

<b>Committee(s)</b>	<b>Dated:</b>
Safeguarding Sub Committee	<b>27/09/2017</b>
<b>Subject:</b> Education and Early Years Service Safeguarding Update	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Andrew Carter, Director of Community and Children's Services	<b>For Information</b>
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### **Summary**

This report is being presented to the Safeguarding Sub Committee to demonstrate the work that has been carried out over the past year by the Education and Early Years Service to improve the safeguarding and welfare of City-resident children being educated in the City of London and other boroughs as well as all non-resident children attending schools within the City of London.

It provides a summary of the work over the past year and includes the following:

- 1) The location of all City of London children and their schools.
- 2) The new children missing education (CME) regulations and the impact that this is having on the City of London.
- 3) Children at risk of missing education.
- 4) Electively home educated children.
- 5) Performance licences and work permits.
- 6) Learning from the Hackney case review.

### **Recommendation(s)**

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

## **Main Report**

### **Background**

1. The City of London has a unique educational landscape in that it has only one maintained primary school and no maintained secondary schools. Most of its primary age children and all of its secondary age children are educated either in the independent sector or outside the City of London altogether. This puts them outside the standard reporting and/or legal framework that governs the City of London's statutory responsibilities.
2. In 2015, in the light of current concerns over young people at risk of sexual exploitation and radicalisation and the often-invisible practice of private fostering arrangements, the City of London strengthened its systems and procedures for locating and monitoring its resident primary and secondary age children who fell within the statutory school age, as part of its safeguarding children programme. Authorities are required to monitor and take appropriate action for those children who may be at risk of missing education as well as those who fall within the statutory definition of children missing education (CME).
3. In September 2016, new legislation came into force to help local authorities and schools in England improve collaboration, communication and information-sharing in identifying CME and to help local authorities meet changes to the regulations. The regulations have been strengthened to ensure that schools (including independent schools) provide regular and accurate information to their local authority about children as they are removed or added to school admission registers.

### **Current Position**

#### **The location of all City of London children and their schools**

4. Over the past two years, the Education and Early Years Service has implemented a rigorous system to try to identify all City of London children of statutory school age and where they attend school. The City of London then maintains this record of where children are placed through the primary and secondary transitions process. A school tracker is updated and reviewed regularly. The school tracker also records the names of City of London children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Looked After Children (LAC).
5. In a previous Committee report, it was reported that 650 children of statutory school age may live in the City of London. However, a look at the most recent census information puts this figure at 540. Of those, the service has identified 424 children of statutory school age, who attend both maintained and independent schools. Some 300 of these children attend maintained primary and secondary schools. This figure has been substantiated by Department for Education data produced in 2016.

6. Last year, efforts were made to identify all 540 children as well as maintain the school tracker each term and reconfirm the City of London children on school rolls and their current attendance. However, this has proved difficult to maintain due to the level of resource required. While it is possible that the outstanding children are attending independent schools throughout the country, there is no evidence either to confirm this or that there are a further 116 children to locate. While it is unlikely that many more children will be identified, the service will continue to update the data held in the school tracker by carrying out an annual census. It will also update the school tracker to record children transferring into primary and secondary schools.

### **The new CME regulations and the impact on the City of London**

7. Since September 2016, a change in the law means that for the first time independent schools come within the scope of schools' duty to report children missing education. This means that during the school year, at non-standard transition points, all City of London schools are required to inform the Education Service when pupils are about to be taken off or added to the school roll. In addition,, the schools have been provided with the means by which to submit a full pupil school roll at the beginning of the academic year and by the end of March (following their annual census return). All schools provide attendance information; this intelligence is then used by our Education Welfare Consultant to provide a support and challenge role to the schools. A protocol, outlining the requirements for all City of London schools, was circulated in the summer term 2017. A copy of this can be found as Appendix 1.

### **Children at risk of missing education (CME)**

8. For children who are at risk of or who are missing education, either as a result of medical reasons or exclusion, we maintain a CME database, which is also accessible to the Children and Families team. Children on this database are given a Red, Amber or Green (RAG) rating depending on the level of concern and the Admissions and Attendance Manager monitors their attendance.
9. For children who are unable to attend school due to medical reasons, following a referral from the school, a professionals meeting is held and tuition is commissioned through the National Teaching and Advisory Service (NT&AS). For children who are excluded, we commission the services of Fresh Start in Education, an organisation that specialises in working with challenging or disruptive pupils.
10. The Education and Early Years Service also works closely with the Children and Families team to ensure that support to families is coordinated. Our Education Welfare Consultant works with our individual families and all schools within our locality to encourage and, where necessary, enforce attendance and to safeguard and promote the children's welfare so that they can reach their full potential.

## **Electively home educated children**

11. A potentially vulnerable group of children are those who are electively home educated – children who receive an ‘education otherwise than at school’. Parents are responsible for ensuring that their children receive a suitable level of education. Although our aim in the City of London is to work constructively with parents to help them promote their children’s learning and development, parents have the right to refuse entry for their children to education services, which could potentially result in them suffering from serious neglect and significant harm.
12. The City of London is well aware of these risks and has a rigorous process in place to ensure the safety and welfare of these children. Although the numbers of City of London children being electively home educated are small, cases are openly discussed with key professionals and referrals are made if required. Case information is shared on our case management system to enable more effective information sharing. The City of London also ensures that home visits exceed the statutory minimum of one a year. Progress on cases is sent to the senior managers regularly.

## **Performance licences and work permits**

13. Children and young people of compulsory school age who are at an organisation or company in paid or voluntary work must have a valid work permit. The City of London is responsible for issuing licences to all organisations and companies located within the City of London. We ensure that, at the point of application, all children are given adequate breaks, work no longer than they are legally permitted and do not carry out dangerous or risky tasks and that their employer carries out a health and safety risk assessment in the workplace.
14. There are also specific rules covering children working in entertainment. It is essential that local authorities recognise this statutory duty and fulfil their safeguarding responsibility towards children taking part in performances, paid sport and modelling. All children of compulsory school age require a performance licence to take part in any performance. There are also strict rules regarding performances and conditions under which children and young people can perform. The City of London Education and Early Years Service is informed of all productions and performances taking place within the City of London where children are performing. We then carry out inspections to ensure that a child’s welfare is being maintained. One of our additional duties is the employment of children’s chaperones, and includes interviewing candidates, issuing Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificates and acquiring references before a licence is issued.

## **The recent case review and review of local policies and procedures**

15. The recent Hackney case review has initiated a call for the review of all local policies and procedures within schools located in the City of London and

Hackney. The key issue for the review was that the child, although not of statutory school age attended a primary school in Hackney. As a result of a medical condition, the mother of the child passed away. A number of recommendations were made to Edward Timpson MP to encourage schools to identify the risks and vulnerabilities of certain children and to guide them in deciding whether or not a child being absent is as a result of an attendance issue or a potential welfare issue.

16. In direct response to this work, after attending the case review in April, the Education Service has been working with Sir John Cass's Foundation School to review its attendance policy and it has drafted a 'rapid response flow chart'. This will provide a clear guide to schools on what to do if a child does not turn up to school and the school cannot contact the family. The process has a timeframe of three days in which to locate a child from the first day of absence. The flow chart and revised policy are in the final stages of development and will be finalised by October. The school has also reviewed its data collection form to include additional emergency contacts, parents'/carers' medical conditions/disabilities as well as access restrictions to the properties where pupils reside. This form is sent to all parents and carers and is a valuable source of information.

### **Future priorities**

17. Over the next year, the Education and Early Years Service plans to finalise its current procedures for monitoring attendance. In line with the protocol, which has been sent to all City of London schools and is attached for your information, the Admissions and Attendance Manager and Performance Analyst will monitor all returns. Work will also continue to maintain the school tracker through an annual census.
18. The Education Service is applying to the Department for Education for information held on the national pupil database (NPD), which will support this work and our research into finding out the numbers of City-resident children who are receiving SEND support in schools located out of the City of London. If successful, we will be able to provide a City-wide picture of how all our children and young people with SEND are progressing.
19. There will be a review of all relevant policies and procedures over the next year to ensure full compliance with our statutory duties. Regular reviews take place to ensure that procedures are in line with best practice and national guidance.

### **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

20. This work supports priorities 1 and 2 in the Children and Young People's Plan 2015:
  - Children and young people in the City are seen, heard and helped, effectively safeguarded and properly supported and their lives improved by everyone working together.

- Every child and young person in the City has the right to educational attainment, participation, confidence, health and wellbeing. We identify and provide early support and help to particularly vulnerable groups in the City to ensure they have the best opportunity to succeed, regardless of their background.

## **Conclusion**

21. Over the past year, one of our key priorities in the Education and Early Years Service has been to ensure the safeguarding and wellbeing of City-resident children accessing education both outside and within the City of London. We will continue to build on our success in locating our City-resident children and monitoring their attendance at school. Working in partnership with our City of London schools, we will continue to identify children at risk of missing education and offer support on attendance issues. The rigorous policies and processes to keep children safe, ensure they receive a suitable level of education and safeguard those performing in film, television and the theatre are reviewed and maintained.

## **Appendices**

- See Appendix 1 – Protocol for City Schools Post CME Legislation

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