

Summary of recommendations to the executive and executive responses [Peer on peer abuse in schools spotlight review]

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| <p>In December 2019 a spotlight review concerning peer on peer abuse in schools was conducted.</p> <p>The following was recommended to the executive:</p> | | | | |
| <p>Recommendation i, ii and iii</p> | <p><u>School Policies</u></p> <p>i) That the executive promotes to all schools in Herefordshire the implementation of distinct, stand-alone peer on peer abuse child safeguarding policies;</p> <p>ii) That the executive works with all schools in Herefordshire to ensure that exclusion policies explicitly state the forms of peer on peer abuse that will result in permanent exclusion;</p> <p>iii) That the executive works with all schools in Herefordshire to ensure that peer on peer abuse policies contain provision for children inside and outside of the criminal justice system and children under the age of criminal responsibility;</p> | | | |
| <p>Executive Response</p> | <p>Partially agreed with the exception of ii) - commentary on the 'exclusion policies'. Such policies do not exist in schools. Exclusions are normally covered within a school behaviour policy. Policy recommendation ii) above is therefore complex: Legal advice is to treat each case on a case by case basis and as such defining which forms will lead to permanent exclusion may not be straightforward because under equalities law and exclusion guidance a pupils' SEND need and other safeguarding concerns e.g. criminal exploitation risk must be taken into consideration. However we will work towards clearer definition of what is deemed serious enough for exclusion.</p> <p>Work is already underway to promote stronger stand-alone policies in regard to peer on peer abuse. Many schools already have such policies. We will recommend that these policies should cover provision for children both inside and outside the criminal justice system and for children under the age of criminal responsibility.</p> <p>It should be noted that many of our schools are academies and we cannot guarantee or enforce such policies upon them. Ultimately it is the governing body of a school which has agrees all school policies whether it is a maintained or academy school.</p> | | | |
| <p>Action</p> | <p>Owner</p> | <p>By When</p> | <p>Target/Success Criteria</p> | <p>Progress</p> |
| <p>1. Stand-alone peer on peer abuse policies for all schools are promoted as best practice and that these policies should consider provision for children inside and outside of the criminal justice system and children under the age of criminal responsibility through briefings to HTs, COGs and DSLs</p> | <p>Learning and Achievement Team</p> | <p>31st January 2021</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ofsted reports state that safeguarding, including peer on peer abuse is | |

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| <p>2. Briefings to HTs, COGs and DSLs promote changes to behaviour policies that include information on what types of peer on peer abuse 'MAY' lead to a permanent exclusion</p> <p>3. The annual section 175/157 audit is amended to ensure it includes a new question relating to a separate peer on peer abuse policy</p> | | | <p>effective in all schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desktop reviews of school policies show that a school has a separate peer on peer abuse policy from September 2020 • Desk top reviews of school behaviour policies show that schools have considered what peer on peer abuse behaviours 'MAY' result in a permanent exclusion • Power point presentations from Education | |
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| | | | <p>Safeguarding meetings, Primary Heads' briefings, HASH meetings and COG briefings evidence that points 1 and 2 have been promoted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 175/157 audit amended to include a new question on separate peer on peer abuse policies for the 2020/21 audit | |
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| Recommendation iv | That the children and young people scrutiny committee writes to the department for education (DfE) to outline the comments of witnesses at the spotlight review concerning existing peer on peer abuse guidance for schools. In particular, correspondence should highlight the requirement for specific guidance for schools to develop their own peer on peer abuse policies. |
| Scrutiny Response | A letter is being prepared which will be sent to the Department for Education following approval by the Chairperson of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee. |

| Action | Owner | By When | Target/Success Criteria | Progress |
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| To finalise and send the letter to the DfE. | Democratic Services | End of March 2020 | Letter sent to DfE | The letter is currently in preparation |
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| Recommendation v | <u>Herefordshire Council review of historic cases</u> | | | |
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| | That the executive provides the outcome of the current review (including lessons learned) into cases of peer to peer abuse referred to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) to the spotlight review and the children and young people scrutiny committee; | | | |
| Executive Response | Agreed. This will be provided to children and young people's scrutiny once completed within the work programme of the committee. | | | |
| Action | Owner | By When | Target/Success Criteria | Progress |
| Provide a report on the outcome of the review, including lessons learned to the children and young people's scrutiny committee | Director of children and families | After the review has been completed which is due by end of April 2020 | Report provided to children and young people's scrutiny | Review commenced January 2020. |

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| Recommendation vi | <u>Data collection of incidence of peer on peer abuse cases and national reporting</u> | | | |
| | That the children and young people scrutiny committee write to the DfE to encourage the establishment of a national database on peer on peer abuse cases including data on: | | | |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • level 4 referrals to MASHs and convictions relating to rape, assault, assault by penetration and sexual assault; and • peer on peer abuse cases not involving rape, sexual assault by penetration or sexual assault to allow for information to be compiled on the scale and diversity of peer on peer abuse cases | | | |
| Scrutiny Response | A letter is being prepared which will be sent to the Department for Education following approval by the Chairperson of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee. | | | |
| Action | Owner | By When | Target/Success Criteria | Progress |
| To finalise and send the letter to the DfE. | Democratic Services | End of March 2020 | Letter sent to DfE | The letter is currently in preparation |
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| Recommendation vii | <u>Promotion of training in schools</u> | | | |
| | That the executive encourages all schools to invite the following trainers: CLD Trust ambassadors to provide training on positive relationships between peers; vulnerability trainers from the office of the police and crime commissioner; and the West Mercia Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre. | | | |
| Executive Response | Agreed – much training has already taken place and which addresses the above issues. We will commit to encouraging schools to invite or attend training being provided by the three organisations above, but we will also review whether any other trainers could assist this work. | | | |
| Action | Owner | By When | Target/Success Criteria | Progress |
| We will undertake a review of trainers who could help support this work, including the three above, to contribute to an annual safeguarding conference. The programme is already in planning phase (February 2020) Promotion of training will also be developed in the action covered in recommendation ix | Assistant Director, Education, Development and Skills | November 2020 | Successful annual conference programme includes the three specific organisations | Review March 2020 to set up next conference |

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| | | | mentioned above – and others | |
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| Recommendation viii | <u>Risk Assessments</u> | | | |
| | That the executive works with the Crown Prosecution Service and the West Mercia Youth Justice Board to clarify responsibility for the production of the pre-conviction risk assessments for children attending court in peer on peer abuse cases and considers a suitable provider for risk assessments in the future. | | | |
| Executive Response | Not agreed. The Youth Offending Service are in negotiations with the Crown Prosecution Service on the matter of the completion of the pre conviction risk assessments (AIM assessment). The Youth Offending Service are the appropriate agency to lead on this. There is agreement from YOS that Children and Families are not the appropriate agency to complete AIM assessments. As such it is not an area for Children and Families to become involved with at this stage, as clarity on this matter will be reached via YOS discussions with CPS, and communicated via the West Mercia Youth Justice Board which Herefordshire DCS attends. | | | |
| Action | Owner | By When | Target/Success Criteria | Progress |
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| Recommendation ix | <u>Resource pool for schools</u> | | | |
| | That the executive considers the establishment of a pool of resources for schools to access to address complex cases of peer on peer abuse. | | | |
| Executive Response | Partially agreed. We will look into what resources are available and promote what is suitable. If available, these will provide access to high quality advice and appropriate school level resources. However the quality of such resources is variable and schools are free to choose what resources they use. Additional resources in terms of time by specialist officers to support and advice is being planned and will have greater impact – and we can consider additional training for such advisers. | | | |
| Action | Owner | By When | Target/Success Criteria | Progress |
| We will undertake a review of which resources are likely to be helpful. There is little available at present and | Assistant Director, | December 2020 | On line support available | Review May 2020 to agree which resources to publicise as appropriate. |

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| quality is variable. In addition we will provide on line advice and support. We will consider additional training and advice for specialists when working with schools. | Education, Development and Skills | | | However, the greater need is for specialist officers to work with schools who are fully trained. Deadline for appointment is June 2020 |
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| Recommendation x | <u>Family Support Workers</u> | | | |
| | That the executive considers what extra resources can be committed to the work of family support workers with schools. | | | |
| Executive Response | Partially Agreed - We will consider how to develop family support work in schools, pooling the resources of the council with opportunities for funding from schools. | | | |
| Action | Owner | By When | Target/Success Criteria | Progress |
| Schools to be encouraged to access support services for Children and Young People and their families through an early help assessment Develop the programme of family support workers attached to schools, following the success in Leominster and Ross on Wye | Early Help Manager | September 2020 | Families identified where there is either a risk of or peer abuse identified, supported and sustainable change achieved. | 1. At least 6 months sustainable change achieved by June 2021. |

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| Recommendation xi | <u>Future meetings of the spotlight review</u> | | | |
| | That the children and young people scrutiny committee agree further meetings of the spotlight review to: consider a greater level of data to provide a more informed understanding of the scale and complexity of peer on peer abuse in Herefordshire; monitor the progress against the spotlight review's recommendations and those arising from the review of historic cases; and make further recommendations as necessary. | | | |
| Scrutiny Response | Following the completion of the review of historic peer on peer abuse cases the chairperson of the spotlight review will be consulted on a date for a further meeting of the spotlight review. | | | |

| Action | Owner | By When | Target/Success Criteria | Progress |
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| To consult the chairperson on a future meeting of the spotlight review. | Democratic Services | End of May 2020 | A date for a further meeting of the spotlight review is agreed. | Consultation with the chairperson over a future date of the spotlight review will occur once the historic review of cases has been concluded. |
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| Recommendation xii | <u>Council policies</u> | | | |
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| | That the executive gives consideration as to how to include reference to peer on peer abuse in relevant council policy (e.g. the children and young people plan). | | | |
| Executive Response | Agreed. Reference to peer on peer abuse is already included within the Herefordshire Children and Young People’s Plan 2019-2024. | | | |
| Action | Owner | By When | Target/Success Criteria | Progress |
| Policies produced by the council will be developed to reflect the issues facing children from contextual safeguarding, which does include peer on peer abuse | Director for children and families | When policies are reviewed or new ones are created | Clear action is taken to address contextual safeguarding as a result and this can be evidenced. | Included in the children and young people’s plan 2019-2020. Ofsted reviewed Herefordshire’s approach in the focused visit December 2019 and noted that “The local authority has improved its understanding and overview of contextual safeguarding in relation to peer-on-peer abuse and has assured itself that schools recognise this issue and work with social care services to minimise risk.” |

