

## HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Report

<b>Panel:</b>	Education Advisory Panel
<b>Date:</b>	30 March 2022
<b>Title:</b>	Peer on Peer Abuse
<b>Report From:</b>	Steve Crocker, Director of Children's Services

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#### **Purpose of this Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide information to the Education Advisory Panel (EAP) on actions of the Children's Services Education and Inclusion Branch (CSD E & I) and of schools and colleges, in response to the Everyone's Invited website and following the [Ofsted review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges](#) June 2021.
2. This paper includes work which looks at peer-on-peer abuse more broadly and not specifically that which relates to sexual harassment and/or sexual abuse.

#### **Recommendation(s)**

3. That the Education Advisory Panel notes the information contained within the report.

#### **Executive Summary**

4. A key trigger for the Ofsted Review was the impact of the Everyone's Invited website, which raised concerns relating to the experiences of children and young people shared on that site. It should be noted that whilst many of the experiences had links to a school or college environment, including a number in Hampshire, others took place beyond the school/college environment but still during childhood and some were during adulthood. Regardless of when and where sexual harassment or abuse was experienced, the Everyone's Invited website rightly shone a spotlight on the lived experience of some

children and young people which needed to be addressed robustly and with urgency.

5. This paper summarises the work of CSD E & I over the last year and that of schools and colleges. Where possible, it captures early indications of impact which will need re-visiting to gain greater insights once more time for implementation has passed and in relation to sustainability.
6. There has been good partnership work focused on this agenda across CSD and partners, extending work which was already on-going with education settings.
7. It is important to recognise that CSD, partners and education settings saw peer-on-peer abuse as an important part of their collective focus regardless of the Ofsted Review; however, it has helped to raise the profile of the work and maintain momentum.
8. Whilst actions taken by CSD E & I are highlighted in this paper, the extent to which education settings engage with those actions and their impact is not so easily defined or measured. Education settings have autonomy over their training arrangements, for example, and indeed their own policies and procedures for safeguarding, within the parameters of the statutory guidance contained within relevant legislation such as Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE). Governing bodies, trustees, proprietors or their equivalent have responsibility for the oversight of safeguarding within their settings.
9. CSD E & I does not routinely have access to all education settings to check first-hand on safeguarding arrangements; therefore, a crucial part of its role is to build relationships with all sectors and be in a position to guide, influence, support and challenge wherever possible.
10. Feedback from and engagement with education settings suggests relationships are strong, with good levels of trust and transparency overall and with the Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP).

### **Contextual information**

11. CSD E & I has long worked closely with schools and colleges alongside partners to promote the protection and safety of children and young people. The Education Sub-group of HSCP and the Hampshire Inspection and Advisory Service (HIAS) within CSD E & I are two of the lead vehicles for communicating key messages, advising, providing training and producing resources to support education settings, both with their own procedures and practices and with curriculum/learning content to help children and young people keep themselves safe.

## Initial briefings

12. In response to the issues raised by the Everyone's Invited website and prior to the publication of the Ofsted Review, CSD E & I in partnership with HSCP arranged a series of briefings/seminars for schools and colleges across Hampshire which explored:
  - key legislation
  - how to manage allegations in the education setting context
  - preventative work in education settings
  - useful resources and sources of support.
13. The briefings were led by HIAS with inputs from partners including Social Care colleagues, Police, Child and Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and Public Health.
14. The 500 registered delegates from Hampshire schools and colleges, both state-funded and independent, were also able to access a post-session recording of the event, for further dissemination.

## Culture change

15. A number of the Review findings and recommendations were about the culture in education settings. There was a sense that if peer-on-peer abuse was recognised and known it would be tackled; however, children and young people felt that much went unnoticed, was 'normalised' and/or was felt to be happening outside the education environment and therefore 'beyond the control' of the setting. Part of re-setting the culture is recognition that peer-on-peer abuse is happening in schools and colleges, and that normalisation of aspects of it such as the use of prejudicial and offensive language in society needs to be tackled.
16. A good practice review in respect of the attitudes, behaviours, procedures and practices which support an inclusive and respectful culture was undertaken in the summer of 2021, drawing on the work of eight secondary schools across Hampshire. This is now available to all education settings by way of exemplification and dissemination of practice. Feedback from other settings suggests the review has been powerful both in terms of promoting reflection and debate in respect of current practice but also in sharing ideas, approaches and ways of working to strengthen that practice.
17. Action research projects facilitated by HIAS are currently underway with twenty further schools focusing on healthy and respectful relationships and their inter-dependence with a positive culture through a whole-school

approach. Significant time is being invested in this work by HIAS with a view to again using the development work and findings to disseminate and build further capacity across the system. Projects run with facilitation until the summer of 2022, when it is hoped that impact thus far can be captured and then carried forward by the schools and indeed other settings that benefit from the sharing of their practice.

18. A key vehicle that supports HIAS in its work in this area is the Prejudicial Language, Attitudes and Behaviour (PLAB) Toolkit/Survey which is driven by the Rights and Diversity Education (RADE) strand of CSD E & I. Historically, all schools and colleges were required to complete a racial incident return annually and had access to resources which supported them in their work to tackle this particular aspect of peer-on-peer abuse. That has been broadened in recent years to cover wider aspects of prejudicial language, attitudes and behaviour across a range of protected characteristics and more generally. The PLAB Toolkit offers settings direction, resources and signposting to support them in their work in relation to respectful relationships, harmonious communities and positive cultures.
19. There are a number of locality-based projects underway (including Basingstoke, Gosport, Fareham and Havant), again facilitated and part-funded by HIAS to promote the rights and diversity agenda. At the heart of these is the key messages of respect, inclusivity, and using the lived experiences of children and young people themselves to effect change.
20. The above work is informed in part by the work of EARA (Equalities and Rights Advocates) co-ordinated by RADE. These are self-defining groups of children and young people from across Hampshire that offer young people the opportunity to engage with and speak up about issues affecting them, current themes and matters of importance in their lives. EARA addresses many of the nine characteristics protected under the Equalities Act of 2010. Fundamental to the ethos of EARA is the UNCRC (United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child) and the articles contained therein. Unsurprisingly, EARA has raised issues such as tolerance, difference, balance of control and engrained stereotyping – both children and adults – and this helps to inform the strategic direction of our work.
21. Cultural change is not a quick process; it will take time for any practice changes to happen and embed, and for settings to influence systemic attitudes and behaviours which are formed both within and beyond those settings.

## Further training and awareness raising for education setting staff

22. The Ofsted Review found, mainly through talking with youngsters themselves, that staff in education settings were often perceived as not knowing the reality of children and young people's lives and that they were 'out of date' in knowing about and spotting prevalent means of harassment and abuse, particularly that which is on-line. In general, the Review found that children and young people reported much higher incidences of sexual harassment, online sexual abuse and bullying behaviours than teachers and leaders were aware of or recognised. The briefings referred to at the beginning of this section were in part a mechanism for raising awareness by drawing on multi-agency inputs and promoting reflection by practitioners and leaders, as to what the reality of the situation might be in their own settings.
23. The annual Personal Development Learning (PDL) conference open to all education settings in the autumn of 2021 focused on peer-on-peer abuse and preventative measures, respectful relationships, good mental health and male adolescent behaviours. Significantly, it included a keynote from an ex-Hampshire school pupil; a young woman who was willing to share her lived experience in order to raise awareness, promote reflection and help professionals re-shape their thinking and practice. It was a powerful input which underlined the importance of pupil voice. As a consequence, many participating settings undertook to re-think the way in which they are engaging children and young people in their whole school approaches and in evaluating both performance and culture. This will be followed up with participants in the autumn of 2022.
24. The annual Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) conference is a key vehicle for working with education settings on current issues and best practice in respect of protecting and safeguarding children and young people. The conference is well supported by partners and led jointly by HSCP and HIAS. Unsurprisingly, there has been a focus in recent years on both the importance of recognising the lived experience of the child and various aspects of peer-on-peer abuse, with strengthened national guidance, legislation and inspection frameworks also highlighted.
25. HIAS has led a substantial training offer to both school staff and their governing bodies focused on the recently introduced Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (RSHE) Guidance produced by the Department for Education (DfE). This is now statutory for state-funded schools. Briefings and training have included the consultation process with parents/carers and the local community, the requirements placed on schools, roles and responsibilities, how to develop curricular content matched to broad age groups and the integration of curriculum areas such as on-line safety within other areas of learning.
26. Through HSCP funding, all education settings have been able to access nationally recognised Brook training materials and resources to support them

in addressing sexually harmful behaviours. Almost 800 delegates have accessed this training and resource thus far.

27. On-line safety training is a core offer open to all schools and colleges with both universal and bespoke content. Some settings have elected to commission training from HIAS for their parent communities as well as for staff. On-line safety also forms part of the RSHE curriculum. Partners, such as police colleagues, contribute to the work of the HSCP Education Sub-group through inputs and involvement in training, such as the DSL conferences and networks.

#### Curriculum change

28. HIAS has produced Personal Development Learning (PDL) curriculum resources which can be accessed by primary schools. These complement and support the teaching of the DfE materials for RSHE, offering greater depth and contextual learning opportunities.
29. Schools are at various stages with the implementation of the RSHE curriculum. Its greater prominence in the Ofsted Inspection Framework for state-funded schools is supporting more attention to this area by school leaders. The impact of Covid on children and people's well-being and for many the need to re-build relationships with peers and/or re-engage with in-person social interactions is also proving a driver for greater attention to the more pastoral aspects of provision.

#### Policy/procedural advice and audit

30. The Ofsted Review made some recommendations in respect of record-keeping and reporting related to peer-on-peer abuse. Through the HSCP Education Sub-group and working closely with HIAS, schools and colleges have access to model child protection and safeguarding policies in line with statutory guidance. These confirm the position and expected policy/procedure in relation to peer-on-peer abuse and associated recording/reporting systems.
31. Schools and colleges have clear guidance on expectations in respect of record-keeping for any child protection concern and it has been stressed that sexual harassment and sexual violence do constitute such a concern. There has been an increase in enquiries to HIAS in respect of how to manage cases of peer-on-peer abuse and these are always supported through direction back to policy and procedure and to inter-agency referral as appropriate. Record-keeping has been an area of focus, with various avenues through which the importance of clear and timely record-keeping coupled with robust reporting arrangements has been given prominence.
32. On an annual basis, schools and colleges are required to complete a safeguarding audit, the outcomes of which are summarised and shared with the HSCP. There was 100% compliance with the return of the annual audit for

the academic year 2020-21. Sample audit validation visits have been led by HIAS and carried out by experienced safeguarding leads from CSD E & I, coupled with members of the HSCP Education Sub-group. These have focused in part on policy, procedure and practice in relation to peer-on-peer abuse. Overall, findings were positive, with some good practice identified which will be shared with all settings.

33. An area for further development continues to be the routine and systematic monitoring of aspects of safeguarding over time, as opposed to monitoring and evaluation being an annual event. However, in general, there is evidence to suggest that schools and colleges are increasingly strengthening and deepening their monitoring arrangements and analysis of information so that, for example, trends and patterns relating to any peer-on-peer abuse may be spotted and dealt with early.
34. As previously indicated, the Ofsted Inspection Framework for state-funded schools has a strengthened focus on the actions taken by schools and the effectiveness of practice to prevent peer-on-peer abuse and to manage cases effectively. Of the inspections undertaken using the new framework thus far, no issues of concern have been raised in relation to this area of safeguarding practice.

#### Survey response from schools and colleges

35. In order to gain a better understanding of the actions schools and colleges have taken and the impact of their work alongside that of CSD E & I and partners, a survey was sent to all schools and colleges. The main outcomes are summarised as follows:
  - Schools/colleges have accessed a wide range of training for various aspects of RSHE including from HIAS, Brook, through the DSL conference and newsletters, HSCP online training and, less commonly, from other external providers.
  - Training has raised awareness and supported shared focus well; this has been measured by, for example, case studies, audit responses, staff and pupil surveys, behaviour logs, Ofsted school visit findings.
  - Almost of schools/colleges use an electronic recording system.
  - Schools/colleges largely have very mature recording systems which in best practice cases are adapted in order that peer-on-peer concerns form a specific category, as this supports the monitoring of patterns and trends.
  - There is a growing emphasis on pupil voice and the lived experience of the child. However, children and young people continue to feel that

some adults do not understand their lives/contexts, with more work to do in this area.

- The normalisation of some inappropriate language, behaviours and attitudes is prevalent in schools/colleges reflective of wider society, and cultural change is complex and longer-term.

## **Conclusions**

36. CSD E & I took swift and decisive action in response to the Everyone's Invited website and used the learning from this and the Ofsted Review to further strengthen and highlight existing work in the field of promoting positive, respectful relationships and tackling abusive behaviours in their various forms.
37. Education settings have similarly responded robustly and are engaging with a range of initiatives, both sector-led and driven by CSD E & I, to promote inclusivity, diversity, the well-being and safety of all children and young people.
38. There has been, and continues to be, good, effective multi-agency working which builds on the strong foundations of the HSCP.
39. Work is on-going and there is recognition that education plays a key role in tackling wider societal issues.



**REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:**

**Links to the Strategic Plan**

<b>Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:</b>	no
<b>People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:</b>	yes
<b>People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:</b>	yes
<b>People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:</b>	yes

**Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents**

**The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)**

Document

Location

None

## **EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:**

### **1. Equality Duty**

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

### **2. Equalities Impact Assessment:**

This report is for information only. However, it should be noted that the nature and breadth of activity identified in the report serves to support the promotion of equality, inclusivity and diversity.