

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF A CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 17 SEPTEMBER 2019 AT 10.00 AM IN ANTRIM BOARD CENTRE

1. PRESENT Mr D Cargo (Chair)

Mr G Lundy

Mr K Mulvenna

2. IN ATTENDANCE

Dr C Mangan, Mr D Hanna, Mrs U Turbitt, Mrs E Craig, Mr C Reid, Mrs L McGovern, Mr N Lavery and Mr C McNickle.

The Chair welcomed Mr Reid who had recently been appointed as Head of Safeguarding, Pupil Welfare and Inclusion.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Ms Á Andrews, Mrs P Carville, Mrs M Culbert and Ms S O'Connor.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were reminded of the requirement to declare interests where appropriate during the course of the meeting.

5. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 14 MAY 2019

The minutes* (CPS/9/19/3) of the meeting held on 14 May 2019 were agreed on the proposal of Mr Lundy and seconded by Mr Mulvenna.

6. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

6.1 CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK (2019-22) (6.1)

Dr Mangan said that, while considerable work had been completed to date, consideration of the Annual Report would be deferred to the Committee's next meeting. This would enable the achievements of the service and infographics to be further enhanced in the document.

6.2 HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT (7)

Dr Mangan advised that the actions in relation to this item were being progressed in light of a further internal audit report on a transport issue which had arisen over the summer. For this reason work in relation to an enduring paper was ongoing. She said that the actions, as specified at the last meeting, would be reflected in a final paper for consideration at the Committee's next meeting.

7. TRANSPORT MATTERS - REPORT ON MEETING BETWEEN DE AND EA

The Chair said that DE and EA senior officers had met in early September 2019 on safeguarding matters relating to transport.

Dr Mangan informed the Committee that discussion had focused on the following key areas:

- Internal Audit Report on Child Protection arrangements within Operations and Estates.

Mr Hanna had provided the draft Action Plan and, further to detailed questions, this was reportedly well received by DE;

- clarity on the vetting arrangements for temporary staff in schools and the assurances that schools were complying with this requirement. A Member expressed the view that prompt vetting was required to ensure that there was no adverse impact on children's learning;
- clarity on vetting arrangements for visitors to schools, with an emphasis on proportionality. It was considered that vetting arrangements needed to be reflected in training for Boards of Governors as well as through other forms of consistent advice provided to school principals. A Member agreed that Governors required clarity on the vetting of visitors;
- development of a workforce framework for training in relation to safeguarding and the evidence to support the audit of training.

Discussion ensued on the role of the Committee in providing assurances in relation to the above matters and a wider discussion ensued on the role of the Committee. The Chair reaffirmed that children and young people were at the forefront of the Committee's focus. He expressed the view that increased membership would strengthen the Committee in its discharge of key duties and responsibilities in connection with Child Protection and Safeguarding. This may require a review of the scheme for this Committee.

8. INTERNAL AUDIT OF CHILD PROTECTION ARRANGEMENTS WITHIN OPERATIONS AND ESTATES (JANUARY 2018)

8.1 ACTION PLAN (SEPTEMBER 2019)

Mr Hanna provided an update (CPS/9/19/7) on the implementation of priority 1 and 2 recommendations from the Internal Audit Review of Child Protection Arrangements in the Operations and Estates Directorate. He presented an Action Plan which outlined the inputs on the actions taken to implement a total of 17 priority 1 and 2 recommendations. All recommendations had been addressed including:

- a single, corporate Access NI database and its contribution to assuring compliance of private transport operators;
- a programme of compliance spot-checks for private transport operators. Mr Hanna said that an update on spot checks would be provided at the Committee's December meeting;
- consistent and robust procedures ensuring adherence to Departmental policy regarding Access NI checks. Mr Lavery said that the robustness of the procedures had been enhanced through the establishment of a dedicated Access NI Unit and a coherent policy had been applied across the five legacy regions;
- consistent and ongoing staff training and engagement within Transport regarding safeguarding practice.

Wider discussion ensued on the different Access NI requirements in place for various categories of staff and it was noted that drivers were subject to checks on an annual basis. A Member queried whether other categories of staff should also be subject to repeated checks, such as every three years. He said that whilst this might not be a legal requirement, it would provide heightened assurances. Mr Reid said that officers had met the Common Law Police Disclosure Unit to ensure that where a child protection risk existed, the police would pass relevant information to EA. Dr Mangan said that the Committee could receive a presentation on this work.

A Member expressed concern that some categories of staff were required to personally meet the costs of Access NI checks. He said that this might serve as a disincentive for applicants to apply for temporary employment opportunities with lower remuneration.

A Member referred to an action relating to minor works contracts. He highlighted that capital works contracts were cordoned off from other unaffected parts of the school and that contractors took control of the site for the duration of the works. This included the management of all persons entering and leaving the site. The Member queried the mechanism for how Authority-appointed Project Managers ensured effective management of all persons entering and leaving the site both for reasons of safeguarding and health, safety and welfare. Mr Hanna undertook to report back on this matter.

Following discussion the Committee agreed the following actions:

- to share the Action Plan with the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee;
- officers to provide an annual update on risk assurance to include a report on actions taken;
- officers to consider what aspects of the Action Plan required regular consideration and reporting at Committee meetings;
- officers to report on how Authority-appointed Project Managers could ensure effective management of all persons entering and leaving the site both for reasons of safeguarding and health, safety and welfare.

On the proposal of Mr Mulvenna, seconded by Mr Lundy, the Committee approved the Action Plan (CPS/9/19/7.1).

Action: *Actions as listed above.*

8.2 OPERATIONS AND ESTATES RISK REGISTER 2018/19

Mr Hanna presented the Operations and Estates Directorate Risk Register (CPS/9/19/7.2) (August 2019). Dr Mangan said that the risk register was a live document which was subject to ongoing review. Members welcomed that the overall residual risk scores had not increased for any of the 12 risks. It was noted that the overall residual risk score had decreased for 6 of the risks and that the score had remained unchanged for the other 6 risks.

The Committee noted the Register.

9. INTERIM TRAINING ARRANGEMENTS FOR PRIVATE TRANSPORT OPERATORS (2019/20)

Mr Hanna presented a paper* (CPS/9/19/8) outlining the interim 2019/20 training arrangements for private transport operators. He outlined actions resulting from the follow up review conducted in March 2017 on Child Protection arrangements within Transport as discussed earlier in the meeting. The review had highlighted limited assurance in two areas, namely pre-employment checks and child protection training for contracted drivers.

Mr Hanna said that collectively the total number of privately employed drivers and escorts used by contracted private operators had been estimated to be around 1,600. Training for private operators had commenced in February 2018, and to date 207 private operators had received training. The next tranche of training would commence in October 2019 with 17 sessions being provided across the region over two days and operators had been informed of their duty to attend.

The Chair expressed the view that the target success rate should be 100% attendance and it was agreed that the Committee would receive an update on attendance figures at the next meeting. A Member queried how EA monitored staff turnover within taxi operators. Mr Hanna said that a SharePoint database enabled information to be shared between EA's Access NI Unit and the Transport Service. He also said that EA wrote to contractors on a monthly basis to remind them of clearances that were due to expire.

Mrs Turbitt stressed that the Committee was being asked to approve interim training arrangements and that the interim arrangements had placed significant pressure on the CPS team. Members agreed that the interim arrangements were not sustainable in the long term and a discussion ensued on enduring training arrangements for private transport operators.

The Chair queried the level of engagement that had taken place with Translink to ascertain what CPS training had been delivered to bus drivers. Mr Hanna said that engagement with Translink was ongoing and he confirmed that all Translink drivers received CPS training on an annual basis. A discussion ensued on the management of Translink contracts in comparison to the management of contracts with private transport operators. A Member said that, in terms of CPS training requirements, there should be consistency between the two sectors.

On the proposal of Mr Lundy, seconded by Mr Mulvenna, the Committee approved the interim training arrangements for private transport operators (2019/20).

Action: *Committee to receive an update on attendance figures for CPS training for private operators.*

10. EVALUATION OF CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE) PREVENTATIVE PROGRAMME

Dr Mangan provided the context for the development of the CSE preventative programme. It was noted that the DE Action Plan 2015-2018 Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation in NI called for:

- guidance to schools on teaching issues regarding CSE;
- improved e-safety provision for parents, carers and education professionals; and
- an exploration of possibilities relating to peer education.

In this context, the Northern Area Safeguarding Panel (NASP) had agreed that there was an opportunity to enhance preventative practice in schools. A workshop had been developed by representatives from CPSS, EWS, Social Services CSE Lead, School Nursing, PSNI, and a designated teacher for child protection and the workshop had been piloted for Year 10 pupils in one school in June 2016. Mrs Craig said that in light of the positive evaluation, and with the approval of the NASP, facilitators had expanded the delivery of this workshop to 14 post primary schools in the NASP area.

Mrs Craig expressed the view that the programme was not overly resource intensive and whilst there was a multi-agency aspect to the programme, the key to its success lay with individual designated teachers for child protection and their positive relationships with pupils.

The Chair highlighted the relevance of the programme to Community Planning and it was agreed to share the evaluation with Community Planning Partnerships.

On the proposal of Mr Mulvenna, seconded by Mr Lundy, the Committee approved the recommendations contained within the evaluation report (CPS/9/19/9) on the Northern Area Safeguarding Panel CSE Programme in Schools (September 2017 – June 2019) including the following actions:

- CPSS to support designated teachers to promote CSE to all year 10 pupils across post primary schools in NI on a phased basis.
- Pilot evaluation to be shared with CCEA in respect of adding this to the current resources in the Relationships and Sexuality Education Hub.
- Pilot evaluation to be shared with SBNI and Community Planning Partnerships.
- Officers to continue to review the impact of the programme as part of a regional programme of offer.

11. CASE MANAGEMENT REVIEW

On the proposal of Mr Lundy, seconded by Mr Mulvenna, it was agreed that discussion on this matter would be held in committee.

Reports were provided on four CMR cases.

On the proposal of Mr Lundy, seconded by Mr Mulvenna, the Committee agreed to resume the meeting.

The Chair reported that while in committee:

- progress reports on four CMR cases had been received; and
- issues relating to the timing of receipt of CMR cases by the EA in July had been identified. This should be raised with SBNI.

A Member referred to the challenging nature of work conducted by CPSS staff and was mindful of the need to promote emotional wellbeing of officers. He thanked officers for their work and Mrs Craig and Mr Reid undertook to relay his appreciation to CPSS officers.

Action: *Issues relating to the timing of receipt of CMR cases by the EA in July to be raised with the SBNI.*

12. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH CONSULTATION ON GUIDANCE ON INFORMATION SHARING FOR CHILD PROTECTION PURPOSES: EA RESPONSE

Mr Reid presented EA's draft response (CPS/9/19/11) to the Department of Health consultation on Guidance on Information Sharing. He outlined EA's responses to the consultation questions.

Mr Reid referred to other relevant documents that had not been listed in the draft guidance and considered that these would be useful to practitioners seeking to share information. Members agreed a minor amendment to this list.

On the proposal of Mr Lundy, seconded by Mr Mulvenna, the Committee agreed EA's response to the Department of Health consultation on Guidance on Information Sharing for Child Protection Purposes (CPS/9/19/11), subject to one minor amendment.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on 16 December 2019.

The meeting ended at 12.28 pm.

Chair

Date

*Paper issued with agenda ** Papertabled