Beyond Referrals – Schools

Type of intervention

Online

Target group/s, level/s of prevention and sub-group/s:

Situations / Places	Internet/Online	Online	Internet Related Only

Target population

Schools and other educational settings, in order to determine their current response level to harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) exhibited by pupils.

Delivery organisation

Beyond Referrals for schools (and other secondary educational facilities) was developed by Contextual Safeguarding Network; a team within the International Centre at the University of Bedfordshire. The International Centre is committed to researching child sexual exploitation, violence and trafficking, by conducting academic research with children and young people. The creation of Beyond Referrals for Schools is supported by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission.

Mode and context of delivery

Beyond Referrals for schools is an online tool designed for secondary education facilities to explore their contextual response to HSBs exhibited by pupils. The tool is available online, with webinar-based guidance, and schools can utilise it as and when necessary. A parallel tool has been designed for school inspectorates, such as Ofsted, to enable a multi-agency approach to identifying contextual enablers and barriers to addressing HSB, and to ensure a collaborative implementation of new response measures.

Level/Nature of staff expertise required

The Contextual Safeguarding Network do not specify any prerequisites to using the tool, other than to watch the five webinars that explain how to use the tool. As the tool requires exploration of an educational facility's current safeguarding policies and procedures, prior knowledge of these would be helpful. Webinar '1 Introduction' outlines what HSBs are.

Intensity/extent of engagement with target group(s)

As the tool is freely available online and does not need to be completed within a set time, it can be used at an educational facility's own pace. However, the greater the time spent dedicated to exploring each response area below, and the greater the number of assessment methods used, the greater the understanding of the facility's current response level to HSB will be.

Description of intervention

Beyond Referrals for schools is an online traffic-light tool designed for secondary educational facilities to use to assess their own response to HSB. There are four key response areas outlined on the traffic light tool, for the user to explore and score: Structures and Systems, Prevention, Identification and Response and Intervention. Within each area, there are different factors that make up that response.

Structures and Systems	Prevention	Identification	Response and Intervention
Designated safeguarding lead	Training	Definition	Partnerhsip inputs
Holistic safeguarding response to HSB	Referral pathway	HSB trends	Staff motivation
Referral pathway	Relationships and sex education	Resources	Thresholds
HSB Strategy	Prevention and incident management	Disclosure options	Response to incidents
Engagement in local context	Ethos	Cultural contexts	Physical environment

Partnership input	Response to local concerns		Policy framework
Parental engagement			Wellbeing of students
			Response to trends
			Incident referral
			Peer support

The traffic light tool has three columns: green, amber and red. Users should start with the green column and identify whether or not they meet that criteria. If they do not, users should use the amber column and repeat the progress. Again, if they do not meet the criteria, users should progress to the red column. Scores are determined by the area whereby an educational facility meets that criteria; with a score of 2 when meeting the green column's criteria, a score of 1 when meeting the yellow column's criteria, and a score of 0 when an educational facility falls into the red column. Users should utilise an array of assessment methods (as the Contextual Safeguarding Network did when creating the tool) when trying to identify their traffic light area; such as focus groups, observation logs, surveys, case reviews and interviews.

There is an excel sheet available for users to create visualisations with their scores, on two levels. Level 1 presents a broader overview of the four key response areas. Level 2 presents a broken-down view of each individual key response area with their sub-areas. If an educational facility is working in partnership with their local authority, these visualisations can be created to incorporate scores from both so that similarities and discrepancies can be acknowledged. Findings and their visualisations can then facilitate discussions around which areas need tackling and in what priority order.

Evaluation

Data was obtained via a mixed-methods approach, with multi-agency partnerships (local authorities and Ofsted) and seven schools (including secondary schools, pupil referral units, special education facilities and further education colleges). The focus was on adolescents, aged 13 and above. The research methods used in multi-agency partnerships were mirrored in schools:

Multi-agency partnership	School
Review policies and procedures	Review policies and procedures
Meeting observations	School observations
Case review	Review behaviour logs
Focus groups with multiagency partners	Focus groups with school staff and young people

Analysis was conducted in three stages.

Stage one involved identifying the enablers and barriers to addressing HSB; both of which were agreed and then combined into larger descriptive categories and clusters based on similarity and relationships.

Stage two involved facilitating reflective workshops with the research team and local authority steering group meetings to put forward and discuss the categories and clusters identified from the first stage of analysis.

Stage three involved conducting qualitative analysis of data using NVivo 11, to refine, validate and finalise the sub-areas under the four main areas. The areas were then converted into a traffic-light model for schools and other educational facilities; and separate but similar mechanisms were developed for multi-agency providers. See 'Description of Intervention' for information on the four areas and their sub-areas.

References

Firmin, C., Lloyd, J. & Walker, J. (2019) Beyond referrals: levers for addressing harmful sexual behaviours between students at school in England. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2019.1659442.

https://contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/publications/beyond-referrals-levers-for-addressing-harmful-sexual-behaviour-in-schools

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