

Learning from 2022-23 Early Years Settings

Portsmouth Safeguarding and Early Help Compact Audit

The Portsmouth Safeguarding Children Partnership has a duty to ensure that agencies and services in Portsmouth are working effectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in Portsmouth. One way in which the PSCP does this is through the Compact Audit. It is sent once every two years to all settings in Portsmouth that work directly with children and families in Portsmouth to consider how well they are meeting their statutory requirements in regard to safeguarding.

The Partnership recognises that services have varying statutory requirements under differing legislation and guidance they work to. Hence, the Compact Audit includes varying indicators that reflect these differences. However, in order to ensure that a holistic view of a child's lived experience in Portsmouth can be formed, these are grouped under the same 12 standards:

1. Senior management commitment to the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
2. Staff responsibilities and competencies (the term staff also refers to volunteers)
3. A clear line of accountability within the organisation for work on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
4. Service development takes account of the need to safeguard and promote welfare and is informed, where appropriate, by the views of children and families
5. Induction, training and appraisal for staff and volunteers on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
6. Recruitment
7. Allegation management
8. Effective inter-agency working for early help and to safeguard children and promote the welfare of children
9. Information sharing
10. Equality of opportunity
11. Children with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND)
12. Additional specific requirements for commissioning bodies

As always, the Partnership was delighted to note the standard of safeguarding arrangements demonstrated through the Compact Audit returns this year. Especially as we recognise the challenges many settings are experiencing in recent times.

We do respond to individual providers where we have identified that you could benefit from consideration or support in particular areas. This document is intended to be a summary of the learning from the sector this year, to highlight some of the areas that settings considered to require improvement with the aim of hoping you all can benefit from this feedback.

How the Compact Audit is used for early years settings

Early years providers have a duty under section 40 of the Childcare Act 2006 to comply with the welfare requirements of the early years foundation stage (EYFS)

This safeguarding audit is designed as a self-evaluation assessment to help early years settings check whether they are compliant with the safeguarding and welfare requirements in Section 3 of the EYFS.

The audit can be used as a 'health check' to:

- support you to meet the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the EYFS
- assess the quality of your safeguarding practice
- consider the robustness of the safeguarding culture within your setting
- will help to ensure that gaps in safeguarding are identified and prompt action is taken to address these areas

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- can be included as evidence for Ofsted (Self Evaluation Form)

It is the responsibility of the owner / manager / management committee to ensure that all staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities and that arrangements for safeguarding children comply with current guidance from government and the PSCP.

How do you know when practice is 'good' or 'outstanding'?

Settings will have a range of information to consider using as an evidence base for the various areas within the audit. The following are examples:

- Records
 - Training
 - Children's files
 - Child Protection files
 - Staff induction
 - Staff files including qualifications and references
 - Parental responsibility and contact information
 - Staff meeting minutes
 - Management committee (or equivalent) meeting minutes
 - Health and Safety fire and risk assessments
- Key documents
 - Policies and procedures
 - Setting improvement plan
 - Parental information e.g. prospectus
- Other
 - Surveys including children, parents, staff
 - Peer observation
 - Local authority visits
 - Ofsted inspection report
 - Daily staffing structure
 - Medical consent forms

You may also want to consider looking at you safeguarding notice boards, and thinking about whether they include all up to date relevant information. You could ask staff on the spot safeguarding questions to test their understanding of policies and procedures.

What was learnt from this year's audits?

Whilst you may have received some feedback on your individual return, it is helpful to reflect on the learning across the sector. There may be areas of practice within these that you wish to consider in your own setting.

We have analysed the 47 returns received this year and would suggest that you consider what you do in your settings and whether there are any further improvements that could be made.

1.7 That records are kept of when staff have received copies of setting policies when they are introduced or updated (as relevant to their role) and that these are signed to confirm they have read and understood these

Good practice in this area would be that when a new policy is introduced or one is changed, that a copy is given (or the electronic link provide) to all staff. The manager should then keep a record of the name of the staff member and the date it was provided. The staff member should then sign a simple declaration to confirm that they have received, read **and** understood the policy. This record should then be kept in the setting's safeguarding portfolio. The manager should have a process in place to check where these have not been signed and follow up with the staff member. A similar process should

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be used for all new starters and those returning from extended leave (e.g. maternity leave) to ensure they are familiar with all policies.

2.5 All staff are aware of and able to access [the HIPS on-line inter-agency child protection procedures](#).

Under Working Together 2018, the PSCP has a duty to set out clear procedures and processes for cases relating to the abuse, neglect and exploitation of children. All staff (including volunteers) working directly with children should be aware of these and know how to access them if needed. Portsmouth Safeguarding Children Partnership has worked with the Partnerships in Hampshire, Isle of Wight and Southampton have worked together to produce the HIPS Safeguarding Children Procedures Manual. Staff should be made aware of this as part of their induction and information on how to access them should be easily available - we'd recommend putting the web address on your staff noticeboard.

4.3 The setting has developed a Safeguarding Leaflet for parent/carers which explains who is who in the setting

Parents and carers should be provided details of the safeguarding arrangements for your setting. This can be provided when they enrol their child at your setting and provided on your website for easy access. It should include easily understood information about:

- What is safeguarding
- What an early years setting must do to keep children safe
- Who to contact if they have any concerns

5.7 All staff have completed PREVENT training and understand how the duty relates to early years

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a legal duty on specified authorities to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”. This includes ensuring frontline staff have a good understanding of Prevent and how to refer when concerns are raised.

Details of how to access training can be found on the [Safer Portsmouth](#) website.

10.3 Changes to service, practice and processes which have potential to impact on some parts of the community more than others have been assessed using an equality impact assessment

An equality impact assessment (EIA) is an evidence-based approach designed to help organisations ensure that their policies, practices, events and decision-making processes are fair and do not present barriers to participation or disadvantage any protected groups from participation.

They are not a legal requirement in England but is considered to be good practice. What is important is that when making any changes to your services or policies that you document your consideration of how it might impact any protected characteristics (such as disability, race, religion etc.) and what steps you have taken to mitigate these.

11.4 All staff in the setting that work with / have contact with SEND children and their families: receive training in communication skills and methods to work with disabled children and young people

The [Portsmouth Local Offer](#) website details training opportunities that are available both locally and nationally. The [Council for Disabled Children](#) also offer some free e-learning courses.

11.5 The setting has access to an up-to-date list of resources, local specialist services, intermediaries and registered and qualified interpreters who could support children with additional needs

There are various resources in Portsmouth where you can access an up-to date list. Some of these are:

- [Portsmouth SEND Local Offer](#)
- [Portsmouth Education Partnership](#)
- [Portsmouth Early Years Support Services](#)