickly settled into post over the summer recess period.
 - ii) Every school has an identified Designated Senior Person (DSP) and a deputy. This person acts as the safeguarding officer for the school and is the bridge between the LA Education Safeguarding Officer (ESO) and School. The ESO provides regular updates and training to DSPs and their Deputies, who will then cascade this training to other staff, governors and volunteers within the school community.
 - iii) New easy read and more visual safeguarding posters have been created for display in schools to outline to users who to report any concerns they may have to. The old format posters were felt to be too wordy and uninteresting to read and often went unnoticed.
 - iv) At the start of the new academic year in conjunction with colleagues in Police a process was put into place of sharing with schools Police Protection Notices (PPNs). PPNs are issued by Police in cases of domestic abuse and provide information to key school staff when a child is linked to an incident (whether directly involved or not). Feedback from schools has been very positive in terms of the benefit of having a holistic picture of what is happening in pupils' lives and the ability for the school to manage any adverse effect that the child might experience.
 - v) Senior officers within the directorate continue to interview and vet supply agencies that wish to be included on the LA's approved list to engage with schools. Individual agency recruitment activities are robustly audited which include testing as to their policies and procedures; methods of recruitment and deployment of workers and their responses to any allegations against staff that might be made. Agencies continue to positively report that the Council's testing of their safer recruitment processes remains generally unique to this Council, is robust and something they experience as constructive challenge.
 - vi) Individual school safeguarding reviews have been in place for approximately 5 years. Since the start of this academic year each school will now be subject to a review on a two-yearly cycle instead of

three-yearly cycles. The checks are undertaken by a team of peer reviewers; some of whom are head teachers, designated senior persons, senior officers and challenge advisers. The ESO oversees the programme of visits and provides a quality assurance role upon receipt of the draft report. An evaluation of the system was undertaken during the year which reported very positively and reaffirms the value of the reviews. As part of the review visits, the peer reviewer will have access to the schools safer recruitment documentation and latest internal audit report. Pupil interviews are undertaken where children are asked whether they feel safe and happy in their school environment.

vii) Senior officers from within the directorate, along with HR, Health and Safety and Social Services colleagues meet as part of the two-weekly education safeguarding reference group meeting where all cases involving allegations of professional abuse within schools or central service areas are monitored for progress from the point of receipt of the disclosure to the closure of the case which might include the dismissal of the member of staff.

5. Areas for development:

Three main areas for development have been identified and are being monitored over the next 12-18 months. Firstly, that all education services and schools carry out full safe recruitment checks on all paid staff and volunteers. We have also identified that our education services and our schools always check all the safeguarding arrangements of partners and external education providers as part of their commissioning arrangements. To progress this we have instigated the bullet points listed below. Finally, that all physical interventions by teaching staff are properly recorded and subsequently reported fully to the local authority as required by policy and procedures.

- Internal Audit to also focus on volunteers, reporting mechanisms and details of review;
- Headteachers and Coordinators are aware that all accountable managers / school staff follow the “Volunteers and Safe Recruitment – Guidance for Headteachers and Managers”;
- Peer reviews in schools will now take place every two years, with greater emphasis on safer recruitment and external providers;
- Safeguarding Action Plans reviewed by lead safeguarding officer in all schools;

- Updates made to cross-directorate spreadsheet for external providers, creating a cross-directorate consistency in checking external providers / volunteers.
 - Safer Recruitment Grid reviewed and discussed with Safeguarding group every two weeks and reported to Operational Group.
 - The Physical Intervention Monitoring Group (PIMG) meet to consider arising themes in terms of training, development, support and how best to address these. The group also meet:
 - Where physical intervention methods employed are above/beyond those detailed within the pupils positive handling plan.
 - Where the use of positive handling methods resulted in an injury being incurred by either a child or a member of staff.
 - Where, as a result of positive handling, a complaint is received or an allegation made.
 - Where physical intervention is used, in any school & where the pupil has no positive handling plan is in place.
 - Introduction of an LA wide safeguarding database. Cluster based bids will improve the recording and reporting of all safeguarding incidents. This will be via the “MyConcern” company.
6. Members will continue to be provided with further reports on a periodic basis informing them of the work in this area.

Financial Impact

7. This report is for information purposes only, there is no financial impact associated with this report.

Equality Impact Assessment

8. Having considered the Council's screening assessment guidance produced to assist the Council in discharging its Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010 it has been determined that this report does not require an equalities impact assessment.

Workforce Impacts

9. This report is for information purposes only, there are no workforce or staffing issues directly associated with this report.

Legal Impacts

10. This report is for information purposes only, there is no legal impact associated with this report.

Risk Management

11. This report is for information purposes only, there is no risk management impact associated with this report.

Consultation

12. There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

Recommendations

13. That Members note the contents of this report.

Appendices

14. Appendix A: Safeguarding in Neath Port Talbot 2018-2019.

List of Background Papers

15. None.

Officer Contact

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