

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee</b>  <b>9 July 2013</b>
<b>AGENDA ITEM:</b>	
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Scrutiny review of Notices to schools: follow-up report on the implementation of approved recommendations</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>Paul Greenhalgh, Executive Director, Children Families and Learning</b>
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	<b>Cllr Tim Pollard</b>
<b>PERSON LEADING AT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING:</b>	<b>David Butler, Improvement Adviser - Teaching and Learning (Safeguarding), and Sylvia McNamara, Director for Learning and Inclusion</b>

<b>ORIGIN OF ITEM:</b>	This item is contained in the sub-committee's agreed work programme.
<b>BRIEF FOR THE COMMITTEE:</b>	- To obtain an update on the implementation of recommendations  - To examine their use during "stranger danger" incidents in May 2013

## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report provides an update as of June 2013 of Notices to Schools related to safeguarding, further to the Scrutiny report of May 2011 and how relevant recommendations were implemented during "stranger danger" incidents in May 2013.

## **2. FOLLOW-UP REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF APPROVED RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 *Recommendation 1A "That all relevant agencies operating in Croydon adopt the procedure detailed in the group's findings and conclusions as per pages 11 and 12 of this report."*

All schools, academies and colleges have an updated list of relevant contacts within the Local Authority, including the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO – who co-ordinates procedures where there are allegations against members of staff), the Improvement Adviser for Safeguarding and Multi-Agency working and the Teaching and Learning Adviser (Safeguarding). These have been disseminated both via Fronter (the Council's electronic interface with schools), training for designated professionals and the termly Safeguarding Forum for head teachers and designated teachers. In addition, there is now contact with a wide range of independent providers, including schools and alternative providers. Every maintained school has a named contact within the School Improvement Team, their Link Adviser, and all schools are aware of their named person. A revised multi-agency model safeguarding policy and protocol was issued to all schools and colleges via the headteacher bulletin to schools and Fronter in May 2013.

- 2.2 *Recommendation 1B "That suitable persons within those organisations should be given a clear responsibility to operate these procedures in the event of relevant future child protection and welfare issues and be appropriately trained to carry out that role."*

Annual audits continue to be undertaken every year in the autumn term. For the last two years there has been a 100% return amongst LA maintained schools and an increasing take-up from Academies and independent schools. Training is provided for whole staff teams, governors and senior designated professionals. All Croydon schools and colleges have up to date training and all have been judged well by OFSTED for safeguarding practice. Schools and colleges give consistently positive feedback on the quality of training received. There has been particular success in the engagement of independent schools. One to one support and guidance is provided by the Improvement Adviser as and when necessary and schools feed back positively on this support. Safeguarding training and guidance are kept under constant review in order to meet statutory guidance. This is disseminated widely via various platforms and forums. All independent schools have been provided with free access to the Safeguarding Room on Fronter, which contains the latest policy guidance and LA documents. Recent updates include changes made as a result of Working Together 2013 and the Croydon Safeguarding Children Board model Safeguarding Policy and Protocol.

- 2.3 *Recommendation 1C "That the procedure detailed in pages 11 and 12 of the report be commended to Croydon Schools and their Governing Bodies for adoption."*

All Croydon schools have adopted Safeguarding Policies and all have been judged by OFSTED to have the necessary policies in place to meet statutory requirements.

- 2.4 *Recommendation 1D "That agencies should be aware of the speed by which modern communication methods can disseminate information to a wide audience and give consideration to how these methods can be more effectively used."*

Updated contact details are sent to schools and colleges on a regular basis, for example changes in contact details for the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and the children's social care intake and assessment team. The weekly bulletin to schools every Friday contains regular updates on Safeguarding issues which are, in addition, contained in the Safeguarding Room on Fronter which reaches a wider audience than the bulletin, including non-maintained and independent schools and colleges. In addition, there are regular updates on relevant safeguarding issues from the Officer responsible for e-safety, Improvement Officer for Health and Well-Being and Improvement Adviser, Safeguarding and Multi-Agency Liaison. Recent concerns regarding child safety to and from school have also been disseminated via the Metropolitan Police. Any concerns of an urgent nature are sent to schools immediately via bulk email, authorised by the Director. As a result of our experiences during the "stranger danger" incidents reported in various parts of the LA in May 2013 the Improvement Adviser, Safeguarding and Multi-Agency Liaison has been nominated as the department's link with the Metropolitan Police in order that such information can be disseminated rapidly, appropriately and in a co-ordinated manner.

- 2.5 *Recommendation 2 "That those organisations should agree a mechanism for ensuring that up to date contact details are available across each agency to ensure the smooth and fast exchange of information in future incidents."*

School audits are undertaken on an annual basis and these include updating contact details to reflect changes in staffing. Schools notify the LA of any changes that take place mid-year. These details are held on a central database.

- 2.6 *Recommendation 4 "That safeguarding training for schools contains information on who to contact in public agencies and how to contact them when faced with child protection and welfare issues."*

All safeguarding training contains information on how to contact the Intake and Assessment Team, Local Authority Designated Officer, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and the Improvement Adviser for Safeguarding and Multi-Agency Liaison, who will support schools as required with concerns about child protection and welfare issues. Referral procedures are covered in detail. In addition, Sukriti Sen (Head of Children in Need) and Gareth Flemyng (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub Project Manager) are regular contributors to the termly Safeguarding Forum for Senior Designated Professionals and provide updates and guidance.

- 2.7 *Recommendation 5 "That the operation of the procedure described in pages 11 and 12 of this report be tested in six months and reviewed periodically thereafter."*

The annual safeguarding audit process includes visits to 10% of schools for an on-site safeguarding audit, resulting in a written report highlighting strengths and areas for development, in addition to any aspects requiring immediate attention. All schools also have a Link Adviser and, where necessary, any safeguarding concerns are reported to relevant officers. The Executive Director and Director also undertake regular visits to schools. These result in any

concerns being raised with the School Improvement Team. Schools make regular contact with the Improvement Adviser and Teaching and Learning Adviser where they feel they require support or guidance. Such visits have, on rare occasions, resulted in on-site safeguarding audits being undertaken, particularly where there have been concerns expressed around site security.

2.8 *Recommendation 6 “That the Children, Young People and Learners Department facilitates a method of communication to non-maintained and independent schools.”*

The Teaching and Learning Adviser (Safeguarding) has established relationships with 19 non-maintained and independent schools in Croydon, from a baseline of 0 at the beginning of September 2011. All 19 have undertaken training for Senior Designated Professionals and/or Whole Staff Safeguarding Training. All have access to the Local Authority Safeguarding Room on Fronter and advice and support. Nine schools or colleges from the non-maintained sector are members of the termly Safeguarding Forum.

**3. THE USE OF APPROVED RECOMMENDATIONS DURING “STRANGER DANGER INCIDENTS IN MAY 2013**

- 3.1 Following an incident in Coulsdon on 9 May 2013 where a pupil walking home after school was approached by a stranger, the Metropolitan Police were alerted. The child’s school sent a letter to all parents and carers the day after the incident to remind them of the importance of “saying no to strangers” and a copy of the letter provided to the Local Authority the following week. The Local Authority supports schools with advice and guidance when alerted to such incidents. Officers from the Coulsdon Safer Neighbourhoods Teams visited local schools in the area to make them aware and have been carried out additional patrols near schools at the beginning and end of the day.
- 3.2 On 16 May 2013 the Metropolitan Police and Local Authority were alerted to another alleged incident in South Norwood by the child’s school. The Metropolitan Police responded and concluded this was not an attempted abduction. However, in the meantime, that morning all schools were alerted by the LA by bulk email, authorised by the Director for Learning and Inclusion, and asked to remind children and their parents / carers to be aware of the need to ensure vigilance and, wherever possible, for children to walk in groups rather than alone on their way to and from school. Schools were also asked to ensure the police are notified of any incidents of which they become aware. The following day schools were again notified by the LA that the police had confirmed there were no suspicious circumstances surrounding the previous day’s alleged incident, but reminded again to ensure vigilance.
- 3.3 Following this second reported incident it became apparent that there was a need to ensure further clarity in the co-ordination of information sent to schools by the Metropolitan Police and Local Authority. As a result, The Improvement Adviser for Safeguarding and Multi-Agency Liaison has been identified as the link LA officer with the Metropolitan Police and will be responsible for ensuring schools receive prompt, accurate and agreed alerts to schools.

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**CONTACT OFFICER:**

David Butler, Improvement Adviser - Teaching and Learning

**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:**