

SCRUTINY PANEL

22nd February 2018

RUTLAND COUNTY COUNCIL SAFEGUARDING THROUGH EDUCATION REPORT 2016 - 2017

Report of the Director for People

Strategic Aim:	Safeguarding	
Exempt Information	No.	
Cabinet Member(s) Responsible:	Cllr D Wilby, Portfolio Holder for Lifelong Learning, Early Years, Special Educational Needs & Disabilities, Inclusion	
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Ward Councillors	N/A	

DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Panel:

1. Notes the actions and priorities for Safeguarding through Education identified within the report
2. Provides feedback on planned actions identified through review of current practice and procedures.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1. All Local Authorities have an overarching responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people in their area. Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places duties on a range of organisations and individuals to 'ensure their functions, and any services that they contract out to others, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children'.

- 1.2. This report aims to provide the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel with assurance that there is a comprehensive approach by the Learning and Skills Service that contributes to the Council meeting these Section 11 requirements. This is achieved through supporting and promoting the knowledge and understanding of safeguarding for staff working in early years' settings and schools.
- 1.3. An annual review of the effectiveness of safeguarding through education is undertaken and this report identifies where this is working well and identifies planned actions for addressing any areas of concern.

2. BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

- 2.1 Her Majesty's Government's guidance 'Working together to safeguard children – a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children' (March 2015) sets out the local authority's responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people in their area.
- 2.2 Rutland County Council's Learning and Skills Service contribute to safeguarding processes and procedures in education settings in Rutland through the delivery or commissioning of training programmes and by issuing guidance and information updates. The Learning and Skills Service is not responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of safeguarding processes or procedures in schools and early years settings; this is the remit of Ofsted. When inspecting, Ofsted must evaluate how well providers fulfil their statutory and other responsibilities and how well staff exercise their professional judgement in keeping children and learners safe. Ofsted's aim is to ensure safe and secure provision for children and learners across all remits through effective inspection and regulation. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-safeguarding-in-early-years-education-and-skills-from-september-2015/inspecting-safeguarding-in-early-years-education-and-skills-settings>. Where safeguarding concerns are raised to, or identified by, members of the Learning and Skills Service, these are escalated in line with Rutland County Council safeguarding procedures.
- 2.3 The Learning and Skills Service works in partnership with Children's Social Care to ensure that the information being provided and the training offered remains current and reflects the very latest statutory guidance and recommendations, as well as taking in to account findings from local and regional incidents and concerns.
- 2.4 In order to support schools and early years settings in maintaining provision which focuses on the safety and well-being of the children and young people in their care, the Learning and Skills Service undertakes routine reviews which include the annual survey of safeguarding through education. The questions asked within this survey are agreed through consultation with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) and are adjusted each year to reflect changes to national legislation and guidelines or areas of concern which have been raised locally or regionally.

- 2.5 The survey is an on-line questionnaire which is sent to state-funded schools, independent schools and early years providers in Rutland. Results are analysed and key outcomes are fed back to schools and early years settings and inform future actions for the Learning and Skills Service.
- 2.6 The outcomes of the 2017 survey indicate that, whilst no significant concerns over knowledge and understanding of safeguarding have been identified through the survey, there appears to be inconsistencies in the levels of training that have been accessed by staff. This has been identified as an issue that has a number of potential causes including the geographical location of training and its availability or accessibility to all staff. Additionally, because there are a number of providers who each offer different aspects or focus areas of training, there has been confusion over key messages and some safeguarding areas are duplicated and some omitted.
- 2.7 Actions planned to address concerns raised through the survey and wider reviews of practice centre around ensuring that there is a more cohesive training package available to schools and early years settings. Members of the Learning and Skills Service now meet regularly with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Children's Social Care representatives, Community Safety Representative and Rutland Teaching Alliance to develop a shared partnership approach to meeting educational needs. This will utilise RCC staff expertise and school experience to ensure this training is of high quality, is referencing the most up to date legislation and local context and is meeting the needs of the schools and settings.
- 2.8 Further review, including the Safeguarding through Education audit 2018, will be undertaken by the Learning and Skills Service to ensure that areas for development identified through the survey have been addressed and actions taken are impacting on the work of schools and early years providers in the safeguarding of children and young people in Rutland.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1. Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places duties on a range of organisations and individuals to 'ensure their functions, and any services that they contract out to others, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children'.
- 3.2. The annual review contributes to the Council's assurances that the Learning and Skills actions to support education providers with knowledge and understanding around keeping children are reviewed to ensure relevance and accessibility.
- 3.3. The only other option is not to complete an annual review but this would not satisfy the Council duty under the Act.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. There are no significant financial implications as an outcome of this report. Actions planned are included within the Learning and Skills budget plan.

Funding for any additional staff responsibilities has been addressed through restructuring of current staff roles and responsibilities.

5. LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1. There are no legal implications arising from this report other than the duty under s.11 of the Children's Act 2004 as detailed above.

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 6.1. An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed. No adverse or other significant issues were found. A copy of the EqIA can be obtained from Gill Curtis, Head of Learning and Skills.

7. COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. No community safety implications have been identified, however the Community Safety Team are key partners in maintaining the effectiveness of safeguarding through education.

8. HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. Rutland County Council has a statutory duty under the Childcare Act 2006 to secure the safeguarding of all young people in the County.

9. CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1. This report provides elected members with an overview of the activities undertaken by the Learning and Skills Service, in partnership with Children's Social Care, to provide childcare providers and school staff with educational opportunities, which include training and guidance, so that they know and understand how to keep the children in their care safe and from harm.
- 9.2. Through regular review of this aspect of the Learning and Skills Service role, assurances are made regarding the effectiveness of the work undertaken and enable planned actions to be timely, relevant and leading to continued quality of support for education providers.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1. There are no additional background papers to the report

11. APPENDICES

Appendix A Rutland County Council Safeguarding through Education Report 2016-17

A Large Print or Braille Version of this Report is available upon request – Contact 01572 722577.