

Halton Children and Young People Safeguarding Partnership



Dear Head Teacher & Chair of Governors

I am writing to share with you a summary of the key findings from the 2021-22 Section 175 Audit and provide you with information on the new arrangements moving forward.

Summary of Key Findings:

- We had a good response from nurseries, schools and colleges with 93% completing or partially completing their S175 audit. Whilst this is slightly higher than the previous audit, we are aiming for a 100% return rate in 2022-23!
- We broadly agreed with the 97% of schools who judged that they had met or exceeded standards and felt that, overall, schools accurately recognised gaps or areas for improvement. However, the use of the action planning and submission of evidence to support ratings, particularly in terms of Exceeds, were areas for improvement.
- 81% of schools reported that they had completed all actions from the previous audit and the majority of outstanding actions related to training with changes in staffing and COVID-19 identified as factors affecting completion.

Governor Training, Operation Encompass and Physical Handling training were the most commonly identified training actions or gaps in training compliance.

- 100% of schools reported regular and robust oversight by the Governing Body (or equivalent) and confirmed that policies and procedures reflect the latest statutory guidance.

There was good practice evidence from some schools of how their scrutiny and assurance arrangements are being rolled out across other settings or shared during partner agency inspections as an example of good practice.

- 48 schools shared 240 examples of good practice. A summary of key themes is provided below:
 - Effective approaches to identify and manage risk and vulnerability;
 - Robust and effective paperwork, systems and processes to manage, monitor and co-ordinate safeguarding risks, concerns and training;
 - Pro-active and creative approaches to engaging and listening to children, families and school staff;
 - Rigorous and robust programmes of professional training and development, supported by strong links with other agencies and organisations
 - Positive impact of nurture-based provision and trauma informed practice in supporting significant improvements in pupil behaviour and emotional wellbeing.
- 100% of schools reported that the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSL have the relevant knowledge and up to date capability required to keep children safe online and that online safety is embedded within the school curriculum.
- 96% of schools reported that staff had received mental health training and 93% that the DSL and Deputy DSL were familiar with "*Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges*" DfE, 2021.
- It is unclear how widely and effectively schools are using and promoting HCYPSP and Operation Encompass information and resources to staff and families so please ensure that you and your staff are familiar with and using the following websites:

Halton Children and Young People Safeguarding Partnership



www.operationencompass.org

www.hcypsp.haltonsafeguarding.co.uk

Arrangements for 2022-23

In 2021, we piloted a new, online approach to the Section 175 and Schools were invited to share their views and experiences by completing a short, online survey.

82% of the 34 schools who responded felt that, overall, completing the S175 self-assessment had been beneficial with the majority of schools rating the quality of the audit process, questions and support positively.

Whilst some schools had difficulty in accessing and using the online software, many felt that the online approach worked well and described how the software allowed them to collate, manage and review information and actions more effectively.

After careful consideration of all options and taking into account feedback from schools, it has been decided to maintain the online audit as a live, working document which Schools can add to and update throughout the school year. Continuing with an online approach will not only reduce the amount of time required to complete future audits but ensures that the S175 audit remains a relevant and dynamic tool within school planning and improvement processes.

To create a system with the ease of use and functionality required to effectively deliver this approach, we sourced a specialist software provider within the safeguarding sector and have been working alongside them to set up and migrate your information onto the new system.

A guide on how to use the new software is available at:

<https://academy.phew.org.uk/en/knowledge/audits-respondents-manual> and, over the next few weeks, nominated contacts will receive an e-mail notifying them when their audit has gone live and providing them with a login link.

Yours sincerely

Susanne Leece

Head of Safeguarding

Halton Children and Young People Safeguarding Partnership