

# Safeguarding

## Newsletter 4

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### Australian Royal Commission Report

#### Lessons for Boarding Schools

On December 15, the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse produced its final report. The findings relate to the situation in Australia, and clearly this article does not aim to do full justice to the 17 volume report, which runs to several thousand pages, but there are definite reflections for all of us in our own contexts. [Click here to access the website](#) and [here for a Recommendations for Schools document](#) (prepared by an Australian legal firm). This highlighted some common safeguarding failings, with BSA's own reflections for our sector in brackets:

- Poor leadership and governance/ composition of school boards [to what extent is knowledge of safeguarding fully embedded within the governing body or equivalent?; to what extent are the Head and DSL held properly to account by the board?]
  - Inadequate complaints processes [do our processes cover not just making, responding to and investigating a complaint, but also providing support and assistance and achieving systemic improvements following a complaint? Inspectorates are focusing increasingly on the *outcomes* of complaints, rather than just the processes]
  - Incompetent investigations/ threshold assessments [are we suitably robust in our threshold assessments, and do we escalate sufficiently when necessary?]
  - Poor HR, including lack of induction
  - Poor management of non-teaching staff
  - Inadequate training/ awareness – staff unsure of what to do [is safeguarding a fully integrated part of the induction of all staff and volunteers, regardless of when they start, and are our HR processes suitably robust at all levels of the organisation, including for contract staff?]
  - Not holding individuals to account...moving them on etc [these will be key issues to be investigated by IICSA and the Scottish Inquiry, and not just with relation to historic abuse]
  - Lack of awareness of “private spaces” on school grounds [do we know all the places on the school site where the pupils feel unsafe? Have we asked them?]
  - Online environment [are we suitably up to speed with *current* issues and *recent* developments?]
- Much as the Truth Project is doing in England, the Commission invited survivors to share their views of the process they had been through. This was entitled “Message to Australia” and, of the 1054 responses listed on the website, here are two which might give us food for thought:
- “In 1978 a boy started crying. In 2014 he still is.”
- “If I can say one thing ...it is: believe us. If a child discloses to you or you sense something is not right, please don't ignore it. Please tell someone. You may save a child from a lifetime of pain.”



## NAPAC

As was mentioned in the most recent main BSA newsletter, BSA has recently been contacted by NAPAC (National Association for People Abused in Childhood) and a meeting was recently held in which matters of mutual concern and interest were explored. This concerned in particular how schools can improve their responses when receiving allegations of historic abuse from survivors, and how NAPAC could support practitioners to do this. Moving forward, BSA is exploring the possibility of some bespoke training on this issue, but in the meantime colleagues can access training courses via the NAPAC website <https://napac.org.uk> Information booklets are available at [https://napac.org.uk/project\\_category/booklets/](https://napac.org.uk/project_category/booklets/) and an advice leaflet for victims from Operation Hydrant [by clicking here](#).

## SOCIAL GAMING

The rising concern about social gaming was mentioned in the previous newsletter. This is an area about which some boarding staff will be aware, but the damaging impact of the negative aspects of social gaming are not always understood. The most popular social games in October, 2017 were Candy Crush Saga, Clash of Clans and 8 Ball Pool. Furthermore, research shows that 64% of under 16s played an online gambling-style game on their smartphones in the previous seven days. YGAM is an organisation with a social purpose to 'inform, educate and safeguard young people against problematic gambling & social gaming' To find out more about the impact of social gaming, to access free resources for PSHE and to access free training, please go to [www.ygam.org](http://www.ygam.org)

## PEER ON PEER ABUSE TOOLKIT

As mentioned previously, Farrer and Co have produced a Peer-on-Peer Abuse Toolkit, which also contains a suggested model policy. It was devised in conjunction with Dr. Carlene Firmin MBE – who is a leading expert on peer-on-peer abuse, and the driving force behind Contextual Safeguarding in the UK.. In addition to providing practical guidance for schools on how to prevent, identify early and respond appropriately to peer-on-peer abuse. It encourages schools to identify and challenge any underlying attitudes, social conditions and contextual dynamics. Whilst clearly aimed at schools in England, it will no doubt be of use to the wider membership. This coincided with the release of DfE guidance entitled **Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Children in Schools and Colleges** Please click on the link to download, and [click here to download the toolkit](#)

## KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE IN EDUCATION CONSULTATION - ENGLAND

Hot on the heels of the "Working Together" consultation, DfE released a consultation into revisions to the key safeguarding document for England, "Keeping Children Safe in Education" (KCSIE). The consultation closes on February 22, and **can be accessed here** There are 33 separate questions, many of which relate quite closely to the detailed content of each section, but the consultation closes with five more general questions regarding the scope and impact of the document, to which DSLs and other members of leadership might particularly consider responding:

**Question 29:** Which, if any, of the safer recruitment requirements in KCSIE do you find most confusing or difficult to understand and why?

**Question 30:** Is there anything that you are currently required to do when completing safer recruitment activities that you find difficult? If so, what makes it difficult?

**Question 31:** If you could change one thing about the safer recruitment requirements set out in KCSIE, which in your view would further safeguard against the possible risks to children, what would that be?

**Question 32:** If you could change anything about the current requirements placed on schools and colleges regarding handling of allegations of abuse, in order to strengthen against possible risks to children, what would that be?

**Question 33:** Is there anything that you are currently required to do when addressing allegations of abuse that you find difficult? If so, what makes it difficult?

## OTHER CONSULTATIONS

There is currently also a DfE consultation relating to teaching Sex and Relationship education and PSHE in England. [Click here for details](#) – closing date February 12.

The next issue will contain information relating to the Green Paper on mental health provision in England. This consultation closes on March 2 and **can be accessed here**

## YOUR SUGGESTIONS

BSA is always pleased to receive suggestions for newsletter content, and a future newsletter will highlight issues to do with "attachment" as the result of one such proposal. Do please contact BSA at [dale@boarding.org.uk](mailto:dale@boarding.org.uk) if you have any matters you would like to see raised in future editions.