



## **s175/157 Education Safeguarding**

### **Executive Summary**

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The purpose of the section 157/175 audit is to enable the Local Authority to assure themselves that all education providers across Hillingdon are discharging their statutory responsibilities as a minimum and following guidance relating to the safeguarding of children and young people, specifically the key statutory guidance in this area, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022). The audit also contained questions related to good practice and priorities of the Hillingdon Safeguarding Children's Partnership (HSCP), where the Local Authority and HSCP were interested in gauging the level of knowledge and confidence of education settings, to inform future training and support.

Education settings in Hillingdon were encouraged to use the self-audit tool provided to support them in undertaking a detailed review of safeguarding across their setting, providing evidence that statutory requirements are met and highlighting any gaps where action is needed. Settings were encouraged to use this tool to provide feedback to their governors and trustees as part of their annual review and to include in wider school development and improvement plans.

Due to the nature of this being a self-audit tool there is discrepancy in completion across individual education settings. Some settings have used this in the way intended, as detailed above, and clear evidence and actions plans are highlighted. On the other hand, a substantial proportion of settings have provided little or no evidence to their ratings which makes overall analysis of the findings more complex. Varied grading across settings also highlights a level of subjectivity and some settings' self-rating has reflected actions identified as opposed to identified gaps in statutory requirements. Whilst we consider it positive that these settings are striving to achieve good practice, it provides an added complexity in analysing the response. The results obtained must therefore, be considered with this in mind.

Based on self-audit ratings and a review of the presented evidence it appears that statutory safeguarding requirements are being met by the majority of education settings. There was also some unambiguous evidence of positive safeguarding practice beyond statutory requirements, some of which we have highlighted within this document. However, the lack of evidence provided in over 50% of the audits makes it difficult to be assured of this practice across all settings, even those who have rated themselves as meeting all requirements. As such we do not feel the audit alone has provided the level of assurance desired.

The audit has appeared useful in allowing schools to identify some immediate actions required to ensure statutory requirements were met. In most cases these actions appear relatively minor and quick to implement. There were a small number of settings where more significant gaps were identified, and these settings will be supported to address these in collaboration with school improvement partners.

The analysis has allowed us to identify some key themes where settings identified they needed to do more to ensure good practice in safeguarding children and young people. These themes are explored in the full body of the report as well as recommendations for how this information can be used by the HSCP to inform future training and resource.

## Good Practice

Good practice was demonstrated by settings providing detailed evidence in their audit that enabled us to understand how safeguarding is managed and promoted in their settings.

Some settings evidenced that they used quizzes, surveys and robust induction processes to support staff knowledge and safeguarding practice. For example, one school stated:

*“Staff read KCSiE and initial on the AS Policy Register. This information is touched upon and discussed during Monday morning staff briefings. Additional information is shared in the Friday Bulletin for staff. As incidents occur, individuals meet with DSLs and knowledge develops. The KCSiE Quiz is used as a tool to refresh knowledge and re-visit parts of KCSiE.”*

Some settings provided good examples of how governing bodies provide strategic oversight to schools' systems, policies and processes. One school stated:

*“Safeguarding is a standing item at Academy Council meetings. DSL attends. Information shared is minuted and actions are followed up after the meeting. School policies are tested, checked and ratified by the CEO and Federation Principal on behalf of the Board of Directors. The Chairman of the Academy Council is a member of the Board of Directors. During Academy Council meetings, there is strategic challenge and questioning to the DSL on safeguarding arrangements. Recently the DSL has begun sharing data analysis on CPOMS records. This is an area to develop. The Safeguarding Governor Link routinely checks the SCR. The Safeguarding Governor link plans to visit school to complete Pupil Voice and meet with staff. This area of oversight is developing.”*

A well evidenced example of how schools are ensuring that sexual harassment awareness and learning are built into the curriculum, was given by one of the schools from the deep dive:

*“Within the Jigsaw PSHE scheme children are taught to set appropriate boundaries with peers and others including in a digital context throughout the year. They are taught the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact as well as how to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all*

*contexts, including online) whom they do not know. Teachers regularly remind pupils how to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary needed to do so.”*

Where practice was good and evidence illustrated this, there seems to be a direct correlation to DSLs having a wider safeguarding team and adequate time, resources, and supervision.

## Recommendations

It appears that a smaller, more focused safeguarding audit, based on the HSCP key priorities may be more effective in looking at how schools respond to these areas and use local resources and training. Overall, we do not feel the audit tool on this occasion has provided the clarity we would like, due to a disparity in how settings completed it, and so this will require a more detailed review to ensure that future audits are more meaningful in the response they elicit. However, the audit has provided useful themes and example of positive practice to share and expand on.

Regarding the themes identified, it appears a key support from the Child Protection Lead for schools would be to ensure there is a wider variety of bitesize training disseminated throughout the year that can be used by settings to support all staff training and ensure a continued reminder of certain topics. Based on the gaps identified this would include bitesize sessions around early help, private fostering and child on child abuse. In addition, the creation of shared activities and exercises DSLs can do with their staff would allow for knowledge to be tested and reinforced in a more interactive way throughout the academic year.

In general, a wider forum for the sharing of good practice across settings would be beneficial. There is currently space for this at DSL cluster groups delivered by the Child Protection Lead however, this is not always utilised by settings. There needs to be consideration of how settings can share good practice more effectively including sharing resources such as translated documents for families where English is not their first language or accessible resources for parents/carers who may have learning difficulties.

Education settings need further support in meeting the needs of children in relation to sexual harassment and sexual violence between children. Settings will be reminded they should take the view that ‘it can happen here’ and therefore educate and support their students and parent/carers. Best practice can be shared between schools at head teacher forums and DSL networks.

Settings need to review support for their safeguarding team and to consider providing regular supervision. This may be bought in by an external provider or schools can support each other including via peer supervision groups with other settings. Hillingdon Local Authority is currently part of a

research project with the DfE offering half of Hillingdon secondary schools DSL supervision. As part of this project, we are sharing data to look at the impact of supervision on DSLs. This will be shared with schools and used internally to review the support the Local Authority offer. The Child Protection Lead for education will also look at delivering emotional wellbeing session at cluster groups and ensuring this is a standing item on the agenda. The Child Protection Lead has also been offering reflective case supervision to schools and will roll out a booking system so schools can book in time to discuss cases that require reflection. The aim of this approach is to support settings in effectively using reflective tools mirroring those used within Social Care systems.

Overall, these themes will be shared in wider forums including with the school improvement service and the sub-groups of the HSCP to continue to identify how to support settings to address the gaps raised.