

Child Protection and Safeguarding Committee

Tuesday 12 December 2017

Boardroom, Education Authority (Antrim)

2.00 pm

Present Mr D Cargo (Chairperson), Mrs P Carville, Ms S O'Connor,
Mr G Lundy

In Attendance Dr C Mangan, Mrs P Woods, Mr G Young

Apologies Mr R Pollock, Mrs M Culbert

Dr Mangan welcomed everyone present to the meeting.

1 Office of Chair

On the proposal of Ms O'Connor, seconded by Mrs Carville, Mr Cargo was elected to the office of Chair.

2 Declarations of Interest

Members present had no declarations of interest to disclose. The Chair reminded members that if required they could declare an interest during the course of the meeting.

3 Minutes of Child Protection and Safeguarding Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 17 January 2017

On the proposal of Mrs Carville, seconded by Mr Cargo, the minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2017 were agreed as an accurate record.

4 Matters Arising from the Minutes

3.4 Item 8 - De La Salle Investigation Report Recommendations

Dr Mangan updated members on action taken to date, it was noted that all safeguarding and child protection recommendations from the report (12A, 13A and 14B) had been met. The EA officer group is managed by Mr Collings, Director of Education.

4 Item 4 – Case Management Review Update

It was noted that this is agenda item number 9 for discussion.

6 Item 6 – Review of EA Child Protection Support Service Structure

Dr Mangan welcomed and introduced both Mr Young and Miss McGovern as the new Interim Head of Service for the Child Protection Support Service (CPSS) and the Regional Administrative Support Manager for CPSS. It was noted that Mr Young and Miss McGovern will be in attendance at future meetings and Miss McGovern will provide administrative support to the Committee.

7 Item 7 – Child Protection and Safeguarding Stakeholders Reference Group

It was noted that no further meetings had taken place due to the cancellation of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Committee scheduled for 7 June 2017.

8 Item 8 – Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland - Regional Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy and Procedure for Northern Ireland - Consultation Report

This was noted as agenda item 12.

5 Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools – A Guide for Schools

Mr Young provided members with an overview of the revised DE guidance issued in April 2017 which has replaced the previous 99/10 guidance. Mr Young advised members that whilst the guidance has been generally welcomed trade unions have submitted objections to DE in respect of the exemplar code of conduct contained within the guidance and advised members not to support its adoption.

Mr Young advised that he will be part of a task and finish group established by DE to respond to the trade union objections. In the interim CPSS advice to schools is that the code of conduct is an exemplar and that it is not compulsory for schools to replace existing codes of conduct which have been previously agreed with staff and approved by Boards of Governors.

A member asked if assurances in respect of the code of conduct have been relayed to school Principals. It was suggested that this could be delivered via Principal reference groups in the New Year. Mr Young advised that this advice is being shared at Principal safeguarding training delivered by CPSS staff.

A member recommended the guide as an excellent source of advice and guidance for schools in relation to best safeguarding practice. In her view all schools should review their safeguarding arrangements and policies in line with the new guidance.

It was agreed by members that the guidance should be made available to all Board members on their web page.

In respect of child protection training Dr Mangan suggested to members that newly appointed Assistant Directors should receive child protection training as part of their induction. Members agreed that this should be explored. Dr Mangan agreed to discuss this with the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT).

6 Virtual Reality Online Safety Awareness Training

Ms Woods provided members with an overview of how the virtual reality online safety awareness training was developed by the PSNI in conjunction with all SBNI partners. The PSNI have trained 100 officers to deliver the programmes which are currently being rolled out into community and voluntary settings.

The training programmes have been developed with three target audiences in mind, parents, primary and post-primary students. It has been agreed that the training should be delivered by PSNI officers to designated school staff in 2018 with CPSS staff facilitating the arrangements.

Mr Young talked through each of the presentations with members commenting on the risks for children associated with on-line activity. A Member felt that the training for parents was particularly relevant.

The Chair enquired if the training programme would be delivered to Youth Service settings. Mr Young agreed to explore this via the SBNI E-Safety forum.

The Chair thanked both Ms Woods and Mr Young for presenting the materials.

7 Children in Entertainment and Employment Team (CEET) Update

Ms Woods updated members on the statutory responsibilities placed upon EA in relation to the licensing of children in entertainment and employment. It had been necessary to create a centralised team to ensure a consistent regional response to the growing demands placed upon EA especially in relation to children in entertainment.

Mr Young outlined to members that the new service had been operational from 1 September 2017 and consists of one full-time Designated Officer for Child Protection and 1 senior clerical officer.

He advised that a business case had been submitted for the purchase of a new entertainment and employment module for the Capita One system which will improve the processing of applications for performance licences and employment permits as well as enabling the collation and analysis of relevant information. It is hoped that this will be operational in the New Year.

Awareness raising work has been undertaken with NI Screen and the Extras Dept. in relation to EA requirements and it has been agreed that Assistant Directors within film and TV production companies will undertake chaperone training at a future date.

Work with DE is continuing in relation to the development of “Body of Persons” guidance. It is hoped that the final draft document will be available for the next meeting of the Committee. The introduction of this guidance will reduce the administrative burden on the team whilst at the same time ensuring safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory.

In respect of applications for employment permits it was noted that work needs to be undertaken in the future to raise the awareness of employers regarding their legal responsibilities in relation to children in employment.

Members acknowledged the important work of this team and the challenges it faces in relation to raising awareness amongst entertainment companies and employers. At the moment the service focus is on the entertainment industry in terms of ensuring that EA’s statutory duties are fulfilled.

8 Case Management Review Update

Ms Woods circulated copies of a template reporting on CMR updates for 16/17 and 17/18 to date in respect of Donovan, Piper and Jackson

Ms Woods updated members on CMR Donovan and reported several key recommendations for education. Mr Young advised members that a letter had been issued to all schools across Northern Ireland advising them of the recommendations and that the key issues had also been included in the delivery of training to Designated Teachers for Child Protection.

Members agreed that documents issued to schools in respect of CMR recommendations should be attached to Committee minutes.

The Chair acknowledged it was reassuring to see the template reporting system working and thanked Ms Woods and Mr Young.

9 Adult Safeguarding Update (Human Resources)

The Chair introduced and welcomed Mrs Hegarty from Human Resources. Mrs Hegarty outlined to members the process for the precautionary suspension of staff and the alternatives to be considered when allegations of abuse are made against staff.

Mr Young highlighted to members the length of time that precautionary suspensions can remain in place whilst PSNI investigations are on-going. Currently some staff have been on precautionary suspension for 3 to 4 years.

Mrs Hegarty outlined to members at present there is currently 10 staff within EA who are on precautionary suspension and this figure includes teaching and non-teaching staff.

Members felt it was appropriate to establish a consistent approach across the EA in relation to protocols outlining clearly the roles and responsibilities of various services. Mr Young advised that he had been in contact with Mr

McGreevy HR Assistant Director to discuss the development of such a protocol and a meeting has been arranged for early January.

Members also felt that a closer working relationship between CPSS, Human Resources and CCMS was required in order to achieve a co-ordinated approach to dealing with such issues including the sharing of information. Mr Young advised that as a member of the DOCPEG group he would place this issue on the agenda of their next meeting.

10 Governance Statement 2016-2017

Dr Mangan outlined to members that following a meeting of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee held in April 2017 the governance statement for 16/17 identified child protection issues in relation to the transport service which needed to be addressed.

Mr Young updated members that he had met with Mr Hanna, Assistant Director for the transport service to discuss the audit recommendations. It is anticipated that transport managers will receive designated officer training in in the New Year.

It was noted that currently there are concerns in respect of the absence of child protection training for contracted taxi and bus drivers. This is not currently a requirement in the contract with such companies. It has been agreed that CPSS staff will provide awareness raising training to contracted drivers in the next term to address such concerns.

Members highlighted some concerns in respect of who would be liable if a child protection incident should occur as the onus should be on the taxi companies to ensure their staff are appropriately trained. Discussion took place regarding the possibility of digital training in trying to mitigate such a risk.

Ms Woods advised members that the SBNI have been very pro-active in having discussions with the Department of Health and Communities regarding how to address the training of taxi drivers and hopefully in future tendering processes companies will have to clearly demonstrate that their staff have received child protection training.

The Chair requested that a summary of steps taken to support the transport section be put in writing in order to update the Audit Committee.

11 Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland - Regional Child Protection/ Safeguarding Policy and Procedures for Northern Ireland (see response sent 7 March 2017)

Dr Mangan updated members that the deadline for the submission of the consultation response had passed and this item was for noting.

Mr Young advised that the SBNI had received over forty responses to the consultation with the EA response being significant in terms of contributing to

certain amendments. The launch of the SBNI child protection policy and procedures was to have taken place on December 1st however due to technical difficulties this has been deferred until 15 December 2017.

Mr Young added that the SBNI policy and procedures are on a web based platform accessed via a web link and that all schools had been advised as to how to access them. A synopsis outlining the differences between these and the previous policy and procedures has also been issued.

The Chair expressed thanks to all officers involved in the response to SBNI and the subsequent actions. It was agreed that information concerning the new child protection policy and procedures should be circulated to all Directorates.

12 Child Protection Support Service for Schools – Annual Child Protection Report (1 September 2016 – 31 August 2017)

Mr Young presented the CPSS annual report and responded to questions from members. A Member commended the huge work undertaken for such a small team which provided vital professional advice and support to schools, Boards of Governors and other EA services.

Dr Mangan stated that having the helpline service ensured that quality advice was available and that it was hoped that a single service contact number would be in situ for April 2018

Members commended officers in attendance for the volume of work they undertake in this area and how thoroughly it is undertaken. It was agreed that the annual report should be placed on the EA website.

13 Any Other Notified Business

There was no other notified business.

14 Date of Next Meeting

A date for the next meeting is to be confirmed. It was noted that meetings should be convened termly.

The meeting ended at 4.00 pm.

Chairperson

Date