

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF THE CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY, 10 DECEMBER 2018 AT 10.00 AM IN ANTRIM BOARD CENTRE

- 1 PRESENT** Mr D Cargo (Chair)
Mr G Lundy Ms S O'Connor

2 IN ATTENDANCE

Mr J Collings, Dr C Mangan, Ms U Turbitt, Mrs P Woods, Mr G Young, Ms L McGovern and Mr C McNickle.

The Chair welcomed Ms Turbitt to her first Committee meeting as Assistant Director and informed Members that Ms E Craig, newly appointed as Head of the Child Protection Support Service, would attend a future meeting. The Chair thanked Mr Young for his role as Interim Head of Service and expressed thanks to Ms Woods who was in attendance for the final time.

3 APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Mrs P Carville, Mrs M Culbert, and Mr R Pollock.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members indicated they had no declarations of interest to disclose. The Chair reminded Members that, if required, they could declare an interest during the course of the meeting.

5 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 27 MARCH 2018

On the proposal of Ms O'Connor, seconded by Mr Lundy, the minutes of the meeting held on 27 March 2018 were agreed as an accurate record.

6 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

6.1 ETI INSPECTION REPORTS - SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS (6)

Dr Mangan advised that issues in relation to child protection and safeguarding arrangements had been raised with the Director of Education. She informed Members that newly appointed staff to the School Development Service would receive child protection and safeguarding training. It was highlighted that this was a recurring issue at inspection feedback sessions.

Dr Mangan highlighted the importance for EA to establish an internal database of schools where safeguarding was an issue so that clarity on actions taken could be evidenced. She reported that the Head of Child Protection would become the contact point for the School Development Service for the co-ordination and implementation of child protection and safeguarding actions arising from inspections.

The Chair referred to the recent reconstitution of Boards of Governors and highlighted the major task to ensure that all Boards of Governors received child protection and safeguarding training. A Member expressed the view that this training should be delivered to all governors and not just the designated governor for child protection.

Mr Young informed Members of the training that had been offered to governors and a discussion ensued on the most effective way to raise child protection and safeguarding awareness with Boards of Governors as a whole. This included regular awareness sessions delivered by the designated officer and dissemination of EA material which had been provided to schools. Members discussed the merits of online training and the need to blend online training with significant demands for face to face training.

7 CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS

The Chair commended existing policies and procedures that enhanced the governance and management of child protection and safeguarding within EA. He said that the Committee should bring forward further developmental pieces of work relating to specific vulnerable children and young people that had safeguarding and child protection implications. He referred to recent media coverage in parts of the UK which related to sexual exploitation of children and young people and he expressed concern that children and young people in NI might also be at similar risk.

The Chair was mindful that EA was not the lead organisation in this matter. He suggested that, in line with EA's duty to co-operate, it would be helpful if the Committee received a presentation from one of the other statutory leads on the responsibilities of the lead statutory agencies, their organisational processes and protocols, and the responsibilities and duties that resided with EA. The Committee noted that EA, as a regional organisation, played a key role in the protection of children and young people.

Members discussed innovative measures to enhance the safety of children and young people including the effective co-ordination of data. The example of increased safeguards achieved through the adoption of the Body of Persons Approval process was cited as an example of how EA could adopt regional policies to enhance child protection and safeguarding.

A discussion ensued on other child protection matters including child employment licenses. Concerns were also raised relating to children that became unaccounted for post Key Stage 4 and the Chair highlighted similar concerns relating to those children that were not enrolled at Key Stage 1. Members discussed the merits of utilising attendance data and movement data to enhance child protection measures. A Member highlighted the role of school leaders in identifying unexplained absences from school.

Action: *Committee to receive a presentation on the responsibilities of the lead statutory agencies, their organisational processes and protocols, and the responsibilities and duties that resided with EA.*

8 HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT

The Committee noted the paper* (CPS/12/18/6) which related to the findings of an Internal Audit follow up review on pre-employment checks carried out on all drivers engaged in the delivery of home to school transport contracts.

Mr Young updated Members on the delivery of child protection awareness training for private operators. This training was provided by officers from the EA Child Protection Support Service on an interim basis. Members said it was unacceptable that drivers from private operators might not have received child protection training. Members discussed contractual arrangements and concern was expressed that the interim arrangements would not be sustainable in the long term.

Mr Young referred to transport services provided by the Department of Health and Members agreed that it would be useful for officers to liaise directly with the Department of Health on this matter. It was agreed that work should commence to consider a sustainable model for the delivery of child protection awareness training for private operators. This encompassed three actions:

1. Officers to convene an internal meeting between Child Protection Support Service, the Transport Service and EA Solicitors to consider contractual arrangements relating to child protection awareness training;
2. Officers to engage with the Department for Infrastructure and the Department of Health on the matter of safeguarding as part of transport contracts; and
3. Officers to refer the matter to the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland.

Action: *Officers to undertake actions as listed above.*

9 CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING - EA DRAFT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Mr Young presented the EA Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures* (CPS/12/18/7.1) and the associated Equality Screening Template* (CPS/12/18/7.2). He informed Members that the policy and procedures would, subject to approval, replace the interim policy and procedures issued in 2016. The revised policy and procedures took account of recent DE, Department of Health, and SBNI amendments to safeguarding policies and procedures and would ensure compliance with the duties and responsibilities of EA as set out in the Safeguarding Board Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. Mr Young confirmed that the policy and procedures provided specific guidance for all staff employed directly by EA to enable EA to fulfil its child protection and safeguarding responsibilities.

A Member drew attention to the safeguarding principles listed in the document, in particular he referred to the principle that 'parents are supported to exercise parental responsibility and families helped to stay together'. The Member said that the definition of parental responsibility should be clarified to include guardians who exercised parental responsibility. It was agreed that the definition of parental responsibility would be clarified in the document.

Members were mindful that child protection and safeguarding advice was similarly provided by DE and SBNI and that each school was also required to have in place its own child protection policy. Mr Collings confirmed that EA provided advice and guidance to schools on the content of a child protection policy.

Mr Collings drew Members' attention to the matter of tendering and sub-contracts within the document and referred to the previous agenda item. Members noted from the document that "EA services, when considering tendering its work to other partner agencies, must demonstrate there are processes in place to ensure that its contractors comply with the duties placed on the Authority to safeguard and promote the welfare of children." It was further noted that "EA should, when reviewing with its contractors their compliance with safeguarding responsibilities, have measures in place to ensure that the contractor is fulfilling this requirement."

Dr Mangan informed Members that, subject to approvals, child protection and safeguarding training for EA staff would be developed by Child Protection Support Service and delivered in

accordance with the EA Child Protection and Safeguarding Learning & Development Strategy 2019-2022. This would be considered further at the next meeting of the Committee.

On the proposal of Ms O'Connor, seconded by Mr Lundy, the Committee agreed to recommend that the Board should approve the Child Protection and Safeguarding EA Draft Policy and Procedures and associated Equality Screening Template.

Action: *Definition of parental responsibility to be clarified to include guardians who exercise parental responsibility. EA Child Protection and Safeguarding Learning & Development Strategy 2019-2022 to be considered at the next meeting of the Committee.*

10 CASE MANAGEMENT REVIEW (CMR)

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

On the proposal of Mr Lundy, seconded by Ms O'Connor, the Committee agreed to resume the meeting.

The Committee:

- Noted progress reports on CMR cases (CPS/12/18/8);
- Agreed that the CMR template would be furnished with information relating to action points arising from each review; and
- Agreed courses of action in respect of specific child protection and safeguarding matters.

Actions: *Case Management Review template to be furnished with information relating to action points arising from each review. Courses of action in respect of child protection and safeguarding matters to be taken forward as agreed in committee.*

11 SBNI MULTI-AGENCY NEGLECT STRATEGY FOR NORTHERN IRELAND 2018-2022

The Committee noted the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland's Multi-Agency Neglect Strategy 2018-2022* (CPS/12/18/9). The SBNI had identified neglect as one of its strategic priorities and had developed a regional Neglect Strategy. The Strategy aimed to help agencies in NI involved with children, young people and parents to take actions to prevent, reduce and manage the effects of neglect on children and families. The Chair commended the Strategy.

Mrs Woods drew Members' attention to the matter of educational neglect which had been addressed. A draft response to the Strategy would be presented to the Committee at a future meeting for consideration.

Action: *Draft response to be presented to the Committee for consideration.*

12 DRAFT STRATEGY FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN: IMPROVING CHILDREN'S LIVES – POST CONSULTATION UPDATE

Ms O'Connor declared an interest in this item.

The Committee noted a post-consultation update (14 November 2018) on the draft Strategy for Looked After Children: Improving Children's Lives* (CPS/12/18/10). Key facts from the consultation were noted.

The Committee commended the update for its succinct style and agreed that officers would adopt a similar approach to consultation feedbacks in the future.

***Action:** Officers to adopt a similar approach in presenting information to Members on future consultation feedbacks.*

13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday 26th February 2019.

The meeting ended at 12.56 pm.

Chairperson

Date