

EXPERTS URGE GOVERNMENT TO PROTECT CHILD SAFEGUARDING BUDGET IN SCHOOLS

Submitted by: BXBY

Friday, 2 June 2017

Safeguarding experts at Ethica Solutions (<http://ethica-solutions.co.uk>) are calling on HM Government to ring-fence a budget for statutory child safeguarding training and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for teachers and designated safeguarding leads to help combat threats to children's welfare, including child sexual exploitation (CSE), radicalisation and gang culture.

There is a rising demand to help and protect children. CSE, radicalisation and gang culture is a major cause for concern. In 2015, the total number of children assessed (<https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Children-in-need-of-help-protection.pdf>) as being in need of help or protection across the year, rose 13% between 2009-10 to 2014-15, from just under 695,000 to over 780,000. 30% were aged between 10 to 15 years (the largest age group).

With punishing budget cuts and under-funding expected across key organisations charged with safeguarding and protection of vulnerable children including schools, police and local authorities, safeguarding experts at Ethica Solutions (<http://ethica-solutions.co.uk>) believe a perfect storm is brewing. Services that are already stretched because of inadequate funding or failure, will leave children being harmed, or at risk of harm.

In 2010, the Department for Education (DfE) commissioned the Munro review (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/munro-review-of-child-protection-final-report-a-child-centred-system>) because it considered children's services were significantly below par. The DfE, which is responsible for child protection, and setting out policy, legislation and statutory guidance on how the system should work in England, then committed to transform the quality of the system by 2020. According to the 2016 National Audit Office report (<https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Children-in-need-of-help-protection.pdf>), progress has been poor. Today, the quality of many children's services does not correlate with spending levels. Access to help or support is not equal across the country, and interventions to improve failed services have been ad hoc. The DfE has yet to demonstrate how it will transform for the better by 2020. Its 2016 Statutory Guidance for Schools Keeping Children Safe in Education (https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550511/Keeping_children_safe_in_education.pdf) asks that "designated safeguarding lead and any deputies should undergo training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role." The question of what the instruction should consist of and how it should be funded and monitored is unclear.

The National Union of Teachers (<https://www.teachers.org.uk>) believe that £3 billion education budget cuts will make budgets untenable by 2018/19. Teacher shortages are worsening (<https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/education-committee/news-parliament-2015>) and there is little focus on retaining teachers with the skills and expertise, also essential to solve shortages. A recent Commons Education Select Committee report (<https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/education-committee/news-parliament-2015>) how Government has missed recruitment targets for five consecutive years. It further suggested that recruitment of new teachers to address shortages will not satisfy the need for improvement in service

delivery.

Education, experience and skills are critical in the vast and complex area of child safeguarding. Supporting the retention of experienced teachers who can use and extend their safeguarding expertise with CPD training and succession planning requires policy and a budget to be ring-fenced. A recent freedom of information request by the children's charity NSPCC (<https://www.nspcc.org.uk>) found that trainee teachers are receiving inadequate safeguarding training. Students on undergraduate courses received only an average of 10.5 hours of safeguarding training over a three-year or four-year course. Postgraduate trainees, receive even fewer hours of safeguarding tuition.

Ofsted's (<http://ofsted.gov.uk>) 2016 report found safeguarding arrangements were not effective in 15% of independent schools, 2% of maintained schools and 3% of providers in Further Education. In cases where incidents of safeguarding were found inadequate, "it was because leaders and managers were ignorant of what was required." A recent report (https://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmhealth/849/84905.htm#_idTextAnchor010) of the Education and Health Committee also found that insufficient prominence is also being given by Ofsted inspectors to children and young people's mental health and well-being.

Commenting, experienced former senior Police Officer, Dr. Richard John said: "An holistic 360 approach that supports and protects is vital in child safeguarding but education of both professionals and youngsters is at its heart. More safeguarding education is needed but there are funding pressures in all our safeguarding organisations. Staff are stretched to capacity with increased workloads and this will result in some of them getting by with inadequate training and tick-box solutions and policies. This will negatively impact on the service provision and those most affected will be our most vulnerable children. We urge the Government not to de-value the importance of safeguarding and to ring-fence a budget for education, statutory training and CPD with succession planning. The DfE must go further to support our young people and educators by working with experts and practitioners to develop a detailed strategy and policy with an inspection framework that works and is properly funded for the benefit of all."

ENDS

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About Ethica Solutions (<http://ethica-solutions.co.uk>):

Ethica Solutions (<http://ethica-solutions.co.uk>), a company founded by a team of highly-qualified former senior Police officers, delivers 360 Safeguarding training, support, incident response and investigation services to individuals and organisations. Its services are delivered by experienced professionals and investigators are experienced in dealing with serious, sensitive and complex cases.

Ethica Solutions (<http://ethica-solutions.co.uk>) is the only provider of safeguarding training for schools accredited by Skills for Justice & Health Awards (<http://sfjawards.com>) scheme the qualifications body licensed by Ofqual.