

Sec 175/157 Schools Safeguarding Audit Analysis Report

2020-2021



Purpose:

To assure the Slough Safeguarding Partnership that Slough schools and the FE College are compliant with current child protection and safeguarding legislation and to highlight any safeguarding issues or emerging trends.

Accountability:

Schools, governing bodies, and local authorities have statutory duties under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002. In accordance with S.175, governing bodies are required to review the school's policies and procedures on an annual basis and to report back to the local authority on how these duties have been carried out. The same Act covers independent schools and academies under Section 157.

The statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021' sets out the duties that schools and colleges are required to comply with to keep children safe, as well as the obligations that they must consider when safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. In addition, schools should comply with the safeguarding arrangements as outlined in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018' on behalf of the Slough Safeguarding Partnership, to comply with the requirements under the Children's Act 2004 and form part of the Section 11 partnership audits. Additionally, the new Education Inspection Framework, September 2019, has a particular focus on safeguarding arrangements under Leadership and Management.

KCSIE was updated in September 2021 however this audit was conducted up to and including 31st August 2021 using the 2020 KCSIE guidance.

Audit methodology:

A comprehensive school audit is conducted by Slough Borough Council using a platform hosted by Virtual College covering all aspects of safeguarding in the school from governance and accountability to professional development and inter-agency work. The audit tool is designed to assist statutory education providers in selfassessment in each area, with ratings of met, partially met, and unmet. There are some areas of the audit that are not scored. For example, the data collection section, and all demographic information that would not be useful to score is presented solely as information only. Although guidance is provided on how the data should be collected, the data captured will differ depending on the person performing the audit and their interpretation.

The audit has 10 sections with specific questions relating to each section which include:

- 1. General demographic information
- 2. Child Protection and Safeguarding data
- 3. Governance and accountability
- 4. Policies and procedures
- 5. Engagement of children and families
- 6. Professional development
- 7. Recruitment, vetting and managing allegations
- 8. Effective interagency working
- 9. Recording and reporting
- 10. Wider Safeguarding themes

The audit tool remains open for schools/settings to update their progress and is intended to be used as a working document.

Slough has 56 schools (including five independent schools) and one college, which were all invited to participate in the audit. Schools and the FE College have updated this audit to reflect any changes, including the introduction of COVID related topics since the previous audit, and any current safeguarding and child protection issues.

It has been possible for schools and the FE college to set a task for improving certain areas that have not been met or partially met by providers, using the audit tool.

A glossary of the terms is included at the end of the report.

Executive summary

Slough self-assessment reports from schools and colleges indicate that they are fulfilling the legal requirements to safeguard children and young people in their care and that they continue to demonstrate their commitment to promoting an open safeguarding culture within their facilities.

This report provides a summary of the safeguarding activities carried out across Slough schools and the College in 2020-21, as well as providing statistical data for 2019-20 (to ensure a full year's worth of data is captured). The following table provides an overview of responses across the authority and the specified safeguarding areas.

Responses in %	Fully met	Not Met	Partially Met	Incomplete response
Governance and accountability	78	0	3	18
Policies and procedures	82	0	1	16
Engagement of children and families	55	0	2	42
Professional development	79	0	4	17
Recruitment, vetting and managing allegations	70	0	1	29
Effective interagency working	80	1	2	17
Recognition and reporting	88	0	4	8
Wider Safeguarding themes	77	0	3	20

It will be interesting to pursue and investigate which schools have not provided all the information and why.

School life was negatively impacted by lockdown. Not seeing children physically made it difficult to identify key concerns. Limited access to trusted adults further reduced the opportunities for disclosure.

It is evident from the data that there has been a reduction in referrals due to this loss of contact, even though schools were open to vulnerable children and children of key workers. During the period following the lockdown, schools report more complex cases including family breakdowns, bereavement, and isolation from peers, all of which affected children's mental health and wellbeing.

Throughout the pandemic, schools increased communication with parents and children through newsletters, emails, home visits and phone calls to

vulnerable families. Several schools encouraged an opendoor policy with dedicated email addresses for specific concerns. Families were directed to FIS and local resources.

Support was given to schoolchildren upon their return to school following lockdown. The majority of schools adapted the curriculum in order to allow children time to reflect, used ISS for bereavement support, provided counselling, made sure staff were available for support and presented assemblies around aspects of wellbeing. Staff wellbeing has also been a priority throughout lockdown with access to employee assistance and employee wellbeing champions. A need for reflective supervision has been acknowledged, and many schools are offering this as part of the SBC pilot model, or independently from an external provider or within their MAT.

- Most schools have an established culture which promotes safeguarding. Further work is needed however, to integrate and fully implement a whole school approach to health and wellbeing.
- There are significant concerns within schools regarding children and young people's (CYP) mental health and wellbeing. As a result, leaders report feeling that the extra capacity of MHST and Getting help services has been of great benefit to them. This indicates that schools have engaged and improved mental well-being in schools through this programme. There are a large number of schools that have created 'peer champions' to disseminate positive mental health messages and to help reduce stigma attached to mental health challenges, even though actions on these were very limited this year due to lockdown. Through lockdown, school systems have embraced a range of interventions for the wellbeing of children and staff. A lot of work needs to be done in order to improve parental understanding of children's mental health problems.
- Schools are confident that staff can identify children in need of early assistance as they have longstanding relationships with children and children are able to identify a trusted adult in the school. Throughout lockdown relationships were maintain through ongoing communication and a remote delivery of the curriculum.
- 4. Due to the migration to remote delivery, schools have been required to look carefully at the behaviour of all employees through the implementation of policy addendums and training. Training on managing allegations has strengthened this area of work with senior leaders which was lacking last year.
- 5. As a result of staff training, having high visibility and updating safeguarding policies, many schools have begun assembling their school's narrative on peer-on-peer abuse. Many schools have increased the capacity of their pastoral and safeguarding teams to support mental health and wellbeing. Many school councils have wellbeing ambassadors. These areas should be further developed over 2022. SBC has also

- provided support to schools to embed strategies for zero tolerance to peer-on-peer abuse through seminars and events for senior leaders.
- 6. Several secondary schools have participated in the Oxwell survey which has demonstrated a need for additional counselling resources. Schools have started to provide a graduated response to children at risk of exclusion by strengthening parental-school relationships, relying on external support like KOOTH, Young Minds, SEBDOS MHST, as well as further discussions at PEAR panels to decrease the possibility of exclusion. Schools and colleges are becoming more aware of the link between challenging behaviour, mental health and wellbeing, and ACEs.
- 7. The recording and reporting process is well integrated and managed in most schools. Schools are confident in their procedures to deal with children who miss school. More professional curiosity is needed to investigate any links between children absent from school for less than the 20 days threshold for CME and their vulnerability to exploitation,
- 8. Child exploitation is one of the emerging themes. Primary and secondary prevention efforts are needed for this. Schools have expressed growing concerns about parenting and the home life of some of these children. Primary schools and early years settings should focus on educating parents about how to safeguard their children both online and in setting clear boundaries. Furthermore, there has been an increase in children and young people with behavioural issues at home which parents are finding it difficult to effectively manage. Many schools report the complexity of some families, including parental mental issues, a lack of understanding, and ineffective parenting.
- Transfers of CP files are inconsistent across settings. Leaders are concerned about GPDR and appropriate guidelines which would enable prompt and reliable transfers. The efficiency, effectiveness, and timeliness of transferring CP files can be improved

- by exploring this area further. There are some challenges when the destination is unknown. The post-16 provision cites the greatest concern because of students entering the workforce and/or taking a gap year, which makes tracking the onward destination difficult.
- 10. At partnership meetings, there is a high level of attendance from schools including case conferences and meetings with children in need. Meetings conducted during COVID presented some challenges. Schools and colleges struggled with the lack of video call technology at professional meetings early in lockdown, although things have improved over time. Some schools may not receive invitations to case conferences or may be notified of meetings too late. They state that they will always send reports if schools are unable to attend due to school holidays. Interagency cooperation appears to be strong across the board.
- Further work is needed to incorporate safeguarding into the leasing and letting of school properties for schools and colleges.
- 12. There are some settings with strong established safeguarding governors, including experienced head teachers and other experts. Others have less experienced governors. As a result, effective leadership and the capacity for challenge and scrutiny varies. In most schools, governors' training consists predominantly of basic awareness training that does not provide the level of knowledge and skill required for safeguarding governor roles.
- 13. Schools have varying views about ensuring that children and young people are safeguarded when a staff member is facing allegations. A few schools shared their perspective on ensuring children and young people are protected. Further work must be done to ensure all schools are meeting the standard of promoting the welfare of children in their policies, not just managing the adult and the alleged incident. This is not always explicitly stated in the policies.

- 14. The majority of required functions are met across the schools and college, including updates to policies related to emerging safeguarding concerns and mandatory duties. Other areas include ensuring that established functions are conducted by named DSLs and safeguarding governors. To comply with the legal requirements, schools are committed to maintaining an up-to-date single central record (SCR) of all staff, volunteers, and contractors. Clarification is needed regarding Disqualification by Association and Disqualification under the Childcare Act.
- 15. Schools vary in the frequency of training provided, ranging from once every two years to termly bite-sized topical sessions. Schools place a high priority on ensuring that training and central records are current and accurate. The schools report that they have distributed and read Annex A and Part 1 of the Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) training, but there is still work to be done on the effectiveness of the training and understanding of staff.
- 16. Schools have introduced, or are exploring, reflective supervision as a means of supporting the wellbeing of DSLs. These leaders are also supported through Network meetings. As a result of training and termly network meetings, DSLs report a greater understanding of policies, procedures, and safeguarding tools.

Impact of the audit

The audit said	We wil
Governance needs to be strengthened for effective leadership and capacity for challenge and scrutiny.	Develop a robust safeguarding module for governors and deliver in the summer term.
A wider recognition of the relationship between challenging behaviour, mental health, and wellbeing, relating to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), is	Work in collaboration with the Integrated Support Services to develop and promote trauma informed practices.
necessary.	Offer a comprehensive CPD to upskill professionals on mental health and wellbeing in partnership with the CCG
	* Support schools to adopt a 'Whole School Approach'
Identification and tracking of children and young people missing from education needs to be initiated earlier.	 Offer professional development and networking to develop professional curiosity amongst attendance officers Develop and improve 'Children Missing Education' (CME
	and children 'missing in education' reporting pathways
There is a need to strengthen transition points between schools.	Establish a task and finish to examine a Slough-wide protocol aimed at fostering prompt, orderly, and efficient transitions, and CP files transfers in accordance with GDPR guidelines
In developing policies, it is imperative to consider both the welfare of children as well as the response to the allegations against the adult and the alleged incident.	Develop guidelines to assist schools in developing child- centric policies in collaboration with the LADO
COVID has presented challenges in engaging in effective safeguarding professional meetings.	Work with the safeguarding partnership to redesign the SCF front door and work towards improving communication methods
	Facilitate the dialogue with the Independent Reviewing service to migrate towards video aided platforms for review meetings

Trends:

The table below outlines safeguarding issues which face children in all phases/ages in school and college. These outline trends which are emerging around safeguarding in educational settings. In this audit a vulnerable child is defined as a child whose school has concerns about their welfare, who requires early help support, who needs child protection services, or who has a need for

multiagency work. The concerns are described in detail in section 2 below.

There has been a significant decline (3.5%) in referrals to LADO for safeguarding concerns for children as well as allegations against staff (36.8%). Most children were not in school because of the lockdown; however, most schools remained open for the most vulnerable children and for the key workers.

Trends identified by education settings

Early years

- Limited parental recognition of SEN needs
- Lack of parental engagement to access support.
- High levels of need at home including families who are struggling to address challenging behaviours
- Domestic abuse, physical abuse, neglect, substance misuse, parental issues/acrimonious relationships.
- Impact of COVID has affected the development of young children such as toileting

Primary Schools

- Lack of engagement from families during lockdown
- Poor quality of home education/learning and/or removed to be educated at home from school roll
- High levels of need at home and families struggling to deal with challenging behaviours including children in special schools.
- Domestic abuse, physical abuse, neglect, substance misuse, parental issues/acrimonious relationships
- Poverty, housing crisis and increased need to access foodbanks and buy second-hand uniform
- Transient families with significant pupil absence including CME children missing; gone abroad and unable to track
- Bereavement support through COVID; socio economic barriers for low-income families.
- Impact on children from older siblings involved with CE
- Concerns related to the virtual world including sexualised images, online streaming and impact on mental wellbeing

Secondary/ Post 16 settings

- Some of the above were also highlighted in the older phase (DV, parental/family issues, income) with additional focus on:
- Exploitation by gangs, knife crime; loss of Year 8/9 Roma students
- The number of young people with mental health difficulties, self-harming, reporting suicidal thoughts, eating disorders, exacerbated by limited or no access to a GP, doubled through lockdown
- Anxiety resulting in, or linked to, emotional related school avoidance
- · Online peer abuse/sharing of nude images/online bullying
- Exploitation through gangs and increase in knife crime.
- Reports to suggest some low-income communities are not accessing the support they need due to stigma of pupil premium
- Impact of family time where low-income families work long shifts and have less quality family time to spend with YP and focus on their needs.
- Concerns regarding CSE though it has reduced through COVID

Analysis of the audit

1. General demographic information

This category requested information on the key roles responsible for safeguarding in schools and was not scored. All schools completed this section and fully met the areas.

At least one deputy DSL (DDSL) is in place at every school and college. Schools appear to be moving towards expanding safeguarding teams, with heads of year taking on more responsibility for safeguarding and linking with the safeguarding teams.

In most cases, schools are familiar with the Berkshire procedures and the escalation policy which they have recently updated through the DSL networks and training. The escalation policy has been successfully utilized by some schools to achieve successful outcomes. A mixed response was observed regarding knowledge of these procedures and those of SCF more locally. An important point raised was that not all children are from nearby areas or come from boroughs in London.

All schools report having a Code of Conduct policy or Staff Behaviour Handbook. However, the level of awareness of these policies varies between schools. It would be beneficial to devote more time and attention to promoting this across all settings. Some schools include the code of conduct in training and staff handbooks, while others require staff members to sign as evidence that they understand and agree with the policy.

2. Safeguarding data; A snapshot of the vulnerable children in our schools and education settings

- · All providers submitted an audit return.
- The number of MARFs to the front door reduced by 3.5% and CE referrals by 25.5%.

- Despite more direct disclosures and increased vulnerability, schools reported fewer children at risk by 20.6%. This may be attributable to COVID and a reduction in visibility, as many children were not present at school.
- Referrals to all services were lower than in previous years for young carers (12.5%), early help referrals (5.8%), CIN cases (14.3%), and CPP (15.9%).
- There is some consensus regarding the definition of vulnerable children. We have, however, defined vulnerable children for the purpose of this audit, as pupils; for whom leaders have had individual concerns, with a social worker, with a child protection plan, with a child in need plan, and/or a child in care. Children missing education episodes (CME) are also included in this category
- The number of vulnerable children reported by schools decreased by 20% from last year (4925 pupils); this was directly related to school staff seeing fewer children through COVID.
- CPP referrals were mainly around neglect, domestic abuse, and emotional abuse.
- Referrals to Early Help focused on mental health, family dysfunction, poor parenting, and physical punishment based on cultural beliefs.
- Schools reported that special education needs were more complex and demanding
- In schools and colleges, there has been a 95.2% increase in an explicit, newly introduced category of peer-on-peer incidents. As part of the workstream on sexual abuse in schools, all schools and colleges have been encouraged to collect this data. According to some reports from the primary phase, inappropriate kissing or sexist language is the most prevalent behaviour. Among the secondary students, there was some online sharing of images and some forms of racism.

- Referrals of Prevent cases from schools increased by 15.4%, of which 5 cases originated in primary settings, but were predominantly secondary referrals
- The number of young carers identified decreased by 12.5%. These young carers were a mixture of primary and secondary students who handled caring responsibilities for ill parents, siblings with Special Education Needs and/or medical conditions.
- There were also fewer referrals to the LADO related to concerns regarding positions of trust (36.7%) and allegations against staff in schools/colleges (29.8%).
- There have been reports of inconsistencies in outcome letters, missed invitations to professional meetings and inconsistent updates - verbal, electronic, and sometimes lacking any communication with SCF. Online meetings have proven useful for short-notice strategy meetings, but the use of non-aided video facilities for case conferences continues to be problematic.

- There is strong school attendance at partnership meetings CIN, CP and CLA. Whenever schools are unable to attend (school holidays), they will always send a report to ensure that they are represented. Many schools have migrated to central safeguarding email accounts in order to support safeguarding processes outside of school hours.
- A decrease of 29% has been recorded in allegations against staff, with 24 of those being reported to the LADO for external investigation, which is a reduction from 36.6% in the previous year. All other allegations were handled by the school's HR department and disciplinary procedures.
- Four schools participated in safeguarding practice reviews or rapid reviews with the Safeguarding Partners, a 60% decrease from 2019-20.

Number of Vulnerable children	2019-20 audit	2020-21 audit	% Difference
Privately Fostered Children	14 (incorrectly captured)	2	
Young Carers	80	70	-12.50%
Early Help Referrals	706	665	-5.80%
Children In Need	447	470	5.80%
Child Protection	308	259	-15.90%
Children Looked After	110	90	-18.20%
CE Referrals	47	35	-25.50%
FGM Referrals	4	1	-80%
Channel Panel Referrals	11	27	145%

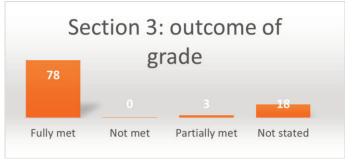
Safeguarding Audit 2021

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Question Number	Question Title	2021 Audit	2020 Audit	2019 Audit	Number	%	Number	%
2.1	How many children/young people within your setting do you identify as vulnerable?	4925	6201	5531	-1276	-20.60%	670	12.10%
2.2	How many of the total number of vulnerable children/young people recorded by the school/setting were referred onto Slough Children's Social Care via a MARF?	777	805	638	-28	-3.50%	167	26.20%
2.3	How many of these MARF referrals do you have a record of the outcome?	632	667	495	-35	-5.20%	172	34.70%
2.4	How many of the children identified overall as vulnerable, have you delivered a school based early help intervention without any external services input?	2069	3240	2154	-1171	-36.10%	1086	50.40%
2.5	How many of the children identified as vulnerable, have been supported with an early help assessment and plan to deliver support through the Early Help Hub?	nna	706	321	-41	-5.80%	385	119.90%
2.6	Please provide the number of families withdrawing support/refusing support from any external services?	114	108	77	6	5.60%	31	40.30%
2.7	How many of the children identified as vulnerable are pupils with disabilities/ special educational needs?	1991	2322	1625	-331	-14.30%	697	42.90%
2.8	Please provide the number of children/ young people who have a Child in Need Plan (CIN) and are Slough residents.	470	447	395	23	5.10%	52	13.20%
2.9	Please provide the number of children and young people with a Child Protection Plan (CPP) and are Slough residents.	259	308	388	-49	-15.90%	-80	-20.60%
2.10	Please provide the number of Children Looked after (CLA) in your school/setting who are Slough residents.	90	110	108	-20	-18.20%	2	1.90%

2.11	Is there appropriate representation from the school/setting at Children Looked After meetings/reviews, Child Protection conferences/reviews and/or Child in Need meetings/reviews in person or a written report in advance if you are unable to attend?	50	58	50	-8	-13.80%	8	16.00%
2.12	How many invitations have you received from the Independent Reviewing service at SCST inviting you to attend Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC) and Review Child Protection Conference (RCPC)?	404	438	304	-34	-7.80%	134	44.10%
2.13	Do you have any privately fostered children in your school? If so, please provide numbers.	2	14	14	-12	-85.70%	0	0.00%
2.14	Please provide the number of identified young carers in the school/Setting that are also Slough residents.	70	80	75	-10	-12.50%	5	6.70%
2.15	Please provide the number of Child Exploitation (CE) referrals made to social care?	35	47	31	-12	-25.50%	16	51.60%
2.16	Please provide the number of Female Genital mutilation (FGM) referrals made to social care?	1	5	4	-4	-80.00%	1	25.00%
2.17	Please provide the number of Prevent referrals made to Channel Panel?	27	11	13	16	145.50%	-2	-15.40%
2.18	Please provide the number of Peer-on- Peer incidents at your school/setting?	1370	702	-	668	95.20%	-	-
2.19	Please provide the number of allegations made against staff in your school/setting.	33	47	33	-14	-29.80%	14	42.40%
2.20	Please provide the number of staff allegations reported to the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO).	24	38	38	-14	-36.80%	0	0.00%
2.21	Has the school/setting been involved in the systems process for any rapid reviews, practice reviews (formally known as serious case reviews)?	4	10	5	-6	-60.00%	5	100.00%

1. Governance and accountability

This section focused on the accountability and scrutiny aspects of the audit. Schools and colleges have met and implemented governance structures with a designated safeguarding governor in place.



- Some schools did not share contact information for the safeguarding governors or provided an email address linked to the school for access to the information. These contact details should remain independent and impartial and should be available on the website under the procedure for complaints. One school is in the process of recruiting a safeguarding governor and has a temporary one from their Trust in place as an interim measure.
- One leader holds both the DSL and the Governor role.
 The issue has been addressed directly with the school.
- Governance and scrutiny of safeguarding varied among schools, from reporting to the governing board to regular termly/annual checks of SCR, CP files and regular themed audits jointly with the DSL, although the majority of liaison was done virtually during the pandemic. Depending on the school, this may be termly, annually, or some schools may pursue more frequent spot checks. This practice is not widespread.
- In most schools, weaknesses have been identified and action plans have been developed to eliminate and mitigate risk, with SMART goals and defined timelines for action that are monitored. Detailed information is shared with the entire governing body, with recommendations for policy revisions, if necessary. In most schools, the Sec 175/157 safeguarding audit serves as the evidence base for reporting to the Board of Governors.

- Multi Academy Trust (MAT) schools are subject to internal Trust scrutiny, including internal audits,
 Standard Evaluation Frameworks, and ISI inspections.
- One school report that it has no children with special needs and no special education coordinator. All other schools have either a qualified SENCO or two SENCOs, and an Inclusion policy that must be reviewed annually (in most cases). In addition, some schools employ inclusion managers based on the level of need within their school. In many cases, SENCOs are also DSLs, and they consult on both SEN and CP cases in order to ensure that information is shared. One school has developed SEND passports to include achievable targets.
- Every school has a designated teacher for children looked after, regardless of whether there are any CLAs on roll. In addition, the responsibility has been expanded to include all children with a social worker. DTs work with DSLs to support these vulnerable children Promoting the education of children with a social worker publishing.service.gov.uk
- On examining the safeguarding culture within an organization, it was noted that schools promote an open safeguarding culture with staff, and volunteers, through posters, email bulletins, safeguarding leaflets, and lanyards to identify visitors, contractors, and staff, and by promoting safeguarding pathways within staff handbooks.
- A major focus in schools has been on providing staff
 with good support, particularly through COVID, with a
 range of interventions, including informal supervision,
 counselling, drop-ins, discussions at staff meetings,
 safeguarding handbooks, and inductions regarding
 safeguarding. The majority of schools met the
 requirements outlined in this section and a couple of
 schools are actively working to enhance their
 structures.

- The trend for reflection, discussion, and supervision (both informal and formal) is evident across settings. Many MATs have established their own reflective supervision for DSLs while other MATs have used the SBC (although the uptake was low in 2021). For informal supervision, staff are using MHST practitioners or Educational Psychologists, and DSLs are providing staff with opportunities to reflect on their cases, as well as weekly debriefs with others.
- Additional temporary measures such as remote working and temporary addendums to policies (code of conduct, safeguarding and behaviour policies) have been implemented through COVID. COVID testing (health and safety) and continuous changes to COVID guidance have presented challenges. Virtual meetings have been the norm this year for most governing boards.

2. Policies and procedures

In this section we have discussed safeguarding policies. Every school/setting has a policy approved by the governing body, which is available on the website. These additions included COVID addendum policies based on the changing landscape. 82% of schools fully met the standards for policies and procedures and 16% did not respond.



- When DSL or SLT (on rota system) were not available on site, they could be accessed remotely by phone or video call and were communicated to the entire staff.
- A good example is where one school developed a policy on early help and provides low-level community support for parents through monthly drop-in sessions.
 Another school has developed a policy on child-friendly peer-to-peer support.
- It is clear that schools have statutory responsibilities in place (FGM, Prevent, CE, Peer abuse) and that these are clearly outlined in the safeguarding policy and embedded into all training. To start the academic year, all schools have requested that staff read the KCSIE and sign that they have understood it.
- Some schools have separate policies relating to each safeguarding theme, for example, Prevent, SEN, and sexual harassment. These policies are being consolidated by some schools. A whistleblowing policy and a code of conduct are in place in all schools. There appears to be extensive safeguarding themes included in safeguarding policies, including private fostering, peer-to-peer abuse, and low-level concerns regarding faith-based abuse.
- All schools have implemented a Code of Conduct Policy, Staff Handbook, or Staff Behaviour Policy. The level of awareness of these policies varies from school to school. There are schools that include the code of

- conduct in training and staff handbooks, and there are others that request a signature as evidence that the policy has been seen and read by all staff members.
- In all schools and colleges there is a complaints policy, but on occasion it may be difficult to locate on the website and the contact information for the governing body may not always be available. Some schools provide both students and parents with a child-friendly version of how to file a complaint, particularly in early years settings.
- The majority of schools seek written assurances about commissioned services (home/school transportation, building contractors, cleaners, hirers for after-school activities) but this practice is lacking in other schools.
 As much as possible, schools commission building work during the holidays so that contractors are not on site when children are present.
- A growing number of schools proactively seek written assurances, which they may not have done in the past, and a few have now developed commissioning frameworks for due diligence. An SCR contains information about the contractors and professionals who visit frequently to see children. It is recommended that most settings do more work on safeguarding in terms of leasing and letting school premises.
- Within settings, visitors and staff are distinguished by lanyards. In most schools, digital scanning systems are in place, and student safety leaflets are provided upon arrival.
- In most cases, schools are familiar with the Berkshire
 procedures and the escalation policy about which DSLs
 have recently been updated through networks and
 training. Some schools regularly review this guidance
 whilst others have used the escalation policy to achieve
 successful outcomes. It appeared that there was a
 mixed response regarding knowledge of these
 procedures and those of SCF more locally. In addition, it
 should be noted that not all children reside in nearby
 areas and come from London Boroughs.

3. Engagement of children and families

This section focused on the involvement of children, young people, and their families. This section provides an additional focus on peer-to-peer abuse and harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) within the PHSE curriculum. While the remainder is working towards full engagement with CYP regarding peer-on-peer abuse, 55% of schools have fully met all aspects in this section.



- There are a range of initiatives to engage children, young people, and families. Schools support an opendoor policy and foster a culture of safeguarding with high visibility regarding safeguarding.
- The integration of PHSE/RSE into the curriculum has been achieved through assemblies, themes days, events and MHSTs. Early years' activities have included 'NSPCC pantasaurus', 'PALS', 'SEAL', 'Zippy's friends', the 'Stop I don't like it' campaign, and 'play and learn to socialise' programs.
- Primary schools have participated in 'Jigsaw', 'ELSA',
 'NSPCC Speak and Stay Safe', 'worry boxes', and the
 'Choices' program. The secondary phase has received
 external support and has incorporated mental health
 workshops, learning mentors, Aik Saath, in-house
 counsellors, Number 22 and school nursing. Several
 schools incorporate online safety into their lessons and
 online learning activities.
- Schools seem confident that their students will be able to approach a trusted adult if they are worried. School curricula seem to cover a wide range of safeguarding topics, including promoting British values. Healthy bodies and minds are important elements of life skills, as are safe choices made in a variety of ways. Some are direct, while others are more subtle.

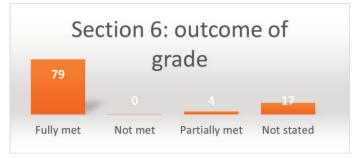
- College forms integrate safeguarding skills into the classroom and are associated with national and local themed safeguarding events. The college offers four safeguarding modules.
- Schools have begun the process of compiling narratives/trends on peer-on-peer abuse, training staff, raising visibility, and updating policies. Many schools have extended the scope of their pastoral teams to include mental wellbeing and safeguarding. A number of schools have wellbeing ambassadors through school councils. We have supported schools in a number of areas to embed procedures to safeguard against peer-to-peer abuse. It is also important to link the safeguarding and the behaviour policies in order to ensure victim/perpetrator support/sanction are balanced and the needs of the perpetrator are also taken into account simultaneously.
- It has been noted that many schools are considering therapeutic, regulation-based approaches, and differentiated solutions in their behaviour policies and language used to address peer abuse. Schools are aware of tools and resources such as the Brookes traffic light tool, beyond referrals to capture HSB through surveys, and by exploring a whole school approach that incorporates "listening" and "safe in school".
- This year's audit included a focus on emotional wellbeing. Schools have embraced and increased support for children, youths, parents, and staff during and following lockdowns. Support has been extended to those who are at risk of exclusion by using homeschool relationships, external support programs such as KOOTH, Young Minds, and SEBDOS, and interacting with PEAR, YISP, and behaviour panel discussions in order to prevent exclusions and promote managed moves.
- PEAR, Primary Behaviour Panel, Early Help Hub and CAMHS provide additional support to children at risk of exclusion. The school police officer is employed to provide targeted interventions for young people at risk of exclusion

- A number of secondary schools have completed the Oxwell survey to demonstrate the need for additional counselling resources. When possible, MHSTs have used to provide extra support to minimise exclusion. The link between challenging behaviour and mental health and wellbeing and ACEs is becoming more widely recognized in schools. Several schools are implementing wellbeing strategies in conjunction with the Whole School Approach (WSA).
- Support for return to education was offered to schools following lockdown; most schools adapted the curriculum to allow children time to reflect and used ISS for bereavement support, and counsellor support during wellbeing assemblies.
- Staff welfare has also been a priority, with lockdowns offering employee assistance, and staff wellbeing champions and some schools offering a dedicated day off for staff in October.
- In an effort to reduce the spread of infection, parent engagement changed from meet-and-greet duties at the school gates to virtual coffee mornings, parents' evenings, and individual appointments. Enhanced communication with parents through COVID via newsletters, emails, home visits and phone calls to vulnerable families. Schools continued to promote the open-door policy and provide dedicated email addresses for specific concerns. This included referring families to Local Offer and FIS.

- In addition to playground whiteboards and communication books, worry boxes are also used.
 Other schools have implemented peer mentors and student councils to ensure that children's voices are heard. To disseminate information about safeguarding, schools also use PTAs, emails, parent view surveys, social media (closed Facebook and twitter), texts, coffee mornings, drop-ins with the FSW, newsletters, parents' evenings, parent forums, and awareness events.
- By creating a home school agreement, along with a list of who is who and conduct expectations, an open dialogue is encouraged.
- Focused communication through COVID, providing additional support and regular contact to those selfisolating, including online attendance registers when schools moved to remote instruction.
- Online surveys are conducted with children, young people, their families, and staff. The schools engage children and young people through School Council, Ambassadors, daily bulletins (young people can also contribute), questionnaires, pupil voice, and worry/ post boxes in classrooms.
- Early years practitioners use the Leuven scales to support young children's emotional wellbeing. A noticeable delay was reported in areas including independent skills, toileting, etc.

4. Professional development

This section focuses on learning and development across the entire school community and 70% were fully compliant with the procedures around training and development.



- Safeguarding training is routinely provided in all schools by the DSL or an external provider. Several CPD sessions have been offered remotely through COVID this year. In some schools, online learning is used to accommodate the flexibility of the workforce, particularly for governors and new employees undergoing induction. There is a wide variety of induction programs from schools to schools, from a full set of mandatory courses to some information and short inductions for supply teachers. In addition to safeguarding questions embedded in interviews, some schools provide staff handbooks.
- Most schools provide refresher training annually, and some schools are using bite-sized themes in safeguarding, which is a positive development from previous audits. This is a good practice in some schools with scheduled half-termly cycle of topics that are to be covered throughout the year, utilizing case studies to embed messages. School systems seem to link measure the outcomes of CP and link these to appraisals.
- All schools have provided updates and requested all staff members sign that they have read and understood KCSIE Part 1 and Annex A, but the degree of understanding varies. In good practice, schools conduct spot checks, discuss anonymised case scenario discussions weekly or monthly as part of staff meetings, and administer quizzes to test knowledge and understanding. The attendance and understanding of staff training is captured and maintained by HR, SCR, or SIMS.

- School-wide training includes early help, thresholds, child vulnerabilities, referrals to the DSL, whistleblowing, low level concerns, and LADO.
 Different schools embed training in different ways, including inductions for new employees, high-visibility posters on the backs of toilet doors, individual emails, staff meetings, and governor walks. Some schools provide verbal updates regarding the status of the case and encourage escalation of concerns and reporting through training.
- As a result of the sessions delivered directly to education providers, the management of allegations training has considerably improved across the schools.
 Since the sessions, increased confidence in consulting with the LADO has been reported.
- All schools report that DSLs have been trained within their two-year timeframe and are using other methods, such as subscriptions to Andrew Hall (Safeguarding expert), the KEY, DSL Networks, and NSPCC, to be upskilled and refreshed during the year. A combination of Safeguarding partnership training and experienced DSL training is offered. COVID has limited face-to-face training this year.
- Governors receive a variety of training, ranging from basic safeguarding including KCSIE, online learning, the KEY website, as well as RBWM Governor Support Services for CPD or internal Trust trainings. Governors in some schools conduct safeguarding walks, audits, and reviews, but this is not the case in all schools. It is important to note that while some settings have welltrained safeguarding governors with experienced head teachers, others have less experienced governors. This influences the level of understanding of and for effective challenge and scrutiny.
- Some DSLs are head teachers, while others have no responsibility for teaching. This varies from school to school. DSLs report feeling supported and receiving adequate time to fulfil the requirements for their roles, including attending meetings and time for reflection. However, some Head teachers who hold the position report challenges.

 By recognising the distinct needs and increased complexity of cases through lockdown, additional capacity has been added to support DSLs. Schools with larger student populations have safeguarding and inclusion teams to share caseloads and to reflect on the complexity of cases. Currently, many schools offer reflective supervision with external personnel through the SBC pilot programme or the MAT.

5. Recruitment, vetting and managing allegations

Section 7 discusses the appropriate procedures to ensure that staff, volunteers, and contractors are vetted in compliance with guidelines and legislation, as well as how to manage allegations. 70% of settings provided assurances that they fully meet the requirements for safer recruitment.



- A number of schools were very strong on employee records, including compliance checks, storage and training on the single central record (SCR). Some settings have more comprehensive SCRs that take into account contractors, volunteers, and supply staff than others. Schools carry out risk assessments when checks cannot be obtained from abroad.
- The SCRs vary across Slough including both electronic and paper records. Some schools maintain a formal process for the cleansing of records after a staff member leaves. Most schools with strong leadership conduct regular SCR audits by their safeguarding governors and termly updates, however this is not true for all schools.
- Schools report compliance with recruitment processes and procedures, including training panel members to conduct interviews in line with the safer recruitment guidance. Many of these were conducted remotely during lockdown.
- Schools ask for work placement assurances from placement settings to include verification of supervisors and/or from 'Learning to Work', who requested placements on behalf of schools through COVID; these did not occur this year
- Only one school organises the homestay exchange programme. This did not take place this year.

- Schools request written confirmation from alternative education providers to ensure that staff have undergone the appropriate compliance checks. Some schools have developed a check list to capture the information provided by alternative provisions. The frequency of school visits varies from weekly to halftermly. School visits vary across the borough. In some cases, induction meetings are held between the DSL and the placements for vulnerable children.
- Few schools/settings offered additional after-school programs through covid. The few that did operate their own. When services are bought in, assurances are sought regarding the suitability of staff; with a few schools conducting their own DBS checks, and some schools recording these results on school records.
- Across the borough, the DBS check cycle may vary from monthly, yearly, or three yearly. In many schools, a random sample of 10% is used. In some schools, staff members are expected to report any changes through an annual staff declaration form or do not recheck due to cost implications. For supply teachers, freelance workers, and work placement students, assurances are sought and included in the SCR. Most schools reported they did not have any volunteers during lockdown, but that they do have systems in place for carrying out DBS checks. Some schools also conduct risk assessments.
- There appears to be ongoing confusion with regards to disqualification by association (DBA) and disqualification under the Childcare Act. Information on partner/family associations is no longer required. However, it is still necessary to record any disqualification of an individual as defined in the Disqualification of Childcare Act (DCCA). Schools that offer under-8 care must comply with the Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006. However, some schools continue to misinterpret these checks. Some schools now request a staff self-declaration annually for risk management purposes

- In schools that have guest speakers, checks for extreme views vary widely. These range from online searches, through the completion of due diligence, to ensuring staff are present during any public presentations. In a small number of schools, visitor policies have been developed to ensure due diligence and DBS checks are requested, although Covid has limited the number of visitors over the past two years.
- COVID risk assessments were carried out as part of temporary arrangements during the pandemic. These included remote interviewing and viewing of documents online to fulfil safer recruitment practices with original documents being inspected prior to employment.
- School whistleblowing policies and codes of conduct are in place. Employees are fully aware of the LADO role and share whistleblowing policies through training sessions, noticeboards, staff handbooks, and inductions. A head teacher allegation is usually investigated by either the governors/trustee chair or the safeguarding governor. Complaint's procedures must be made explicit in the complaints policy, including the key investigators. As new ways of working and remote delivery have become more prevalent, conduct for employees has become an important issue. Our managing allegations training has contributed to this effort this year.
- There was some confusion in the understanding of the question concerning safeguarding for children and young people when an individual is being investigated.
 Some schools provided insight into protecting children and young people at such a time. The need to ensure that all schools meet the standard of promoting the welfare of students in these policies goes beyond simply managing the adult and the allegation. This is not always explicitly stated in the policy.

6. Effective interagency working

The focus of section 8 was on how well schools and colleges work with external partners to safeguard children and young people. This year, the section has been expanded to emphasise CME, EHE, off rolling, and links to exploitation and 80% of schools reported meeting all requirements on these areas.



- Schools share the referral process, including bringing serious concerns to the DSL's attention verbally and in writing following a training session. Around 50% of schools upload information using CPOMS/My Concern. Staff are trained in using the system. For staff who are not online, coloured manual forms are used to convey urgent information. It is reported that school staff are aware of early indicators and understand the importance of seeking support at the right time to ensure that families are directed appropriately. School staff are also taught about consent and EH. The majority of schools had a list of vulnerable children during lockdown who did not require external assistance but were on the radar. This indicates that schools have a good understanding of these children's needs.
- Schools and colleges are confident in their reporting and recording systems. For continuity and oversight, some have joint peer discussions and report increased confidence in the use of screening tools and threshold documentation. Sporadic spot checks are performed by a number of schools.

- Many schools have subscribed to Operation Encompass notifications. There is an absence of consistency and intermittent reporting, as well as inaccurate information about pupils not enrolled in their school/college. The schools have indicated that notifications are important in monitoring children. The college has also signed up, but there are some challenges with 14 local authorities and 3 police forces.
- TVP only provide information to educations provisions who have statutory age children; therefore, any nurseries are not able to receive alerts for children under 5 which is a concern.
- The majority of schools are familiar with the tools available through DSL networks and training, including DASH, Brook's Traffic Light Tool (sexual harm), Neglect Screening Tool, FGM Screening Tool, CE Screening Tool, Wellbeing Tool, Young Carer Screening Tool, etc.
- Schools also recognise the importance of multi-agency meetings. However further work is needed to understand what these meetings accomplish and how they function. These included VAMP, SEMARAC, SYV Panel, Channel Panel, EMARAC, and MARAC.
- Schools have subscribed to Andrew Hall's, Alan McKenzie's (E-safety) and NSPCC's online alerts.
- Schools report that they are confident in their ability to identify children in need of early intervention, because they believe that they have a close relationship with them. There are schools that have family support workers, inclusion teams, and pastoral care teams who provide support and referrals to agencies. Early Help services are well connected to schools.
- Schools value the front door (SCF) service as well as the opportunity to discuss their concerns prior to implementing a MARF. According to the schools, all referrals are made effectively and on time.
- Schools and colleges are equipped with effective systems for tracking absences and persistent late arrivals. At least one contact number is provided for each student in every school.

- In schools, systems are in place with a supportive approach rather than a punitive response, offering meetings to help comprehend context and challenges, as well as providing appropriate support. Many schools have internal discussions to monitor and track persistent late arrivals, and some offer pick-up/drop-off services in order to ensure that students arrive on time. The text, call, home visit, and fixed penalty notice are standard processes across all settings.
- Schools have developed a system to track absentees.
 This follows CME guidelines. Some schools are making early referrals to the Early Help Hub or engaging with families to assist them in finding solutions through family support workers, while other schools update families on low attendance half termly.
- The attendance threshold varies between 90 and 96% across schools. Others are more proactive by tracking children before they have completed the 20 consecutive days of CME. There are some schools that offer incentives for attendance, and some conduct home visits prior to sharing information with the local authority. Schools have indicated that they advise pupil tracking services when a child misses' education (CME) in accordance with CME guidelines. From the audit, it is unclear how quickly these vulnerabilities are reported and what actions are taken to investigate their vulnerability and exploitation factors. The school's express confidence in their reporting procedures.
- There are still differences between schools, but there is an increasing awareness of the link between nonattendance of vulnerable children and exploitation.
 Many schools maintain close contact with their attendance officer and DSL to keep these links active. It has been reported that some schools do not remove children from their current register until a new place has been confirmed; however, this is not the case in all settings. In situations where schools are asked to remove a child, they are hesitant to remove them until the onward destination has been determined.
- There is a clear understanding among staff as to how to handle a child who goes missing while on the school premises during the day (SLT alerts and sweeps), with some schools developing policies around this and increasing staff levels during break times. Leaders report that early years' site perimeters are secure.

7. Recording and reporting

Schools and colleges report they maintain CP files separately from personnel files, with 88% of schools fully meeting all requirements in record keeping and reporting. Paper based copies are stored in the Head Teachers' or DSLs' office and electronic files are password protected. Chronologies are included on CP files in order to track activity, manage, and review any cases/actions on a regular basis. Schools using CPOMS/SIMS, or My Concern store records on secure platforms, with access to full records restricted to Heads, DSLs, and DDSLs. As a precautionary measure, a few schools maintain both manual and electronic records.

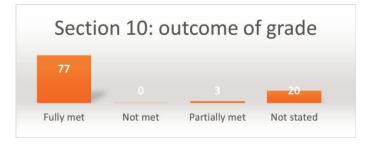


- Staff data is password protected. GDPR requirements are shared widely throughout the school, and the duty of confidentiality is enforced. The majority of schools use the Egress secure platform to share sensitive personal data, and schools report that CPOMS has improved the security of their child protection records. Some schools have appointed their own Data Protection Officer (DPO) or have HR support for data compliance issues, including governors responsible for GDPR compliance. A number of schools have cited that GDPR does not apply to safeguarding the welfare of a child, which is a positive development. In order to ensure compliance, a GDPR policy and training are provided to staff, whilst others apply a clear desk policy.
- Personnel records are also safeguarded by HR, or the head and staff are well aware that confidentiality is part of the Code of Conduct.

- Each school/college tracks CP cases on a weekly or fortnightly basis. Electronic systems provide the appropriate alerts, while paper-based records have chronologies detailing review dates that are fed into electronic diaries.
- There are concerns about GDPR and appropriate guidelines regarding CP file transfers. These guidelines vary across settings. As long as both the current school and the receiving (new) school have electronic filing systems, such as CPOMS, cases are transferred electronically. In the event that one of the schools uses paper-based CP files, signed receipts are provided by courier for the transfer of files. It may be possible to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and timeliness of CP file transfer by exploring this area further. However, there are some challenges where the onward destination is not known. Post-16 provision expresses the greatest concern that when young adults are between jobs and/or take a gap year, the onward destination can be difficult to manage.
- In accordance with KCSIE, the majority of the schools have acquired at least two contacts through home school agreements and through the admissions processes, which are managed through SIMS. When there is a concern about safety, support worker details are kept as an alternative. With the constant changes in mobile numbers, schools continue to struggle with compiling accurate annual data forms.
- Post-16 education and the college face additional challenges due to a reduction in contact with parents and young people seeking independence.

8. Wider Safeguarding themes

The information pertains to site security, health and safety, off-site school visits, and additional services with 77% fully meeting the requirements outlined in this section.



- The function of Health & Safety advisors varies between schools, including onsite managers, members of the SBC H&S Team, and/or MAT advisors. Every school has at least one designated individual.
- Site security measures are in place across all phases. There are a number of security measures in place to ensure the safety of students and staff. These include CCTV, magnetic push button doors, locked/supervised access points, interphones, swipe entry points, manual and electronic signing, lanyards and stickers to identify staff, visitors and contractors, and staff patrols of the school at opening and closing times. There is a security guard on duty at one setting. Additional supervision is provided in some settings during unstructured times throughout the school. A school visit is conducted by appointment only, with electronic check-in and visitors escorted around the grounds. Throughout the schools, there is a visible presence of safeguarding teams, as well as safeguarding information leaflets and coloured lanyards for different types of visitors.
- A number of additional measures have been introduced such as hand sanitisers, class bubbles, face coverings, and the NHS QR code track and trace system where appropriate.
- When possible, contractors are commissioned to complete work outside of school hours.
- There are some schools that have lock down policies and alarms that sound different to a fire alarm.

- All schools and colleges have a Health and Safety policy that has been reviewed and ratified within the last 12 months, except for one school which has a two-year reviewing cycle. Some schools have the H&S policy available on the website.
- Risk assessments vary among schools. In some schools, robust policies have been developed for all areas of risk including lone working, safe storage of medicines, and transportation of children while others are drafting risk assessments. MAT schools often have trust-wide policies.
- Typically, schools use the Evolve system to record and monitor risks related to external school visits; however, all trips were cancelled this year due to covid. Schools generally have risk assessment forms to assist in planning and managing educational visits, are aware of the Department of Education's safety guidelines for educational visits and have a designated an Outdoor Education Coordinator.
- Several schools report the use of a graduated response for de-escalation and positive handling. The use of Team Teach strategies, positive handling plans, restorative justice, and safer handling techniques are common in some settings. In the early years, expression cards and PACE by Dan Hughes are used. Some schools do not have de-escalation procedures because they feel it is unsuitable for their setting. In relation to behaviour policies, there appears to be a shift towards a therapeutic approach rather than traditional sanction-based policies. Some schools have referred to therapeutic behaviour policies.

Glossary

ACE	Adverse Childhood Experiences	H&S	Health & Safety
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services	IRMS	Information Records Management System
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group	ISS	Integrated Support Service
CCTV	Close circuit television	JD	Job description
CPD	Continued Professional Development	KCSIE	Keeping Children Safe in Education
CIN	Child In Need	LADO	Local Area Designated Officer
СР	Child Protection	MHST	Mental Health Schools Team
CPOMS	Child Protection Online Management System	PSHE	Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education
CPP	Child Protection Plan	PP	Pupil Premium
CLA	Child Looked After	PTA	Parent Teacher Association
CME	Children missing education	SEN/SEND	Special Education Needs (and Disabilities)
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation	SENCO/SENDCo	,
CYPF	Children, young people and families	SERCO/ SERDCO	(and Disabilities) Coordinator
DAAT	Drug and Alcohol Team	SIMS	School Information Management
DBS	Disclosing and Barring Service		System
DDSL	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	SLA	Service Level Agreement
DfE	Department of Education	SLT	Senior Leadership Team
DPO	Data Protection Officer	SCR	Single Central Record
DSL	Designated Safeguarding Lead	SCST	Slough Children's Services Trust
DT	Designated Teacher	SLT	Senior Leadership Team
EH	Early Help	TAC	Team around the child
EHCP	Education Health and Care Plan	TAF	Team around the family
ELSA	Emotional Literacy Support Assistants	WSA	Whole School Approach
FIS	Family information Service	WT	Working Together to Safeguard
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation		Children
FSW	Family Support Worker	YOT	Youth Offending Team

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audio tape, braille or in large print, and is also available on the website where it	
can easily be viewed in large print.	
Sec 175/157 Schools Safeguarding Audit Analysis Report 2020-21	