

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education and Children's Services
DATE	17 November 2016
DIRECTOR	Gayle Gorman
TITLE OF REPORT	Update on progress towards implementing the anti-weapon /knife strategy and its alignment to the recommendations of the Independent Review carried out after the incident at Cults on 28th October 2015.
REPORT NUMBER	ECS/16/074
CHECKLIST COMPLETED	Yes

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise Committee on the planning and implementation of the anti-weapon/knife strategy and its alignment to the recommendations of the Independent Review carried out after the incident at Cults on 28th October 2015.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (1) Approve the strategy
- (2) Note the additional and supporting activities
- (3) Note the commitment to wider training, development and implementation contained within the strategy
- (4) Note the partnership working across the Northern Alliance local authorities to delivering this strategy collectively

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no additional financial implications associated with this report. All costs are being met from an existing Education Support Officer post within the Curriculum Support Team.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Schools will be required to

- Deliver new curricular courses
- Upskill staff in the requirements of the anti- weapon/knife strategy for ACC
- Continue to work in partnership with Police Scotland
- Disseminate related materials to pupils, staff and parents
- Organise required discussion forums

- Review anti bullying policy in light of recommendations
- Test the rigour of the business continuity plan

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

5.1 Background

Following the tragic death at Cults Academy in October 2015 of Bailey Gwynne and the conclusion of the trial at the High Court in Aberdeen, the principal public agencies with an interest in the issues raised by the case, announced their intention on 7th March 2016 to commission an independent review.

The independent multi-agency review was commissioned by members of a Chief Officers Group comprising Angela Scott – Chief Executive, Aberdeen City Council, Campbell Thomson – Chief Superintendent, North East Division, Police Scotland and Malcolm Wright – Chief Executive, NHS Grampian. Other agencies were invited to contribute as required.

Mr Andrew Lowe was appointed to lead the review. The outcome of the review was published in October 2016. [Appendix 1]

Aim

The overall aim of the review was to provide independent assurance to partners and the public that all circumstances, in relation to the death of Bailey Gwynne, were reviewed and appropriate recommendations made which can be applied for future practice.

Review Conclusions

- C1. This was an unplanned, spontaneous conflict that emerged rapidly out of an unexceptional banter. It is not considered that it could have been predicted or averted on the day.
- C2. The course of the conflict was fatally altered by the possession of a bladed weapon by one of the boys. This was potentially predictable and avoidable if those who knew Child A carried weapons in school had reported this to staff.
- C3. The incident at Cults Academy on 28th October was well managed by all agencies.
- C4. The 12th October 2007 incident had marginal significance in relation to later events. Child A was a secondary player in these events and is not mentioned significantly in the correspondence. It did not reveal a violent child but a child under very significant and continual pressure from his brother A1.
- C5. The complaint that followed these events was attenuated and did not receive a satisfactory outcome.

In addition the review noted that:

- The work to develop an Aberdeen City Council Weapons (knife crime) Strategy involving parents and pupils and Police was noted and welcomed.
- Redaction of names in the NHS chronologies left some unresolvable ambiguities. NHS Grampian sought consent for record sharing from one significant actor but this was legitimately denied.
- The move to develop a city focussed chief officers group for public protection was supported.

5.2 Anti knife/weapons crime Strategy

Following the tragic event at Cults Academy on the 28th October 2015 an Education Support Officer was identified as the lead for the development and subsequent implementation of an anti-weapon/knife crime strategy. This work commenced in early 2016 and in collaboration with other key partners. These included

- The Northern Alliance partnership
- Police Scotland
- Primary & Secondary Head Teachers
- Communities Teams
- Social Work Teams
- Pupils
- Parents

Following on from a series of meetings with each of the key partners a draft anti-weapon/knife strategy (Appendix 2) was created with identified actions and time lines for delivery. The plan identified a multi partnership approach ensuring that broad coverage of the agenda was evident and would have a consistent impact on the behaviour of young people and children in relation to anti-weapon and knife crime in Aberdeen City.

A number of the key actions were shared across the Northern Alliance ensuring a consistency of approach across the 7 Local Authorities involved in the Alliance (Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Highland, Moray, Orkney, Shetland and Western Isles Councils).

As the independent review report was not available at this time and thus could not be cross referenced to the draft anti-weapon/knife strategy it was decided to begin work on a number of the actions in this interim period. The work actioned at this stage included:

- Roll out of 'Keeping People Safe' presentation & lessons to S1 pupils by Police Scotland
- Adaptation of Ben Kinsella Trust resources for delivering to Primary 7 pupils. This was aided by feedback from Head Teachers
- Input to Pupil Focus Groups from ACC with pupil feedback used to develop further strategy actions
- Draft poster created with Head Teacher suggestions and feedback
- Pledge name decided using pupil suggestions
- Draft parent leaflet

- Anti-weapon/knife plan, draft poster and resources shared with Northern Alliance
- Youth workers trained on weapons/knife crime

Following the publication of the Independent review (11/10/16) the draft strategy paper was cross referenced with the recommendations and required amendments and additions were made. This paper was presented to the Anti-weapon/knife Operational Group on 13/10/16 for approval.

Immediate action following on from the Operational Group meeting included:

- Creation of an implementation plan which captures all of the key actions.(Appendix 3)
- Updated information for Head Teachers with regards to protocols regarding knife/weapon possession within schools.
- Meetings set with key personnel with responsibility for implementation of identified actions.

Work has begun and in some cases implementation has begun on areas of the identified actions contained within the Implementation Plan.

Partnership working will continue during this implementation phase both with local organisations and the Northern Alliance. Small amendments may be made during this period in order for the plan to have the maximum impact on the behaviour of young people and children with regards to anti-weapon/knife crime.

6. **IMPACT**

Improving Customer Experience

The safety and wellbeing of all pupils, staff and visitors to a school is of paramount importance. Implementation of an anti-weapon/knife strategy will help create a safe learning environment benefitting everyone and therefore contributing to a safer community and environment.

Improving Staff Experience

An anti-weapon/knife strategy will enable schools across the city to effectively raise awareness of weapon/knife crime and educate young people on the consequences of carrying a weapon/knife. In addition it will provide clarity to school staff on the protocol of:-

- Notifying and recording incidents relating to weapons/knives
- Pupil searches and confiscation of weapons/knives
- Anti- bullying recommendations
- Complaints policy
- Testing business continuity plan

Professional learning opportunities will be provided to build teacher's confidence to deliver anti-weapon/knife crime lessons with the flexibility to merge anti-weapon/knife lessons into current PSE programmes.

Improving our use of Resources

A centralised direction around creation of resources will save schools developmental time.

Corporate

This work clearly aligns with the Local Outcome Improvement Plan –

1. Children are safe and responsible – children and young people are safe from all forms of harm
2. Children are respected, included and achieving – children and young people are listened to, respected, valued and involved in the decision making process.

Public

This report will be of high interest to the public. It will raise awareness and educate the public on anti-weapon/knife crime and also the consequences of carrying a weapon.

The work also aligns with the Local Outcome Improvement Plan –

Safe and Resilient Communities

A fundamental sense of safety and wellbeing has the greatest impact on people's lives and builds community empowerment and resilience. Preventing crime and antisocial behaviour continues to be a priority for partnership working.

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Aberdeen City Council will continue to evaluate the provision and support provided by actions contained in the implementation plan. This will be reviewed at relevant times ensuring that mitigating circumstances relating to any incident regarding weapon/knife crime is reduced as far as possible.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Appendix 1 - Independent Review (Andrew Lowe)
- Appendix 2 - ACC Weapons/knife Crime Strategy
- Appendix 3 - Implementation Plan

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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