

Committee(s)	Dated:
Safeguarding Sub Committee	26 th January 2017
Subject: 2016 Early Years Safeguarding Report	Public
Report of: Neal Hounsell, Acting Director of Community and Children's Services	For Information
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Summary

In January 2016, the Education and Early Years' Service commissioned safeguarding audits of the City of London Corporation's nine early year's settings to ascertain the quality of practice. The output from the audits which were commissioned from the Early Years' Service from the London Borough of Islington evaluated 19 separate areas under the broad categories of:

- compliance with Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), the national framework which underpins early years provision and against which Ofsted measures performance
- policies and procedures
- staff training
- safer recruitment.

Each setting of the 19 areas was RAG rated and a report was provided to the setting including recommendations for improvement in practice. Throughout the year, the settings received targeted support and training to improve practice in areas that required development. In one instance, the City of London worked with Ofsted to support a setting following a referral about them to the City of London LADO. The spreadsheet showing the RAG ratings following termly visits is attached to this paper as an appendix.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. As referenced in the Report on Early Years Performance which was presented to the Community and Children's Services Committee, the role of the local authority in its partnership with early years settings has changed in recent years. The *Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities in the Provision of Early Education and Childcare* (published in 2014) placed duties on local authorities in relation to

ensuring 'sufficiency' of childcare and early education provision but also clarified that the local authority's role is to:

- secure information, advice and training for early years childcare providers in the areas of:
 - meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Curriculum for 0–5-year-olds
 - meeting the needs of children with special educational needs and disabilities, vulnerable and disadvantaged children, and
 - effective safeguarding and protection.
- 2. These duties are limited to providers that are newly registered, registering, or not yet judged as 'Good' or 'Outstanding' at Ofsted inspection. So the core minimum role of the local authority has changed from an offer of a universal support service to all settings to a more targeted role to ensure sufficiency, and to provide support for settings not yet judged as 'Good'.
- 3. The safeguarding audits were commissioned in order to establish what support was required by each setting and to inform a training programme for all practitioners. All but one City of London early years setting have been judged 'Good' or 'Outstanding' in their most recent Ofsted inspection. The remaining setting has recently opened and has not yet been inspected, but in order to improve their practice, this setting has participated in the audits and attended training alongside long established settings.

Current Position

- 4. Most settings achieved a high frequency of green RAG ratings against the audit criteria. The areas that most consistently required development were:
 - the provision of Prevent training for all staff
 - some policies and procedures had not been updated recently to reflect current legislation
 - 'Single Central Records' were not in place
 - safer recruitment practices were not consistent for all staff appointments.
- 5. To immediately address areas of weakness, the settings were directed to models of good practice and exemplar policies and training were commissioned for them.
- 6. Four settings did not achieve high scores in the initial audit. One of these was the newly opened setting. Two of the other three have achieved a conversion to green RAG status in almost all areas. One of them has a remaining amber status due to a recent staff change and a need to provide this person with Prevent training.
- 7. The Education and Early Years Service has not been able to visit the remaining setting during the autumn term. When last visited, there were three areas which were judged to be amber. Two relate to non-attendance at training courses and the other requires a revision of an existing policy.

8. All settings responded very positively to the request to audit them and the ongoing programme of work. A number of the settings have been exceptionally positive and have transformed their own practice into exemplar status as a result.
9. All settings also completed an S11 Self-Assessment this year and managers fed back that the audit process had given them the opportunity to improve their own understanding of their practice and development.
10. Alongside these audits, Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) audits were also undertaken with a similar targeted support package provided following these.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

11. This safeguarding work is consistent with the City of London's Children and Young People's Plan, the first priority of which is safeguarding vulnerable children.

Conclusion

12. The audit work in Early Years has been an extremely valuable exercise which has:

- improved safeguarding practice in each setting
- improved understanding and relationships between the City of London and its early years settings
- set a benchmark for future work
- supported a culture of inspection readiness.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Early Years Safeguarding Rag Ratings

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