

Barnsley College

Monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector: Sheila Willis HMI

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Type of provider: General further education college

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Inspectors carried out a one-day visit to the college as a result of information that Ofsted had received. The visit considered leaders' and managers' implementation of the college's safeguarding procedures. Inspectors met with the college's staff, reviewed documentation relating to safeguarding and visited two college sites. At the previous inspection in 2010, inspectors graded safeguarding as outstanding.

Themes

How effectively do leaders and managers apply the college's safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure that all learners, including those at subcontracted providers, are kept safe?

The college's systems and procedures for keeping learners safe are effective. Systems for identifying and reporting on safeguarding concerns are robust. Managers record and analyse data on safeguarding concerns well, and use their analysis to develop staff's and learners' understanding of safeguarding risks. For example, managers have organised training for staff and learners on the dangers of using psychoactive substances ('legal highs') and of child sexual exploitation following an increase in reported incidents. The college's safeguarding procedure provides alerts to managers and staff so that they are able to identify learners who are at risk from dangers such as female genital mutilation, and to intervene swiftly and appropriately to protect learners from harm.

Managers and staff take prompt and decisive action when safeguarding concerns and complaints are raised to ensure that learners are kept safe from the risk of harm. They do practical things such as telephoning learners to ask them if they feel safe and if anything has happened that would cause them to feel unsafe. When leaders identify concerns, they act decisively. For example, they have withdrawn learners placed with a subcontractor as a precautionary measure until the issues raised are concluded to their satisfaction.

Governors have good oversight of safeguarding. Safeguarding is discussed regularly at board meetings, with governors showing an informed curiosity about the information that they are presented with. A governor with a specific safeguarding role provides active assurance to the board of the robustness of the college's approach to keeping learners safe.

How do leaders and managers ensure that the college complies with the relevant safeguarding requirements?

Managers in the human resources department have established a rigorous system to check the suitability of all staff employed at the college and to ensure that staff are

safe to work with learners. The single central register that managers use to record that all the relevant checks have been undertaken is accurate and comprehensive. Records are thorough and are reviewed every month. Managers carefully interrogate information disclosed at recruitment and make considered decisions in line with the college's safer recruitment policy. However, managers do not always record precisely the outcomes of decisions taken on individuals who declare that they have a spent conviction, or set out the reasons for the decisions that they take. Risk assessment ensures that newly appointed staff work safely by being supervised at all times until the relevant clearance checks are received. The process for vetting and managing visiting speakers is robust.

Strong relationships with external agencies, including the local authority safeguarding officer, ensure that the college responds to safeguarding incidents promptly and appropriately.

Managers' monitoring of subcontractors' compliance with safeguarding requirements is effective. The contractual agreement between the college and subcontractors has been strengthened further this year to make the safeguarding responsibilities of subcontractors more explicit. College managers meet with subcontracting staff termly to monitor the quality of the provision and talk to learners to check that they feel safe. However, when commissioning or re-contracting with providers, managers have not always checked sufficiently the quality of some subcontractors' employment policies to assure themselves that subcontractors are following safer recruitment practices.

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