



**CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

9 SEPTEMBER 2013

SAFEGUARDING ASSURANCE

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG
PEOPLE'S SERVICE**

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to introduce Safeguarding Assurance to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It will describe how assurance is achieved and illustrate three priority safeguarding areas as requested by the Committee.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. Safeguarding Assurance is at the heart of the County Council's responsibilities. The Statutory Duties of the Lead Member for Children and Young People and the Director of Children and Young People's Services set out in national guidance, directly addresses those individuals' duties and responsibilities. These were reported to Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held in May 2012.
3. Associated national guidance published by the Department for Education is Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013.¹ This sets out strategic and operational responsibilities of the County Council and our partners to safeguard children and young people.

Background

4. Although strategic responsibility for services provided to safeguard children is located in the Children and Young People's Service, it is important to emphasise that the County Council and its partners in schools, the police, probation service and the NHS share the duty to effectively work together in a way that ensures effective and co-ordinated safeguarding of children. This collective responsibility is discharged by a formal partnership, the

¹ <http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/w/working%20together.pdf>

Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB), which is chaired by a suitably senior and independent person. The independent chair holds the County Council and its partners to account for the quality of their safeguarding services.

Safeguarding Assurance

5. Safeguarding Assurance describes the important function of determining the extent to which the management, services and practice, deployed to protect children and young people by the County Council is fulfilled. This should actively consider material from four sources; data about the service, audit activity to analyse the quality of the service, staff views and the views of children, young people and their families.
6. These four areas are used in the internal performance management approach in the Children and Young Peoples Service and latterly in the Supporting Leicestershire Families Service and also form the basis of the LSCB's performance management of the partnership.
7. There is a systematic approach to this work within the Children and Young Peoples Service and the Supporting Leicestershire Families Service. This starts with the actions of the Lead Member, the Director and Directorate Management Team to determine the extent to which safeguarding is assured. There are responsibilities across the operational services but as would be expected the fundamental day to day performance management is carried out by the front line managers through their supervision and management of the staff.
8. In this current year, and in response to Ofsted's views about our safeguarding services the focus of the performance management is on improving consistency. Audit and improvement work has therefore focussed on the quality of assessment work, a key part of keeping children and young people safe. Linked to this and in response to feedback from staff and children and young people is work to ensure there is a confident and competent workforce in safeguarding services. This is being addressed by the introduction of a practice methodology 'Grow Safety' across the workforce.
9. The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee have a critical role in view of the Council's collective responsibilities and commitment to the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable children, young people and their families. In addition there is a standing panel to consider continuously safeguarding matters which reports to the Committee.

Priority Areas for Consideration

10. The Local Authority's responsibilities for safeguarding children and young people are extensive and cover a broad range of topics. Currently the priorities include Child Sexual Exploitation and the day to day practice we are engaged in to protect vulnerable children, including the early identification of emerging problems in a family. The committee has asked for information in

relation to three other priority areas of anti-bullying work, e-safety and dealing with hate crime.

Anti - Bullying Work

11. The Anti-Bullying Team works at a strategic level to develop a whole school approach to tackle bullying. The team does not have the remit to undertake individual casework but does include the following approaches;
 - i. The 'Beyond Bullying Award' is now the central to the support the Anti-Bullying team delivers to schools. The award provides a structured framework for schools; they are required to develop a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate good anti-bullying practice across a range of criteria. It is an excellent way for schools to gain accreditation and recognition for their achievements in embedding effective anti-bullying practice.
 - ii. Provide a range of training courses throughout the year.
 - iii. Deliver INSET and bespoke training on request and in response to need.
 - iv. Provide support and advice to review and develop anti-bullying policies.
 - v. Provide general support and advice to school staff, parents and carers when contacted.
 - vi. Is proactive in contacting schools and providing additional support where concerns have been raised about bullying.
 - vii. Develop anti-bullying resources (including a range of advice leaflets available via www.beyondbullying.com)
 - viii. Provide current guidance and information www.beyondbullying.com
 - ix. Work in partnership with other agencies and colleagues across the authority
 - x. Promote activities and information to raise awareness during National Anti-Bullying Week.

12. This year Anti-Bullying Week (18th - 22nd November) calls on children and young people to take the lead on creating a future without bullying - using new technologies to promote positive communication rather than being held back by cyber-bullying. ('The future is ours, safe ,fun and connected')

13. The team is now Stonewall Education Champions receiving recognition for ongoing work to prevent and tackle Homophobic bullying

E - Safety

14. The growing area of the safety of children and young people on-line causes particular challenges for parents, schools and the County Council. Specific e-safety training is provided to schools as a normal part of their routine safeguarding support. In addition in Leicestershire an annual Year 9 e-safety survey which is now in its fourth year is carried out. The survey is planned to coincide each year with Safer Internet Day and is an opportunity for secondary schools to re-visit issues around e-safety with students. The survey is hosted on "The Jitty" website and the number of responses has

increased from 800 in the first year to over 2,200 in 2013. The survey is a significant contribution to the local understanding of young people's use of the internet and the risks faced. The results of the survey are analysed and key messages are incorporated into training presentations delivered to school staff and parents. A summary report is prepared for all schools and distributed via EIS. Individual survey results, comparing each school with the overall LA results, are sent to each participating school.

15. This year the survey results have seen a small increase in a number of unsafe behaviours compared with the previous year i.e. more webcam use to meet new people, less use of tight privacy settings and more cyber-bullying. About the same proportion of children met up with online contacts but a slightly less percentage went on their own. Just over a quarter of the students said that their parent or carer did not know what they did on the internet. About a third of students said that they allow programmes/apps/websites to know their location. A significantly higher proportion of these students engaged in risky online behaviours than those who said their parents do supervise their internet use. Most young people use Facebook, but many also use Twitter, and most use a mobile device to access the internet.
16. Safer Internet Day 2014 will take place on the 11th February 2014, with the theme 'Let's create a better internet together'. The Anti-Bullying Alliance and ABA member Childnet International will be working together to connect the two campaigns so that schools and colleges can plan activities throughout the school year to prevent cyber-bullying, promote e-safety and create a positive online world.
17. In view of recent tragic events locally and nationally an additional emphasis will be given to e-safety training in the Autumn term, with a bespoke training event for schools and another for youth service and other professional groups working with young people.

Hate Crime

18. A hate incident is any incident where someone has been targeted because they are believed to be different, this may be motivated by: age, gender, gender identity, disability, race, religion/belief or sexual orientation. Hate incidents can be reported to the police, but also at reporting centres in other locations across the County. It is important to distinguish that the police are the only agency that can deal with hate incidents that are crimes but that support and advocacy can be provided by victim support to victims of hate crime and incidents. In Leicestershire the Council's joint approach with the police, the Hate Incident Monitoring Project (HIMP) currently receives reports into a specific database; however from September the HIMP will be replacing this database with Sentinel, in line with the Police and districts/boroughs. This will enable all agencies using the system to avoid duplication and ensure incidents are accurately collated and dealt with appropriately. Incidents of Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) often include hate factors as an aggravating factor.

19. Annually the HIMP run a 'Stop and Tell' campaign, taking a different focus each year. Previous campaigns include raising awareness of mental health, young people and lesbian, gay, bi and transgender issues (LGB&T). The campaigns are run in partnership with a number of agencies. Historically the HIMP has worked closely with schools, delivering assemblies and specific class sessions on equality and diversity and hate, as part of the duty on schools to record racist incidents. The majority of schools across the County have now become academies and no longer have this duty; however the Project is continuing to engage with schools in order to support them to record hate incidents.
20. This report has set out the strategic responsibilities for safeguarding children and young people, and how these responsibilities are monitored, and have given the Committee assurance information in relation to the three priority areas of anti-bullying work, e-safety and dealing with hate crime. Future meetings of the Standing Panel on Safeguarding will consider reports on other priority areas.

Resource Implications

21. Resource for delivering the County Council's Safeguarding responsibilities is provided within the Medium Term Financial Strategy. The budget has been increased through the allocation of growth and has increased from £951k in 2011/12 to £1.35m in 2013/14.

Equal Opportunities Implications

22. This report considers the safety and wellbeing of the children and young people likely to be most disadvantaged in the county.

Background Papers

23. The Statutory Duties of the Director of Children's Services published by the Department for Education 2012.
24. Working Together to Safeguard Children published by the Department for Education 2013.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

25. None

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