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National Association for Managers of Student Services in Colleges

Safeguarding in Colleges in England- Good Practice Examples from the Sector

Commissioned by the Department of Health

This guidance was commissioned by the Department of Health in response to requests from FE practitioners for a means of sharing good practice and expertise, thus helping Colleges to develop an effective Safeguarding service based on tried and tested experience.

The guidance was edited by members of the NAMSS executive and compiled by NAMSS researchers with inputs from members and other experts in the field.

Compiled by the National Association of Managers of Student Services [NAMSS]

This guidance was compiled by the NAMSS researcher, Vicki Cox [Education Consultant] edited by the NAMSS executive and is hosted on the NAMSS website

NAMSS is a not-for-profit member organisation for Managers of Student Services in post-16 educational and training provision. NAMSS aims to provide support and professional development for managers of services that support learners in post 16 education and training by:

- Providing information to members
- Developing and promoting quality standards of student services' practice
- Representing the needs of students and student support services

Contributors

We would like to thank all those Colleges and Associations named in the report for their generous sharing of good practice and their willingness to put their developments in the public domain.

We thank all members of NAMSS who use the JISC MAIL service as much of the inspiration for the content of the Examples of Good Practice was culled from their questions and answers to each other.

We thank all the members of the NAMSS executive for their support throughout the development of this guidance.

Contact details

If you would like to join NAMSS or would like more general information about the association please visit the website www.**namss**.ac.uk

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You can read specific sections by clicking on the Section title of any hyperlinked title in the contents page

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1.0 Introducing Safeguarding in Colleges

1.1 What is Safeguarding

The Government defines the term 'safeguarding children' as;

'*The process of protecting children from abuse or neglect, preventing impairment of their health and development, and ensuring they are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care that enables children to have optimum life chances and enter adulthood successfully.*'

"What to do if you're worried a child is being abused" [Department of Health publications] requires:

- all agencies working with children, young people and their families taking all reasonable measures to ensure that the risks of harm to children's welfare are minimised
- all agencies taking all appropriate actions to address concerns about children and young people's welfare, working to agreed local policies and procedures in partnership with other local agencies

where:-

- "All those who come into contact with children and families in their everyday work, including practitioners who do not have a specific role in relation to child protection, have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children." (Department of Health 2003: 4)

In the context of Further Education in Colleges this requires providers to have robust systems in place that will:

- prevent young people and vulnerable adults from suffering physical harm, abuse and neglect
- prevent young people and vulnerable adults from suffering mental and emotional harm, abuse and neglect
- support young people and vulnerable adults in accessing appropriate support if such harm, abuse or neglect occurs.

A child/young person is defined as "anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday"

A vulnerable adult is defined as "a person who is, or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is, or may be unable to care for him/herself against significant harm or exploitation"

Abuse is defined as "a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by another person or persons"

Colleges of FE will themselves benefit from the confidence and security imbued by a safe environment. Learners who feel safe and secure can better concentrate on their studies, are at ease with attendance and with working with their peers and trying to do well, and will behave with greater consideration and care in social and recreational spaces. They will themselves understand the benefits of living in a safe and supportive society and will be able to make their own positive contribution to social cohesion.

1.2 The policy context for England

The Children's Act 1989 provided the basis for the Safeguarding system, defining the terms we now use, the agencies with a duty to co-operate and work jointly and the threshold for state intervention to protect from harm.

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 defined a range of criminal offences involving the abuse of a position of trust.

The Children's Act 2004 defines the statutory leadership roles, the joint planning and commissioning of children's services, and how organisations safeguard children and promote their welfare.

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 provides for the Independent Safeguarding Authority Scheme to prevent those who are deemed unsuitable from working with children and vulnerable adults.

The Ofsted "Common inspection framework for further education and skills 2009" places Safeguarding under Outcomes for Learners [Feel Safe] and under Leadership and Management [Safeguarding], Limiting Grades relate to Safeguarding and equality and diversity as these are considered to be essential in assuring the quality of the development and well-being of young people and adults. The grades for these two aspects may therefore limit other grades, including the grade for Overall Effectiveness.

[In the UK some legislation applies to all four nations, some only to England and Wales. Both Scotland and Northern Ireland have powers to pass laws applicable only to those nations]

1.3 The implications for Colleges in England

Under common law, everyone owes a duty to everyone else to take reasonable care to prevent them from suffering foreseeable harm. This means that the College must provide a safe place for work, study and recreation and that the workforce and the learners have a duty to behave with reasonable care and skill.

Safeguarding and the promotion of the welfare of young people and vulnerable adults is therefore part of a common law duty of care towards all people for whom the College is responsible.

Colleges are required to:-

- Provide a safe and secure environment
- Respond appropriately and quickly if any young person or vulnerable adult is identified as having suffered, or being in danger of suffering, significant harm.
- Prevent anyone who is unsuitable from working with young people
- Co-operate with other agencies that provide services for young people.

1.4 Who this guidance is for

The guidance is intended for Governors, Senior Managers, and Managers with specific responsibility for Safeguarding in a Further Education College. Whilst it has been developed with the 14-18 student and vulnerable adult learner in mind, much if not all, of the guidance applies to the wider FE community including adult learners, staff and volunteers.

All Colleges are addressing the steps required to meet their Safeguarding duties and responsibilities. Whilst many have made significant progress some are still forming policy and practice. There is no single solution as FE Colleges operate in widely differing environments and with widely differing client groups. This Guidance is an opportunity to share information and ideas, to identify what works well and has proven impact, to learn from the successes of others and to use shared experience to ensure that learners feel and are, as safe as is possible in their learning and living environment.

Colleges and other institutions reading this document will recognise some of the practice described as being applicable in their own circumstance, some will not be so relevant. It is hoped that all Colleges will find something within it that is thought provoking, of direct practical use, or provides a solution to a problem and that they can take relevant aspects of the guidance and apply it to their own provision.

1.5 How it is structured

The guidance has been structured sequentially as the research progressed.

Section 3 summarises NAMSS members' e-conversations and requests for help or clarification on Safeguarding related issues. This gives an overview of the uncertainties that staff in Colleges are facing and the information that members have received from experts in the field.

Section 4 summarises the contributions from a range of consultations with learners via on-line questionnaires, tutorial and group discussions using a reflective exercise, and focus groups with 3 groups of learners. This gives an overview of the perceptions that learners have of how safe they feel, how safe they really are, and of the threats and dangers that they see as being most relevant to them.

Section 5 records the contributions from managers and teams within Colleges who feel that they have identified issues and have identified the key success factors contributing to the achievement of significant progress in developing an effective solution.

Section 6 details the good practice offered by Colleges. These contributions are presented in the form of case-studies detailing the context, the issue and the progress achieved so far. These are voluntary contributions from staff in the sector who have a responsibility for developing and delivering Safeguarding policy and practice. They are offered as examples of good practice in the development of a Safeguarding system that is effective in meeting the needs of the particular client base of the College.

1.6 How it can be used

This guidance can be used at all levels from Governors and Senior Management, through Service Managers and service teams to student discussion, feedback and focus groups. It is intended to raise awareness, to promote discussion, to offer an opportunity for learners to lead the Safeguarding service, and to offer examples of development solutions.

It is not a blueprint for Colleges to follow; rather it is a selection of actions that practitioners have undertaken in order to best meet their responsibilities in the Safeguarding of young people and vulnerable adults.

Each Further Education College in England has its own unique environment and client base and there is no one-size-fits-all Safeguarding solution. Colleges serving inner-cities will face different priorities from those in a rural setting; those spread over a wide geographical area with many campuses will face different issues from those within a single campus.

Each provider will need to place the relevant elements of this guidance into the context in which they work and within the development journey they have already agreed and planned.

The guidance is offered to the sector by the sector in a spirit of generosity and the sharing of good practice. The case studies have been offered voluntarily by Colleges as examples of steps along the way to excellence.

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2.0 Research Methodology

2.1 NAMSS JISC_MAIL

A request via the NAMSS website for members to identify "who in your College has responsibility for developing and delivering the College Safeguarding policy and practice" showed that Managers of Student Services carry that responsibility in almost all Colleges. These managers have been responsible for developing the College response to the Every Child Matters themes, one of which is "stay safe", and have therefore some experience of the safety agenda. However Safeguarding is placed in a strong legal framework and within this framework Colleges have a much greater responsibility to identify and minimise risks of harm, abuse and neglect.

In response to the question "How confident are you in this role?" most managers were concerned that they didn't know enough to be sure that they were covering all the requirements fully.

In response to the question "Which services do you use for support?" most managers said that they felt that information from Government sources was at best unclear and sometimes contradictory and that the information sharing via the NAMSS JISC MAIL was their main resource.

They were all taking their definition of Safeguarding from the Department of Children Schools and Families Every Child Matters web page and from the Common inspection framework for learning and skills 2009.

2.2 Learner perception surveys

Given that OFSTED Inspectors evaluate the extent to which "staff take action to identify and respond appropriately to users' welfare concerns" the second strand of research centred on identifying learner perceptions of the threats and dangers they might face. This research took two forms. The first was the development of a tutorial discussion tool for students to use to identify what threats and dangers they thought were relevant to them and from whom. Colleges were invited to use the tool as they thought most appropriate and to adapt it to meet their own needs. [Case study 6.9 demonstrates this case study in report form.]

2.3 Focus groups

The second strand was feedback from 3 focus groups to gain a deeper understanding of why learners had identified particular threats and dangers, using the same discussion tool but in a more searching and interactive mode.

2.4 College examples of good practice

The final research was by face-to-face meetings with staff in Colleges responding to a request to offer their own experience and developments to the sector in the form of an example of good practice. All the Colleges offering these examples are pushing policy and practice forward on many fronts, however each case study concentrates on a particular aspect of Safeguarding. They are not offered as a final and definitive solution but as steps along the way towards a Safeguarding system that is effective in meeting the needs of the particular client base of the College.

Each case study has been agreed by the College for inclusion in this report.

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3.0 Staff Perceptions and Issues

3.1 NAMSS JISC_MAIL

Between September and December of 2009 NAMSS members posted questions on more than 200 topics to NAMSS JISC_MAIL, of which more than 50% were questions related to Safeguarding. The main concerns were compliance with legislation, meeting the standards in the new Inspection Framework, and accessing high quality resources to meet an urgent need to train staff and to work with their learners on identifying and responding to their Safeguarding issues.

A **very** small sample of the questions asked and the relevant information and references follows.

Questions on the legal framework for Safeguarding

Question Is it a legal requirement to have a member of the Corporation with overall responsibility for Safeguarding?

Information Working Together to Safeguard Children Section 2.124 states that "... schools and FE institutions should have a senior member of staff who is designated to take lead responsibility for dealing with child protection issues..." Many Colleges have a Governor designated to safeguarding with the particular responsibility of dealing with any safeguarding issues related to the Principal.

Reference *Working Together to Safeguard Children*

Question Do Colleges CRB volunteers in a College activity, mature students joining groups that include 16-18 year olds and work placement providers?

Information The advice from Ofsted is that "Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks are not required for visitors. Visitors do not have unsupervised access to children. Checks are required for those who have regular and unsupervised access to children and young people. "

Reference *Ofsted safeguarding*

Question Do we need to have a CRB check for all new staff?

Information The document "Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education" states that "A new CRB Disclosure is only required for ... anyone who within the three months before his or her appointment has not worked in a school in England in a post which brought him or her into regular contact with children or any post they were appointed to since 12 May 2006; or an FE college in England in a position which involved the provision of education and regularly caring for, training, supervising or being in sole charge of children or young people under the age of 18."

Reference *Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education*

Questions on best practice in Safeguarding

Question Does anyone know of best practice guidance in Safeguarding vulnerable adults?

Information The Department of Health has published a document called "No secrets" giving definitive guidance on protecting vulnerable adults from abuse.

Reference No secrets: Guidance on developing and implementing multi-agency policies and procedures to protect vulnerable adults from abuse

Question In Ofsted recommendations it says "All staff must be trained to Level 2 in Safeguarding". Do they really mean "all"?

Information The AoC briefing 73/09 "Safeguarding and Inspection" section 7 states "the update to the inspector's handbook has changed to an emphasis on appropriate training for the level of staff need. Ofsted do expect to see training records for staff and what has been covered in the training.

Reference AoC member Colleges can access via AoC

Question Does anyone have a tried and tested resource that identifies learners' perceptions of their Safeguarding issues please?

Information A selection of Colleges have used the tutorial exercise developed for this report.

Reference NAMSS JISC MAIL archives has the tutorial task under Good Practice Guidance in Safeguarding on September 29th 2009

Question Does anyone have a tried and tested resource on preventing and dealing with Cyber-bullying please.

Information A response from a member identified materials and a range of videos

Reference See NAMSS archived email from Jenny White of 9th October 2009

In addition members have identified a range of supporting information from the following websites.

The Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) will deliver the vetting and barring scheme

The Government Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF)

The Criminals Record Bureau presently runs all CRB checks.

The Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Centre tackles the exploitation of children

The Protection of Vulnerable Adults (POVA) scheme

The Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) offers training and resources

The Government Equalities Office provides factsheets on Safeguarding women

3.2 Key Learning Points

These e-conversations and requests for help or clarification on Safeguarding related issues give an overview of the uncertainties that staff in Colleges are facing.

1. Many of the e-requests are from "new-in-post" Safeguarding Officers or from established student service staff who have taken on this role. It seems safe to assume that at least some of these posts are the result of the very high importance that Safeguarding has in the new Inspection regime. This places a huge responsibility on these staff who need fast and accurate answers to their questions. **There is clear evidence that staff are finding definitive answers to some questions difficult to find.**

2. There is clear evidence that Colleges have previously addressed their own pressing priorities and that these differ between Colleges dependent on the environment in which they work and the client base they serve. **This means that Colleges have developed their Safeguarding policy piecemeal and are now pulling it together to meet the new requirements as a matter of urgency and are looking for help and support**.

3. There is clear evidence that the development of Safeguarding policy and practice varies widely from College to College, with some just starting out on the journey, whilst others are well advanced in both their policy developments and their ability to evidence impact. **This means that the NAMSS JISC_MAIL is proving an excellent and well used way of sharing resources and practice.**

4. The majority of e-requests have focused on the legal requirements that have to be met. It is clear that most Colleges are finding reliable statements difficult to source. Some College staff have made contact with experts in the field [such as Ofsted inspectors]. **This shows that there is confusion about who can be contacted for help.**

5. Many of the e-questions are about who should be CRB checked. Some Colleges are running CRB checks on a "better safe than sorry" basis, others are only running CRB checks for adults who could have unsupervised one-to-one interactions with young people. There are still unanswered questions about hosts on foreign exchange programmes. **There is evidence that Colleges are having difficulty obtaining definitive guidance on the more unusual situations**.

6. One of the main requirements of the Child Protection legislation is that all parties should work together. Some College managers are members of their local Safeguarding Board, some are members of sub-groups, and some are not involved at all. There is no consistent pattern across England. **This shows that FE Colleges are not all fully involved in local decision making or fully informed of the local developments.**

7. The new "Common inspection framework for learning and skills 2009" places strong emphasis on Safeguarding. **Managers are not clear about the evidence they need to have and produce to gain the higher grades for Safeguarding**.

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4.0 Learner Perceptions and Issues

4.1 Perception surveys

A request via the NAMSS website for members to use the perception survey with their learners was responded to in a variety of ways.

One College asked learners to forward their views directly to Vicki Cox. Several Colleges used the survey as a tutorial exercise to identify the particular threats and dangers of their learner groups. Some Colleges used it as an on-line survey requesting learners to complete it within a given time-frame. A particularly good example of this is the collated case study for South East Derbyshire College

All responses had 2 common themes.

1. Learners identified BULLYING in all its forms as the greatest threat and the one they are least confident to deal with. This includes **bullying by peers** [being teased about my appearance; racial and sexual harassment] **bullying by other College learners** [homophobic, faith, ethnicity bullying; cyber-bullying] **bullying by College staff** [over-critical feedback on my work] **bullying by other young people and adults** [my parents punishing me for not getting top marks; having my possessions stolen or damaged]

2. Learners see "other learners on my course" as the least threatening and "other young people and adults" as posing the greatest threats and being the ones that they do not know how to deal with.

4.2 Focus groups

The three focus groups were

- 25 year 12 learners at Wyggeston and Queen Elizabeth 1 College in Leicester using the tutorial exercise as a discussion document
- 22 year 13 learners at Wyggeston and Queen Elizabeth 1 College in Leicester using the tutorial exercise as a discussion document
- 10 year 12 learners at The Manchester College discussing their perceptions with the tutor

The Wyggeston and Queen Elizabeth 1 College year 11 group and year 12 group were asked to work in small groups of their own choosing and to agree how to colour the threats and dangers listed in the spreadsheet.

- RED I think this is a danger for me and I don't know how to deal with it
- AMBER I think this is a danger for me and I do know how to deal with it
- GREEN I think that this is not a danger for me

The group from Manchester College were testing their perceptions by undertaking Book 1 of the Pacific Institute programme, coached and questioned by the tutor.

Focus group conversations

A group of 4 girls, 2 white British and 2 Asians asked if they could work separately. "We don't agree on the colours because we don't go out on our own or at night, or meet street gangs or accept lifts from strangers so none of those are a threat to us." "And we do go out a lot but we can look after ourselves OK. But we don't let our parents boss us around or stop us doing things!"

Zara. "Vicki what's internet grooming?" "It is someone making friends with you on the internet then suggesting a secret meeting with you. Have you heard that Ashleigh Hall was found murdered by an Internet friend yesterday? Sometimes they are not as nice as they seem" "Oh I know now" Colour AMBER. "So you know how to deal with it?" "Yup, I'd know it was a pervert and I'd string him along and then not turn up, or I'd take along a gang of friends and sort him out".

A group of 3 boys coloured 'Dangerous driving by friends giving you a lift' AMBER. "So you know how to make them drive more sensibly?" "Oh Yes we did all this at school, see their license, smell their breath, ask them their car registration and all that" "But suppose they drove far too fast how would you slow them down" "Tell them, shout at them to stop it." "Suppose that didn't work" "Then I'd pull on the handbrake and jump out."

Saisha. "I am colouring it all AMBER or GREEN, is that right?" "So you don't see many of these things as threats or dangers and you can deal with those that might be?" "Not now I don't. I used to live with my Mum and Dad and go to a school for all white girls and they were always talking about going out to clubs late and I know some took drugs, and they wanted me to try it. Now I just live with my Mum and her parents and the rules are really strict but I like it much better because I know where I am, and I don't get teased for not joining in!"

Darren "Why are we doing all this stuff about safety and that?" "It is because there are occasions when young people like you find themselves being treated unkindly or roughly and we want to help you to know how to deal with that and have some staff here for you to ask for help" " Who is that then?" "Well did you know that the College has a Safeguarding Officer and all adults who teach you or look after you including visitors like me, are all checked to ensure that we don't have any criminal convictions about harming young people?" "Nope we didn't know that did we? We know there is an Anti-bullying policy and that we must go to our tutor, but we haven't been told anything else have we?"

With a couple of boys. "I see you have coloured Street Gangs RED!" "Yes, well I haven't met any but a friend of mine got duffed up and called the police and they didn't come for ages. There were loads of them and he was on his own so he didn't stand a chance. What could he have done?" "Well perhaps the best thing to do is run as fast as you can to a well lit and busy spot and then phone for help". "Sounds a bit cowardly to me, I'd rather fight them. Why should they get away with it?"

To the whole group. "Have I missed out any threats or dangers?" "Yes, I think here in Leicester you are really safe some places and not others. I work part-time in ***** and I always travel the long way round so that I don't have to wait for a bus in ***** because there is lots of trouble there."

Halla "I wanted to join the police but I was put off by the entry test. My friend, who is much cleverer than me, didn't pass it. I didn't want to look silly, or be picked on because I didn't get in so I didn't even try."

Dean and friend. "Where we live there is nothing for us to do in the evenings so we go on the streets. We used to have a youth club but it got shut down. Why don't they have more youth clubs?" "Do you know why it was closed?" "No money they said but we paid to go. I think it's not safe to shut youth clubs so we have to go on the streets!"

4.3 Key Learning Points

The surveys and focus groups give an overview of the issues that young people perceive as being threats and dangers, and some insights into how they plan to deal with them should they occur.

1. Safeguarding is inter-related with equality and diversity. Young people live in different environments and in social or economic or cultural or faith groups that offer differing levels of protection and allow different freedoms. Whilst white British girls are not threatened by forced marriage, Muslim girls do not visit night clubs. **Safeguarding policy and process should cover the threats and dangers to all groups, offering alternative strategies to deal with issues dependent on the circumstances in which the young person is living**.

2. Some young people, particularly the white British boys and girls, are over-confident about their ability to deal with threats and dangers. When questioned they propose strategies that could exacerbate the situation, or are even more dangerous than the threat they are intended to resolve. **Learners are reluctant to involve authorities such as the police, and much preferred to rely on their own efforts to stay out of, or deal with, trouble.**

3. In the focus groups, and in the responses from East Derbyshire College, there was a disturbing level of ignorance about the Safeguarding roles and responsibilities of the College. **Colleges have a great deal of information to impart to young people at enrolment and induction and some of the Safeguarding messages were missed or forgotten**.

4. Physical and emotional bullying is the most common threat coloured RED by all the diverse College groups. Their perception of "what is bullying" is very wide ranging from physical violence to just being unfriendly. **Bullying is a real issue for all young people no matter their background and the one they have least confidence that they can deal with unaided**.

5. Cyber-bullying by text or email is not seen as a threat although some respondents coloured it AMBER. When asked they all said they would ignore it, they would not respond, and they would block emails or phone messages from that number. **Learners have great confidence in their ability to use technology to deal with any cyber threats.**

6. Internet grooming was not well understood by any of the young people in the focus groups. These took place 2 days after the murder of Ashleigh Hall in Darlington but none of them knew about that. They do not read newspapers or watch news programmes on television and it seems that this event had passed them by. Their responses were simplistic. Those with stricter parents said they would not be allowed out to meet friends unattended anyway so it was no threat to them. Those who would be allowed out thought that Ashleigh had been gullible. **They vaguely thought that anyone with a record of abuse was kept behind bars for ever, and that they were somehow "easily recognisable" if released into the community. They were unanimous in not wanting restrictions on the use of social networking sites.**

7. All learners knew what they would do if they felt in any way unsafe at College. **The tutor was the named refuge in all cases with their favourite subject teacher as the next step should the tutor be unavailable.**

8. On the whole they felt very safe at College except in areas that were ill-lit at night. They were least threatened by their classmates, and by staff. Some thought other College learners might pose a threat but could not quote instances. **The greatest threats and dangers were identified as outside of College. In the main these were concentrated on trouble in clubs, pubs and the streets at night.**

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5.0 Key success factors

5.1 Key Success Factors

The contributors to this research identified the following as having the greatest positive impact on the successful development of Safeguarding policy and practice.

Leadership

Managers of Student Services are appointed at a range of positions within College structures. Where they were not the senior post-holder with responsibility for Safeguarding [and therefore not a member of the senior management team] they identified having a close working relationship with that person as one of the key positive contributions to speedy and effective practice.

These managers also identified the understanding of the Human Resource Manager of the urgent and ongoing need for high quality training as being key to the success of strategy implementation.

The managers also identified the support of the Senior Team in allocating appropriate accommodation for private and personal conversations as key to engaging both staff and learners in openness regarding Safeguarding issues.

Managers stated that a whole College commitment to Safeguarding is an essential component of consistent practice. This is particularly so where College provision is spread across a range of sites. They considered that the achievement of the whole College approach was dependent on strong leadership at middle management level coupled with effective inter-College communication and training.

Collaboration and Partnership

The key government theme for Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults is successful multi-agency working, ensuring that there is no opportunity for a child or vulnerable adult to slip through the net.

Managers in Colleges also identify close working partnerships and the sharing of essential information as a major success factor in successful Safeguarding practice. Examples of collaboration are the inclusion of College managers on the Local Children's Safeguarding Board and subgroups, information sharing at the point of transition from school to College, and cross community provision of Safeguarding services for young people.

A strong success factor was seen as being current and accurate information and contact details regarding the point of contact for particular Safeguarding issues and the channels of communication for accessing or imparting important information.

Government policy

Managers all stated that where clear Government legislation and guidance is available, implementing that guidance in Colleges is both effective and efficient.

Managers were confident that Government agencies such as the Forced Marriage Unit were responsive and highly effective and that this had been key to several instances of young girls being prevented from a forced marriage.

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The Walsall Borough partnership anti-bullying standards

The development of policy and practice

The College Safeguarding policy has been developed over a long period of time. Involvement with the local Children's Safeguarding board and linkage to their strategies has been key to its success.

Identification of “vulnerability” and personalization of learning is at the heart of the college mission in relation to safeguarding and a great deal of action has taken place to ensure this is embedded in both policy, and, often more importantly for the learner, in practice. Reviews of withdrawal data and staff feedback led to a process being embedded in admissions practice, which identifies those most at risk. This was in addition to processes to identify support needs of LDD learners. Feedback indicated that care leavers and young people receiving youth justice support were entering the system unknown and were the most likely learners to leave study within the first half term. This led to an analysis of reasons for leaving across the board and the identification of a range of issues and learner characteristics associated with early leaving.

Vulnerability is now assessed at entry by the admissions team. A framework has been created with a scoring system. Any learner scoring 20 or more points at admission is automatically flagged as potentially vulnerable and teaching teams are alerted to give any extra help or to steer the learner towards support within college. This is now linked with the MIS and data demonstrates a significant improvement in retention of those deemed to be vulnerable.

The College developed a partnership agreement with various organizations in Walsall and neighboring boroughs who work with the most vulnerable, such as the Youth Offending Team, care leaving team and teenage pregnancy service. This ensures that the college is alerted to the needs of particular young people and could put in place any extra support or mentoring early in their programme. These services include a buddy system, tutor alerts, early 1:1 tutorials, formal Additional Learning Support, and links with the Connexions advisers.

Policy in relation to issues once a learner has enrolled, such as bullying, has been developed with the boroughs strategic safeguarding anti bullying group. June Morrow, Director of Student Services at Walsall College said “Our policy, procedure and practice have enabled us to achieve the safeguarding boards kite mark at gold standard. Bullying incidents are logged centrally. The team checks soon after the intervention to ensure that the actions taken have made a positive difference and that further support is put in place. We are currently organizing a programme of restorative intervention training for our peer anti bullying team. Here at Walsall College, we have a robust anti-bullying policy and we are proactive in tackling any issues our students may have. The members of our Anti-bullying Team do a fantastic job in spreading awareness throughout the College and are the first point of contact for students with any concerns”.

The Walsall Borough Anti-bullying Standards

The Walsall Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) co-ordinates the services of the providers represented on the board to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to ensure the maximum effectiveness of each area of provision. June Morrow, the Director of Student Services at the college, is on both sub groups of the board which are the Safe Operations Group and the Anti-bullying Steering Group.

The Anti-bullying Steering Group has developed a standards framework based on incremental development of good practice within an institution. These standards can be achieved at Bronze, Silver or Gold so that an institution can demonstrate an early commitment to dealing with bullying and can progress through the standards demonstrating the improvement in their service.

A provider wishing to achieve the standard collates and submits a portfolio of evidence against the criteria for their target level. A panel of young people judges the portfolio against the criteria for that standard, agreeing that the standard as been achieved or [if not] recommending ways of improving provision.

The WSCB hired the Walsall Football Stadium during National Anti-bullying Week for 2009. All young people could join a wide range of activities that challenge learner's own stereotypes and prejudices. Each year the WSCB chooses a particular safeguarding theme. In 2009 the theme was staying safe in cyber space and students from the college who participated bought back many ideas to help us to amend our own policy.

The Awards ceremony was held during this week with the College achieving the Gold Standard.

During Anti-bullying Week at College the anti bullying team wanted to tackle prejudice that they feel contributes a lot to bullying issues . Learners were invited to talk about or show something in the Diary Room that makes them unique and explain why they are proud of this.
Everyone was amazed at how involved people became and the discussion that the activity generated.

Forced Marriages

The operations Board of the Walsall Safeguarding Children Board takes responsibility for matters related to forced marriages. The Borough has a very diverse population with 14% of its residents from ethnic minorities. The College recruits 28% of the students from this ethnic mix and is fully aware of the need to respect traditions and beliefs whilst ensuring learners' safety.

The College includes forced marriages within its anti-bullying strategy and trains staff in dealing with forced marriage issues.

June Morrow says "Staff have expressed reluctance to take action in the past where they feared learners might be being forced into a marriage they didn't want.

The college amended its policy and improved the training programme to make sure that the message about this topic was clear and that staff felt appropriately trained and supported to deal with such eventualities.

Ultimately staff or student supporters are advised to seek help if they are remotely unsure about what to do and members of the safeguarding team will advise and support. Decisions about reporting are made centrally which relieves tutors of responsibility and prevents them worrying about what is appropriate action in these circumstances".

The college has a system of giving learners who may be at risk information on primary contact numbers and safe places to go. This is "disguised" in ways which mean that if it is picked up by members of the family, it will not cause concern. Advice is given for extreme circumstances such as such as being taken to an airport.

Relationships with key police departments and other agencies supporting people at risk of forced marriages have been fostered over a number of years and work well. "We haven't met this problem this year but we have a robust system in place and great contacts in case we should need it!"

Top

- the FE Forum: Rotherham College of Arts and Technology; Thomas Rotherham College; Dearne Valley College.

Starting the FE Safeguarding Forum

Paul Bloor is Head of Customer Service at Rotherham College of Arts and Technology and leads Safeguarding in the College. The college had well established child protection systems to meet the legal requirements and Paul was reviewing and improving these to meet the developing Safeguarding agenda.

He says, "I was developing policy and process, searching for answers to questions, for good training resources and for proven good practice when it occurred to me that there was a growing body of knowledge to which college managers did not have access to within the Borough Council. I made contact with my colleague at Thomas Rotherham Sixth Form College to share thoughts and issues and we realised that we were working independently, facing similar difficulties and inventing similar wheels. We invited our colleague from the third college in the local area to an initial meeting. The desired outcome would be a shared knowledge of local issues for the different age groups, consistency in dealing with those issues, and the sharing of good practice across the Borough. As required, it could also be a forum for learning from local activities to ensure that all young people facing problems were dealt with fairly and equitably.

Local schools had the LEA to turn to for support and answers and we thought that the same resource would be very helpful to colleges.

I spoke to the Children's Safeguarding Board for Rotherham Borough Council explaining that we all wished to benefit from their knowledge and advice and that we would be very happy to explain what we were doing in each of the 3 local colleges and the general developments in the FE environment. As we have more 16-18 year olds than all the schools put together it was important for the Board to know that we were complying with legislation and guidance. "

He says, "Although everyone said that it was an excellent idea it took a while to get us all together, mostly because diaries were already full. We eventually arranged an exploratory meeting at which we found that we were all facing the same issues and challenges. This has now developed into the FE Forum which meets regularly each term with an agreed agenda, supporting paperwork and the agreement to invite other experts to attend for certain topics. Members of the Children's Safeguarding Board attend with the colleges hosting the meetings. Members are invited to propose agenda items and we all take along any resources that we have to support discussion. It works very well."

The Agenda

At the meeting in December 2009 the members discussed the new guidance from the Forced Marriage Unit entitled 'Multi-agency practice guidelines: Handling cases of Forced marriage'. The legislation and guidelines were discussed and matched with policy and practice in colleges. The members of the Safeguarding Board advised on the implementation of the guidance and were able to satisfy themselves that all colleges were taking appropriate safeguards and actions and that each would help in any joint solution if required.

Paul says, "Although the Borough has an ethnic minority of 7% I had surprisingly not come across forced marriage before despite working in Safeguarding for many years.

At the meeting I found that others had been dealing with this issue for some time, that it was on the increase, and that Thomas Rotherham Sixth Form College had dealt with several cases in the past. Having heard how other providers were identifying girls in danger of being forced into marriage, understanding the support available from other agencies as well as learning who to contact, I was much better prepared to deal with our own instance of forced marriage when it arose."

Supporting the Colleges' Safeguarding Policy and Practice

As well as building a close relationship with the Local Children's Safeguarding Board, the forum has provided access to specialist services and visitors including the DCSFs Allegations Management Advisor and police officers from the Public Protection Unit. These visits all help to build knowledge and networks as well as enhance the capability within colleges to deal with Safeguarding issues. This has been noted at strategic level within the Local Children's Safeguarding Board who have commented on the work the colleges do in partnership with the operational Safeguarding Unit.

The forum also provides colleagues in colleges with the opportunity to discuss the changes in the inspection framework and to develop policy and practice in response.

Colleges are now taking a holistic approach to safeguarding and it is common practice in Paul's college for managers with a range of responsibilities such as HR and Estates to attend Safeguarding meetings to ensure a coherent approach to policy, practice development and implementation takes place. This is a good practice that the other colleges are taking on board and implementing.

Paul says, "Colleagues in other agencies now know who to contact in each of the colleges to liaise with on safeguarding incidents that have not originated from reports by students to college staff. All of the colleges now have good contacts with Social Care, the Police and the Local Children's Safeguarding Board. The forum has really enhanced the multi agency work of the colleges and this is certainly beneficial for our students."

Safeguarding Incidents

All of the colleges reported that the number of cases being raised in their college under the safeguarding procedures trebled last year. Up to December of this year Paul has received the same number of reports of Safeguarding issues as for the whole of the previous year and so it seems highly likely that the number of reported issues will continue to rise once again.

Paul says, "There is definitely a greater awareness amongst staff of the threats and dangers for young people and of what they must do to report these issues. This is likely to be the result of the compulsory training that we have provided over the last 3 years. There has also been considerable media coverage in recent years and so this greater awareness has contributed to the number of reports. This can only help make children and young people safer. We have also undertaken more work with students to develop their own awareness of maintaining their safety and who to speak to if they encounter issues. This gives students greater confidence that matters will be treated seriously and dealt with sensitively."

This is echoed by the other colleges in the Forum.
"Colleagues at the forum don't discuss specific cases due to confidentiality but we all know that we encounter a range of safeguarding issues, including some very serious cases. Previously, we all felt we were on our own in dealing with these cases but now we know that our colleagues are dealing with similar issues and that we have the close support of the Local Children's Safeguarding Board to help.
New and emerging issues are discussed at the forum and we are able to share views on best practice in dealing with these. Social networking and e-safety are currently presenting schools and colleges with a new range of safeguarding challenges and discussing these at the forum helps to develop practice to deal with them."

Members' views

The members were asked to identify the benefits of the FE Forum which include:

- They have built relationships with local agencies and feel able to access their support
- They feel involved in local provision and can contribute to discussion and developments
- They can share information within the rules of confidentiality
- They have been advised by the Police on the role of the Public Protection Unit
- They have discussed the new initiatives such as the Vetting and Barring scheme and the Forced Marriage Guidance
- They have shared good practice such as the safer working practices for adults working with children, and effective staff training practice.
- They can contact each other at any time for advice or to forward information
- They know who to contact at the Safeguarding Unit for advice or to get help for a student
- They have shared training resources
- They had shared concerns and uncertainties and found some answers.

The FE Forum has been such a success that one has now been developed for the local schools along the same lines.

"We hosted the first schools forum in December at Rotherham college of Arts and Technology and the Safeguarding Board invited safeguarding representatives from all of the schools in the borough. This was very successful and we were overwhelmed by the response when more than 50 designated safeguarding officers from schools attended. We soon realised that they were feeling as we did when we started our FE Colleges forum a few years ago. At the meeting, Susanne Scotter from Thomas Rotherham College shared the origins of our forum and what we had gained from building our partnership and this was well received by the school representatives. Now that this new forum has been established, the college safeguarding officers have been invited to attend and this has furthered the links between schools, colleges and the agencies involved in safeguarding locally."

Top

New College Swindon

- Staff training

The Environment

Swindon is a large and prosperous town in the far north east of Wiltshire, with very strong communication links with London and all areas of the country via the M4 and the east-west rail link. It has a very strong retail, commercial, business and manufacturing base and presently has the fastest growing economy of any town in the country.

Employment rates and wages are higher than both regional and national rates, and employment prospects are good. Nevertheless there are areas of severe economic deprivation. The town has 3 of the most deprived wards in the country

Around 80% of the college's full-time equivalent learners are aged 16 to 18. The college is the main provider of level 3 courses in the town with long courses at levels 1 and 2 forming a growing proportion of the college's work for this age group. The provision was designed to meet the needs of learners in Swindon leaving school with below average attainment.

Schools link provision for learners aged 14 to 16 and young apprenticeships, account for some 150 learners.

The minority ethnic population index for the borough is 4.5%, above the average for the south west region as a whole, with the college learners profile at 10%.

In the 2009 LSC Learner Satisfaction Survey 98% of the students stated that the college is a safe place to learn.

An Experienced Safeguarding Trainer.

Val Bateman was appointed as the Programme Co-ordinator for Business Services, so during her induction she attended the Safeguarding awareness training session.

At the end of this training she approached the student services manager explaining, "I am the Safeguarding Officer for the St John's Ambulance Service for all of Wiltshire, delivering the child protection and safeguarding vulnerable adults training for St John's across the county".

Within this role she is the main contact for issues relating to members and for liaising with Social Services regarding issues with young people.

She asked if she could help the college with both staff training and the ongoing development of safeguarding procedures and was immediately asked to join the safeguarding team as a safeguarding officer.

Staff Training

Under the Child Protection legislation the initial College safeguarding training was delivered as a whole college awareness raising session linked to the "staying safe" theme of ECM. The training was delivered by the Safeguarding Training Manager from Swindon Borough Council supported by the Student Services Manager who is a member of the Local Safeguarding Board in Swindon.

Up to June 2008 all employees were trained to level 1 through the in-house Staff Development scheme. The college employed a highly experienced external safeguarding practitioner to run these sessions.

To meet new legislation, and to ensure that safeguarding is of the highest standard, the College now has a comprehensive training scheme. Every college employee is trained to level 1 using materials provided by the NSPCC. This is recognised by an attendance certificate and is valid for 3 years. The College runs catch-up sessions for new appointees each term. Newly appointed staff attend an introduction session during their induction to the college, which is followed as soon as possible by attendance at the level 1 training. Attendance at this training is required for the satisfactory completion of the probationary period and is discussed during performance reviews.

Key staff such as the 5 Safeguarding Officers, the SMT member responsible for Serious Case Reviews, the SMT member responsible for Allegations against Staff and the designated Governor, all undertake specialist training provided by the Swindon Borough Council.

Both food service and cleaning are outsourced and the staff involved in these activities are not employees of the college. The companies providing these services are asked to produce and detail their safeguarding procedures and the staff working on the college site are invited to undertake the level 1 training sessions alongside college staff. The college has CRB checks for all employees, volunteers, governors and the facilities team.

The Training Programme

Val Bateman is CEOPs [Child Exploitation and Online Protection] trained at level 3 for both young people and vulnerable adults and is now the main point of contact in college for safeguarding training.
She delivers the training sessions using the St John's training materials [with their permission] which are interactive case studies designed to provoke discussion on all forms of abuse and neglect, including manifestations of abuse such as self-harm, poor attendance or achievement and depression.

Val says, "When you are dealing with young people you must always be prepared for surprising and sometimes shocking revelations. I widen the scope of discussions to prepare staff to deal with unexpected and worrying conversations with students, telling them to listen carefully, to write detailed notes whilst with the student or as soon as possible afterwards, to get the students to sign if they will, to pass the notes on to someone qualified to deal with the issue, and to follow that up to ensure action has been taken."

Keeping Staff safe

During Safeguarding training Val is careful to ensure that staff are properly prepared for their role. She is concerned that staff should themselves remain safe, and is careful to explain how they can avoid putting themselves in a vulnerable position.

She says, "No matter how much training you give them there are occasions when staff come up against a situation they are not prepared for. Sometimes adults are not sure if they have done the right thing and worry about finding themselves in trouble. I always tell them that if they find themselves involved in any incident in which they feel uncomfortable or are not sure of the appropriateness of their own actions, they must make careful and detailed notes and tell a safeguarding officer or an appropriate manager as soon as possible."

SAFEGUARDING YOURSELF –

Guidance with regard to Safeguarding Children and positions of trust

The following points are meant to help you establish a safe working practice, should you be placed in a position of trust with students. Also outlined are procedures you should follow should an allegation of abuse be made by a student against a member of staff.

- **Do** adopt high standards of personal conduct and remember that you are role models for our students.
- **Do** avoid situations that compromise your relationship with young people. Maintain appropriate boundaries in dealing with students.
- **Do** ensure that your relationships with students are appropriate to the age and gender of the student, and take care that your language or conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation.
- **Do** report to your line manager if you are aware of any indications of infatuations either by staff or students. These situations should be treated sensitively but must be reported.
- **Do** ensure any confidential interviews or one to one meetings with students are conducted in a room with visual access, or with the door open, or in a room or area which is likely to be frequented by other people. Where such conditions cannot apply, you should ensure that another staff member knows that the interview is taking place.
- **Do** ensure you wear clothing which promotes a positive and professional image and which is appropriate to your role. Dress should not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding. It should not contain political or otherwise contentious slogans.
- **Do not** make unnecessary comments to and/or about students which could be construed to have a sexual connotation.
- **Do not** make personal remarks to a student including through email, text messages, telephone or letter.
- **Do not** discuss your own private relationships with students or those of students in inappropriate settings or contexts.
- **Do not** agree to meet socially with 16 – 19 year old students without prior agreement from your line manager.
- **Do not** make unprofessional comments towards a student, including the use of abusive language or degrading remarks.
- **Do not** introduce or encourage debate amongst students, which could be construed as having a sexual connotation that is unnecessary, given the context of the lesson, or the circumstances.
- **Do not** offer lifts in your car to students, without prior agreement from your line manager.

It is a criminal offence (Sexual Offenders Act 2003) for a person in a position of trust in an educational establishment to engage in any sexual activity with a person aged under18, with whom a relationship of trust exists, irrespective of the age of consent, even if the basis for their relationship is consensual.

As a member of staff at New College you are considered to be placed in a position of such trust and therefore, the conditions of this Act apply to you.

Staff contributing to Safeguarding

During the training staff are urged to be proactive in the development of policy. This has raised their awareness and several staff have asked about a review of site security.

The Student Services Manager, Duncan Webster, feels that the balance of security against access is presently about right giving a friendly but controlled feel, but recognises the concerns expressed.

He says, "All staff, students, visitors, volunteers and anyone attending temporarily at the college have identification badges, which staff always wear and students always carry with them. As part of the regular safeguarding training I invite the Police Community Support Officers to mount regular safeguarding awareness activities. This has included inviting staff and students to try passing through a knife-detection arch and a demonstration of how sniffer dogs work".

However, the college takes all safeguarding concerns seriously and knows that it is important to give a reasoned response to any concerns expressed by staff or students.

Duncan says, "The College is presently, and wishes to remain, an amenity for the local community and does not wish to put barriers in the way of those wishing to visit us.

However, some managers and other staff are aware of the airport style security operated by some colleges and in response the SMT regularly reviews security arrangements."

Top

Chesterfield College – Assessing and managing risk

achieve your potential

Identifying risk

Heather Boylan is the Learner Support Team Leader and has responsibility for assessing and managing risks posed by members of the College community within her role.

Heather screens applications to identify risks posed by applicants and potential students, both risks for themselves and risks they may pose to others. Disclosures such as significant health problems, any history of behavioural issues, and any criminal past lead to a process of risk assessment.

The Risk Assessment Team may consist of an officer from Connexions, a member of the Youth Offending Team, Head of Learner Services, Learner Support Team Leader, Health and Safety Officer, Security Officer, and at least one of the relevant heads of Directorate or Operational Manager or Programme Manager for the curriculum area applied to.

If the risk analysis identifies a risk to any member or part of the College, a protocol is compiled for that applicant, stating what risk management components the College would need to provide in order for the applicant to be enrolled to the course applied for. This protocol can then be discussed at a meeting of all relevant staff to assess the College's ability to provide the services identified to the standards required to ensure the safety of all. Only when the College had agreed that the needs identified at application could be properly met is the student invited for interview.

Heather would conduct this interview with the student and carer both to explain what the College had agreed so far and to identify any other needs that the student may have that had not been included at application. Heather uses the services of experts to ensure a full risk assessment for specific matters. The College receives excellent support from professionals such as an Epilepsy Needs Specialist, the Local Children's Safeguarding Board, Community Safety Partnership, and a member of the Dangerous People's Management Unit.

Heather says," We are mindful of the fact that we have very young children attending the nursery and vulnerable adults attending a wide range of courses on site as well as our 16-18 year old students. We look at risk from all angles. Risk to themselves, risk to other students, risk to staff, and risk to experts brought in specifically to help them to be successful learners,

We have a duty of care to everyone who sets foot on our campus and we consider the risk to each and every one of them. Only when we are certain that the risk can be successfully managed would we move to the enrolment process, as it would be very difficult to refuse a student access to their course once they had been offered a place."

Identifying Risk for Students with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities

Rob Haywood is responsible for the Foundation Studies students and implements the risk assessment process for this group. Once the pre-enrolment screening and protocol has been completed the applicant is invited to join a summer school. Each applicant attends for 3 days over the 2 week summer school at which their needs are assessed through organised activities and 1:1 tutorials. This provides a structured bridge into College, preparing both student and staff for the start of college term before the hustle and bustle of Induction Week.

Rob says, "We cover all safeguarding issues such as travel to and from College, any medication they take regularly or in an emergency, any specific dietary constraints, and any particular situations that they find difficult to deal with. These students need to be aware of the situations they put themselves into, for example the behaviour of learners with severe autism is not always understood by other students. Other students are very friendly so we go through the dangers of talking to strangers, that they would be best not to give their phone number or address to anyone, and set some behavioural rules for various different situations. We try to take a low key approach but re-enforce it regularly."

The staff encourage students to talk freely about any issue that worries them but recognise that sometimes they prefer not to state their concerns in public. They have mounted a Message Board in the corridor, with a nearby supply of post-it notes, which students can post concerns onto anonymously. These are dealt with by the staff and may be discussed as a general concern during tutorials. Keeping safe and bullying topics are included as part of tutorials to reinforce every child matters themes. A Chesterfield Community Police Officer comes into tutorial classes to talk about keeping safe both within the College and out in the Community.

Stop and Search for Knives and Drugs

For the last 3 years the College has operated a stop and search policy operated by the security team. Students are told of this during induction, stressing that it is part of the College Safeguarding Policy and that those stopped and searched are chosen at random. The policy was developed with help from the Police and from Crimestoppers.

All searched students receive a copy of the search report, which also details their rights and tells them with whom they can discuss any concerns.

Eric Hadley, the Head of Security, says, "Chesterfield is a really safe and friendly place and we have very few behaviour problems. This stop and search is more of a deterrent than a serious concern about knives and drugs being brought onto the premises.

We sometimes find a student carrying illegal substances but this is very rare.

We found one student carrying a knife after a tip-off from a student's Mum who had heard him say he carried a knife the night before. He was a student with a learning difficulty and after a thorough risk assessment we decided that he shouldn't stay at College."

Eric reports that there is a stall in the market that sells a pack of an alternative drug to cannabis brought in from Amsterdam.

"It only costs £2.50 for a pack. This is not illegal so we can't do anything to stop it. We train all staff to recognise alcohol and drug induced behaviours such as aggression, poor co-ordination or an unusually relaxed attitude to things. These behaviours can make other students feel unsafe, or can cause accidents in workshop areas such as Engineering, Catering and Hairdressing."

The College Safeguarding Board

The College Safeguarding Board has responsibility for driving the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and for checking that they are effective and fit for purpose. The Board membership includes the Principal, the Vice Principal, and the Chair of the Corporation.

Their brief is to consider Safeguarding within the complete learner journey for all learners. This includes policies and procedures for safeguarding all learners including those who are not based on the college sites such as those learning at their workplace, or at home.

They maintain a careful scrutiny of the checks, information and training of volunteers, employers and Work Placement Managers. They consider everything from safe travel to bullying; the arrangements for checking and monitoring visitors, the physical environment and the management of hot spots such as lift cars and pathways between buildings. Most recently they have checked all possible travel routes to and from College to ensure that students are safe every minute between College exit and entry to their own home.

One of their roles is to check a sample of the risk assessments undertaken by Heather and her team, not so much to check that they are being undertaken according to the agreed procedures, but to maintain an awareness of the types of risks that are being addressed by the College and the effectiveness of the protocols put in place.

Derbyshire Partnership Forum

Chesterfield College is a member of the Derbyshire Partnership Forum.
Partners have agreed three key cross cutting priorities for 2009/10. These are to:

- Share with partners what their organisation is doing and the difference this work is making
- Learn what other partners are doing and share good practice
- Influence the development of future work on this key priority

The Agenda for the November meeting asked members to identify:

1. The safeguarding issues for their organisation? (Think about the risks to your service users, their needs and what they have told you)
2. How the organisation safeguards vulnerable people? (Think about what actions are being taken, the difference they have made and what you have learned from this activity?)
3. What opportunities are there for future safeguarding improvements?

The Partnership defines vulnerable people as:

- People with a dependence on public services (e.g. because of illness, the need for care or support, or homelessness)
- Children
- Care leavers
- People with learning disabilities
- People at risk from harm (such as harm linked to substance abuse)
- People who are marginalised or discriminated against in society.

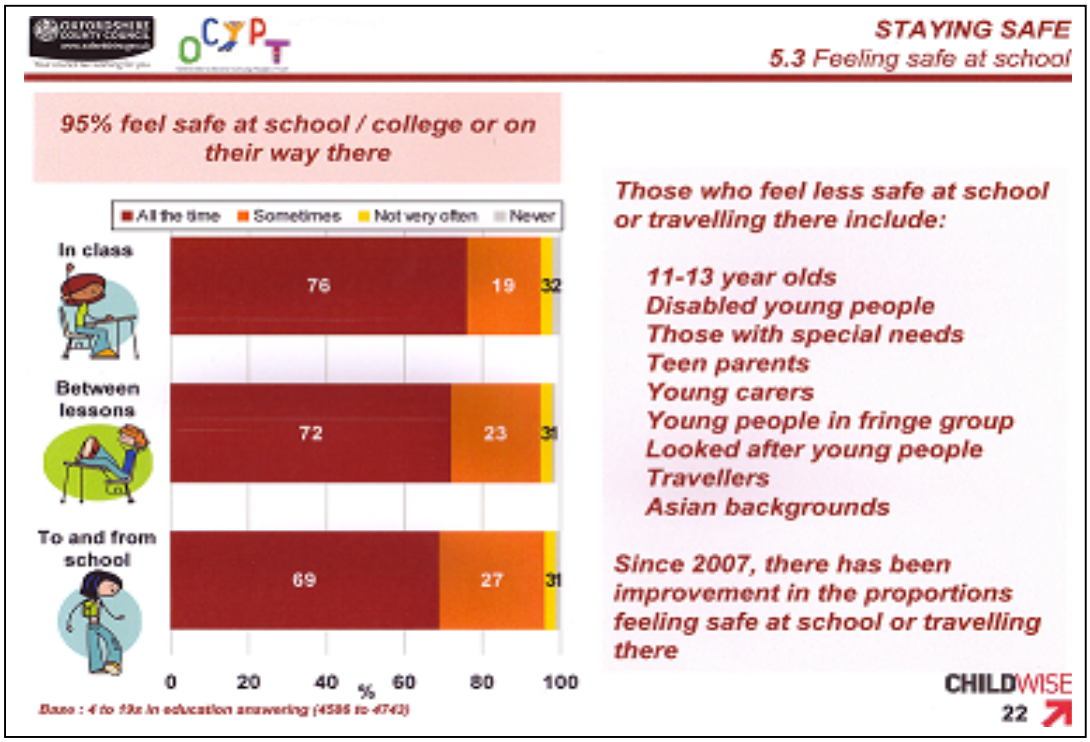
Top

– Restorative Justice resolving conflict situations

'Your Voice 2009'

Your Voice 2009 was a survey of nearly 5,000 children and young people across Oxfordshire. The results were compared with the 2007 survey.

One of the key findings for 2009 is that more children and young people feel safe at school or college, but more of them also say they have been bullied both in and out of school. The slide shows the results for Feeling Safe at School.



In the beginning

Vivienne Miles is the Head of Student Services at the college.

She says "Any conflict situation, including bullying, used to be dealt with through the disciplinary procedure which kicked in almost immediately and once begun had to run its full course. Whilst this provided a solution in that the problem was removed from the college campus, it went no way towards identifying the reasons for the conflict and dealing with those reasons so that all parties could learn from the experience and find a resolution that enabled everyone to continue their studies".

The College recognised that the disciplinary system was not an effective way of dealing with bullying and conflict situations. In practice the required evidence was difficult to collate, being mostly hearsay and opinion, and any witnesses were unwilling to come forward. The usual outcome was that the aggressor became even more aggressive and felt that their position had not been properly understood or dealt with. Similarly the victim felt that they had been let down both by the college system and by the staff who they believed would be able to support them and remove the situation.

Viv says "We wanted a more productive outcome for both the bully and the bullied, one that resolved the present problem but also gave both parties the tools to manage aggression [their own or that of another person] in any future conflict.

Our Senior staff had all been trained in Solution Focused Coaching as part of the Management Training and we felt a similar system would work well with our students"

The College Staff Programme

The Oxfordshire Youth Justice Service had been using Restorative Justice Practices for some time with young offenders and had evidence of significant success. At a meeting between the Youth Offending Team, local schools, and a school working with youngsters with significant behavioural problems, the report showed that the system had reduced the number of exclusions from15-20 per year to zero.

Restorative Justice is based on working with each side of the conflict to bring each party to an understanding of how their actions are perceived and the impact they have on the individual concerned. This takes time and expertise so the college committed resources to train volunteer staff in Restorative Justice Practices.

So far 22 of the college staff have completed the intensive 3 day training course to become a Restorative Justice facilitator. The role of the facilitator is to find a way for the victim and the perpetrator to work together to find a resolution. Meetings are held with each person individually, using open positive questioning techniques in a no-blame culture, following a sample script. These meetings are repeated regularly to build up a positive relationship between the facilitator and each of the two parties. The ultimate aim is to of move each person to a point where a joint meeting would be productive in finding ways for the victim and perpetrator to work together so that they are comfortable in each other's presence, that they each understand the other's point of view, that each understands the impact of their own actions and that they can be helped to work together to agree a lasting resolution to the situation.

Viv has followed this with shorter 2 hour training sessions open to any staff interested in taking part. This has so far included academic staff, support staff and business support staff and managers who see this as a management tool as well as a means of resolving student to student conflict.

The College Student Programme

The College has been successful in gaining funding from the Oxfordshire Social Services to appoint a "Peer Mentoring Co-ordinator" charged with introducing a peer mentoring system for students to support students who are in challenging situations. The college prioritised care leavers, looked after children, and unaccompanied asylum seekers as vulnerable groups for whom a peer mentor would offer support from someone of their own age.

Students who wished to be peer mentors were trained appropriately. The peer mentoring co-ordinator manages the very careful matching service, keeps a close watch on the relationships, and undertakes regular supervision of the mentors. The mentors follow the structured ASDAN award in peer mentoring.

The scheme has resulted in an impressive improvement in retention and success rates of care leavers and has received very positive feedback from both mentors and mentees. This success has led the college to expand the scheme to offer a peer mentor to any young person identified as vulnerable or having problems. This includes a programme of 2nd year students mentoring 1st year students where they study and learn together in such curriculum areas and Catering and Hair and Beauty.

Young mums studying at college within the Care to Learn scheme are known to be vulnerable. Older students who were themselves very young mums are invited to train as mentors for this group, using their own experience to support the young mums in balancing their time and their responsibilities and staying in learning to achieve their qualification.

An Example of Restorative Justice in Action

Viv cites an example of a group of hairdressing students who "just did not seem to gel, could not work together, and did not seem to have the group dynamic necessary to run the salon successfully or work together in the roles required".

One member of the group was deemed to be making racist comments about another, being obstructive and standing in front of her so that she couldn't see the demonstrations. Staff were concerned because students were saying that they were considering leaving because they felt uncomfortable. Viv decided to try a Restorative Justice meeting with the whole group.

"We agreed the ground rules, that only the person holding the key could talk and that all others had to listen with an open mind and show respect for the views being expressed. There was to be no blame or criticism of anyone, only comments about how it feels to be part of this group and what could make the group operate more successfully. All statements had to be forward looking, focusing on the solution, not the problem. Easy to say, but it has to be done too."

Members of the group spoke in turn as the key was passed around, the only one passing on the key without speaking was the girl alleged to be causing the problem. Viv felt that the meeting had been helpful and the course leader reported positive feedback from most of the group. The problem appears to have been caused by a rushed induction programme for this accelerated course and the students have asked for a second meeting to identify team building activities.

Viv accepts that it will take time to resolve the differences and that she may need to have one-to-one meetings with particular students to achieve a real and lasting solution. However the students now know that the problem is out in the open, that the college is working with them to address it, that their views are listened to and valued and that their input to the solution is essential

Restorative Justice supporting Social Cohesion

The college has been successful in accessing funds to support social cohesion activities working closely with ethnic, faith and cultural groups in the city. This funded attendance at the PREVENT conference on Community cohesion and the Prevention of Violent Extremism which focused on ways of preventing racial tensions turning into racial extremism.

The college was aware that it celebrated Christmas by decorating the college and having a long holiday but that there were no other faith based celebrations.

SO... the college decided to arrange an EID party that all students could attend and share.

Top

- Peer mentoring

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ashton Sixth Form College is in Ashton-under-Lyne on the North East corner of Greater Manchester just outside the M60 ring road. The college offers a full range of subjects from level 1-4, including A-levels and BTECs.

The area is served by a range of post -16 providers including a single sex girls' school, a single sex boys' school that accepts girls to the 6th form, a Further Education College and a Faith school with sixth form provision. Of these, the college is the largest provider of A-levels.

Whilst the College is situated within easy travelling distance of Manchester City local young people prefer to attend the college for their level 3 qualifications.

In the beginning

The Mentor team

Lisa Richards is the Assistant Principal for Student Services.

When writing the job description for the post of College Counsellor she took the opportunity to include in the responsibilities the development of a peer mentoring system for young people to support young people.

Soon after being appointed as student counsellor Claire Shaw met with the college Chaplain, and a personal tutor with mentoring experience, to pool college expertise on how such a system should operate and how it could be launched.

She says "We studied all the safeguarding rules and regulations to make sure that we were meeting every legal requirement. That led to a description of what mentors could and could not do and the sort of student who would be a successful mentor.
We advertised for students to come forward as prospective mentors in December 2008 and were delighted with the response. Our students are very caring and many were keen to be involved immediately.

A training programme was developed to cover all the essentials for a young person to act as mentor to another young person. The training began in January 2009, a twelve week programme delivered after college so real commitment was essential. All of the first group stayed the course and went on to be members of the mentor team."

The training experience

Samuel undertook the training in his first year and in now in his second year and an active member of the mentoring team.

He says, "I wanted to volunteer so I approached my tutor for her advice. She said that she thought I would be good as a mentor because I am friendly and outgoing and I would be confident when talking to tutors if I needed to act as an intermediary for a student or accompany them to a meeting."
The training was very good; we were in groups so we made close friends. We covered all the essentials such as confidentiality, when to refer to a higher authority, what to look for as well as to listen for, how to use gentle open questions to get to the root of the problem, and how to help the student to think of ways to resolve the problem with or without help. At the end we each did a presentation that was judged by a panel, following which, all of the Peer Mentors were presented with a certificate by the Principal who also gave a prize for the winner. We gained a college certificate and were given a tee-shirt with a peer mentoring logo on it so that we ware easily recognised by students who would like to talk to us.
We go to local schools to help school leavers with transition to the college and to have a friend from day one, and we have a site on the VLE with each of us saying what we found most difficult about coming to college!"

Organising the peer mentoring service

Claire, the college counsellor is responsible for the day-to-day running of the system. She has 14 trained mentors, a mix of 1st and 2nd year students,

Students can approach any mentor personally or by email if they want help and referrals also come from tutors or teachers. Claire is notified of each referral and takes care to match the student with an appropriate mentor, considering the personalities involved and the nature of the issue presented by the student. She says that this matching is essential to the success of the system and success will encourage further use of the mentoring service.

The meetings are arranged by the mentor and mentee and take place in either the Tutor Base or the Chaplaincy.

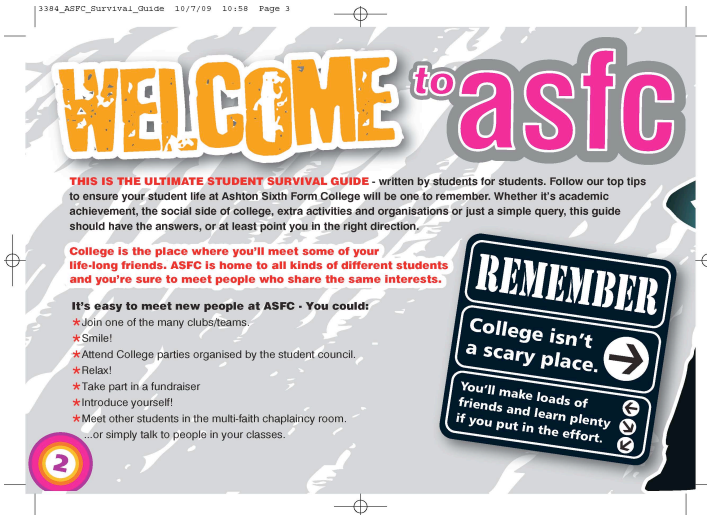
"These places are well used by all students and the Chaplaincy is particularly popular as a meeting place with Fair Trade coffee freely available and a lovely relaxed atmosphere. They are also safe places to meet with student services staff close at hand if needed. We stress that meetings must not take place outside college hours or off the college premises and the mentors understand that their own safety is as important as the safety of their mentees."

Samuel is aware of the need to maintain the protocols set for the service.

"Two mentees are available for an hour each Thursday lunchtime for students to drop in for a chat. We use our own judgement to decide that the meetings should move onto a more structured 1:1 pattern and at that point they must sign our contract. This says that we have explained what we can keep confidential and when we must break that confidentiality because we fear a risk of harm to themselves or someone else. The contract also says when we will refer to another senior person and what will happen after that. It is all very clear and there have not been any problems for mentors and mentees so far."

The mentors have written a Student Survival Guide

The Peer Mentors contributed their ideas to this 15 page guide, based on their own experience of starting at college and the worries and problems they encountered. Below are pages 2 and 5.



Film puts internet bullies in the frame

Excerpt taken from the Tameside Advertiser Newspaper

December 03, 2009

"STUDENTS at Ashton Sixth Form College showed that they say 'no' to bullying by making a special film.

The college's Peer Mentors made the film, which was shown during tutorials at the college during Anti-Bullying Week, to help people realise that bullying is wrong and help is available if you become a victim.

It includes interviews with students and staff about what it felt like when they were bullied when they were younger.

Students have also been discussing their views on cyber bullying – in particular text and social network sites – and what they would do if it happened to them or someone they knew.

The week ended with blue Friday where students showed support for the campaign by wearing blue - supporting the college's zero tolerance attitude to bullying".

Top

– Empowering young people to take control, manage risks and be safe

THE ENVIRONMENT

Manchester Council claims that "This free-spirited city demands your attention with a warm, no-nonsense welcome and a liberating open-mindedness that challenges you to take part". It offers the full range of leisure and learning activities for all age groups. The students say: "It is a good place to live with lots to do and some exciting places to go".

However, like most large cities, Manchester experiences levels of crime or disorder above the national average for England, and some neighbourhoods have to contend with particularly anti-social behaviour or gang activity on a regular basis.

Graham Hanifian, a senior coordinator within the College's 40-strong youth worker team explains:

"The students find ways of avoiding conflict. They choose their bus-to-college route to avoid stopping or changing at certain places which is sensible.
But some also say that they don't go out in the evenings, which is not good because they are missing out on an important part of growing up and meeting people.

We want to give them the freedom to choose their lifestyle and not have it forced upon them by real or perceived threats.'

The College Values

The two colleges that merged in August 2008 to form The Manchester College were the former MANCAT and City College, graded as 'outstanding' and 'good' at their last Ofsted Inspections.

There are over 7,000 16-18 year olds at the college, following a wide range of courses from pre-entry level to level three (including the new Diplomas).

The 25 campuses serve all of Manchester's communities and students can choose to study locally or at a campus across the city.

The Manchester College's safeguarding strategy includes preparing learners for autonomy and self-efficacy in order to manage and improve their own lives and future. The College is convinced that whilst learners do need to learn how to deal with specific dangers or threats, they also need to develop their skills in thinking independently and in positive ways to enhance their safety and well-being in all situations.

The college strategy therefore aims to develop young people's self-awareness and self-esteem. Allied to this are practical 'tools' to enable students to manage themselves and situations in ways that avoid or defuse potential conflict and maximise constructive outcomes.

The Programmes

Two key programmes are used to deliver this aspect of the safeguarding strategy: PX2 and PEARL. These can be delivered separately from one another or together for a recognised qualification.

PX2

PX2 (formerly 'Breakthrough') is the Seattle-based, Pacific Institute's motivational vehicle, aimed at young people. The programme operates on the basis that everyone has tremendous but underutilised potential. It consists of a series of key concepts, used as tools for self-awareness and constructive thinking, presented in 12 modules. The concepts are drawn from a wide range of sources both classical and modern, and include ideas such as 'scotomas' or 'blind spots', the power of the sub-conscious, cognitive dissonance, comfort zones, habits and attitudes, the mind's reticular activating system, self-talk, goals and affirmations, and many others – but all delivered using language and hands-on activities that are attractive and accessible to learners of all abilities!

Typically delivered either in tutorials, during themed weeks or via residentials, the modules encourage young learners to reflect on their aspirations and seek out positive opportunities to maximise their potential and life chances. The College has been delivering the programme for several years and receives very positive feedback from learners and staff.

Trisha Petal, an Art and Design student, says that the programme: 'made me think about things a different way …it will help me think about the way I do my course work.... it was fun'. Henar Heresh loved the activities. She found it 'interesting to learn about how the brain works' and Husnah Anwar said 'it made me think about things in a positive way'. A Construction student found it 'life-changing' as he saw that: 'the power to change things is in my own hands, not just in other people's'.

PEARL

PEARL provides an innovative accreditation framework based on graded, 'performance assessment' similar to that used in examining dance or playing the piano. In the module on 'Social and Personal Development', learners develop skills in the five 'constructs' of self-awareness, empathy, motivation, managing feelings and social skills, observed by their tutors who are trained as 'involved assessors'. This skills development is embedded in learners' vocational programmes or tutorials (and can be used to wrap around PX2 also) to provide a QCA recognised qualification. Over 4,000 learners have piloted the qualification with a marked impact on their attitudes and achievement. The personal and social skills developed have a wide application – not just helping to safeguard learners in their relationships as peers, but also with strangers in the workplace and often in the home, too.

As Dana* says, 'PEARL helps me to avoid getting into rows with my family and we get on much better now'. Learners on a NEET-prevention course using PEARL, allied to sports activities, made remarkable strides in self-control and conflict avoidance strategies – becoming confident of how to act or react in situations they previously felt they had no way to deal with safely.

NB * not her real name, unlike the others quoted where permission has been given to publish these

TRAVEL TRAINING

One of the safeguarding issues identified by all learners was their confidence in being able to travel safely. Vulnerable adults welcome the independence they gain from the PEARL programme so the College has developed a SAFE TRAVEL TRAINING card to help them use public transport safely and with confidence.

Key (d) directed P (prompted) (i)independently	Date					
Have all items ready						
Leave College at correct time						
Walk to bus stop						
Flag down/ catch bus						
Show bus pass						
Get off bus at correct stop						
Walk to Princess Street bus stop						
Use pedestrian crossings						
Flag down/ catch bus						
Show bus pass						
Get off at correct bus stop						
Use pedestrian crossing						
Arrive at home						
Additional comments						
Communication with others						
Personal safety						
Dealing with any problems						

Jack Carney, Senior Vice-Principal and the Senior Designated Person for safeguarding at TMC, explains the college's approach in this way.

'Virtually everything that the college does is designed to 'safeguard' our learners as the Local Safeguarding Children's Board describes this in terms of:

- prevention of and protection from harm
- the provision of safe and effective care
- Preparing learners for successful adulthood.'

Our learners are safeguarded through a powerful combination of support, on the one hand, and challenge, on the other.

The challenge is manifested in the expectations we place upon them to develop personally and socially to become responsible adults, capable of caring for themselves and others in turn.'

Top

BLACKPOOL AND THE FYLDE COLLEGE
An Associate College of Lancaster University

- Learners leading safeguarding and anti-bullying policies

The Environment

The town of Blackpool runs along the north west coast of England onto the Irish Sea. It lies 40 miles north-west of the city of Manchester and less than 30 miles north of Liverpool. Blackpool is the fourth most densely populated local authority district of England & Wales outside Greater London. The population is predominantly white [98.4%] with 25% of the population being 65 or older.

The Blackpool Health Profile for 2007 published by the Department for Health reveals that of the 26 health indicators for Blackpool, two are better whilst 20 are worse than the England average.

- The death rate from smoking is higher than the North West and England averages
- The rate of people claiming sickness benefit because of mental health problems is higher than the North West and England average.
- The rate of hospital admission for alcohol specific conditions is above the England average.
- Teenage pregnancy rate is high compared to the North West and England averages and is the third highest in England.

The biggest contributor to Blackpool's increasing population is migration from within England, with approximately 700 net gain in population expected per year.

Blackpool has a relatively small minority ethnic population compared with England and Wales (3% compared to 11%) Blackpool experiences considerable levels of disadvantage, and in 2007 ranked as the 12th most deprived of 354 local authorities in England. 41 out of 94 small areas within Blackpool are amongst the 20% most deprived areas of the country and there are no areas amongst the 20% most affluent. Blackpool's relative position in the national deprivation rankings has worsened over the last 5 years.

Blackpool had a greater proportion of people in Mosaic Group D than England and Wales, accounting for over 46% of Blackpool households in comparison to 16% in the UK overall. Typical features of this group are single adults, low income families with young children, families on modest incomes, and older people preferring to live in familiar surroundings.

Supporting College Learners

The College has developed a comprehensive tutorial support system with well coordinated links to its learning support, student services and other 'mentoring' provision. There are teams of Inclusive, Higher Education and Specialist Learning Mentors to support learners in identifying and overcoming the full range of barriers to learning and achieving their life plans. The learning mentors are available for students throughout the learning day. They maintain a constant presence in all social and circulation areas of the College; keep watch on learner attitudes and behaviours and work as a close-knit team to share their concerns and solutions.

Gerry Gregoire is training to be a youth worker and is a specialist learning mentor at the college.
"We deal with everything that young people need help with including homelessness, drugs, drink, sexual health and well being, debt, health, family breakdown and social exclusion.
We run outreach for young people giving cause for concern. This involves speaking with parents when a learner has left home, maybe been kicked out, because of arguments. We try to mediate and find a mutually acceptable resolution but if that isn't possible we have to help the young person live independently in safety. This is usually in a hostel or accommodation provided by the local authority.
Yes there is a surprisingly high number of youngsters today who do not live with their family and there are a variety of threats and dangers they face because of that.

Anti-bullying practice so far

The various learning mentor teams identified that providing information about how to tackle potential "bullying" in all its forms as an important topic for learners. To coincide with National Anti Bullying Week, the College focus in the Autumn Term is 'No Disrespect Week' was on cyber safety. Bullying can create barriers to attendance and achievement and prevent learners from participating fully in College activities. Having strategies to cope with bullying inside or outside College, in the present and the future, will help the learners to feel and be safer. The College has policies and procedures in place but the mentors also provide sessions in tutor groups and by request in response to local or national events or issues. Currently there is a cross college competition within the current campaign against bullying, related to College's No Disrespect Week. This focuses on coping strategies and emotional responses to bullying, to help learners feel safe in and out of College.

The College has a very active Students Union and has developed an ethos of student participation and involvement in all matters related to their safety, security and wellbeing. The students have been involved in the development of Anti-bullying strategies, giving information on where, how and why bullying starts and how it might be stopped before it becomes a real problem. A group developed a RAP style DVD about a young girl who was bullied until "she commits suicide". This is used in tutorials, with a DVD called "who are you to judge me" and materials from the anti-bullying alliance, to discuss bullying openly and to ensure that both those who are bullied and those who bully know that help is at hand. This includes harassment and bullying by individuals or groups from outside the college. Strategies such as peer support or travelling around in groups are arranged. The initiative has been adopted nationally by many other Colleges and won a Diana Award in 2009 presented by Esther Rantzen, in London, to the learners involved in recording and promoting the DVD.

Gerry Gregoire is collating student views to inform Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy. He says, "One of the most important things to establish is an understanding of what is bullying and what is not, and how something minor can escalate into bullying. Our students are perfectly free to choose their friends, who they want to spend their time with and who they prefer to work with in and out of class. "They won't let me join in", "she doesn't walk to College with me any more" may be upsetting but it probably isn't bullying, just a change in personal choice. So we need to develop a clear definition of the different levels of bullying within our updated Harassment and Anti-bullying Policy. The Policy also needs to include more and more on cyber safety and the issues of bullying on the internet – which is a national issue that learners are very aware of." This in turn feeds into our Safeguarding policies and procedures."

The Blackpool and Fylde College Student Forum

The College Student Forum is a highly effective mechanism for obtaining student feedback, for responding to students about how college management has responded to that feedback, and to gain their involvement in initiatives and developments. Each course or programme has an elected course rep, a role that is taken very seriously by the students. The Forum is held once each term in a large area in the centre of two sites, with generous refreshments provided for all. It is attended by Senior Managers, the Chairman of the Governors, all college reps, and other invitees with a contribution to make to the discussions on the Agenda. The Agenda is agreed well in advance to give reps the opportunity to canvas the views of those they represent and for tutors to include the college forum agenda in the tutorial programme to ensure that course reps have their full support.

Whilst the Student Forum is organised and administered by the Student Support and Guidance Services including the Learning Mentor Team, the Student Union Executive take a leading role in deciding the Agenda, ensuring that the course reps attend, and organising the table carousel during discussion time. They include students from the 14-19 age group who show great maturity and commitment to their role. They will be heavily involved in the development of the Safeguarding policy and processes along with the students who have volunteered to be on the Safeguarding Development Committee. The team will use the well established College Forum and the Students Union to ensure that Anti-Bullying and Harassment are a major part of the general College Safeguarding approach and that this is developed to identify all learner issues and ways of dealing with those issues that students and staff believe will be effective and enduring.

The Student Services Manager can quote many examples of the success of the Forum.

"At the last forum students said they felt unsafe on some of the local buses. Now we have some HE students who travel on those buses and report back to us about what is going on and what might be required to stop it. Many of our students travel from the most deprived parts of Blackpool and we need to ensure they are safe.
This year the bus company cut one of our important bus connections and wouldn't re-instate it however hard we argued. This meant learners having to walk along roads with little or no footpath and areas which were not safe in the dark. Immediately we funded and put on our own bus morning and evening called the Number 72 which is really well used. Feedback is very positive."

The Safeguarding Development Committee

The college already has 4 volunteers to serve on the committee from the HE student group. At the Forum the opportunity to contribute was explained to the 14-19 year olds and they were invited to volunteer to help. The students showed real enthusiasm. Volunteers gave good reasons for wanting to be part of it.

D said, "My Mum died 2 years ago and I was really on my own with nowhere to live. The College found me space in a hostel and have helped with finance and everything. I REALLY want to be on the committee because I know how it feels to be scared and on your own and what you need to feel safe. I want to help the college get it right for others like me."

J said, "Blackpool seems pretty safe but the buses aren't reliable and are really expensive so sometimes we have to walk. Late night travel can be scary and intimidating for young and old. The student survey shows that students feel safe in College but I want to make sure that our policies go wider than that and teach students how to be safe out of college as well, particularly in the home where lots of students are in conflict situations."

C said, "Blackpool has the highest number of male suicides, of drug offences, of teenage pregnancies, and of young lesbian/gay/bisexual/transsexuals. There must be something that we can do to help students who are so desperate that they will kill themselves!"

M said, "I have an SU role as the LGBTQ rep but I want to be on the Committee to ensure that EVERYONE feels free to be themselves without being criticised, bullied, excluded or isolated. The College anti-bullying policy works very well and there aren't any reports of homophobic bullying. We hold a transgender awareness week but there is a lot more we can do to value people for being individuals and to accept their personal decisions whatever they are."

K said, "The College holds 'No Disrespect Week' and we have Stay Safe in Cyberspace. We log internet traffic but there has only been one time in 15years when the log has been used. Routine policing and some exception scrutiny are used but we ensure it all complies with the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act and so this is routinely happening in the background. We know Cyber Space can be a dangerous place and have lots of alerts near the computers."

K said, "The College is brilliant at student involvement especially things like this Forum. It makes us want to be involved in making things even better, not just for ourselves but for the young students who will join us next year and the year after. It isn't always easy being a student and lots get into trouble of some sort or another so the more we can do the better."

Top

SOUTH EAST DERBYSHIRE COLLEGE

- A safeguarding report

Safeguarding Report

Research was undertaken with 18 tutor groups across the curriculum areas at Field Road, ranging from Adult Access (vulnerable adults with learning difficulties) to Level 3 Year 2.

The session was introduced by asking what the young people understood by the term "safeguarding"; very few of the groups could come up with a definition of the term particularly in relation to their age group. The following definition was given to the students:

"Safeguarding is how we help young people and vulnerable adults to feel and to be physically safe and emotionally safe, and how we respond when they have been harmed."

Students were then asked to work in small groups and were given a set of scenarios relating to threats and dangers they might have to deal with. The scenarios were in four sections:

- Other learners on your course of study
- Other learners in the college
- Staff within the college
- Other young people and adults

The threats to safety were then categorised into the environments that young people learn and live in as follows:

- Within lessons and other curriculum activities
- Within college services and activities
- Within home, social and leisure life

They were asked to rate the threats as:

- Red = I think this is a danger fro me and I don't know how to deal with it.
- Amber = I think this is a danger for me and I do know how to deal with it.
- Green = I think that this is not a danger for me.

The results show that on the whole students generally feel safer with their peer group than they do with adults and other young people outside of college. Also the majority of students feel that sexist, racist, homophobic and ethnicity bullying is totally unacceptable and would consider it to be a threat to safety if it happened to them.

The results indicate that students would feel it a threat to their safety if the staff were unwilling or unable to help them if they were in any danger, although when questioned on this most of the groups felt that they would speak to their tutor or Student Services if their safety was in danger.

Most groups were not aware that the college has to have a Child Protection Officer or who that person was. In addition to this concerns were raised by students when told that the Child Protection Officer has to refer some cases to Social Services – there seemed to be an air of distrust / misconception about Social Services breaking up families if this were to happen.

On the whole students felt generally safe around the college and did not feel the need for additional security or CCTV cameras, although some felt that it was quite dark around the main gate when they left college at night.

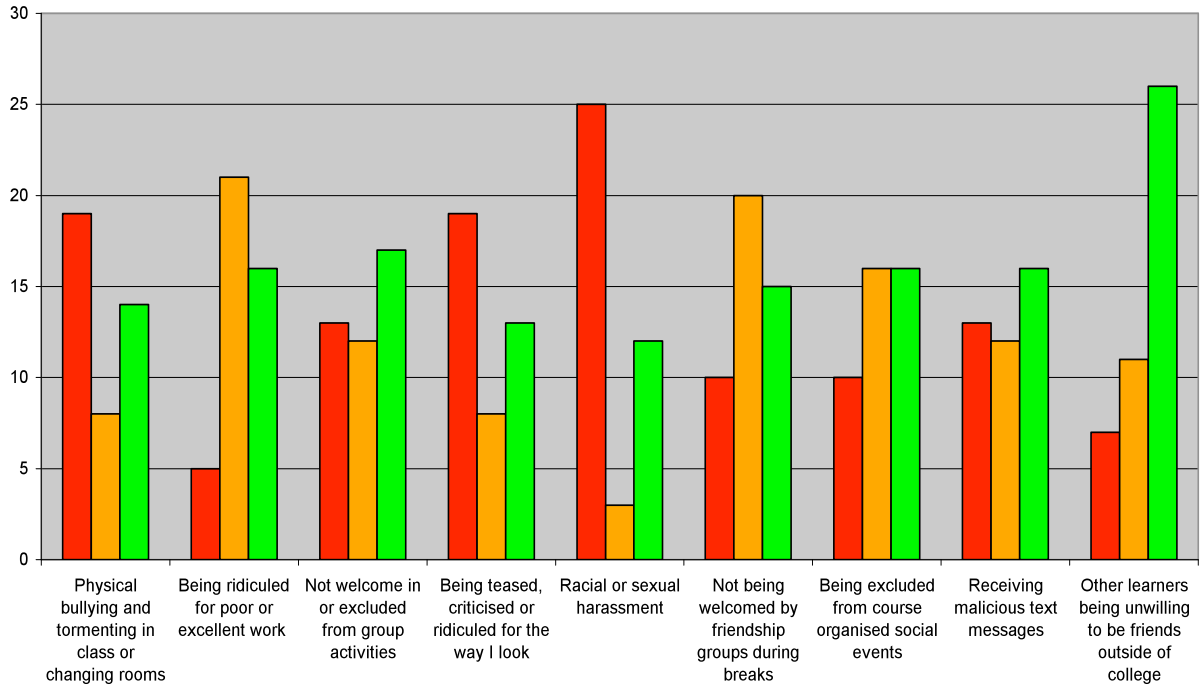
Some students felt that some bullying did go on around the site that was not seen by staff and that it went unreported as the students felt that it would become worse. Most students felt that they would prefer to report bullying to another student rather

than staff in the first instance. There was also some challenge by the students about how bullying was tackled by staff and that involving staff usually made the situation worse. These opinions were a reflection of experiences at school rather than college.

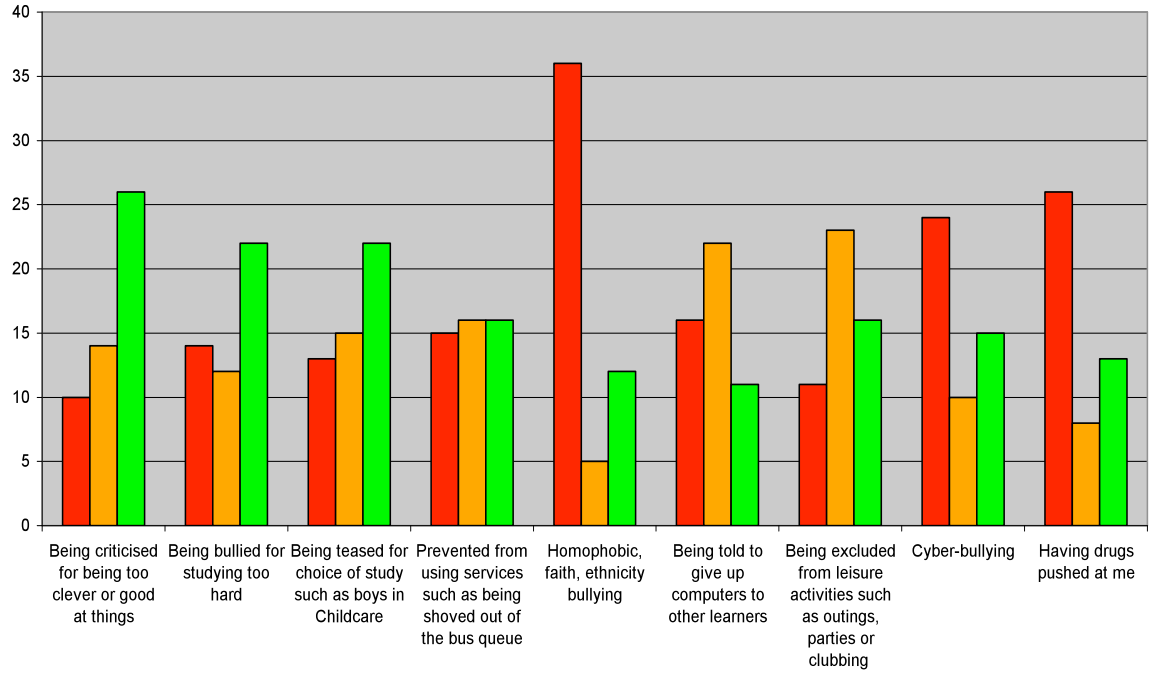
Recommendations from the research:

- More information about safeguarding (leaflet to be distributed) including why it's important to speak to someone about their personal safety.
- Outside speakers such as police on personal safety, antisocial behaviour etc invited into college during awareness raising events.
- Tutorial sessions on sexist, racist, homophobic, ethnicity bullying plus raising awareness on Equality and Diversity issues - ongoing.
- Specific safeguarding tutorial – covering similar issues to staff safeguarding / child protection session.
- Trained Peer Mentors available for drop in over lunchtimes for students to discuss bullying issues (etc)

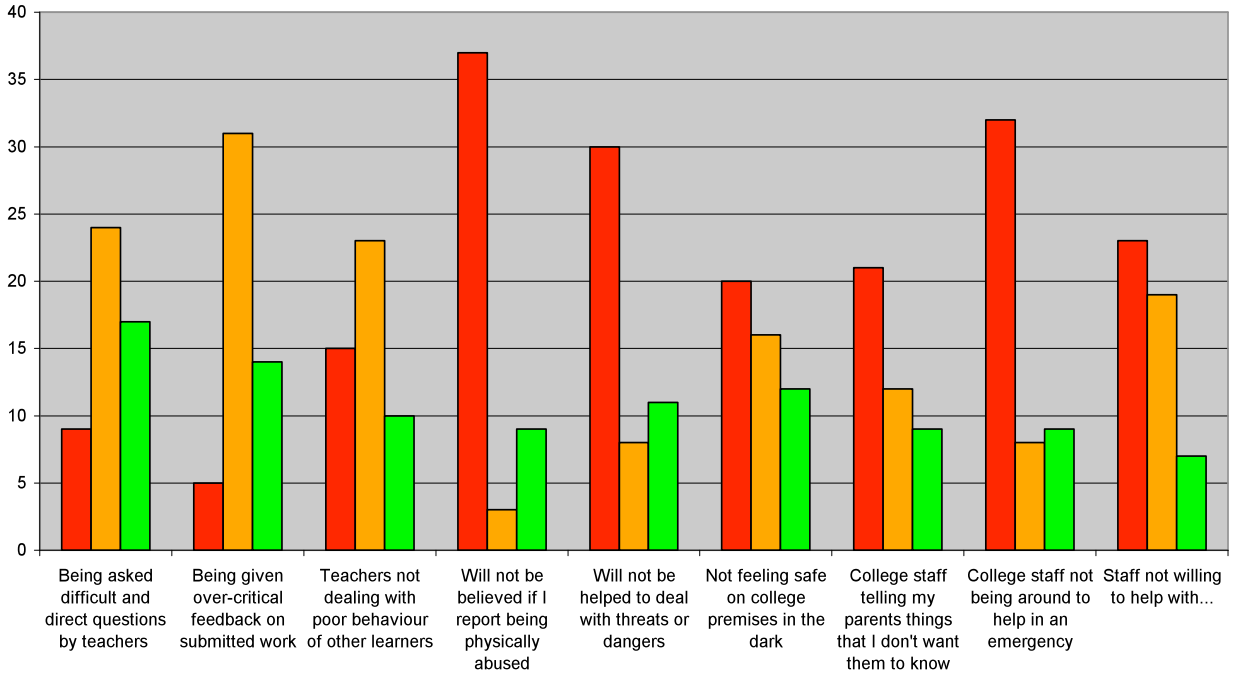
Threats to safety from other learners on my course



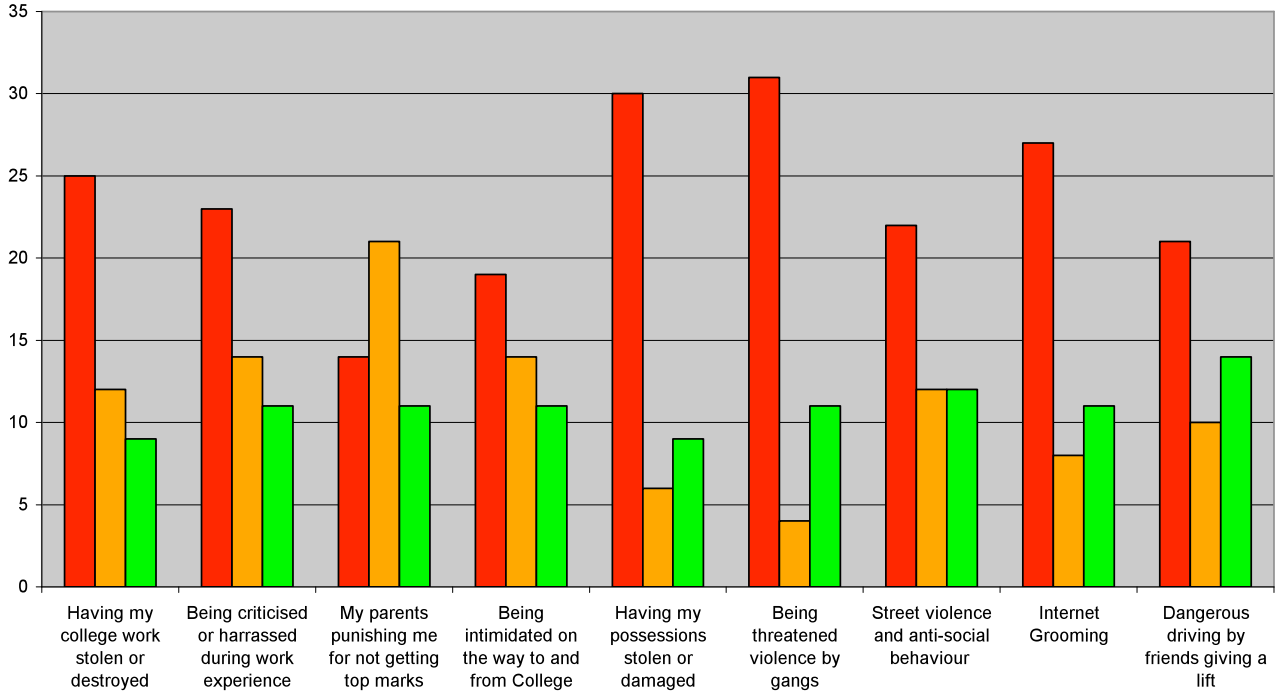
Threats to safety from other college learners



Threats to safety from College staff



Threats to safety from other young people or adults



Top

HARLOW COLLEGE

-Identifying and responding to learner views

The new team

Pauline Leggett was appointed to the post of Head of Student Support in August 2009. Having worked in the learning support team for some years Pauline was not new to the College but she was new to the safeguarding role

The safeguarding provision in the college was being reviewed in light of the expectations expressed in the Inspection Framework for 2009 and the safeguarding team were looking for opportunities to improve provision.

Steve Devine is the Student Services Liaison Manager and was also a new appointment in August 2009. His role is to assist in developing a rapid response to the safeguarding agenda, including assisting with staff training, and to be available to support staff or students with any safeguarding issue.

Pauline and Steve now work with a 6 strong safeguarding team, responsible to an Assistant Vice Principal who is the college designated lead for safeguarding.

Working with the Safeguarding Team, Pauline and Steve decided that the starting point should be to consult the students to discover what threats and dangers they identified and how the college should prioritise and respond to these concerns.

The issues identified by the students

In October a message via NAMSS JISC-MAIL invited colleges to participate in a "learner voice" activity based on a tutorial exercise designed for students to identify their safeguarding issues. This seemed to be exactly what Pauline and Steve were looking for and they responded with a request for the materials.

"The notice from NAMSS was just the right thing at just the right time because it gave us a starting point.

We thought it best to trial the materials to ensure they were right for our students so we ran a pilot with the 2nd Year National Diploma Sport group. The materials were differentiated to be appropriate for the group and resulted in very interesting and stimulating discussion.

The feedback from both tutors and students on the exercise was very positive."

Having demonstrated that the materials were effective the Safeguarding Team decided to use the 3 most effective tasks with all students across campus; students with learning difficulties and disabilities used a similar task based on debate and a coloured card exercise.

The issues identified by the tutorial task.

The trial with the pilot group identified that there was tacit student acknowledgement that "bullying happens everywhere" and that there was an acceptance of verbal jokes and jibes which constituted low level harassment, racial abuse, and homophobic bullying. The staff had not been aware of this and were horrified that the students would consider this to be a normal part of life that has to be accepted, and that there is nothing they can do about it.

The Safeguarding Team developed a tutorial session to be included as one of the compulsory elements of the tutorial programme. The team used the safeguarding task in this tutorial, which was delivered to all groups before National Anti-bullying Week; the results of the survey were used to inform the structure and content of the college Anti-bullying Week programme. The result was a structured campaign focused on a **"Do the Right Thing - Report It"** slogan carrying the strong message that dealing with bullying is everybody's responsibility and that the expectation of Harlow College is that everyone will take responsibility for reporting bullying; it is better to report a suspicion that proves to be unfounded than not to report a suspicion that proves to be correct.

The college produced a film focusing on as many different nationalities, cultures, religions, ages and races as possible giving the message that the college is a very diverse community and that everyone deserves their individuality and choice to be respected. The activities during the week were designed to raise everyone's awareness of all forms of bullying, of the signs that someone is being bullied or abused and that the right response is to **"Report It"**, not to tolerate it. Ongoing activities include training for staff in giving support to students reporting bullying incidents, how to react, what to say, and what to do next.

The College has a confidential reporting button on the VLE that goes directly to the safeguarding team, and has developed a user friendly poster which is displayed in corridors, the toilets, the staff rooms, in fact everywhere there are students or staff. All students have a credit-card sized card detailing the contact numbers of the safeguarding team, and an A5 flyer has been produced for parents explaining the college safeguarding procedures.

Dealing with Homophobic Bullying

In response to the homophobic bullying identified as an issue by the tutorial task the college has made contact with the Action for Men co-ordinator working for the local PCT. He focuses on all matters related to male sexual health using the slogan "Supporting great sex that is safe sex". His work with the college will cover sexually transmitted diseases including HIV and how to adopt safe sexual practices, but the main context will be discussing homophobic bullying with student groups.

Pauline says, "He has such a wide knowledge of the subject, so many experiences to call on and such a good understanding of the results of homophobic bullying that I know he is the right person to work with our students".

His message is that any sort of joke, jibe or bullying is distressing for gay young men who are still trying to find their place in society; that they can lead to such disastrous levels of despair that some young men become chronically depressed or suicidal. His task is to ensure that students understand how destructive such comments are and to give them the tools to challenge any homophobic bullying they experience themselves, or observe being aimed at others.

Whole staff training is planned so that everyone can feel confident about challenging homophobic bullying whenever and wherever it may occur.

Positive Outcomes

Pauline says, "We have made good progress so far.

Level 1 safeguarding training was delivered to all teaching staff, managers and other key staff members during a college staff development day. Members of the Safeguarding Team have either undergone Level 2 training or arrangements are in place for them to do so in the near future. This has raised staff awareness of safeguarding issues and their confidence in knowing how to respond and who to contact. We have told them to bring the problem to us and we will deal with it, which takes the pressure off them.

The tutorial exercise has proved to be a very effective way of debating safeguarding issues with students and staff, and identifying how safe students feel and what safeguarding issues need to be addressed as a priority".

Pauline has evidence that the work of the safeguarding team is being effective.

"During the internal audit of Visual Arts against the college Key Performance Indicators I was told that the tutorial task had shown that their students were not as comfortable in the central college social areas as in their own base.

As a result the staff have opened and staffed the base rooms during the lunch break so that the students can stay in the comfort of familiar territory. What is important is that the students not only are safeguarded but that they feel safe on campus at all times.

Top

-County wide collaborative training

The College

Lincoln College has campuses in Lincoln, Gainsborough and in Newark. This means that the college responds to both Lincolnshire County Council and Nottinghamshire County Council, doubling the number of relationships that have to be built and maintained.
This is particularly so for all services for children, young people and vulnerable adults. For Barbra Plunkett, Director of Student Services, this means working with 2 Local Education Authorities, 2 Local Safeguarding Children Boards, 2 Social Service Teams and several Primary Care Trusts.

Barbra says, "When the new Inspection Framework was issued saying that all staff had to be trained to level 2 in Safeguarding, I discussed the task with the Lincolnshire Local Safeguarding Children Board. We did not want a multi-disciplinary course talking about children. What we wanted was a safeguarding course focused on the 16-18 age group, one that would help us to gain an accurate understanding of the threats and dangers in their lives and give them the tools to deal with safeguarding issues throughout their lives."

Barbra knew of an appropriate trainer who had worked with the LSCB, and gained agreement from Grantham College, New College Stamford, and the University of Lincoln for a joint course to be delivered over 4 days, covering issues specific to the FE and HE provider and tailored to meet the needs of the Designated Safeguarding Officers and the Senior Manager for each provider.

The Environment

Lincolnshire is a rural county with a strong history of agriculture and food production. The population was very strongly white British but this has changed rapidly in recent years.
A steep increase in the number of migrant workers and other factors following the opening of the University has changed the ethnicity of the county significantly and this has brought its own safeguarding issues.

Barbra is the PREVENT lead for FE Colleges and HEIs for the county.

She says, "PREVENT is the Government agenda to stop violent extremism. It is linked to local partners' wider work to create and support social cohesion, resilience and empowered local communities.

I know that this newly diverse nature of our county is a potential threat and danger for many of our students. They are often not knowledgeable or understanding about different races, religions, lifestyles and traditions of other cultures and they have many misconceptions about them.

This could cause local tensions expressed in behaviour and ill feeling that could lead to a student being in a very vulnerable position.
Therefore our safeguarding policy has to include an educational experience that prepares our students properly for living and working in a multicultural society."

The Training Programme

Those delegates for whom the course was designed had asked that it covered the Inspection requirements but that the focus should be the wider responsibility of safeguarding. This must include the 14-16 years olds from local schools, work-based learners, those following E2E programmes and those who learn remotely. One of the strands had to be strategies to empower all young people to take responsibility for managing their own safe behaviours and reactions whilst ensuring that parents, carers and other nominated stakeholders were informed and involved in this empowerment.

The aims of the agreed programme are to help participants to update and build on their knowledge and skills with regard to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The programme looks beyond the child protection elements and incorporates how colleges and staff can develop-

1. A culture within their establishment of empowering young people to make safer decisions about their own lifestyle
2. A culture of safety for young people to disclose events that put them at risk and to disclose when they feel they may be in danger of causing harm
3. An understanding of the wider remit of joint working with partner agencies, sharing information and contributing to interventions to safeguard young people.

Barbra says, "There were 10 of us at the training. We agreed to complete confidentiality agreements so that issues could be discussed openly and we could test the response we made to those issues with others in the field and hear other solutions that may work better.

We wanted to include debate about Equality and Diversity issues, the new Independent Safeguarding Authority and best practice around support and disciplinary policies to ensure staff and students are clear about what can and cannot be tolerated."

The programme covered all aspects of safeguarding in great detail and included anonymous real-life case studies from a range of scenarios applicable across the FE spectrum. One college had very recent experience of the inspection process and this allowed delegates to answer some of the burning questions and to clarify the rumours and confusions. The delegates are planning to organise a peer support system within the confidentiality agreement to enable scenario and solution testing with other colleagues able to listen and support.

"This training is another link in the collaborative partnership of providers in Lincolnshire and will give a Lincolnshire wide approach to Safeguarding so that our young people receive the same service and work to the same rules wherever they study."

Training for those working with students beyond the college campus

The college has working relationships with a range of providers of other services. This includes employers offering work experience placements, those engaging apprentices and those supporting care leavers and other independent students, and parents and carers.

The college identified that they needed to heighten the awareness of all these partners and have designed a leaflet that is sent to all partners engaging with college learners. An extract from this leaflet is reproduced below.

Bullying, harassment and safeguarding of Lincoln College students

Duties of employers, work placement providers and partners
All employers, work placement providers, partners, staff, students, visitors and contractors have a responsibility to make sure that students from Lincoln College are in a learning environment or workplace which is free from harassment and bullying and where students' welfare is safeguarded. The college has policies and procedures in place to help eliminate bullying and harassment and to safeguard our students as this forms part of our duty of care.
In education and employment, harassment may be against the law. There are several laws which involve harassment- Race Relations Act 1976, Sex Discrimination Act 1975, Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1995, Disability Discrimination Act 1995, Protection from Harassment Act 1997, and others. Students under 18 and vulnerable adults are also protected by the 2004 Children Act and how we discharge our responsibilities is inspected by Ofsted.

What is duty of care?
We would like to make employers, work-placement providers and partners aware of what support is available from the college for you and our students as part of our duty of care. It is important that if a student who is under 18 or vulnerable (because they have a disability or learning difficulty) makes a disclosure to you or you feel that they are at risk of harm or abuse, you must contact the college as soon as possible for advice.

What does the college do to support students?
The Safeguarding Officers are responsible for training staff, college partners and stakeholders in our legal duty of care and for dealing with the support of students who are at risk or have been abused. The Safeguarding Officers work with other agencies to support at risk students.
The Bullying and Harassment Support Group meet with individuals and discuss any worries or issues that they have relating to bullying and harassment in college. The College has a zero tolerance policy on bullying and we take allegations of bullying and harassment very seriously and do our best to help individuals resolve these matters.
We advise our staff not to give students their personal email address or phone number and to ensure that their relationships with students are professional at all times. It would be helpful if you could ensure that your staff are aware of this too.

What is the Bullying and Harassment Support Group?
If a student discloses that they are experiencing bullying and harassment or say that they have any worries or concerns about bullying, you can refer them to the college's Bullying and Harassment Support Group for information and support. The Support Group are volunteers working at Lincoln College who provide guidance and support for people, both staff and students, who are suffering from bullying or harassment. It is made up of teaching and support staff working across the three sites that are united by a wish to ensure that the time spent at Lincoln College is a happy and safe one for all staff and students.

Who do I contact?
The Safeguarding Officers are Barbra Plunkett and Oliver Bostock on 01522 876220. You can call or email bplunkett@lincolncollege.ac.uk or obostock@lincolncollege.ac.uk. All contacts will be treated confidentially.

Top

– Safeguarding in residential accommodation

Accommodation of students under eighteen by further education colleges: National Minimum Standards, Inspection Regulations

These are published by the Department of Health and identify the minimum standards to safeguard and promote the welfare of young people under 18 for whom accommodation is provided or arranged by a FE college.

They apply to all colleges within the FE sector unless they are care homes. *[A 'mainstream" FE college accommodating students with disabilities will not be a care home unless more than 10% of its students who are accommodated are provided with personal or nursing care.]*

The standards also apply to any schools where all the students accommodated are aged 16 or over.

The five main areas covered by the standards are;

- welfare policies and procedures
- organisation and management
- welfare support
- staffing
- premises

These standards are minimum standards below which no FE College accommodating under 18s is expected to fall in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of their residents.

The Environment

Loughborough College is a large college of Further Education offering a wide range of courses and qualifications from Entry level to level 4.

The college is set within a wide educational campus area on the edge of the town of Loughborough. The campus also includes, Loughborough University and RNIB (Royal National Institute for the Blind) College Loughborough.

The college offers accommodation to student's aged 16 to 18 and to older students, an offer that enables learners from a wide geographical area to attend courses at the college.

The Accommodation Service Team Leader is Cheryl Darnell who says, "Students choose to be residents for all sorts of reasons.

Some come to us from boarding schools where they have been used to studying away from home and wish, or need, to continue their further education in the same way.

Others want to follow a qualification that we offer and which they cannot access near to their home. This is particularly true for students wanting to follow sports courses associated with Loughborough's excellent facilities.

We also accommodate international students who attend a range of courses."

The Accommodation

At the start of the 2009/10 academic year there were 30 students aged 16-18 in residential accommodation. They are housed in a block specific to the under 18s, each with a single room with a lockable door. The rooms are grouped as flats, six rooms to a flat, sharing central service such as kitchen and social areas. These blocks have extra rules specific to the under 18s such as no overnight guests except close relatives, no alcohol and they must be in the building by 11.30 p.m.

Cheryl says, "We normally accommodate all the under 18s in one block. If they have a really good reason to live in another block, such as to be near a friend or relative, we sometimes agree if they have their parent's permission. Occasionally we have more under 18s than the block will hold, in which case we prefer the older ones to be accommodated in another block, where they still have to obey the rules for those under 18 until they turn 18. Each case is treated individually because we prefer to find the right solution for the student than for them to decide not to come to study at the college."

The college interviews all potential residents before they join the college, with their parents or carer, to ensure that all parties understand and agree with the rules and regulations, are confident that the student will be safe, know what freedoms are, and are not allowed, and for what reasons contact with the parent or carer will be made. The students are expected to sign in and sign out as they use the block and are told to take care not to let others "tailgate" them into the building. There are posters everywhere reminding students to lock doors and to report any strangers within or outside the building.

The general expectation is that under 18s will go home for the weekends. If they wish to stay the college requires a reason and their parent's or carer's consent.

"The only people allowed to stay in the student's room are their parents or carers, and close relatives who can visit at any time. They can be let in by the student and are allowed in their rooms. The student can ask for another meeting room if they wish and this request is always met. If a student had a problem, or if a problem was suspected, this meeting room would be somewhere with staff close at hand."

Hall Wardens

The campus is constantly patrolled by the duty wardens who have a "round" system collecting and delivering post, checking H&S, chatting to and listening to students and generally being around and about. They have an emergency contact number and are backed up by the duty Senior Manager if needed. They have key access to all accommodation blocks and all flats and rooms. The wardens are fully aware of each residential student, who should and who should not be in the buildings.

Cheryl is confident that, "The wardens know who is around and when they are expected to return to the halls. They keep this close observance very low key as there is a fine line to be drawn between care and intrusion as this is the student's home. However, the wardens would raise the alarm if anyone was missing or exceptionally late back. We stress that it is better to raise false alarms than not to raise a real one."

The wardens complete a log as they reach the end of their shift detailing everything that the new shift warden needs to know about including new issues that have been dealt with or may need further attention. There is a physical handover at shift change to ensure that the new shift wardens have read the log and asked any questions that they may have.

A "daily matters" news sheet is made during the daytime of all tasks being undertaken by wardens so they are aware of any situation that is being monitored, any particular issues related to residents or any ongoing activities that they need to take over from the staff on duty during the day.

Staying safe and managing risk

The college has a robust risk management system, which covers the residential accommodation. The Accommodation Service staff are experienced in dealing with young people living away from home and are confident that they have covered all the risks associated with safeguarding. They see the wardens as their eyes and ears around the clock, and other regular staff such as cleaners and maintenance teams as a strong backup. All staff working in the residential blocks are charged with reporting any suspicious behaviour, any changes in behaviour patterns, any suspicions about the use of alcohol or drugs, and any personal or social issues they perceive. These staff have a dedicated Safeguarding phone number to call if they suspect anyone of being abused.

Cheryl has built a good relationship with the local police and the beat officers regularly visit the campus to check that all is well. "Their visits are invaluable as they show the residents that any inappropriate behaviour may be seen and dealt with and also demonstrate to any strangers and passers by that this is a secure campus. The beat officers are there if support is needed but equally importantly as a deterrent to anyone misbehaving or with ill-intentions."

Residential students are encouraged to contribute to the safeguarding developments and to give feedback and comment regularly. Students say they feel safe and that there are good relationships with staff which makes them feel secure and well cared for, and also gives them someone they feel confident in talking to if they had a concern.

Extracts from the National Minimum Standards

- Students are protected from bullying and harassment.(NMS 2)
- Students are protected from abuse.(NMS 3)
- The use of discipline with students is fair and appropriate.(NMS 4)
- Students' complaints are adequately responded to.(NMS 5)
- Students are protected from the risk of fire.(NMS 24)
- The welfare of any young people accommodated by the college other than its own students is safeguarded and promoted. (NMS 26)
- Students' safety and welfare are protected during high risk activities.(NMS 27)
- Students' personal privacy is respected.(NMS 33)
- There is careful selection and vetting of all staff and volunteers working with residential students.(NMS 34)
- Students are protected from unsupervised contact with adults who have not been, subject to the college's complete recruitment checking procedures.(NMS 35)
- Students have their own living accommodation, secure from public intrusion.(NMS 37)
- Any security or surveillance measures provide security to protect students without compromising their privacy.(NMS 38)
- Students are given reasonable protection from safety hazards.(NMS 42)

Top

Bradford College

– new in the post of Safeguarding Officer

The Environment

Bradford College is the second largest general further education (GFE) college in England enrolling some 21000 students. Of these 4000 are 16 to 18 and a further 400 14-16 attending within a school/college partnership. Almost half the college population is other than white British compared with some 25% of the local population.

There are two main sites, two adult education centres and 60 community centres. In most subject areas, courses are available from entry level to level 4.

Two thirds of the college's FE population live in postcode areas designated as socially deprived. On some full-time courses this proportion is much higher. Bradford school leavers achieve well below the national average and the local authority has been in recovery. Many students have positive aspirations and the college also provides a range of HE courses.

The college accommodates the Pupil Referral Unit, many of whose students progress to college courses.

There are close links with the Connexions team who are based in the college.

A New Post

Sally Karimian was appointed to the post of Safeguarding Officer at Bradford College in September 2009.

Having been a Social worker since 1983 Sally had a long and varied experience of working with young people and families. Her work with the Local Authority, with the NSPCC, and with Action For Children had covered a range of safeguarding issues and had introduced Sally to the full range of services working to prevent, and deal with situations in which young people were in danger of, or were actually subject to, harm and neglect.

Sally says, "Until I joined the college I had no idea how much time, commitment and expertise is devoted to supporting learners here. Staff really care about students as people and are really good at spotting problems, especially unvoiced ones, and finding someone who can help.

One of the reasons that I was so keen to take the post was that I am working closely with the staff development team to design and deliver staff training. This will also give me the opportunity to obtain feedback from staff and clarify such issues as information sharing and confidentiality."

Working with the 16-18 age group

Sally's first term highlighted differences between safeguarding young children and safeguarding college students.

- The nature of abuse is different as children move towards adulthood, abuse in personal relationships is more common, and there are issues such as sexual exploitation.
- There are students with very difficult things happening in their lives, some of them things that most adults would find very tough to deal with, yet they come to college and do really well.
- Forced marriage has arisen as an issue and the Forced Marriage Co-ordinator from the Police Safeguarding Unit was really helpful. We also link with the Forced Marriage Unit in London.
- There are a number of young parents combining parenting with studying and they are able to access a variety of support and advice.
- There are some unaccompanied asylum seeking young people and they can have really high emotional support needs.
- For some student's college is the safest place to be, where they have friends and are welcomed and valued.
- The college has some students who had been "trafficked" to England and they really thrive in the college environment

The Long Term Aims

Having completed induction, shadowed security, and studied the safeguarding policy and procedures, Sally conferred with Programme Area Managers, her Line Manager and other relevant staff to identify her workflow. The long-term aims were to: -

- Create a whole college approach where safeguarding is "everybody's business"
- Create strong working links between Security, Health and Safety, Healthy College team, Learner Services and the Students' Union and others to deliver safeguarding policy and practice consistently and efficiently
- Develop a whole college code of conduct for students and for staff so that everyone knows what they can and can't expect and what they should and shouldn't do, and make this everyone's normal lifestyle
- Create a confidence base that enables the college to respond positively to students with safeguarding issues as they arise including those who are vulnerable adults.
- Strengthen links with the full range of agencies both locally and, where applicable, nationally, to raise the profile of colleges to ensure that the safeguarding support needs of the 16-18 are given equal priority as those for younger children

Progress so far

Sally says, “I have been here a term, and have been very busy. Examples of issues I have tackled are: -

- It is difficult to find a free room for meeting young people in private, even though the college looks so big from the outside, but now we have a room shared with the counselling service for meetings with students in immediate need.
- Cyber and e-safety are a real issue because most of the students are so e-aware. They probably know a lot more than some of the staff. I have been on Bradford Safeguarding Children Board e-safety training and am involved in developing an acceptable user policy in line with the new e-systems and policies.
- The college has a team of designated child and vulnerable adult protection officers. We meet regularly and I am presently listening to their experiences and concerns and responding with suggestions that will improve their ability to advise and support both staff and students and to decide when to refer to outside agencies.
- We have rolled out staff training using a package adapted from the BSCB and delivered by e-learning, for all 1800 staff. I am now developing in-house safeguarding training applicable to this college in this city for these students. This will include the emotional component of being involved with abuse or neglect of young people. One of the most important messages is that I will share the responsibility and the concern with the key staff who know the student best.
- We are developing ways of helping students to manage their own protection, giving them the tools and knowledge to recognise potential harm and threatening situations.
- I have made contact with most external agencies including the Bradford Children’s Safeguarding Board. I am now a member of the Bradford Safeguarding Adults Board working alongside members from Adult and Community Services, Supporting People, Community health Service and others.”

An Evolving Role

Sally’s experience shows that safeguarding is not a static role. She says, “New issues are coming up all the time and a job description is out of date almost before the ink is dry. I am responsible to the Assistant Director Learner Services who is responsible to the Executive Director named as the Designated Safeguarding Lead reporting to the Governors. We have regular Safeguarding Meetings to look at issues. We know that such a big college in such a big city will always have young people and vulnerable adults presenting issues that require new services or procedures. That is what makes the job so interesting and worthwhile, the fact that I am supporting the young people and staff to develop positive skills and strategies to respond to actual or potential risks and harm.”

Top

Safeguarding in the city

The Environment

The area of South Birmingham is truly multi-cultural. To meet the traditions and preferences of their learners the College provides learning in a very wide range of settings.

South Birmingham College has four main sites and a wide range of localised provision to provide local learning opportunities to meet the learning needs of the local community.

The Digbeth Campus is close to the city centre and has a wide range of courses for Music, Media, Multimedia, ESOL (English language), Basic Skills, Fashion, ICT, Business, Finance, Professional Studies and Trade Union Studies.

The Campus in Bordesley Green offers mostly construction trades and related courses and sports courses.

The Hall Green Campus offers Health & Care, Catering, Hair & Beauty, ESOL & Basic Skills and caters for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The Women's Academy in Balsall Heath offers a secure environment for female students to study a range of vocational courses.

In common with all providers in Birmingham all sites are accessible from every part of the city via the excellent transport links.

The College is well used to managing learning across this geographical spread and in harmony with the range of ethnicities, religions, cultures and traditions of the learners.
Strong links and joint working arrangements with the many community groups are the norm, and work very successfully. However safeguarding young people and vulnerable adults can present challenges where culture and traditions differ widely and where college standards and protocols have to be explained to, and accepted by, each of the community groups individually.

Working with Community Partners

Jane Linsell is the Director of South Birmingham College's Student Services, a team with significant experience of working with community groups.

Student Services for the first time this year arranged for the college bus to visit all local communities with a road show demonstrating the Every Child Matters themes and how the college embeds ECM into curricula and services for students.

Safeguarding has been embedded in this road show to raise awareness of the sharper focus on child protection and the responsibility that colleges have to be observant and proactive, to raise concerns and to involve other agencies when they need to.

Jane says, "We are constantly working with the larger community to raise awareness and respond to questions and concerns.

All community groups have their own value-base and cultural practices and may be concerned by perceived threats to their ability to continue their traditions, or their autonomy.

We aim to foster community cohesion by ensuring that our students understand the rights and responsibilities that apply to everyone in this society."

Training for All

The College ensures that everyone understands the safeguarding legislation and the ways that the College will respond to its role and responsibilities in safeguarding learners.

All staff, franchise partners and community providers have received face-to-face training on policies, procedures, roles, responsibilities, local services and national support. This training shows the facts and figures for Birmingham, that child abuse is usually caused by a friend or family member, that everyone is covered by the Human Rights Act and that the law overrides inappropriate religious and cultural practices. Jane says, "The training has been designed for staff working in culturally-diverse Birmingham. There have been no taboos or areas deemed too sensitive to cover. We have included anonymous real-life case studies of abuse and neglect, forced marriage and domestic imprisonment. We have encouraged staff to be open about their own perceptions of cultural behaviours and to challenge any myths and false impressions about community lifestyles. We have made it clear that their role is to observe, support and report but that they are not expected or empowered to act; Safeguarding Officers are there to take forward any issue they report. Our staff are very caring and we don't want them getting involved beyond their own knowledge, competence and responsibility."

Large numbers of students have been involved in safeguarding workshops, both during the Learner Voice Conference and during Staying Safe Week, the week before Christmas. This series of events not only encouraged students to behave safely over the festivities (Road safety, Alcohol and Substance misuse), but also raised awareness of wider safeguarding issues. Representatives from the Forced Marriage Unit ran powerful workshops featuring video footage of a girl being rescued from Pakistan; College staff ran sessions on managing domestic conflicts; partnership organisations ran activities on keeping away from trouble in the pubs, clubs and city streets.

The election of Safeguarding Ambassadors has been the first step in a further process to identify student issues and ways in which they would like those issues addressed.

Specific front-line staff received specialist training for their work. Assessors are trained in liaising with employers regarding their safeguarding role and are issued with a checklist of who to contact should they suspect an issue. Part of the workplace risk assessment includes a pre-safeguarding checklist to reinforce the guidelines set out in Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment. Safeguarding Officers have been trained in the Common Assessment Framework.

All training is backed up by content on Moodle exploring safeguarding issues including forced marriage, domestic violence and psychological and emotional bullying, accessible to students and staff alike.

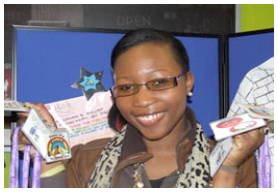
Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults

The College recruits a large number of adult learners, many of whom study in community provision local to their home. Many of these learners live almost entirely within their local community and may not themselves be aware of their rights to safety.

Student Services staff, including Guidance Officers, are receiving specific training from the Birmingham Adult and Communities Directorate in recognising signs of abuse and neglect in adults. Guidance Officers support large numbers of adult learners to access medical, mental health, emotional health and financial services through referral to and liaison with external agencies. They are trained to be alert to safeguarding issues that may not be perceived as such by the student.

The college is using MENCAP to deliver specific training in recognising mental and emotional health issues, the behaviours of students under severe stress or duress and those who are finding the transition into western society challenging. This includes recognising depression, drug dependency, substance abuse, domestic abuse, sleeplessness, and fear.

The College has also forged strong links with the West Midlands Police Vulnerable Adults team, who stress the fine line between what is and what is not a criminal offence and the time is needed to identify the underlying issues; the College advise the Police of any reported concerns that prove to be founded.



College Learners Stand Up To Bullies

Learners at South Birmingham College took part in a competition held to help tackle the issue of bullying.

Learners from the Health, Care, Public Services, Travel and Sport Division were asked to come up with a memorable way of educating people about the problem as part of Anti Bullying Week, 2009. Entries included posters, short films, t-shirts and badges in three categories: whole groups, small groups and individuals.

The winner of the individual category was Deoneil White, an 18-year-old Health Studies student. She designed a series of badges that can be inserted into the College's ID holders and carry messages and art about the harmful effects of bullying.

She said: "I was bullied in school and I really wanted to help. I did some research and discovered the problem is really widespread and sometimes young people commit suicide as a result. The badges are small but really visible and you can always carry them with you."
Janet Wagstaff, a lecturer at the College's Hall Green campus, organised the competition and works with students to educate them about the benefits of positive behaviour and the consequences of bullying.

She said: "It's important to raise awareness of the destructive effects of bullying. I'm proud of our students because they have really taken this issue to heart."

College warns of bullying and forced marriages

South Birmingham College held talks on the dangers of forced marriages and bullying as part of Staying Safe Week 2009.

Anti-bullying champion and world's strongest man Big Dave, whose real name is Dave Gauder, spoke to students about self-belief and the devastating effects bullying can have on young people.

Big Dave, who holds 17 uncontested world records, was bullied as a child because of his quiet nature.

He is currently spearheading a global anti-bullying and social responsibility campaign, with the support of BT and the Better World Programme.

Learners also attended a talk and short film about the dangers of forced marriages from Farhana Aktar, who works for the Forced Marriage Unit of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Fashion and textiles student Michelle Masih, aged 23, said: "I know people who have been heavily pushed or even forced into marriage and I now know what to do if I'm confronted with the situation."
"It was very informative in terms of how to approach the problem and who to contact for advice."

Throughout the week students were invited to talks about drugs, alcohol and general safety in an effort to help them stay safe during the festive period. The College's programme of events ties in with the government's Every Child Matters campaign

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Brooklands College

– the inspection experience

The New Inspection Framework

In July 2009 Ofsted published the "Common inspection framework for further education and skills 2009" for all post-16 education and training provision inspected after 1st September 2009.

Ofsted Inspects - a framework for all Ofsted inspection and regulation (2009 Ref 0801210) states:

Safeguarding

- Two judgements on safeguarding will be made under the leadership and management section and in the staying safe outcome section of all reports.
- All remits will be judged on the effectiveness of providers and services in ensuring that children and learners are safe and feel safe.
- The safeguarding grades will contribute to and may limit the grade for overall effectiveness.

Limiting judgement

The safeguarding grades will contribute to and may limit the grade for overall effectiveness in the following ways:

- if a provider is not meeting their legal duties this should prompt a judgement of inadequate for safeguarding
- where a judgement of inadequate is awarded for either safeguarding judgement it is most unlikely that the overall effectiveness of the provider will be better than satisfactory. It is likely that the overall judgement will be inadequate
- where a judgement of satisfactory is awarded for safeguarding it is most unlikely that the overall effectiveness of the provider will be better than good.

Before Inspection

Elaine Madden is the Head of Student Services and has lead responsibility for Safeguarding.

Safeguarding is well established in the college and so preparation for Inspection was based on ensuring that all the evidence was available to the inspection team, that all staff were briefed on what to expect, and that all information given to students was prominent.

Elaine says, "The focus on Safeguarding included both Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection. All aspects of safety for learners were scrutinised – including Health & Safety. The feedback from students was an important part of the Inspection.
As safeguarding is a limiting grade the initial meeting took place on the Monday. It was led by the Lead Inspector and included the Principal, the Deputy Principal, the Health and Safety Officer, the Head of Faculty for Supported Learning and the Human Resources Manager as well as myself (Head of Student Services)."

The Evidence

A file was compiled with all the evidence ready for the Inspection Team.

This included:

- All relevant Safeguarding policies and procedures and related reports
- The recruitment policy for high-risk learners including ex-offenders
- Staff training records and materials showing that they all attended training appropriate to their role
- Records of training for staff working in the Supported Learning Team – this included Protection of Vulnerable Adults
- CRB records for all employees and volunteers and the hosts for International students. The College only uses taxi firms that CRB check their drivers.
- The briefing given to contractors who had been working in a sectioned off area within the campus
- Copies of the Principal's welcome speech at the beginning of the academic year which included the Safeguarding update

Serious case review details were not included but these were discussed with the Lead Inspector at a separate meeting.

During the Inspection

During the Inspection the Inspection Team triangulated the evidence by checking documentation, by observing Safeguarding awareness (including posters and information contained in student diaries) and by conversations with students about how safe they felt and how aware they were of safeguarding provision.

The Inspection Team roamed freely about the college speaking to students and staff at random and held meetings with student groups for formal discussion. It was concluded that the learners felt very safe and knew to whom they should go if they needed support or if they were concerned about anything. They came to the conclusion that staff were well briefed and well trained; that procedures are well understood and that all staff know their role and its limitations and which issues should be referred and to whom.

The response to the query about the statement in the Inspection Guidelines that all staff should be trained to level 2 was that *"the staff should receive training appropriate to their role"*.

The only issue coming from these meetings was that some students did say that they felt a bit threatened when leaving the site at night because of the long dark drive and the heavy woodland around the periphery of the college.

Extracts from the Report

Overall Effectiveness

8. Keeping their students safe, respecting their different backgrounds and needs, and involving them in how the college is run are all high priorities for the Principal, staff and governors. They fulfil these commitments well.

Leadership and Management

29. The college pays high regard to the safeguarding of all its students, with particular attention being given to those who might be most at risk, including those in care. All relevant policies and procedures are current and appropriate.

Information and advice designed to ensure that students are protected from all hazards and harm wherever they happen to be are a priority for everyone.

Without becoming excessively risk-averse, the college has created a culture in which students learn over time to manage their own risk and take responsibility for their own safety.

Staff have been trained to the necessary levels of understanding, alertness and intervention in order to provide a very secure network for safeguarding throughout the college.

There are very good links with external agencies who share responsibility for the protection of children and vulnerable adults.

The record of accidents and incidents, actual or potential, is scrupulous and shows a reducing occurrence.

Main Findings

Students feel safe and secure. The college takes great care and trouble to ensure this. It is particularly watchful of those who are most vulnerable.

Top Tip

Elaine's top tip is "to constantly ensure that students and staff know what constitutes a Safeguarding problem and to whom they should go to report it or for help in dealing with it".

Elaine says "I found the Inspection experience very positive and was pleased with the Grade 2."

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OAKLANDS COLLEGE

- the inspection experience

Recommendations from the Team

Ensure that the college nominee is familiar with the safeguarding agenda, what should be in place, what is actually in place, where further evidence will be found.

Prepare the nominated Governor for the inspection of safeguarding and how it will be conducted.

Inform external agencies who may be contacted that the inspection is to take place.

Ensure that all staff are totally familiar with the latest safeguarding systems in the college, update names on posters and paperwork if staff have moved on or left, and ensure that job descriptions and responsibility charts are all up-to-date.

Ensure all the CRB checks are properly undertaken and recorded centrally, and risk assessments are in place for contractors

Collate and present accurate and complete records on all occurrences, even those that are not deemed to be an issue, or are proved to be unfounded.

Have copies of any newly released legislation and guidelines to hand and if possible plans to ensure that relevant staff are aware of these and trained on their content.

Keep records of all case conferences with local Social Services for any college students

Ensure that staff have reported everything, even if it seems to be of low or no importance, to ensure that nothing has fallen through the net

Be honest about strengths and areas of improvement

Before Inspection

Dawn Brown is the College Secretary and the Senior Safeguarding Officer.

She says, "We self-assessed our safeguarding provision carefully and decided we should be Grade 2. We had to evidence this to the Deputy Principal Business Support justifying our grade using the inspection criteria & legislation and guidance and the grade was agreed.

This self-assessment grade was an assessment of our normal practice and we didn't do anything extra to prepare for Inspection. However we did spend time with the college nominee, making sure that she was familiar with the safeguarding requirements, our policy and procedures and how these translate into practice.

We took her round the college pointing out the various posters aimed at staff and those that are aimed at students."

During the Inspection

The inspector for Leadership and Management was also the inspector for Safeguarding.

He asked for evidence of:

- Our safe recruitment processes including the centrally held records and CRB checks for all staff and Governors [from HR]
- Our staff training system and the records of those who had been trained and when that training had been refreshed
- Agendas and minutes of our safeguarding team meetings
- Our attendance at conferences and similar events
- Our partnership working with relevant local agencies and records of meetings attended

He collected further evidence from meetings with:

- The Governor with special responsibility for supporting the Senior Safeguarding Officer
- The Corporation and the Senior Management Team
- Teaching staff, students and business support staff particularly those with frequent contact with students
- Other Inspectors on the team

He observed:

- The on-line training scheme
- Poster in every classroom and corridor reminding staff who to contact if they have any concerns about a student
- The credit card sized reminder that is given to all staff
- Posters all over the college to remind students about safeguarding issues such as bullying and harassment
- Reports to the Corporation on safeguarding

Particular strengths

Staff training Scheme

The inspector was particularly interested to see the online safeguarding training that all staff and governors undertake. This has been developed by the college as a voice-over PowerPoint presentation that can be accessed anywhere in the college at any time. Staff are taken through anonymous successful case studies from social services to show that safeguarding is both necessary and worthwhile.

The secure area of the network

The college keeps an area of the network dedicated to safeguarding. This is only accessible to the 3 people with particular responsibility for safeguarding but is a particularly useful way of sharing good practice, identifying issues and maintaining up to the minute information on developments and ongoing cases. It demonstrated that the team were working closely together across sites and were always aware of upcoming issues.

Staff understanding

The staff all demonstrated a detailed knowledge of the policies and procedures, that the training had prepared them to act appropriately, and that they knew who had responsibility for all safeguarding in the college.

Extracts from the Report

Main Findings

Learners feel particularly safe around the college and show mutual respect for one another. Relationships between learners and staff foster respect and build confidence.
Safeguarding procedures are good and the college has good links with relevant external agencies. Recruitment checks have been completed on college staff and detailed policies and procedures are in place to deal with issues such as bullying and harassment. Staff have received appropriate training and understand their safeguarding responsibilities.

Outcomes for learners

16. Learners report that they enjoy college life and feel very safe in the harmonious environment. They are confident that any concerns they raise are taken seriously and are effectively addressed. Learners are well informed about risks and have the knowledge and understanding to make informed choices about their safety, health and well-being. They have a good understanding of their rights and responsibilities. Learners make a good contribution to the community and through a wide range of activities within the curriculum develop skills and knowledge that improve their economic and social well-being.

Leadership and Management

29. Arrangements for safeguarding are good. The college provides good training for all staff and enhanced training for designated child protection officers and key staff. Good links have been established with the relevant external agencies, including the local children's safeguarding board. The college's policies and procedures for safeguarding are detailed and appropriate. Learners feel safe and there are good examples of safeguarding issues being dealt with swiftly and professionally. The college has good arrangements to address bullying, including cyber-bullying, and sound arrangements for criminal record bureau checks for all staff, governors, and volunteers. A single central register records the relevant details of all staff and the college assures itself that the necessary checks have taken place for agency and contracted staff.

Key findings

Safeguarding arrangements are good. Posters on bullying and harassment are prominently displayed in corridors and learners report that they feel safe in the college.

The Experience

Dawn describes the whole experience as *'exactly what she had expected'*.

"I met with both the Safeguarding Inspector and the Residential Accommodation Inspector on the first of the 5 days.

I presented the evidence to support the self assessment report and answered any questions about his plans to check the evidence and who held other data he wished to see.

I discussed the college case reviews, anonymously of course, showing the range of issues that we have dealt with, the other agencies we had contacted regarding safeguarding the student, and ways in which we had worked with tutors and other college support workers to support the student."

There was no further contact from the Inspector during the Inspection and the feedback from the nominee was that there were no issues that were causing concern, nothing that needed to be dealt with, and no requests for information or other evidence.

Dawn attended the feedback meeting on the Friday afternoon. "The inspector was really positive about safeguarding, he agreed with our grade 2 assessment, agreed with the strengths and areas of improvement that we had identified and agreed that our improvement targets and action plan were appropriate.

The whole experience was very positive because we had been confident in our own assessment, and that was confirmed by the final Grade 2."

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