



Hampshire Safeguarding Children Board

Response to the Recommendations from the
Serious Case Review of Stanbridge Earls

Working Together 2015 allows LSCBs to use any learning model consistent with the principles set out in the guidance. Kevin Harrington, an independent person with experience in conducting reviews arising from safeguarding concerns, was commissioned as the lead reviewer to complete the review, and was asked to work to all the points set out in the agreed Terms of Reference (TORs), particularly to ensure that the review reflects

- the “voice of the child”, and of the parent
- the substantial body of documentation that had already emerged from these events, and through interviews with officers of the relevant agencies.
- the views of key staff from Stanbridge Earls who, as a result of the closure of the establishment, may not be readily available.

To support the process the Board established a reference group of senior staff from partner agencies which the reviewer used as a sounding board, and where necessary to provide necessary context on organisational policies and practice. The SCR subgroup quality assured the final draft before presentation to the Board.

This document provides the response from the Board, and individual partner agencies on any recommendations made to them.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Board should refer this report to the Department for Education with reference to the broader issues identified in respect of safeguarding children educated in schools in the independent sector. In particular the Department for Education should be asked to consider the extent to which an LSCB can reasonably satisfy itself that schools comply with safeguarding requirements when there may be insufficient powers to monitor or ensure compliance in independent schools.

HSCB has provided a copy of the full report to the Department for Education and will raise concerns about the challenges that LSCBs face when trying to engage with, and monitor, the safeguarding of children in independent school settings. The Department for Education has already released updated guidance on ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ which applies to all educational establishments, and clearly outlines their statutory duties to safeguard and protect children in their care. This review raises issues which may not be adequately covered in that guidance.

2. The Board should use its arrangements for working in partnership with independent sector schools in Hampshire to disseminate the findings from this report, highlighting:

- the particular responsibilities of trustees to ensure that safeguarding is assured and promoted
- the need to ensure that all staff, but especially those with specific safeguarding responsibilities, are adequately trained and supported to deal with safeguarding issues
- the need to ensure that staff providing school health services are appropriately qualified, trained and supported in dealing with safeguarding issues
- the potential safeguarding implications for all young people with special needs, and consequent vulnerabilities, who are involved in sexual activity
- the vulnerabilities of girls, particularly girls with special needs, in residential educational provision
- the need to ensure that parents are always promptly and appropriately made aware of safeguarding concerns
- the importance of prompt and accurate recording of safeguarding concerns
- the complementary responsibilities of child protection services in home and school localities, when children are in residential education.

HSCB will provide all independent schools within Hampshire with a copy of this report, and the learning identified in it. This will specifically highlight the need for senior staff, governors and trustees to be aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and actively promote them within their work in line with government guidance

(<http://www.hampshiresafeguardingchildrenboard.org.uk/>)

All schools in Hampshire, including those in the independent sector, are in the process of completing their statutory Section 157 / 175 audit returns¹ as requested by HSCB. As part of this HSCB seeks assurance that schools have a policy on safeguarding children in their care, and, that staff have access to relevant training. Staff in schools across Hampshire have access to the wide variety of training provided by HSCB for all multi-agency staff.

HSCB has already led an event for representatives from independent schools in the summer of 2015 to raise awareness of the work of the Board, particularly in accessing multi-agency policies and training, promote national guidance, and to promote a continuing dialogue between the Board and independent schools. A further event is planned for the Autumn 2015

¹ Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 requires school governing bodies, local education authorities and further education institutions to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Such arrangements will have to have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State. Similar requirements are in place for proprietors of Independent Schools under Section 157 of the Education Act 2002.

term, which will focus on the specific learning that has been highlighted during the course of this review.

Learning from this review will be disseminated via the Education Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) network sessions that are run by the Hampshire Local Area Designated Officers (LADOs), established in early 2015.

HSCB has secured a representative from the independent school sector, as well as from other primary, secondary and special schools to join the Board and directly contribute to its work.

3. The Board should develop mechanisms for engaging with and supporting professionals providing health services in independent schools, in line with national best practice for safeguarding children.

HSCB has commissioned a small group of professionals from its Health, and, Education Sub Groups to develop mechanisms to support those professionals who work / are directly employed in residential educational settings.

HSCB will require independent schools to identify health professionals providing services in their settings to enable the health service 'named GP's' to provide support and encourage engagement with training opportunities.

4. The Board should require commissioners of health services to demonstrate compliance in discharging their safeguarding duties against local best practice guidelines, with specific reference to health services in independent schools.

HSCB Board has required West Hampshire CCG (WHCCG) to report on how commissioners ensure compliance of all health services in independent schools.

WH CCG will conduct a Section 11 audit and a bespoke audit to review the needs of GP practices in relation to their child safeguarding responsibilities to test compliance with relevant policies. This will be completed by end of March 2016.

5. The Board should review and amend as necessary its multi-agency child protection procedures, with specific reference to:

- i. feedback between the agencies when it has been agreed that either police or the local authority should carry out a "single agency" investigation.**

- ii. **concluding or continuing involvement in situations where, after initial discussions between the agencies, a case is referred to another police force or local authority**
- iii. **how the two agencies work together in situations where a vulnerable young person is the subject of police investigations as a possible perpetrator of a criminal offence.**
- iv. **decisions by professionals about informing parents when they become aware of a child, who may be vulnerable, becoming involved in sexual activity.**

HSCB has commissioned a small task and finish group to review the current multi-agency child protection procedures to include the points raised above. This work is in progress and will be completed by the end of 2015.