

CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING

GUIDANCE ON CHOOSING AN EXTERNAL TRAINING PROVIDER

Introduction

Schools understand that the harmful effects of child sexual exploitation (CSE) and other forms of abuse can be serious and far-reaching for victims, their families and wider communities and that schools can have a critical educative role to play to prevent abuse happening in the first place.

School staff and others working in the education services have a significant contribution to make to the safeguarding of children and all schools should create and maintain a safe environment for children and young people. A school's child protection policy and its delivery of the Preventative Curriculum addresses how children will be made aware of risks, how children will be helped to recognise risks and how they will be given the skills to cope.

These can be difficult issues to address and schools may decide to seek additional training to support their understanding and response to sensitive subjects.

There are many organisations offering training in schools to support the teaching of sensitive subjects and responding appropriately to pupils presenting with issues such as CSE. The variety of training available is considerable and schools have indicated that they would welcome some guiding principles to assist them in selecting a provider that would best meet their needs. This point was reflected in a recommendation in the 2014 Kathleen Marshall report on CSE in Northern Ireland.

This document therefore seeks to provide a supportive framework for schools wishing to commission external training. Whilst the framework is couched in terms of CSE, the principles apply equally to training in other areas of child protection and safeguarding.

The guidance provides:

- Suggested actions for schools, in order to maximise the relevance and safety of delivery
- A checklist for use with potential providers and;
- Research and practice informed principles about key messages in relation to educating children and young people around CSE.

Context

What is child sexual exploitation? Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/ or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.

The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

The Preventative Curriculum

The personal development curriculum requires schools to give specific attention to pupils' emotional wellbeing; health and safety; relationships; and the development of a moral thinking and value system. The curriculum also offers a medium to explore sensitive issues with children and young people, such as domestic violence and sexual abuse, in an age-appropriate way which helps them to develop appropriate protective behaviours. In recent years, the use of "keeping safe messages" and the term "preventative curriculum" have become more widely used to denote the proactive promotion of positive emotional health and wellbeing of pupils within and across the broader school community. This is achieved by raising awareness of social, emotional, and health issues; developing the confidence, resiliencies and coping skills of pupils; and in offering early intervention when pupils are experiencing certain difficulties.

Actions for Schools

Before meeting with a potential training provider, there are a number of issues schools should consider that will help them to be clear about what they are hoping to achieve from the training. For example:

- Think about what you specifically want the trainer to provide - how many sessions do you want? Bear in mind that you need to allocate sufficient time to adequately deal with the issues.
- Consider what preparatory work has already been done - what other inputs have pupils received that are linked to the subject e.g. drugs, alcohol, domestic violence, sexual health, consent etc.
- How does this training feed into the curriculum? – The training provided should not be an isolated or one off event.
- Consider what pre and post-delivery support regarding the training content may be required.
- Appropriateness of the content / method of delivery for age, gender. Should this be done in small / large groups/ single sex etc. (think of getting feedback from other schools who have had this or similar training)?
- Do not unnecessarily exclude any group of children and young people e.g. disabled.

- It is recommended that the class teacher is present – in the young life and times survey, children and young people clearly indicated that they want teachers to deliver this information and to be present.
- Remember to highlight to the trainer any particular sensitivity in the school.
- Notify parents that the training is taking place - issues may be raised that need to be discussed.
- School should ensure that trainers are not left alone with young people unless they have an Access NI check.

Disclosures

Bear in mind that there may be children in the room who will have experienced CSE or be at risk of CSE. Schools will need to consider arrangements on how to respond to disclosures. Considerations include:

- Should counselling support be available?
- Have the Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection been made aware that the training is taking place?
- Will disclosure arrangements influence the time of day the training is provided?
- Handling arrangements for disclosures about 'my friend' or disclosures about a child in another school.
- Is there a room available for a CYP to go to if they feel they want to leave the training if affected by the content?

Checklist for Use with Training Providers

In order for a school to receive assurance about the expertise and professionalism of a potential training provider, and before signing any contractual agreement, it may be helpful for the school to request the following from the provider:

- An assurance that the provider complies fully with the relevant requirements for the vetting of staff as detailed in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Group (NI) Order 2007 (as may be amended from time to time) and has policies and procedures in place to ensure compliance with the:

- Regional Area Child Protection Committees Policy & Procedures April 2005 and any subsequent amendments or updates.
- Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland, DoH August 2017.
- An assurance that the provider has provided appropriate training to all its staff, relative to their role, on its child protection and safeguarding procedures and on the regional guidance referred to above, and to provide on request a return detailing the child protection training undertaken by staff, and when the training content was last updated.
- An assurance that the provider will notify the school Designated Teacher/Principal immediately of any child protection or safeguarding allegations including any allegations made against staff.
- Confirmation of the clear boundaries as to the extent of the trainer's remit in relation to the subject matter being trained.
- Agreement that the provider will undertake an evaluation of each training session and supply the school with the analysis.
- Confirmation that the provider will include Signposting to external 'help organisations' and the child protection reporting procedures within the school.
- A minimum of 2 References from other schools in relation to the training the provider intends to supply.

Research and Practice Informed Principles

Materials used in training should be consistent with the following best practice-informed principles about key messages in relation to educating children and young people around CSE:

Terminology

- Any terminology used in relation to children and young people at risk of, or affected by, CSE should not be victim blaming.
- It should be made clear that the responsibility for exploitation lies with the perpetrator.

Equality issues

- It should also be made clear that CSE is an issue that affects both males and females and is not just a female issue.
- This is an issue that affects children/young people regardless of sexual orientation.
- Ensure that content is inclusive. Any examples used should demonstrate difference.
- Specific issues around CSE and disability should be addressed.

Content

- Examples provided must demonstrate that CSE can take many different forms, including online and offline.
- CSE is not standalone and training must explain the context/relationship to other issues of sexual harm / consent/ substance abuse, etc.
- There should be an understanding of the profile of CSE in NI and the local context.
- Should reflect policy and practice in NI.
- Should include what happens afterwards. Where help can be sought.
- Should not assume audience understanding of the issues.
- It is recommended that training on CSE should cover the following areas:
 - Provide the agreed definition of CSE
 - Predisposing factors – what factors can make a child/young person vulnerable to CSE
 - Current indicators
 - Nature and scope of CSE in NI
 - Peer exploitation
 - Online exploitation and e-safety
 - Grooming process
 - Relationships
 - Power and control
 - Policy and legislation
 - Use of language
 - Contextualising consent

Safety of participants

- It should be acknowledged with any audience that this is a sensitive topic and, as such, has the potential to provoke feelings of distress. All participants should be offered the opportunity to leave the training session, if necessary.
- It should be made clear that this is not the forum for personal disclosure but explain the arrangements that the school has put in place for any pupil that requires support or wishes to speak to a member of staff/counsellor.

Contractual Considerations

Schools should ensure that their procurement processes and any contracts entered into comply with the advice and guidance issued by the relevant managing authority.

Schools should ensure that the provider has full employers and public liability insurance and professional indemnity Insurance.

Provider standards must comply with employment, equality, human rights and discrimination legislation.