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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -  
Promoting Improvement*



*Providing Inspection Services for*  
Department of Education  
Department for Employment and Learning  
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

**Education and Training Inspectorate**

**Report of a Follow-up Inspection**

**to**

**The Review of Child Protection Arrangements**

**in**

**The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL)  
and its Sponsored Organisations**

**2009/2010**

## **FOLLOW-UP TO THE REVIEW OF CHILD PROTECTION ARRANGEMENTS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, ARTS AND LEISURE (DCAL) AND ITS SPONSORED ORGANISATIONS**

1. A review of the child protection arrangements for DCAL sponsored organisations in 2007 highlighted among the strengths: the pro-active role taken by DCAL in raising the awareness of the need for robust arrangements for child protection by the sponsored organisations; the close and effective working relationships established between the individual sponsored organisations and voluntary agencies; the examples of detailed planning and the implementation of policies and practices by some of the sponsored organisations; the updating of policies in some of the sponsored organisations to bring them into line with more recent legislative requirements; and the relevance of the training provided by the Voluntary Development Agency (VDA) for senior staff from DCAL and representatives of some of the sponsored organisations.

2. As key areas for improvement, the review identified the need to:

- provide specific guidance and direction to the sponsored organisations on matters related to child protection, with clear direction on governance arrangements;
- put in place adequate personnel to have oversight of the policies relating to child protection both within DCAL and across the sponsored organisations, including a more robust system for monitoring child protection arrangements across all provision;
- disseminate the existing good practice in the various sponsored organisations;
- ensure that all the sponsored organisations have trained designated child protection officers and deputies and that they provide child protection training for new staff members and regular refresher training for existing staff members;
- provide clear guidelines regarding safe practices in the selection and recruitment of staff and in the vetting of existing staff, including those staff or volunteers who are recruited for 'one-off' projects or on a freelance basis; and
- consult with the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) about the use of the minimum standards in the DHSSPS voluntary accreditation scheme as a baseline for registration and/or funding arrangements.

3. In the interval since the review, DCAL issued its 'Guidance on Safeguarding Children' (the guidance) to the sponsored organisations in June 2009. The guidance is currently comprehensive and supports appropriately the development of policies and procedures within the sponsored organisations. The Department held two events with the sponsored organisations to consider the complex issues of safeguarding. These workshops included input from internal and external agencies to support the sponsored organisations in the development and understanding of rigorous safeguarding policies and procedures.

4. The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure has responded to the introduction of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007 by developing interim guidance on the protection of vulnerable adults, in advance of guidance being prepared by the DHSSPS. In due course this guidance will need to be reviewed and updated.

5. The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure has appointed designated members of staff with responsibility for safeguarding within each of its business areas. The roles and responsibilities associated with these posts require further clarification in relation to the monitoring of the arrangements within the sponsored organisations. The staff in such positions of responsibility also require regular, effective training to support them in this important role.

6. The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure has made good progress in beginning to monitor the arrangements for safeguarding learners within each sponsored organisation, through including an update on the organisation's safeguarding arrangements within its regular accountability meetings.

7. In addition, at the request of DCAL, the Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) appointed individual link inspectors to each of the sponsored organisations. The Inspectorate carried out a follow-up inspection in 2009-10.

#### THE KEY DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN THE SPONSORED ORGANISATIONS SINCE THE ORIGINAL REVIEW

8. At the time of the follow-up inspection, all of the sponsored organisations inspected\* had satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding vulnerable groups. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by DCAL. A number of areas, however, are still in need of attention.

9. Most of the sponsored organisations have made good use of the guidance to evaluate and develop their own policies and procedures for safeguarding learners. All of the organisations have ensured that all relevant staff have completed appropriate training in safeguarding procedures. A minority of the sponsored organisations, however, needs to tailor the safeguarding training for their staff to meet their organisation's specific needs. All of the organisations also need to put in place procedures to review continually the needs of their staff to ensure that the training is kept up-to-date, and is as well-matched as possible, to the areas of work in which they are involved.

10. In the case of the new libraries authority, Libraries NI, which came into existence on 1 April 2009, all of the staff have had child protection awareness training as part of their corporate governance training. The new libraries authority reports that all of the designated officers have received training appropriate to their role, and the authority has a Service Level Agreement with the Education and Library Boards' Child Protection Support Service to continue to receive their training and advice. A number of new staff are awaiting a more in-depth training session, which is scheduled for May 2010.

11. A minority of the sponsored organisations needs to clarify the vetting and training requirements of those who are in positions of governance and have responsibility for overseeing safeguarding, even when they themselves have limited direct contact with children or vulnerable adults.

12. The inspection findings indicate that the sponsored organisations are committed to developing their understanding of the importance of the effective implementation of safeguarding policies. As the various stages of the 2007 safeguarding legislation are implemented, including guidance for safeguarding vulnerable adults, they will need to review

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\* A few of DCAL's business areas have yet to be inspected; a further follow-up report dealing with these areas will issue within the next three months.

continually their practice. The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure should ensure that there are opportunities for sharing good practice across its sponsored organisations, for learning from one another and for developing more consistent approaches to the implementation of safeguarding policies.

## CONCLUSION

13. The strengths of the work include:

- the good progress made by DCAL in issuing to the sponsored organisations, comprehensive and appropriate guidance on safeguarding children;
- the inclusion by DCAL of the monitoring of the respective safeguarding arrangements of each of its sponsored organisations within its regular accountability meetings;
- the compliance of the sponsored organisations with DCAL's guidance and the appropriate use of the associated checklist as a tool to evaluate safeguarding within their organisation; and
- the satisfactory arrangements for safeguarding learners by the sponsored organisations.

The areas for development include the need to:

- clarify the roles and responsibilities for the designated officers in the business areas within DCAL;
- provide regular, effective and registered training to DCAL personnel to enable them to work towards greater consistency of practice across the sponsored organisations;
- ensure that at accountability meetings and other fora, the Department's review of safeguarding is completed on a continual basis, with appropriate rigour, regularity and consistency;
- clarify the training and vetting requirements for those staff with responsibility for governance within the sponsored organisations; and
- ensure that policies and procedures at all levels are continually reviewed and updated and particularly as the new safeguarding legislation comes into force.

In all of the sponsored organisations inspected the quality of safeguarding arrangements is satisfactory. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which need to be addressed. It is recommended that DCAL monitors the progress within the Department and the sponsored organisations, through a rigorous approach within the accountability meetings, in addressing the areas for improvement in order to ensure that the required safeguarding arrangements are in place. The Inspectorate will also continue to evaluate safeguarding arrangements as a matter of course in all of its inspection work.

**SPONSORED ORGANISATIONS INSPECTED**

AmmA Centre  
Armagh Observatory  
Armagh Planetarium  
Arts Council Northern Ireland  
Foras na Gaeilge  
Libraries Northern Ireland  
National Museums Northern Ireland  
Nerve Centre  
Public Record Office Northern Ireland  
SportNI  
Studio On  
Ulster-Scots Agency  
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