

Local Members Interest
N/A

Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Thursday 16 February 2023

Sexual Harassment in Schools Spotlight Review – Executive Response

Recommendation

That the Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider the Executive Response to the final report and recommendations of their Spotlight Review on Sexual Harassment in Schools.

That the Committee monitors the Action Plan and implementation of the recommendations made on a six-monthly exception basis until all recommendations have been fully implemented.

Reason for recommendation

The final report and recommendations of the joint Spotlight Review on sexual harassment in schools was endorsed by the Health and Care, Prosperous, and Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committees and forwarded, with their comments, to the Cabinet Members for Children and Young People and for Education (and SEND) for their Executive Response. The three Committees agreed to delegate monitoring of the response and implementation of the recommendations to the Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Executive response is now attached (appendix A) for consideration.

Background

At the beginning of the new municipal year the Safeguarding, Prosperous and Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committees each raised sexual harassment in schools as an area for further scrutiny, with each separate Committee including this issue on their work programme. To avoid duplication the Committees agreed to undertake a joint spotlight review with one member from each committee taking part.

Sexual harassment in schools is an issue of concern nationally. The “Everyone’s Invited” on-line platform raised the profile of this issue and

highlighted concerns around the levels of abuse and harassment in education. The Government asked Ofsted to complete a rapid review to identify the extent of any problems and give recommendations for addressing these.

This joint spotlight review considered the issues highlighted nationally and scrutinised whether these were reflected in Staffordshire Schools, to what extent, and how/whether the issues identified were being address. The final report and recommendations were considered by the parent Overview and Scrutiny Committees at their April 2022 meetings, with each Committee endorsing the report for submission to the Cabinet Members for their executive response (Appendix A).

Summary

The Spotlight Review was held on 14 January 2022. Representatives attended with a range of expertise, including educationalists and safeguarding professionals. Further information was gathered after the review to address remaining queries.

The findings from this investigation give a current picture of the work to identify and address sexual harassment and abuse within schools. Following their investigations, the Review Members produced their conclusions and set out seven recommendations to support the considerable work already in place.

As this was a joint review, with representation from three separate Overview and Scrutiny Committees, each Committee considered the report and recommendations, endorsing it and submitting it (with accompanying comments) to the Cabinet Members for Children and Young People, and Education (and SEND) for their Executive Response.

Next Steps

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee need to consider the Cabinet Member's response to the Spotlight Review and recommendations and agree how they will monitor the actions agreed.

Link to the Strategic Plan

Offer every Staffordshire child and young person the best start in life, and the chance to achieve their potential.

Implications

The equalities and legal; resource and value for money; and risk implications are set out in the Review Group report.

Contact Officer

Name: Helen Phillips
Job Title: Scrutiny and Support Officer
Telephone No: 01785 276143
e-mail: helen.phillips@staffordshire.gov.uk

Appendices/Background papers

- Executive Response to the Spotlight Review of Sexual Harassment in Schools Final Report and Recommendations
- Final Report of the Spotlight Review of Sexual Harassment in Schools
- Minutes of the 11 April Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Minutes of the 14 April Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Minutes of the 21 April safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Contact Details

Report Author: Helen Phillips
Job Title: Scrutiny and Support Officer
Telephone No.: 01785 276143 or via Microsoft Teams
E-Mail Address: helen.phillips@staffordshire.gov.uk

