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| Committee: | Dated: |
| Safeguarding Sub-Committee | 12/05/2022 |
| Subject: The Early Years Service – Safeguarding Children Update | Public |
| Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly? | <p>Contribute to a flourishing society</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. People are safe and feel safe 2. People enjoy good health and wellbeing. 3. People have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential. <p>Support a thriving economy</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. We have access to the skills and talent we need. |
| Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending? | No |
| If so, how much? | N/A |
| What is the source of Funding? | N/A |
| Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department? | N/A |
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Summary

- The purpose of this report is to update Members on the work of the Early Years Service in the context of safeguarding children.
- The City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership (CHSCP) undertook safeguarding self-assessments for the Early Years providers in the City of London.
- The Education and Early Years team works closely with all City of London Early Years settings to ensure that children develop in the best possible learning environment so they become resilient, capable and confident individuals.
- The Education and Early Years team has prepared an updated leadership and management audit in line with the 2021 Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance. This audit will now take place on a yearly basis and will complement the CHSCP self-assessment safeguarding tool.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The purpose of this report is to update members on the work of the Early Years Service in the context of safeguarding children. It also provides an update on the range of training available and delivered to Early Years settings in the City of London. Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.
2. The City of London Early Years settings must have regard to a range of statutory guidance, including:
 - Department for Education's (DfE's) 'Early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework' September 2021
 - The DfE's statutory guidance 'Working together to safeguard children'
 - The Home Office 'Prevent duty guidance'.
3. All Early Years settings must have a trained Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who leads on safeguarding policy and procedures, (including an explanation of the action to be taken when there are safeguarding concerns about a child, and in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff), and cover the use of mobile phones and cameras in the setting. Providers must train all staff to understand their safeguarding policy and procedures and ensure that they have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues.

Safeguarding audits

4. The City of London has six Early Years settings funded to receive the Free Early Education Entitlement and one workplace nursery which does not receive any of this funding.
5. As part of the CHSCP's ongoing work, all Early Years settings are asked to complete a safeguarding self-assessment. This assessment allows managers to ensure that they comply with all statutory guidance as well as with CHSCP recommendations. The 2021 audit was completed by all City of London early years settings. Furthermore, the CHSCP will undertake a compliance campaign with self-assessments in the coming months.
6. Early Years settings that completed safeguarding audit highlighted three main actions:
 - Review the setting's development plan, including safeguarding policy and procedures, in line with the 2021 Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework

- Implement specific supervision for the DSL/Deputy DSL
- Use the NSPCC Pants programme to support children's understanding of safeguarding. See: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/support-for-parents/pants-underwear-rule>

Training

7. The Education and Early Years Service has prepared an updated leadership and management audit in line with the 2021 Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance. This audit will now take place on a yearly basis and will complement the CHSCP self-assessment safeguarding tool. The audit will focus on all aspects of leadership within Early Years. This will include ensuring that:
 - a) all settings have a single central record which details staff names, roles, qualifications, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) number (and, if applicable, annual update service registration details), first aid and safeguarding training details
 - b) the DSL is empowered to play an effective role in protecting children
 - c) an effective key person system is in place so that children who are too young to effectively share their concerns form strong attachments to a trusted adult
 - d) as part of children's personal, social and emotional development, practitioners teach young children the language of feelings, helping them to appropriately develop their emotional literacy
 - e) the daily experience of children in Early Years settings and the overall quality of provision is high, with practitioners having appropriate qualifications, training, skills, knowledge, and a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities
 - f) an effective induction programme is implemented for new staff, including emergency evacuation procedures, safeguarding, child protection, and health and safety issues
 - g) managers have a good understanding of data protection regulations, and therefore all appropriate records are in place and kept for the required length of time
 - h) providers have a written procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints from parents and/or carers.
8. Face-to-face safer recruitment training was offered to all Early Years settings pre-pandemic. A refresher session will be offered as part of the training programme for Early Years in autumn 2022.
9. Training sessions on the implications of the new Early Years Foundation Stage Framework were delivered in the autumn term 2021 to support practitioners to review their practice and policies in line with the new statutory and non-statutory guidance. The Education and Early Years Service provides a range of training for providers. (See Appendix 1: Training provided in autumn 2021 and spring 2022.)

10. As part of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory requirements, settings must provide access to an outdoor play area or, (if that is not possible), ensure that outdoor activities are planned and taken on a daily basis. All settings in the City of London organise regular outings within the local area. This also ensures that children discover the world around them and have access to additional learning opportunities.
11. Settings must also take all reasonable steps to prevent unauthorised persons entering the premises, and have an agreed procedure for checking the identity of visitors. The Action Counters Terrorism (ACT) training was delivered by the City of London Police at the Providers' Forum on 18 March 2021. This ensured that all providers were aware of the procedures to follow in case of a terrorist attack, as well as how to make certain their premises were as safe as possible.
12. All Early Years settings are expected to identify a member of staff to act as Special Educational Needs and Disability Co-ordinator (SENDCO). Since 2020, the Education and Early Years team has offered the Level 3 Certificate for SENDCOs in Early Years – a DfE recognised qualification. Eight Early Years practitioners started this qualification in February 2022.
13. As part of their safeguarding practices, providers are responsible for managing children's behaviour in an appropriate way. This was identified as an Early Years practitioners' training need in the autumn 2021 training and skills audit. Therefore a 'Behaviour for Learning' course was delivered on 9 October 2021, and 16 practitioners attended to develop their knowledge and skills on how to positively deal with children's challenging behaviour.
14. In the City of London, the CHSCP offers safeguarding training sessions for Early Years staff as well as a regular newsletter (*Things You Should Know*). All City of London settings have registered to receive this newsletter, but most managers find that staff attendance at training is difficult due to the timing of the sessions. They are therefore relying on online training offered by a range of providers such as Educare, Flick, and so on. However, some managers have acknowledged that face-to-face training has a bigger impact on staff as it allows them to ask questions and get a better understanding of the local context.
15. All settings need to have at least one qualified first-aider on site at all times. To ensure this, a programme of first aid training is made available by the Education and Early Years team. In 2021–2022, 14 practitioners received this training.
16. The regular visits from the Early Years Advisors have had a positive impact on the understanding of the importance for Early Years settings to refer to Social Care and the City of London Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in a timely manner. All City of London Early Years settings now have a very good understanding of what to record and who to make referrals to. As a result, contacts between Early Years settings and the LADO went from two between 2007–2017 to six between 2017–2022. This included three referrals that met the LADO threshold. All incidents were thoroughly investigated, parents informed and action plans put in place.

17. During the COVID-19 pandemic, and until 21 February 2022, Early Years settings needed to inform Ofsted of all COVID-19 cases as part of their serious incident procedures. The clear Standard Operating Procedures produced by the City of London ensured that all cases were shared with the Education and Early Years team, City & Hackney Public Health, and Ofsted.
18. The January Early Years Census provides the City of London with an overview of the qualifications held by staff in all Early Years settings. As part of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory guidance, providers must also put appropriate arrangements in place for the supervision of staff who have contact with children and families.
19. All City of London settings provide healthy meals, snacks and drinks for children, and record all children's dietary needs. Furthermore, six out of our seven Early Years settings are registered with the Healthy Early Years London Initiative, and two settings have already completed their Bronze Award; the other four have completed their First Step Award.
20. All City of London Early Years settings publish and regularly update their Local Offer on the Family Information Service website, explaining how they support children with special educational needs and disabilities to access the learning within the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Key Data

21. The Early Years census contains information on children attending any private, voluntary and independent sector nursery where one or more children receive funding from the Department. The City of London provides these data returns to the DfE on a termly basis.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

22. **Strategic implications** – This proposal supports the delivery of the first aim of the Corporate Plan: Contribute to a Flourishing Society, outcomes: 1. People are safe and feel safe; 2. People enjoy good health and wellbeing; and 3. People have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential. It also supports the second aim: Support a thriving community, outcome 8: We have access to the skills and talent we need.
23. **Financial implications** – The cost of additional key training sessions for Early Years providers will be covered by the Early Years part of the Dedicated Schools Grant to improve the quality of childcare services in the City.
24. **Resource implications** – Time is allocated within the Early Years Advisors' schedule to visit settings and deliver identified training.
25. **Legal implications** – None
26. **Risk implications** – None
27. **Equalities implications** – None

28. Climate implications – None

29. Security implications – As mentioned above, Early Years staff have been trained to ensure that their settings are secure and procedures are in place in case of a sudden attack or intrusion.

Conclusion

30. The Education and Early Years team will work closely with the CHSCP and all City of London Early Years settings to ensure that children learn and develop in a safe and welcoming learning environment. Continued an ongoing support will include regular visits from the Early Years advisors and yearly safeguarding and management audits. A broader training programme is delivered annually and adapted to the needs of local practitioners.

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Appendix 1

Training provided in autumn 2021 and spring 2022

| Training | Date | Context | Attendees | Delivered by |
|--|---|-------------------------|------------------|---|
| Infant feeding | 23/09/2021 | Providers' Forum online | 8 | Laura Crane – Homerton University Hospital |
| Curriculum for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) | 30/09/2021 | Online | 9 | Early Years Advisor |
| Behaviour for Learning | 09/10/2021 | Online | 16 | External Provider – Carla Cornelius |
| Working with families with Domestic Violence | 21/10/2021 | Providers' Forum online | 7 | Ali Burlington – Community Safety Officer & Ayesha Fordham – Domestic Abuse/Vulnerability & Risk Policy Officer |
| Coltale Conference | 23/10/2021 | Guildhall | 35 | Range of external speakers, including Ofsted |
| Next Steps – Developing Children's Skills & Interests | 03/11/2021 | Online | | Early Years Advisor |
| Attention Autism | 27/11/2021 | Face-to face | 9 | External provider |
| Picture Exchange Communication System Overview | 01/12/2021 | Online | 2 | External provider |
| Overview of the Early Help Service and the new Strengthening Families Strengthening Communities course | 15/12/2021 | Providers' Forum | 4 | Sadie Carnegie – Early Help Manager |
| SENDCO Level 3 | 05/02/2022 23/04/2022 11/06/2022 | In person | 8 | External Provider – Eastern Partnership |
| Female Genital Mutilation & Breast Flattening | 08/02/2022 | Online | Course cancelled | CHSCP |
| Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (Child R) Learning Seminars | 24/02/2022 10am to 12pm 28 Feb 2022 1pm to 3pm | Online | Course cancelled | CHSCP |
| Children with Communication and Interaction Needs: How to Plan for Their Learning and Development | 03/03/2022 4.30pm to 6pm | Online | 8 | External provider – Carla Cornelius |
| What is Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder | 09/03/2022 | Online | 4 | External Provider – Soli Lazarus |

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| and strategies to support children | 4.30pm to 6pm | | | |
| Designated Safeguarding Leads webinar | 10/03/2022 10am to 1pm | Online | 4 | CHSCP |