

**JOINT EDUCATION, YOUTH & CULTURE AND SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Date of Meeting	Thursday 17 th June 2021
Report Subject	Safeguarding in Education
Cabinet Member	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education
Report Author	Chief Officer (Education and Youth)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To provide an overview of the updated guidance on Keeping Learners Safe (2021).

To provide assurance of the focus of the Education and Youth Portfolio and its schools on discharging statutory safeguarding duties.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That members note the content of the safeguarding in education report and provide their feedback to officers on the strategies used by the Portfolio to effectively discharge its duties.
2	That members note the positive work undertaken by Flintshire schools to safeguard children and young people during the pandemic.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE SAFEGUARDING IN EDUCATION REPORT
1.01	The Education and Youth Portfolio usually undertakes an annual self-evaluation of safeguarding processes against the framework for the inspections of Local Government Education Services published by Estyn. This framework was suspended as a result of Covid-19. This report is

	<p>therefore presented in a different format with a focus on work over the last twelve months in responding and adapting to the health emergency, whilst at the same time implementing the new national safeguarding procedures and guidance.</p>
1.02	<p>The last twelve months have presented new challenges for the Council, particularly in relation to its delivery of education services. The statutory provision of education for all learners was suspended for the period March 2020 to September 2020 and schools had to repurpose themselves as childcare hubs for vulnerable children and children of critical workers.</p> <p>Since the restart of education provision in September and the rising rates of infection through the autumn term and early spring term, the delivery of education in all Flintshire schools has been significantly disrupted with pupils having to isolate for extended periods of time. In January 2021, Welsh Government directed all schools to cease face-to-face learning for the majority of pupils and only making provision for those children identified as vulnerable or those of critical workers in the face of escalating infection rates. We then saw Foundation Phase pupils return to school after February half term, with more learners able to return from 15th March and all learners after Easter.</p>
1.03	<p>Through all of this time, safeguarding of children and young people has remained the highest of priorities for the Education and Youth Portfolio. Schools have worked tirelessly to keep in touch with learners throughout the various stages of the pandemic.</p> <p>Whilst the national position with COVID 19 was changing rapidly, the Council's approach from the very beginning was to continue to protect and support vulnerable children and families. The way we have worked has had to change significantly however in order to also protect our staff, clients and partner agencies.</p> <p>Flintshire schools have received regular updates from Children's Social Services as to how they could continue to report any safeguarding concerns and continue to participate where required in Child Protection Conferences and Looked After Reviews.</p> <p>During this year, we have also seen the implementation of the new Wales Safeguarding procedures for children and adults at risk of abuse and neglect as well as updated guidance on Keeping Learners Safe. Schools in Flintshire have responded positively to these changes, despite the pressures of the pandemic. We have seen significant uptake of training around the new procedures and have had to increase the number of sessions initially planned.</p>
1.04	<p>During the pandemic, schools have had to move to firstly remote and then blended learning models of education. We know that children and young people have therefore had increased access to digital technology and resources. With so many aspects of our lives now using technology in a digital world, supporting our children and young people to be digitally resilient and safe is fundamental. Digital resilience encapsulates the need to develop knowledge, skills and strategies in order for children and young people to:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • manage their online experience safely and responsibly • identify and mitigate risks to stay safe from harm online • understand the importance of using reliable sources and employing critical thinking skills to identify misinformation • seek help when they need it • learn from their experiences and recover when things go wrong • thrive and benefit from the opportunities the internet offers. <p>WG continue to update the Keeping Learners Safe online section of Hwb. This online area has been designed and developed to support online safety in education across Wales. It provides an extensive suite of up-to-date bilingual resources, Welsh Government guidance and links to further sources of support on a range of online safety issues.</p> <p>In addition Keeping Safe Online also hosts bilingual resources created by or developed in collaboration with key partners, such as the South West Grid for Learning (SWGfL), the NSPCC, Common Sense Media and the National Crime Agency.</p>
1.05	<p>The North Wales Safeguarding Board endorsed the new Wales Safeguarding procedures for children and adults at risk of abuse and neglect from 1st September 2020. These are the national Wales Safeguarding Procedures. They detail the essential roles and responsibilities for practitioners to ensure that they safeguard children and adults who are at risk of abuse and neglect. They support a consistent approach to safeguarding practice and procedures across Wales.</p> <p>Within the new children’s procedures, many of the changes are around the emphasis placed on how children should be supported and how practitioners work e.g. co- production, person centred, advocacy, use of reflective practice and practitioner judgement etc. rather than the process of safeguarding which remains largely unchanged. Several new terms have also been introduced, including ‘Report’, ‘Report Maker’, ‘Lead Coordinator’ and ‘Lead Practitioner’.</p>
1.06	<p>The Welsh Government’s Keeping Learners Safe Guidance has been updated in line with the Wales Safeguarding Procedures and was reissued in October 2020. Keeping Learners Safe provides guidance for local authorities and governing bodies of all maintained schools on arrangements for safeguarding children under the Education Act 2002.</p> <p>The guidance also sets out effective practice for wider education settings and related agencies, particularly those inspected by Estyn.</p> <p>All Flintshire schools have been advised of this updated guidance and support and advice is available from designated local authority officers.</p>
1.07	<p>The Safeguarding training for staff in Flintshire schools has been updated to reflect the new Wales Safeguarding Procedures and the revised Keeping Learners Safe Guidance.</p> <p>Level 1: The updated training materials were shared with headteachers in schools in September 2020 to enable the delivery of Basic Awareness</p>

	<p>level 1 training to all their staff at the start of the Autumn term 2020. A full refresh has also been undertaken ahead of September 2021 and will be issued to schools before the end of the summer term.</p> <p>The Level 2 Safeguarding training for middle leaders (or equivalent), Level 3 for New Designated Safeguarding Persons and Level 3 Refresher courses for existing Level 3 trained colleagues have been delivered online from October 2020. The number of participants per course is limited to 20 to ensure the quality of the delivery and maximise opportunities for engagement. The content has been adapted and updated accordingly and the sessions do not exceed 3 hours – which includes a break and opportunities to participate in various discussions through the use of virtual break-out rooms.</p> <p>Level 2 online Safeguarding training for middle leaders (or equivalent), (3 hour duration): 5 x courses delivered October 2020 – May 2021 benefiting 94 participants. There are two further courses planned; the projected total number trained at Level 2 by mid-July is 134 participants.</p> <p>Level 3 online course for New Designated Safeguarding Person’s is delivered over two 3 hour sessions; 6 hours duration in total. There were two courses delivered October 2020 – May 2021 benefiting 18 participants. There is one further course planned over two dates; the projected total number trained at the full Level 3 level by mid-July is 38 participants.</p> <p>Level 3 online Refresher Course for colleagues trained at level 3 previously: five courses (3 hour duration) delivered October 2020 – May 2021 benefiting 78 participants. There is one further course planned; the projected total number trained at Level 3 Refresher level by mid-July is 98 participants.</p> <p>There were 190 participants trained October 2020 – May 2021 on twelve courses. By mid-July 2021 it is projected this number will have increased to 270 participants delivered over sixteen courses.</p>
1.08	<p>In response to the updated Keeping Learner’s Safe guidance, the Education and Youth Portfolio has now established a Safeguarding Panel to maintain a strategic overview of the Portfolio’s responsibilities in relation to safeguarding.</p> <p>The purpose of the panel is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure “safeguarding” is everybody’s business in each service area • Ensure the Portfolio is operating effective management and assurance processes • Consider matters referred to the Panel within its terms of reference • Drive continuous improvement in safeguarding across the Education and Youth Portfolio • Ensure schools have the opportunity to access appropriate support and training to improve their safeguarding processes. <p>The Panel will develop and oversee the Portfolio’s annual work in relation to safeguarding and ensure service areas are fully compliant with</p>

	safeguarding legislation / policy. It will ensure that there continues to be good joint working arrangements between the Portfolio and other Council departments and partner agencies, including working arrangements with the North Wales Safeguarding Children Board.
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
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2.01	Safeguarding is a core responsibility of everybody who works for the Local Authority. Delivering the commitments contained within this report are within existing human and financial resources.
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3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
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3.01	<p>There are no specific risks arising from this report and subsequent actions. The Education Portfolio has a detailed risk assessment which outlines key risks related to the delivery of education services and the continued disruption of teaching and learning as a result of the ongoing pandemic and method statements which describe how these risks are managed. These are regularly reported to the Education, Youth and Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>There will continue to be ongoing monitoring of the portfolio and schools in discharging of statutory safeguarding duties.</p>
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4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
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4.01	None required for this report.
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5.00	APPENDICES
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5.01	There are no supporting documents for this report.
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6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
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6.01	<p>The Wales Safeguarding Procedures for children and adults at risk of abuse and neglect</p> <p>https://safeguarding.wales/</p> <p>https://diogelu.cymru/</p> <p>Keeping Learners Safe (2021)</p> <p>https://llyw.cymru/cadw-dysgwyr-yn-ddiogel</p>
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	<p>https://gov.wales/keeping-learners-safe</p> <p>Guidance for local authorities and governing bodies on arrangements for safeguarding children.</p> <p>Hwb- Keeping Learners Safe online</p> <p>https://hwb.gov.wales/zones/keeping-safe-online/</p> <p>https://hwb.gov.wales/parthau/cadwn-ddiogel-ar-lein/</p>
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7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	<p>Contact Officer: Vicky Barlow, Senior Manager for School Improvement Telephone: 01352 704019 E-mail: vicky.barlow@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
	<p>Safeguarding - safeguarding means preventing and protecting children and adults at risk from abuse or neglect and educating those around them to recognise the signs and dangers.</p> <p>Wales Safeguarding Procedures - These are the national Wales Safeguarding Procedures. They detail the essential roles and responsibilities for practitioners to ensure that they safeguard children and adults who are at risk of abuse and neglect.</p> <p>Hwb - This is the digital platform for learning and teaching in Wales. Hwb provides its users with access to a range of centrally-funded, bilingual, digital tools and resources. It is the Welsh Government’s strategic digital channel to support the delivery of the curriculum in Wales.</p>