

Launch of new education best practice standard deemed a resounding success by former Schools Commissioner

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The only independently audited quality standard for supply staff, Compliance+, was launched at the House of Commons last week. The much anticipated inauguration of the Association of Professional Staffing Companies (APSCo) accreditation – which covers not only safeguarding but also the competency of supply professionals – was acknowledged as having huge potential by a former Schools Commissioner and featured three staffing companies who piloted it in 2013.

Leading educational consultant and former Schools Commissioner for England, Dr Elizabeth Sidwell CBE described Compliance+ as going above and beyond the crucial issue of pupil safeguarding: “This is a great standard as it takes a holistic approach looking at both safeguarding and competency in the classroom. Safeguarding is crucial but the pupils still need to be taught well. It is a rigorous process and the fact it is annual means that it is a standard that can be relied on”.

Compliance+ has been developed in conjunction with APSCo’s external Stakeholder Group - which includes the National Association of Head Teachers, the Association of School & College Leaders, the National Association of School Business Managers, Voice, the School Governors One Stop Shop, the Academies Enterprise Trust and the Independent Academies Association – to ensure the standard is fit for today’s education sector.

The consensus from the recruitment companies which piloted Compliance+ was that it is a meaningful accreditation which will raise standards within education, as well as safeguarding pupils. Jane Scott, Managing Director of Key Stage Supply commented that whilst the safeguarding aspect is crucial, what she particularly likes is the heavy focus on the competency of professionals: “I really like the competency section -that’s a real differentiator. A good example of this is a recent conversation I had with a Head Teacher talking about recent bad experiences she had had with recruitment agencies - where the teachers had not matched up to the standards of her school. She asked me how we ensure we have the best teachers and how that was monitored.....I was straight in with Section Two of Compliance+ which focuses on competency and the evaluation passport”.

Lorna Harvey, Managing Director of The Education Network, was keen to highlight the differentiators as well as the rigorous audit process: “Compliance+ is different, it concentrates on robust processes, excellent customer care and, of course, safeguarding. The audit was refreshing as it took a really holistic approach. As well as all the checks of our own processes and interviewing, the auditor also spoke to our clients - the schools themselves”.

Lee Brammer, Managing Director of Celsian Education, expressed the importance of an accreditation that is not only independently audited, but one which is audited by a true expert in the field of education recruitment: “What really stood out for me from the beginning of the audit was that Martin Kent, really got what the accreditation was trying to achieve. Coming from a health background, as well as being a Chair of Governors at a Primary School, it was clear that he has a very good grasp on what high standards look like as well as the work of education”.

Commenting on Compliance+ APSCo’s Chief Executive,

Ann Swain says: “What was clear from last week’s launch was that there is a real appetite for a robust accreditation which supersedes the now dissolved Department for Education’s quality mark. It has taken a year to finalise and I am convinced that, by working in partnership, Compliance+ can help both schools and staffing companies achieve their common goal – to ensure our schools are safe for children to learn and to raise the standards of education by providing competent education professional”.

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