



city & hackney
safeguarding
children board

Section 157 / 175 Audits

May 2015 (Updated August 2016)

"Working Together to make children safer"

Introduction

Sections 157 and 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a statutory duty on independent and maintained schools to make arrangements to ensure that in discharging their functions, they have regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and that any services they contract out to others are provided having regard to that need.

In fulfilling its statutory objectives under Section 14 of the Children Act 2004, the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Board (CHSCB) is required to ensure that schools are meeting these duties effectively.

One of the mechanisms by which the CHSCB establishes this assurance is through individual schools self-evaluating their performance under an agreed framework and then sharing these results and the associated improvements required with the CHSCB.

To support schools do this, the CHSCB has developed a safeguarding audit tool. This tool can help provide clear evidence about the progress schools are making in response to the safeguarding agenda and their own quality assurance processes. It further provides a focus on relevant safeguarding priorities; whilst also maintaining a clear audit trail of scrutiny and activity for Governing Bodies and Ofsted.

Audit findings are not only important for individual schools, but for the system as a whole. Understanding where the strengths and areas for improvement are across all of the City and Hackney is a necessary function of the CHSCB. Adopting this systematic and simple approach to reviewing the contribution of schools will assist in identifying how the CHSCB can better support the school community in making sure that children are seen, heard and helped.

Jim Gamble
Independent Chair, CHSCB

School Involvement

Independent and Maintained schools undertake the audit in line with statutory obligations under sections 157 and 175 of the Education Act 2002.

The Audit Tool

The CHSCB has developed a self-assessment audit tool based on agreed benchmarks and standards. The self-assessment tool takes an electronic format and generates an action plan for schools.

The tool requests auditors to self-assess how well they are meeting elements of standards by scoring 'Not met', 'Partly met' and 'Fully met'. If the rating is 'Fully met', agencies must provide evidence to support the score.

If the rating is 'Not met' or 'Partly met', schools are asked to provide information on what plans are in place to meet or improve upon the current standard with timescales. Auditors are also instructed to identify a lead person to monitor the implementation of the action plan and to provide feedback and evidence against agreed action plans.

Oversight of Audit Work

Auditing of safeguarding arrangements falls within the remit of the Learning and Improvement Framework which is actioned and monitored by the Quality Assurance sub-committee. Initial findings will be reported into this sub-committee before dissemination of key themes to the members of the Executive Group and the CHSCB.

Audit Cycle

The audit programme follows a two year cycle which provides *annual reassurance of safeguarding standards and arrangements*.

In year one, the audit tool is completed by all schools. To triangulate responses, an annual safeguarding survey is also issued to staff members electronically.

An extraordinary meeting of the Quality Assurance Sub Group will be scheduled to review audit returns from selected schools. The purpose of this additional layer of scrutiny is to provide constructive challenge and feedback to schools on their self-assessment, identifying areas for improvement and where additional evidence is required to support the school's findings.

The QA Sub Group will use an intelligence-led approach to determine the schools that will be considered as part of this process. Intelligence gathered through the learning and improvement framework, alongside local knowledge of schools will be considered to assist the QA Sub Group identify the relevant s157/175 returns to review.

In year two, schools sign a statement of compliance noting review of the audit tool and their current position. At the time of signing the statement of compliance, schools will be requested to submit details / evidence against any standard(s) self-assessed as 'partially met' in the full audit which is now deemed 'fully met'.

This sits alongside work undertaken each local area directly with schools as part of its own quality assurance processes and provision of support.

New schools

New schools will be requested to complete a full audit document during their first year of operation, regardless of where this falls in the cycle.

Further Resources

This guidance has been designed to provide an overview of the audit tool and programme of work. Separate guidance has been compiled to help schools undertake the audit and can be found, along with a template of the audit tool, on the CHSCB website.

For further assistance, please contact the CHSCB Business and Performance Manager on 0208 356 4175 (sandra.reid@hackney.gov.uk).

Appendix 1: Two-year programme of audit work

