

**School Safeguarding Audit 2022/2023**

1. Background
	1. The biennial mandatory NSYCP school safeguarding audit arrangements relates to **all** schools across North Yorkshire including maintained, academies, free and independent schools. This is in accordance with the statutory functions of the partnership as outlined in paragraph 28 and 29 of Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018). It is of note that this is the guidance in place at the time of commissioning of this audit, however the latest iteration of Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) has now been published at the point of sharing the findings of the audit.
	2. Within our NYSCP arrangements, schools are included as ‘relevant agencies’ and thus the purpose of the audit is to provide a mechanism for schools to undertake a self-assessment of their safeguarding arrangements and identify areas for development and produce an action plan. The undertaking of the audit gives Governing Boards, Trustee (s) and Proprietor(s) a tool to test, challenge and be assured of the arrangements that they have in place, which are aligned to Keeping Children Safe in Education and other relevant legislation and guidance. It should also be noted that Safeguarding is also a limiting factor in Ofsted inspections. The audit supports NYSCP to comply with its statutory functions to assess the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements within schools across North Yorkshire and identify areas where we can provide further support and guidance.
	3. The purpose of this report is to inform the Learning and Improvement Subgroup[[1]](#footnote-1) of the key themes identified from the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership’s (NYSCP’s) School Safeguarding Audit 2022/2023 undertaken across the various educational settings in North Yorkshire.
2. Safeguarding School Audit

2.1 Previous School Safeguarding Audits undertaken by NYSCP have sought assurance through conducting the self-assessment audit and collating the responses to identify themes and trends. This has continued within this audit cycle; however, we have also developed the methodology of undertaking the audit by developing a series of school audit panels to understand the following:

 - Explore the emerging key themes.

 - Review the evidence used by schools to reach their self-evaluation score.

 - Understand ‘how’ schools arrived at their score.

 - Learn about current practice and identify strong examples.

 - Learn about next steps being taken to improve practice.

- Seek greater assurance about the current arrangements in North Yorkshire Schools.

 - Identify opportunities to share good practice.

 - Explore whether further training and resources are required.

 - Gain feedback for the next audit.

2.2 In order to do this, the NYSCP Business Unit selected 3% of schools to be invited to take part in multi-agency school panel session to enable NYSCP to have more curious and in-depth conversations to seek the assurances outlined in section 2.1. The selection was a proportionate random sample across a range of provisions from Early Years, Primary, Special, Secondary schools that are from the maintained, academy and independent sector. Schools were also selected across the geography of the county.

2.3 multi-agency panels were attended by senior leaders across the Local Authority (including those focused on Education, LADO and Children Social Care), Police, Health and Partnership. Schools were invited to attend the panel days some of which were held at County Hall, others were held in the school setting. Schools were invited to bring representatives from their school to discuss their audit including the Headteacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and for some schools either the Chair or Safeguarding Governor and/or the School Business Manager. The panel sessions took on average 45 minutes and enabled schools to provide evidence for their self-assessment score. It also enabled panel members to look at the evidence including, examples of induction training, evidence of policies and procedures. Panel members were also able to explore progress made by schools for action points identified from their school’s audit.

2.4 Themes from the initial analysis of the school self-assessment audits were identified as those falling within record keeping, communication of policies and procedures and induction and training. These were the areas that the panels explored further with schools. Representatives from NYSCP who had undertaken the schools panel sessions then met as a group to share feedback from the panels. These responses were then collated and underpin the analysis outlined within this report.

1. Response to the Audit
	1. The response rate for the 2022/2023 audit, whilst high, was lower than the previous audits with an overall completion rate of 94%. A number of schools who did not return the audit sit within the same multi-academy trust. Feedback from some of the Multi-Academy Trusts (MAT) was that they felt they undertook their own safeguarding audit processes and thus found it challenging to complete a separate safeguarding audit. Discussions undertaken by the Assistant Director, Education & Skills and the Head of Safeguarding Partnerships with one MAT who had initially not completed the audit explored some of these challenges and resulted in completion of the audit, however the feedback from that trust will be considered within the planning for the next safeguarding school audit. However, it should be noted that the audit remains a requirement of NYSCP to fulfil its statutory duty.
	2. All schools selected to take part in the panel sessions responded. The logistics of aligning diaries however took time. Half of all schools invited to the panel days held at County Hall could not attend over the two selected days, however, alternative arrangements were made for those remaining schools to meet with panel representatives at their respective schools.
	3. The responses received to date for the school audit are as follows:
2. **Audit themes**
	1. The school safeguarding audit was separated into 9 key themed areas which are pulled from Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022), Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018), the Early Years Foundation Framework, Health and Safety guidance as well as other relevant legislative and statutory guidance. It is of note for some schools there are some questions that do not necessarily apply (e.g. a secondary school with no early years provision), however the tool enables schools to identify this within the question set responses. In total there are 154 different requirements, thus there is some variance in the levels of implementation schools have across these areas:
* Section 1 – Safer recruitment
* Section 2a – Management of safeguarding
* Section 2b – Actions taken where there are concerns about a child
* Section 3 - Inclusion
* Section 4 – Managing risk
* Section 5 – Early years
* Section 6 – Learning beyond the classroom
* Section 7 - Premises security, and
* Section 8 - Premises health and safety
1. Summary of key areas of strength identified from the audit
	1. The overall response rate for compliance with the different requirements overall for schools in North Yorkshire was high (between 90-100%). For those schools where this was not the case, they had identified implementation plans/actions to achieve this requirement. Timescale for completion was also outlined in the audit return.
	2. Across the criteria however, few schools were able to report 100% compliance against all criteria. Those areas where 100% compliance was achieved is outlined below.

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| **Type of school** | **Number of criteria where school reported 100% achievement in implementing the criteria** |
| Maintained Primary Schools | 6 (4%) |
| Academy Primary Schools | 30 (19%) |
| Maintained Secondary Schools | 69 (44%) |
| Academy Secondary Schools | 25 (16%) |
| Special Schools | 85 (55%) |
| Independent Schools | 68 (44%) |
| Pupil Referral Units | 78 (51%) |

* 1. The above table indicates that very few schools had implemented all the criteria, although the numbers were higher as a percentage of the total for Special Schools as well as Independent and Maintained Secondary Schools. High compliance was seen in relation to governance of schools, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) role and requirements, risk management and some elements of policy and procedure.
1. Summary of key areas for development identified from the audit
	1. A number of schools identified areas of development and were either actively developing these or had a plan in place. Based on responses to the safeguarding audit, the following themes were identified as areas of development:
* Training – including induction training, governor training, general training in safeguarding, Female Genital Mutilation, and Escalation.
* Policies and Procedures – covering a variety of subjects including emergency situations, sex and relationships, prevent/radicalisation and extremism, substance use, smoke and vaping. It also relates to ensuring that these policies are robust, transparent, easy to understand and raising awareness with staff and volunteers
* Record keeping – this includes the Single Central Record, online searches for candidates, recording of signing of the code of conduct and other related issues and records of qualifications.
* DSL Development – includes ensuring they are supported in time, training, job descriptions, status and funding, multi-agency working and DSLs knowing which children have social workers.
* Transitional arrangements between schools – this includes transferring information, etc.
* Online safety – relating to monitoring and online filters, reviewing of controls to ensure they are effective, governor ownership, and the logging, monitoring of incidents and embedding in the curriculum
* Supervision – ensuring staff have regular supervision arrangements which includes safeguarding.
* Governance – Complying with legislation (e.g. equality and human rights), monitoring of use of part-time timetables to ensure that children are returned to full time education as soon as possible
* Welfare – Supporting pupils with complex needs, monitoring of physical interventions, Mental Health, monitoring visits, transport arrangements and unstructured elements of the day
* Bullying – Embedding restorative approach to bullying and harassment, reporting prejudice-based incidents
* Elective Home Education (EHE) – notification of EHE and notification of children who are being electively home educated.
1. Section 1 – Safer Recruitment
	1. Maintained Secondary Schools and Secondary Academies did report up to 100% compliance in some areas such as ensuring Section 128 and Disclosure and Barring Service checks have been completed. Maintained Primary Schools reported a slightly lower level of compliance across all requirements; however, this was still very high with the majority of schools having appropriate arrangements in place.
	2. A new requirement under Keeping Children Safe in Education was in relation to online checks of shortlisted applicants. The level of implementation across all schools varied with as little as 60% of maintained secondary schools reporting this was fully implemented and only 40% of PRUs. Although academies and independent schools did indicate higher levels of this requirement being in place, overall, this was one of the weaker areas across schools.

**Recommendation 1: NYSCP to ensure the updates on recruitment checks identified in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 are updated into practice guidance and shared with schools and with the council’s HR service provider to schools (NYES) in relation to online checks and shared through the DSL Network Events.**

* 1. Record keeping was another area where some primary schools reported areas for improvement around the single central record, although secondary schools and academies, as well as special and independent schools all reported that this was fully in place.
	2. In terms of recruitment panels and training, most schools have in place arrangements for at least one member of interviewing panels to have undertaken safer recruitment training, with primary and secondary schools and academies with between 3% to 11% of identifying this as an area for development.

**Recommendation 2: NYSCP raise awareness of the need for all schools to be compliant with Safer Recruitment practice through the DSL Network Meetings and through the council’s recruitment provider (Resourcing Solutions) including appropriate advice and guidance on the single central record and the recording of qualifications.**

* 1. Overall Safer Recruitment is generally well embedded across all North Yorkshire Schools with most schools reporting that many of the requirements identified in this area were met.
1. Section 2a – Management of Safeguarding
	1. The management of safeguarding section of the School Safeguarding Audit is the largest section of the audit and has identifies 62 separate requirements ranging from leadership, the role of the DSL, training, online safety and other requirements.
	2. Across the management of safeguarding section, schools reported a very high level of compliance throughout. Schools reported 100% implementation across multiple requirements, but these were not consistent for each type of school (i.e., maintained, primary and secondary schools, academies, etc).
	3. Independent schools reported that their governors had received appropriate safeguarding training on induction which included child protection. While the majority of other schools and academies (averaging approximately 88%) reported that governors had appropriate training in place, a number of schools and academies reported this was an area of development with PRUs and Special Schools reporting a higher level of ongoing development. Visits to schools during the school panel sessions saw some evidence of good induction training with appropriate references to practice guidance and policy as well as learning from serious cases etc. Schools were using creative ways to deliver that induction training including use of videos/quizzes and had clear recording systems to ensure all staff had received and understood the training.
	4. However, within some schools it was clear that training didn’t reference guidance on the NYSCP website and training provision was sourced from a range of different providers. The training section of the NYSCP website is considerable and education providers need to be using these resources alongside linking to DSL Network Events, E-Bulletins, MACE Bulletins and Masterclasses. The schools panel sessions heard from some schools who were accessing these resources and really valued the fact that they were recorded on the NYSCP YouTube channel so if they were unable to attend the event due to teaching commitments or other school events, they could still watch the learning events. Although some schools were clearly accessing the vast array of education and safeguarding resources produced by NYSCP, some schools were not. Some schools reported difficulties in accessing emails sent through from the NYSCP, which is often linked to changes in staff members or schools not having a dedicated DSL email address.

Recommendation 3: Local Governing boards, Trustee (s) and Proprietor(s) to seek assurance that

schools have an effective awareness of the NYSCP Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements, have

shared their generic DSL email address with the NYSCP Business Unit, are accessing the NYSCP

newsletter and are linked into DSL network events and resources shared through the NYSCP

website.

* 1. Schools using creative ways to ensure all staff had easy access to the appropriate child protection information was identified through the schools panel audit visits. For example, use of laminated A5 cards with details of school DSLs, LADO contact details, NYSCP details and also detailed guidance around what to do if you have a concern about a child and/or a member of staff. These laminated cards were given to all members of school staff including catering/grounds maintenance staff etc. Similarly, some schools had produced fold up business card size documents that went into lanyards for staff and visitors with details on of child safeguarding procedures.
	2. Ensuring that policies and procedures were transparent and easy to understand was a concern for some schools, with this requirement having actions identified in this area. However, despite this the majority of schools reported that this requirement was in place. Linked to this, between 13% and 27% of schools reported that they were undertaking work to ensure that staff are provided with policies on induction. The schools panel sessions saw some good practice in this area with schools ensuring that staff and governors had read and understood policies and had signed to confirm this. Many schools were also putting in place creative methods to ensure staff understood key policies and procedures including interactive quizzes, online tests, frequent email updates in safeguarding bulletins to staff and through supervision conversations. This was continually fed throughout the year to act as a continual reminder. One school also demonstrated the creative use of videos narrated directly by Headteacher illustrating key elements of relevant policies and procedures both to staff and to students. This was then added to their school intranet to enable constant reminders of key policy areas.
	3. Online safety policies were high on the agenda for schools with over 90% of schools reporting that governors have included this in their Child Protection (CP) Policy with the remaining schools indicating that they were in the process of developing this area. However, while most schools had in place online safety in their CP policy, schools reported slightly lower levels of implementation for arrangements to regularly review the effectiveness of their online safety arrangements. It should be noted that many schools utilise the Template CP Policy produced by the NYSCP rather than produce their own policies. With the changes to Keeping Children Safe in Education, Working Together to Safeguard Children and the ever-changing nature of the online world, it may be understandable that schools are more cautious about the effectiveness of their online policies. The DSL Network Event held in February 2024 updated DSLs with the latest requirements through Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 with regards to responsibilities through filtering and monitoring of online activities through Smoothwall, this input is now live on the NYSCP YouTube channel and [website](https://www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk/professionals/learning-for-professionals/).
	4. Designated Safeguarding Leads within schools are key roles and it was reassuring that the vast majority of schools reported that their DSLs carry the appropriate status and authority to undertake their role and were available in and out of term time. Training for Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) and their deputies was in place in the majority of schools with only a small percentage of schools (around 6%) identifying that work was ongoing in this area. Duties of the DSL were not always reflected in job roles although it was noted that Special and Secondary schools were more likely to have this requirement fully implemented. This may be due to the dual role many headteachers in primary schools undertake as it is common practice for headteachers to also be the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
	5. Schools reported that governors generally had an understanding of the need to keep children in care or those previously looked after by the local authority safe. However, an area for development for a number of schools was in relation to ensuring they have a designated teacher for children in care in place and ensure that they have received appropriate training to undertake the role. Although the majority of schools reported that this was in place, there remained a number of schools who identified this as an area for development and a small number of maintained primary schools (1%) which reported this as an unidentified risk.

**Recommendation 4: The Virtual School to work with those schools which do not have a designated teacher for children in care to develop plans to ensure arrangements are achieved.**

* 1. In terms of prevent and radicalisation, the majority of schools reported that leaders and staff had received appropriate training to implement their duties with between 6% and 11% of schools identifying that this is an area for development.
	2. Another requirement placed on schools is to ensure that they have robust procedures to manage emergency situations should they arise. It was of note that school confidence levels in this area were very mixed, with as little as 40% of PRUs, 44% of Special School, 60% of secondary academies and 66% of maintained primary schools reported that their arrangements were fully in place, with primary academies and maintained secondary schools reporting high levels of implementation, but only by an additional 10%-20%.
	3. The emergency planning tool for schools was updated in September 2023 and all schools have been asked to adopt this before the end of March 2024. The North Yorkshire Council Health and Safety team are undertaking checks with all schools that access this service. There are also two planned business continuity sessions scheduled for schools in May 2024 to further support schools in this area following an audit undertaken by Veritau that identified a lack of business continuity plans in schools.

Recommendation 5: NYSCP through the DSL network events and email to signpost schools to the

North Yorkshire Council emergency planning tools and promote regular updates in this area to early years, schools and colleges.

1. Section 2b – Actions Taken When There Are Concerns About a Child
	1. Safeguarding of children and young people appears to be well embedded within schools with the majority of schools reporting they were compliant with all audit requirements relating to taking actions when there are concerns about a child.
	2. While the majority of schools (above 95% in most criteria) reported they were fully compliant, there were some areas which schools have identified as areas for development. A number of secondary schools for example reported a slightly lower level of staff awareness of the legal duties on teachers to report concerns of Female Genital Mutilation.

**Recommendation 6: NYSCP Business Unit to send regular updates and reminders on NYSCP practice guidance through the E-Bulletin and via DSL email addresses.**

* 1. Another area of development for some schools was in relation to understanding of the NYSCP escalation procedures. This issue has been raised by the NYSCP Partnership Manager and NYSCP Policy and Development Officer separately to the audit following conversation with schools and is an area which the NYSCP could take action to address through the Designated Safeguarding Leads Network Webinars.

**Recommendation 7: The NYSCP includes a section on the Escalation Policy in the Summer Term 2023/2024 DSL Network Meeting. This element of the webinar should also be circulated through the NYSCP Podcast for a wider partner audience.**

* 1. While not all schools reported having arrangements fully in place, the use of CPOMs or other digital recording and reporting system in schools has improved the recording of safeguarding incidents reported to the DSL and further escalated to the Local Authority. Schools panels were able to see evidence of the use of CPOMS and the regular updating of key safeguarding information to school governors. This was identified as a theme from the previous audit, and it is good to demonstrate that schools have actively improved in this area.
	2. Schools reported that most staff working with children with safeguarding concerns receive regular supervision and support. While this is good, there remains an average of 13% of primary and maintained secondary schools who are not fully compliant with this requirement and concerningly, 32% of secondary academies which report that this is not fully operational, although all of these schools report they have plans to address this.
	3. Overall, arrangements within schools to address safeguarding concerns relating to children and young people appear to be good with some areas for development.
1. Section 3 – Inclusion
	1. In terms of inclusion, as would be expected, Special schools reported very high levels of compliance across most requirements; however, there were some areas of development in relation to the level of awareness of the governing bodies regarding their duties to comply with legalisation, having systems in place for all students to know who they can talk to if they have concerns as well as systems for monitoring and reporting hate crime incidents. There was also development work ongoing in some schools ensuring that deregistering a child from school was rigorous and evidenced.
	2. Attendance monitoring is vital to ensure that children are accessing education. Where children have a part-time timetable, a number of schools reported that they did not have in place rigorous systems in place to monitor the use part timetables, ensuring children returns to full time provision as quickly as possible and routinely inform the LA of pupils on part timetables. Special and Secondary Schools together the PRUs generally reported lower levels of this requirement being fully implemented, whereas this appears to be more embedded within primary schools.
	3. In terms of elective home education there was some weaknesses in arrangements within the PRUs for notifying the EHE Team of pupils which have become EHE within 10 days of receiving a notification from parents/carers, with only 60% of PRUs reporting this was in place however, it was noted that those PRUs which did not have this in place reported they had a plan to do so.
	4. EHE across other areas was embedded in the majority of schools with all secondary schools stating that they reported pupils within 10 days. However, 12% of independent schools reported that this was an unidentified risk.
	5. Where parents were considering elective home education, a fifth of secondary academies, PRUs and independent schools reported that this was not fully embedded. Primary schools and maintained secondary schools reported that this was in place in most schools with development work being undertaken in some cases.
	6. Since this audit has been undertaken NYSCP have set up a task and finish group chaired by the Virtual School Head and attended by a number of partners and education representatives to examine the issue of attendance and home education. This group are focussing on what actions can be undertaken by partners to raise awareness of issues of attendance, duties on schools and examples of best practice.
	7. In relation to legal obligations under equality and human rights legislation, most schools (between 89% to 100%) reported a high level of confidence that their governors, trustees or proprietors were aware of their duties and complied with them. However, given the turnover of senior leaders within schools, governor/trustee/proprietor training will remain an important issue for schools to ensure that their governing bodies have sufficient knowledge to successfully discharge their duties.
	8. The recording of restrictive interventions was in place in all special schools and PRUs; however, not all schools reported that this requirement was in place and was an area for development in up to 14% of primary schools and 40% of secondary schools. This was evidenced when the schools panels visited a few schools who reported that they either had never had cause to need to record a restrictive intervention or they had only recorded it on CPOMs. Other schools were able to evidence a clear list of interventions with details of those involved and a clear audit trail of any actions taken as a result.

**Recommendation 8: NYSCP to include restrictive interventions guidance, expectations and good practice with regards to recording into the Designated Safeguarding Lead Network Webinars.**

* 1. Hate crime reporting arrangements are in place within the majority of schools, which was an area for development in the last audit. Most schools reported that they analyse types and patterns of bullying and use restorative approaches to incidents of bullying and harassment, although fewer secondary academies and independent schools reported full compliance and indicated ongoing development in this area. The Schools Panels were able to see good practice in terms of schools analysing the themes and trends and reporting that within their weekly safeguarding meetings and also sharing this with governors. For example, one school evidenced the link between themes and trends seen in school and key messages sent through to parents in their termly letter including online safety and cyberbullying etc. This was also feeding into work included in PSHE lessons e.g. discussions about children accessing pornography.
1. Section 4 – Managing Risk
	1. Special and independent schools stated that their governors ensured that children and young people were taught how to protect themselves online and reported a 100% compliance level in this requirement. While all other schools reported a high level of compliance, with over 90% of schools stating this was fully in place, only 80% of secondary academies felt that this was fully embedded.
	2. Most schools reported that they had staff who received appropriate continuous professional development to teach children and young people age-appropriate methods of safeguarding. However, this was less embedded within secondary academies, with only 60% of this schools reported fully meeting this criterion, whereas 80% of maintained secondary schools reported this to be in place.

**Recommendation 9: The School Improvement Service, together with the NYSCP identifies recommended key training requirements for Governors, Headteachers, DSLs and other roles in schools. This should be promoted to schools through the DSL Network Webinars, CYPS briefings for school leaders and Governor School Improvement Meetings**

* 1. Up to date policies for relationships, sex education, substance misuse and smoke/vape free environments was another area which requires further development by schools with just over half secondary academies reporting having these in place. The level of compliance against this requirement rose across other types of schools to 89% special schools, which reported the highest level of policies in place. In relation to LGBTQ+, most schools reported that their CP policy identified children may have additional barriers which may stop them from speaking out. Information from [North Yorkshire’s Growing up In North Yorkshire Survey](https://healthyschoolsnorthyorks.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/NYork2022summary_weblinks.pdf) also indicates that children who identify as LGBTQ+ may face additional barriers in coming forward to report concerns. This should be maintained as a priority for schools to ensure children and young people feel confident to talk about their worries.
	2. Further whilst the schools panels saw evidence of some schools having specific polices around smoking/vaping and substance usage, other schools relied on the references to this in their Child Protection Policy. Over the last year there have been a number of challenges reported by schools with regards to vaping particularly within schools. There has been a significant amount of work undertaken through NYSCP by Public Health and MACE colleagues including the [Drink Drug Hub](https://drinkdrughub.co.uk/).

**Recommendation 10: Public Health is invited to the DSL Network Webinars to raise awareness of concerns relating to substance use in line with the** [**North Yorkshire Substance Misuse strategy 2024-2026**](https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-02/Draft%20substance%20use%20strategy%20-%20accessible.pdf)**), smoking and vaping as well as any other related health risks to children and young people.**

1. Section 5 – Early Years
	1. Early years requirements were generally well embedded within relevant schools. However, not all schools reported that they had facilities for the delivery of intimate personal care to pupils when required.
	2. In terms of supervision ratios of children, up to a third of primary schools reported that this was not fully implemented and, in some cases, reported that this was not applicable.
	3. Within the schools panel visits to early years settings, communications to those settings could be strengthened. On some occasions they felt that they didn’t always have the most up to date child protection information for children within their setting or they would find this information out late. They also reported that whilst for many of their children they were fully engaged in any child protection processes, there could be some challenges in terms of them being aware of wider safeguarding concerns for that child. For example, they may not always be made aware if a child’s social worker had changed or that a child was open to another service. Similarly, if a child leaves their setting, whist they can report that child as missing, given that the children within their provision are under the statutory school age, they are not always informed of the actions that are taken or where that child may have gone.

**Recommendation 11: Early Years settings non-compliant with regards to intimate care and staffing to be passed to the Early Years Strategy Manager and strategic planning team to consider next steps and any necessary support required for those settings.**

1. Section 6 – Learning Beyond the Classroom
	1. Learning beyond the classroom was one of the areas of highest compliance against the standards identified in the audit, with many schools reporting 100% compliance in multiple areas.
	2. One of the areas which required further development mostly within primary schools was in relation to the retention of staff leading outdoor activities to have evidence of their qualification recorded as required by the school’s procedures. As with other areas, records management was an area which some schools did have plans in place to improve and the recording of qualifications links to the single central record. Record keeping was also a theme identified from the School Safeguarding Audit for 2021/2022.
2. Section 7 – Premises Security
	1. Schools reported a generally high level of compliance across most areas of premise security. Most schools reported they had arrangements in place to ensure the security of the school site during school hours.
	2. Schools reported very high compliance with the requirement to have robust arrangements in place for receiving and handing over pupils at the start and end of the school day, with some schools identifying they had plans in place to address these requirements.
	3. In the previous audit, measures to manage the risk of moving vehicles and plans to manage risks from vehicles was a weakness for a number of schools. While there was improvement noted in a number of schools, this is still an area of development, particularly for 19% of primary academies and 27% of maintained primary schools. However, the management of pedestrian safety from vehicles was in place in a greater number of schools, with up to 19% of schools identifying this as an area of ongoing development.
3. Section 8 – Premises Health and Safety
	1. As with all other areas of this audit, the majority of schools reported that they were fully compliant with Health and Safety requirement. The majority of maintained primary schools (98%) reported that they had a Health and Safety Policy while this fell to 88% in the case of secondary academies. As the Health and Safety Policy is part of the suite of policies produced by North Yorkshire Council for school, it can be expected for most schools to have this in place. However, no schools reported this as an unidentified risk and where not fully compliant with the requirement, this was an area of development.
	2. Arrangements for the maintenance of premises was slightly improved from the 2021/2022 audit and the majority of schools reported that they had records for equipment maintenance. Most primary and secondary schools reported having plans to manage legionella and asbestos, with over 90% of schools stating that this was fully implemented; however, this number was lower in independent schools (81%) and special schools (89%).
	3. In terms of Medical and First Aid Policies, the majority of schools have these arrangements in place (over 95% for most categories of schools). Again, it should be noted that North Yorkshire Council produce a template policy for adoption by schools.
	4. Primary Academies reported a high level of compliance (94%) for ensuring their safety policy has been communicated to all staff and they had signed to say they had read the policy. However, this was an active area for development for a number of maintained secondary schools (up to 27%) and secondary academies (20%). It was also noted that some schools were also developing how they shared emergency arrangements and fire safety information.

**Recommendation 12: NYSCP to promote the need for Health and Safety Policies through the North Yorkshire Council Health and Safety Newsletter to be communicated to all staff and work with schools to ensure that evidence of this is in place.**

* 1. Most schools and academies have in place health and safety inspection reports and actions plans but was an active area of development in up to 20% of schools.
1. Awareness of Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements

16.1 Meetings held with schools and multi-agency partners within the schools safeguarding panels were useful in illustrating how effectively schools understood the NYSCP multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. Recognition and knowledge that the statutory duty to safeguard children sits equally between the Local Authority, Police and Health was varied across the schools that were spoken to. There can be a tendency that the partnership is seen as the Local Authority. The extent to which schools linked in with NYSCP to access training/guidance and other resources provided to schools again was varied. The panels saw evidence in some schools of really strong practice in this area with resources being widely shared through school staff and governors as well as promoting key messages to children and parents and carers. However, it was recognised that for those schools who may be part of multi-academy trusts that span a number of geographical areas, this might be an area that can be strengthened. Feedback from schools was positive in relation to the NYSCP E-Bulletin and the MACE Bulletin with some schools extracting key information from these documents to share across schools through their own internal comms.

16.2 Where schools were well engaged with the Partnership, they reported good use of the NYSCP YouTube channel to view training events that are recorded so that these can be accessed at any time. Evidence was also seen with Governors viewing these and also listening to NYSCP podcasts, again created so that staff and governors can listen to these at any time to fit their own individual needs. Good evidence of discussion of these key themes was also seen within school staff safeguarding meetings.

16.2 Schools safeguarding panels also saw evidence of strong multi-agency working within some schools in localities with other multi-agency partners, especially children and families and police. Areas for strengthening however were identified in the sharing of information between education settings where children move to ensure that receiving schools are fully appraised of the information they need to safeguard that child.

1. Summary
	1. In summary, NYSCP should be assured that overall, there is some strong practice across schools within North Yorkshire in relation to their safeguarding arrangements. However, there are areas that need to be strengthened. It is therefore proposed that NYSCP except the findings of this audit and undertake the recommendations outlined below overseen by the Practice and Learning Subgroup. Further the findings from this audit are to be shared with schools through the DSL network events and a plan on a page infographic to be shared through the DSL email link.
2. Recommendations

**Recommendation 1:** NYSCP to ensure the updates on recruitment checks identified in Keeping Children Safe in Education 23 are updated into practice guidance and shared with schools and with the council’s HR service provider to schools (NYES) in relation to online checks and shared through the DSL Network Events.

**Recommendation 2:** NYSCP raise awareness of the need for all schools to be compliant with Safer Recruitment practice through the DSL Network Meetings and through the council’s recruitment provider (Resourcing Solutions) including appropriate advice and guidance on the single central record and the recording of qualifications.

Recommendation 3: Local Governing boards, Trustee (s) and Proprietor(s) to seek assurance that

schools have an effective awareness of the NYSCP Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements, have

shared their generic DSL email address with the NYSCP Business Unit, are accessing the NYSCP

newsletter and are linked into DSL network events and resources shared through the NYSCP

website.

**Recommendation 4:** The Virtual School to work with those schools which do not have a designated teacher for children in care to develop plans to ensure arrangements are achieved.

Recommendation 5: NYSCP through the DSL network events and email to signpost schools to the

North Yorkshire Council emergency planning tools and promote regular updates in this area to early years, schools and colleges.

**Recommendation 6:** NYSCP Business Unit to send regular updates and reminders on NYSCP practice guidance through the E-Bulletin and via DSL email addresses.

**Recommendation 7:** The NYSCP includes a section on the Escalation Policy in the Summer Term 2023/2024 DSL Network Meeting. This element of the webinar should also be circulated through the NYSCP Podcast for a wider partner audience.

**Recommendation 8:** NYSCP to include restrictive interventions guidance, expectations and good practice with regards to recording into the Designated Safeguarding Lead Network Webinars.

**Recommendation 9:** The School Improvement Service, together with the NYSCP identifies recommended key training requirements for Governors, Headteachers, DSLs and other roles in schools. This should be promoted to schools through the DSL Network Webinars, CYPS briefings for school leaders and Governor School Improvement Meetings.

**Recommendation 10:** Public Health is invited to the DSL Network Webinars to raise awareness of concerns relating to substance use in line with the [North Yorkshire Substance Misuse strategy 2024-2026](https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-02/Draft%20substance%20use%20strategy%20-%20accessible.pdf)), smoking and vaping as well as any other related health risks to children and young people.

**Recommendation 11:** Early Years settings non-compliant with regards to intimate care and staffing to be passed to the Early Years Strategy Manager and strategic planning team to consider next steps and any necessary support required for those settings.

**Recommendation 12**: NYSCP to promote the need for Health and Safety Policies through the North Yorkshire Council Health and Safety Newsletter to be communicated to all staff and work with schools to ensure that evidence of this is in place.

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1. At the point of publication of the findings of this audit (March 2024) the Learning and Improvement Subgroup for NYSCP will transition into the Practice and Learning Subgroup. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)