

Committee: **Joint Social Services and Education and Learning (Safeguarding) Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: **2nd December 2019**

Report Subject: **Quality Assuring Safeguarding in Local Government Education Services (LGES)**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr J Collins Executive Member for Education**

Report Submitted by: **Michelle Jones, Strategic Education Improvement Manager**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
✓		Oct 19			02.12.19	18.12.19		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To seek members views on the revised quality assurance protocol for safeguarding arrangements in Local Government Education Services (LGES).
- 1.2 This report presents the revised quality assurance protocol for safeguarding in LGES. The revised protocol sets out the now established approach that the Education Directorate takes to checking that the safeguarding arrangements across its settings and commissioned services are robust and fit for purpose.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The Safeguarding section (3.4) of the Estyn Framework for Local Government Education Services (LGES) requires inspectors to evaluate how well the Authority fulfils its statutory responsibilities relating to safeguarding.
- 2.2 Whilst this is fulfilled in a number of ways the question that naturally arises is how does the Directorate know that our safeguarding systems are robust and fit for purpose and are being consistently applied?
- 2.3 Over the past two years a quality assurance or system test protocol has been developed and the information from this is now routinely included in the Performance report to this Committee. This protocol has been reviewed and has been refined in the light of areas of learning with a view to ensuring that the system test continues to focus on key areas.
- 2.4 The report requires members to consider the contents of the revised protocol and to offer views to further inform the development of the final document.
- 2.5 Through this activity members will continue to demonstrate their understanding of safeguarding processes that are in place as well as the Directorate's approach to the management of risks.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 **Option 1**

Members are asked to scrutinise the revised protocol and contribute to the continuous assessment of effectiveness by making appropriate recommendations to the Executive Committee.

3.2 **Option 2**

Accept the report as provided.

4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

4.1 **Corporate Plan**

- **Education Aims**

- “To improve pupil outcomes, progress and wellbeing, particularly for our more able and most vulnerable learners
- To improve the quality of our education services and our school buildings to help learners achieve great outcomes
- To continue to support our school leaders to help our pupils achieve their ambitions.”

4.2 **Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan Objectives**

The process of rigorous self-evaluation as detailed in the revised policy makes a valued contribution to Blaenau Gwent PSB Well-being Plan Objectives. Blaenau Gwent Council wants:

- everyone to have the best start in life;
- safe and friendly communities;
- to look after and protect its natural environments;
- to forge new pathways to prosperity, and
- to encourage and enable people to make healthy lifestyle choices in the places that they live, work and play.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 The revised quality assurance protocol is cognisant of the ongoing austerity measures and its implementation is managed through existing resources.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

The Directorate Risk register identifies safeguarding risks for the Directorate and is informed by the findings from this process. Such risks are monitored as part of the routine Directorate risk management business activity.

5.3 **Legal**

Safeguarding arrangements comply with relevant legislation and guidance which includes the Welsh Government Keeping Learners Safe Guidance.

5.4 **Human Resources**

There is no direct staffing or workforce implications arising from this report.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

6.1.1 The reporting of quality assurance visits are now shared with this Committee through the Performance Report and provides Elected Members with an overview as to how management assures itself that the safeguarding arrangements within Local Government Education Services (LGES) are fit for purpose and do not present a risk.

6.1.2 During the last two years there have been sixteen quality assurance visits to schools and quality assurance visits to each of the following service areas: Leisure Trust; Early Years, Childcare and Play; Home to School transport and Catering (schools).

6.1.3 From these visits, evidence has been gathered which has provided reassurance that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place in schools and other education services. Learning from these visits informs future policy and practice and is included in the Directorate's self-evaluation process.

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

6.3 **Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)**

Quality Assurance visits involve the Safeguarding in Education Manager meeting with the leadership of the setting, a representative sample of staff and in the case of schools, listening to the views of learners.

The high level learning from these visits is shared at termly meetings which take place with the Safeguarding Leads from LGES representatives. More detailed information is shared with the individual establishment, at monthly meetings between the safeguarding team and lead education staff and on a regular basis with Education DMT and on a quarterly basis with CLT and Members of the Joint Safeguarding Scrutiny Committee through the Performance Report.

6.4 **Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)**

The Annual Council Reporting Framework (ACRF) and self-evaluation process enables the Education Directorate to plan for the future as spend, risk and performance is continuously reported on and provides a baseline of where the directorate is currently and where it needs to be in the future.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

The work undertaken through this process seeks to promote a preventative approach to practice through early identification and intervention and the sharing of key areas of learning across Local Government Education settings.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

The Council collaborates with a range of services to discharge its Local Government Education Service (LGES) functions. The Safeguarding in Education Manager participates in the local, regional and national safeguarding groups and shares learning with Safeguarding Leads from LGES settings.

The South East Wales Safeguarding Children's Board and its sub groups ensure a multi-agency collaborative approach to safeguarding. Blaenau Gwent fully participates in the Children and Adult Safeguarding Boards.

6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***

All local authorities and partner agencies work together on safeguarding through the South East Wales Safeguarding Children Board.

6.8 ***EqlA (screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)***

Not required for this report.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 Education DMT and CLT monitors the outcomes of this quality assurance process. The Performance report to this Committee provides Members with high level management information. The learning from this activity is shared with Safeguarding Leads and also informs the work of the Safeguarding in Education Manager through changes to policy and practice within LGES safeguarding.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – A Protocol to Quality Assure the Safeguarding in Education Processes