



## **SAFEGUARDING – THEMATIC SURVEY OF RECURRENT CHARACTERISTICS OF FAILURE**

### **Introduction**

The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Central Intervention Team (CIT) undertook an analysis in May 2017 of 13 Ofsted reports where safeguarding was assessed as 'not effective'.

This note summarises the recurring themes that arose in the course of those inspections that led to those assessments and includes recommendations made by Ofsted about how institutions can avoid Safeguarding failures.

### **Summary**

Most providers have effective safeguarding arrangements, but where they do not there is often a general lack of thoroughness which contributes to the assessment that arrangements are ineffective. The scope of safeguarding activity considered in this paper encompasses the following areas:

- bullying and/or harrassment
- the Prevent Duty which tackles radicalisation and extremism
- safety online and/or cyber bullying
- risk assessments including health and safety and care plans
- student attendance
- recruitment procedures and/or vetted staff and
- child protection including abuse and exploitation.

### **Additional responsibilities for providers with high needs students**

For HNS providers, all staff must have enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks to comply with working safely with vulnerable adults. HNS providers also need to ensure that each learner has an individual care plan and that distributing medication is carried out attentatively; monitoring the aftercare of learners.



## Departmental policy

Government policy is published on [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) and some useful Safeguarding guidance can be accessed via the following links:

Statutory guidance	<a href="#">Working together to safeguard children</a>	Published: March 2015
Guidance	<a href="#">Protecting children from radicalisation: the prevent duty</a>	Published: July 2015
Statutory guidance	<a href="#">Keeping children safe in education</a>	Published: March 2015

## Summary of issues by safeguarding area

### (i) HNS specific issues

The Ofsted reports identified a number of issues related specifically to HNS learners/delivery of provision which included:

Complex needs: failing to sufficiently recognise the risks linked to the mix of learners and to manage the increasingly complex needs of some pupils.

Care plans: do not always include the most serious risks or comprehensively outline the strategies for staff to use. Staff do not update care plans quickly enough when pupils' and learners' needs change.

Residential homes: managing the behaviour of learners, poor protection of learners. Some staff failing to understand the importance of a secure home and stable attachments.

Management of medication: staff responsible for administering medication failing to observe residential pupils after it has medication has been given out.

Staff: those working with learners aged 16 to 18 and vulnerable adults failing to have the appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service safeguarding clearance and checks in place to confirm they are safe to work with such groups.

Policy: failing to stipulate what actions staff should take if a safeguarding matter arises that involves vulnerable adults.

Vulnerable learners: managers have not ensured that vulnerable learners attending lessons with other learners at multiple sites, across a large geographical area, are safe.



**(ii) Reporting and recording**

It was noted that there were a number of issues related to the reporting and recording of safeguarding concerns.

Failure to accurately record safeguarding issues is a common feature of failure. Internal policy on recording protocol needs to be relevant, detailed and up-to-date. For successful and appropriate information sharing there needs to be strong and evident relationships between staff, learners and, beyond that, between the provider and the local authority.

Some of the concerns regarding reporting related to the systems in place to log a recording. System related concerns included mention of:

- Records detailing safeguarding incidents are reported as: incomplete, not collected or shared appropriately.
- Systems used to document safeguarding concerns: confusing and unreliable.
- Records of concerns are stored in different places, which increases the risk of errors or missed information.
- Online systems not secure and failing to provide a detailed chronology of incidents.
- Serious concerns being reviewed in isolation and staff are not able to identify any trends or patterns.
- Reports of referrals and disclosures lack sufficient information about interventions and actions taken to ensure the safety of learners who have made disclosures.

In some instances, it was noted that weak relationships resulted in information not being shared effectively. Issues were identified as follows:

- Failure to promptly inform relevant agencies; including poor relationships with local authority staff.
- Failure to develop a culture where the safeguarding of all learners is prioritised and seen as responsibility by all.
- Leaders' and managers' reporting on safeguarding to governors is weak.
- Staff are not confident with protocols relating to reporting concerns.
- Senior leaders who are responsible for safeguarding do not have enough experience, understanding or time to oversee all the child protection referrals made.
- Managers' records show that, in a number of instances, learners left their programme immediately after disclosing



information that raised very serious concerns about their safety and well-being.

**(iii) Prevent**

All providers are required to ensure that Prevent duty training is undertaken by all staff, governors and learners. Incomplete or insufficiently detailed training is often cited as a contributory factor in staff lacking the understanding and confidence to apply the Prevent duty effectively.

Specifically, measures to implement Prevent and tackle extremism are recorded as failing due to:

Training:

- Failure of staff to undertake any form of Prevent training.
- Failure of staff training to be thorough and comprehensive; with a superficial understanding of the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.
- Failure to keep training up-to-date.
- Failure of governors to be suitably trained in the 'Prevent' duty.
- Learners receiving no form of training or information to enable them to keep safe from those who advocate radical views and extremism.

British values:

- Governors, leaders and managers have not ensured that learners have a good enough understanding of British values.
- Strategies to promote equality and celebrate diversity are not effective.

In practice:

- Governors, leaders and managers have failed to comply with the 'Prevent' duty. They are not doing enough to keep learners safe from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.
- Implementation of a 'Prevent' strategy has been too slow and is incomplete.
- Staff, learners and governors have insufficient understanding of their responsibilities within the area of radicalisation and extremism.
- Failure to develop a culture of rigorous vigilance to ensure wider safeguarding arrangements are effective in protecting all their learners.



**(iv) Attendance and safeguarding failures**

The reports included in this survey identified a number of attendance and safeguarding failures including insufficient staff attention to pupils' and learners' attendance and instances poor practice when afternoon registers were not taken properly.

Teachers do not follow up all unexplained absences promptly and systematically. Leaders do not place sufficient urgency on identifying the whereabouts of learners who are missing lessons. Where parents/guardians cannot be contacted to report missing learners, staff do not invoke quickly enough the appropriate escalation protocols.

**(v) Risk and risk assessments**

Staff are not clearly identifying risks for pupils, nor do they understand or manage risk well. Risk assessments do not help staff to reduce risks or keep pupils and learners safe. Important information is not shared with the staff who teach and care for pupils and learners.

Safeguarding processes and procedures do not ensure that learners aged 16 to 18 learning alongside adults, and vulnerable adult learners, are safe. Leaders have not ensured that appropriate risk assessments are in place to monitor the safety of these groups. Tutors do not use health and safety risk assessments effectively to reduce hazards and minimise risk in the vocational workshops.

**(vi) Online risks**

Risks associated with learners online included that some older pupils place themselves at risk through inappropriate use of social media. The management of e-safety is not sufficiently comprehensive. As a result, learners have unrestricted access to inappropriate and unsafe websites while using the information technology (IT) equipment.

**(vii) Safeguarding policy**

Providers should ensure policy is thoroughly detailed and encompasses all aspects of safeguarding.

Policy and procedures need to be consistently updated and all staff are regularly trained in their use so that responsibility for actions and confidence with reporting incidents is paramount.



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It is important to implement fully the requirements of 'Working together to safeguard children' and 'Keeping children safe in education' and to develop safeguarding arrangements by implementing comprehensive individual risk assessments for learners on Foundation Learning.

(viii) **Staff**

Providers should ensure that a senior manager adopts the role of the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and undertakes the relevant training.

It is also important to improve the ability of staff to recognise risk to learners, including peer-on-peer abuse, in all learning and residential settings.

Providers need to ensure that leaders and managers engage regularly with a range of external professionals, accept constructive feedback and use it to inform swift and ongoing improvements to systems and procedures and to the identification and reporting practices.



## Annex

For this analysis, Ofsted reports from the following institutions were used:

Provider Name	URN	Ofsted Inspection		
		Link to report:	Date of inspection:	Grade:
North Shropshire College	130797	<a href="https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/130797">https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/130797</a>	26/01/2016	Inadequate
Epping Forest College	130677	<a href="https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/130677">https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/130677</a>	15/11/2016	Inadequate
Blake College LLP	50743	<a href="https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/50743">https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/50743</a>	10/10/2016	Inadequate
Hereward College	130474	<a href="https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/130474">https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/130474</a>	04/10/2016	Inadequate
Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Education	113654	<a href="https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/113654">https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/113654</a>	08/11/2016	Inadequate
Newham Sixth Form College	130452	<a href="https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/130452">https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/130452</a>	20/10/2015	Good
Trinity Specialist College	141703	<a href="https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/141703">https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/141703</a>	14/03/2016	Inadequate
Essex County Council	51766	<a href="https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/51766">https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/51766</a>	06/12/2016	Inadequate
Platinum Employment Advice and Training	56776	<a href="https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/56776">https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/56776</a>	17/01/2017	Inadequate
Exeter College	130645	<a href="https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/130645">https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/130645</a>	20/01/2014	Outstanding
First4Skills Limited	59142	<a href="https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/59142">https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/59142</a>	07/02/2017	Inadequate
Academy of Hair & Beauty Limited	50078	<a href="https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/50078">https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/50078</a>	30/09/2011	Satisfactory
The Royal School For Deaf Children	SC023679	<a href="https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/CARE/SC023679">https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/CARE/SC023679</a>	24/10/2012	Outstanding