

# Section 175/157 Self-Assessment Executive Summary 2021 - 2022

A summary review of findings from the 2021/22 Education Self-Assessment conducted under Sections 157 and 175 of the Education Act 2002 on behalf of Blackpool

## Background

- The Section 175/157 audit process was undertaken by the Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership (CSAP) on behalf of Blackpool and Lancashire Local Authorities (Blackburn with Darwen colleagues made alternative local arrangements for 2021/22).
- The online self-assessment took place across the Spring Term 2022, launching on Monday 10th January 2022 and closing on Monday 25th April 2022.
- The Audit reflects statutory guidance in both Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) and Working Together and was comprised of 4 overarching Headings (i.e. Parts) covering 24 specific Sections, plus an Introduction (i.e. setting-specific information such as Name, Number on Roll, DSL information).
- The overarching Headings were:-
  - 1 – The School Approach
  - 2 – Effective Safeguarding
  - 3 – Specific Safeguarding Issues
  - 4 – Statistical information
- Each of the 24 Sections within the audit contained a number of related Statements. In total there were 143 statements to answer (details of each individual section are available within the full overview report with analysis available for each Local Authority broken down for each Section).

## Comparators

Overall responses are reflected across both the Blackpool and Lancashire regions. In findings at the Section-level, the vast majority of Blackpool and Lancashire responses are generally within  $\pm 3$  percentage points of each other. However, given the significant numbers of settings involved, it is important to ensure locality differences are appropriately reflected (for example, in presenting a single, combined response covering both Authorities, an area of potential concern for Blackpool schools may not be reflected should Lancashire school responses be significantly different).

To support this transparency, the section-by-section summaries provided in the attached Appendices provide both a Blackpool and Lancashire breakdown.

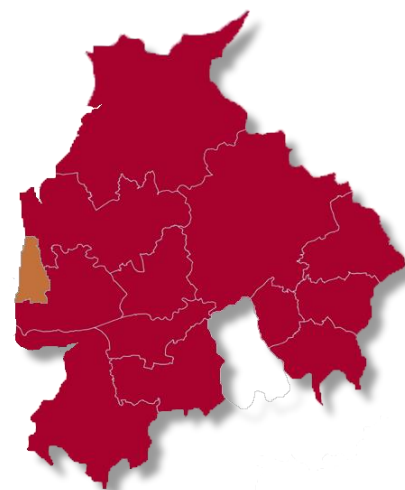


Figure 1: Blackpool: 34 responses (6% of total);  
Lancashire: 510 responses (94% of total)

## Methodology

Given the vast scale of establishments involved, the audit needed to be accessible and self-contained, requiring minimal intervention from the CSAP team and Local Authority colleagues. As such, a decision to conduct the audit as a self-assessed process was agreed and based around a simple 4-grade Likert scale set of response options.

To support self-assessment, a guidance document was developed for the toolkit which described each grade option along with suggested examples to support school colleagues in arriving at an informed decision (see *Figure 2* opposite).

The grading descriptor resource was well-received and as a result, very few queries were encountered questioning which grade was most applicable.

## Key Findings

In total, 544 schools completed the audit. With each audit requiring an answer to 143 individual statements, the cumulative dataset generated via this piece of work amounts to 77,000 answered questions. This is a comprehensive education evidence base for further interrogation.

Considering the information at Section-level illustrates broad similarities in responses across the two Local Authority (LA) footprints, both in terms of perceived strengths and areas for development.

The dataset provides detail down to individual school level, allowing LA colleagues to interrogate according to establishment, phase, school type and locality area. The dataset also provides the ability to establish comparators and filters on a variety of aspects according to need (e.g. *"how do primary schools compare with secondary schools on pupil welfare?"*) and can provide an invaluable reference for school safeguarding colleagues prior to local school visits.

The table provided below provides a snapshot of the 5 top and bottom aspects in graded responses. However, it should be noted that these are purely section-level summaries and as such, more specific detail is available within the individual statement responses for each Section.

## Section-level (self-assessed) Highlights

Top 5 Areas of Strength <sup>1</sup>		Top 5 Areas for Development	
95%	Section 11 - Children Missing from Education	Section 12 - Parental Responsibility & Private Fostering	79%
92%	Section 7 - Promoting the Welfare of Pupils	Section 13 - Elective Home Education	79%
92%	Section 6 - Policy, Procedures & Recording	Section 14 - FGM, HBA, Forced Marriage, Breast Ironing/Flattening	79%
91%	Section 9 - Safeguarding and the Curriculum	Section 16 - Child Sexual Abuse in the Family Environment (CSAFE)	76%
90%	Section 5 - Site Safety	Section 4 - Early Help	72%

Note: The infographic 'Fully Met At a Glance' at [Appendix 1](#) provides a visual highlight of combined findings

Whilst the above Section-level Highlights provide a useful oversight for further investigation, it should be noted that a number of individual statements display some cause for concern in relation to both an awareness of the Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership and communicating the school's Early Help offer to parents, carers and the local community (see *Figures 3-5* below).

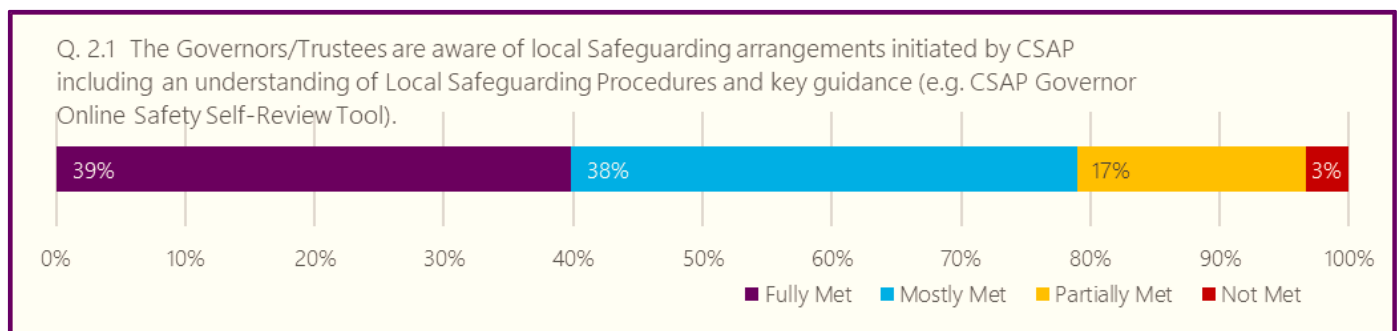


Figure 2: CSAP Governor Awareness

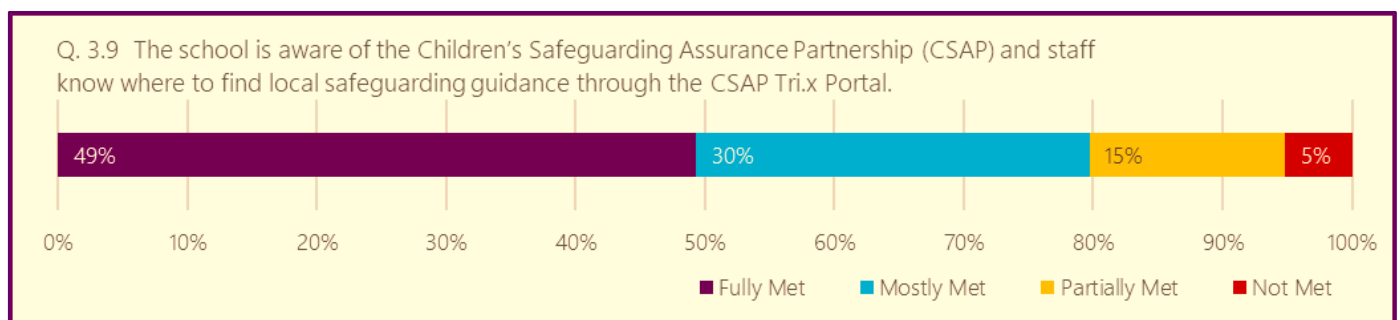


Figure 3: CSAP School Awareness

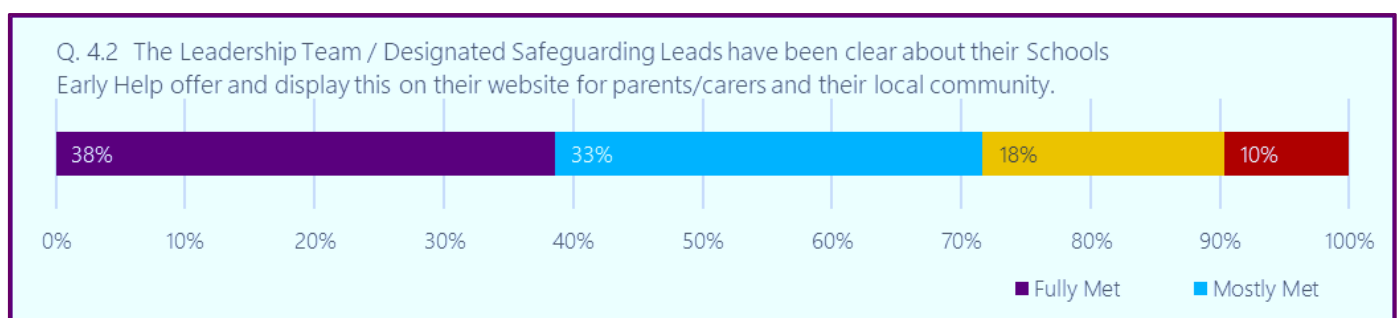


Figure 4: Early Help Offer - Parents/Community

<sup>1</sup> Based upon the highest/lowest proportion of 'Fully Met' responses

## Feedback and Continuous Improvement

Given the scale of activity, the CSAP Section 175/157 page contained a dedicated Section 175 Contact Form for enquiries. On such a large scale (and particularly given the unfamiliarity with the Section 175 process in Lancashire), resulting queries from school colleagues were anticipated to be considerable and needed to be managed given the limited resource available. To pre-empt this, a dedicated Frequently Asked Questions section on the Section 175 webpage was created to mitigate the number of potential queries. Throughout the live phase of the self-assessment, a Learning Log of feedback was maintained to allow points raised to be recorded as part of a continuous improvement process to inform future development.

## Recommendations & Next Steps

The resulting Section 175/157 dataset presents an invaluable opportunity to review and interrogate the self-assessed findings to inform evidence-based safeguarding progression across the Partnership.

Whilst this will need to be assessed at Local Authority (LA) level as part of an evidence-based progression, a number of recommendations are highlighted below for consideration:

- The complete Section 175 dataset should be shared with School Safeguarding colleagues in both Lancashire and Blackpool LAs as well as a summary overview for Governor/Proprietor colleagues supported through the LASGB (Lancashire Association of School Governing Bodies) or equivalent.
- To raise awareness and support a co-ordinated approach, School Advisor colleagues should be updated on the findings in the respective Local Authority School Improvement Teams.
- In support of improving safeguarding outcomes, Local Authority colleagues should review the dataset to identify areas of potential concern and schools who may need additional safeguarding support as part of a Local Authority Section 175 Action Plan development.
- Where available, a summary overview of the findings should be communicated to Local Authority Designated Safeguarding Lead networks across the Blackpool and Lancashire areas.
- In partnership with school colleagues, the Local Authorities should give consideration to identifying discrete areas of LA activity that will support schools and improve outcomes in those aspects most assessed as requiring development.
- Schools and Colleges are a key partner in safeguarding children across the region with almost 200,000<sup>2</sup> children and young people attending Blackpool and Lancashire settings on a daily basis. In line with Ofsted and Children's Commissioner recommendations, consideration should be given to formalising future education arrangements in relation to the Safeguarding Partnership to maximise education engagement and improve outcomes.
- Consideration should be given to the planning and arrangements for future Section 175/157 self-assessments, including their frequency (e.g. Annual or Bi-ennial) and timing (e.g. Spring, Summer or Autumn Term).
- The provision of a joint approach across the Local Authorities in Blackpool and Lancashire through the Safeguarding Partnership has been positively received. Where appropriate,

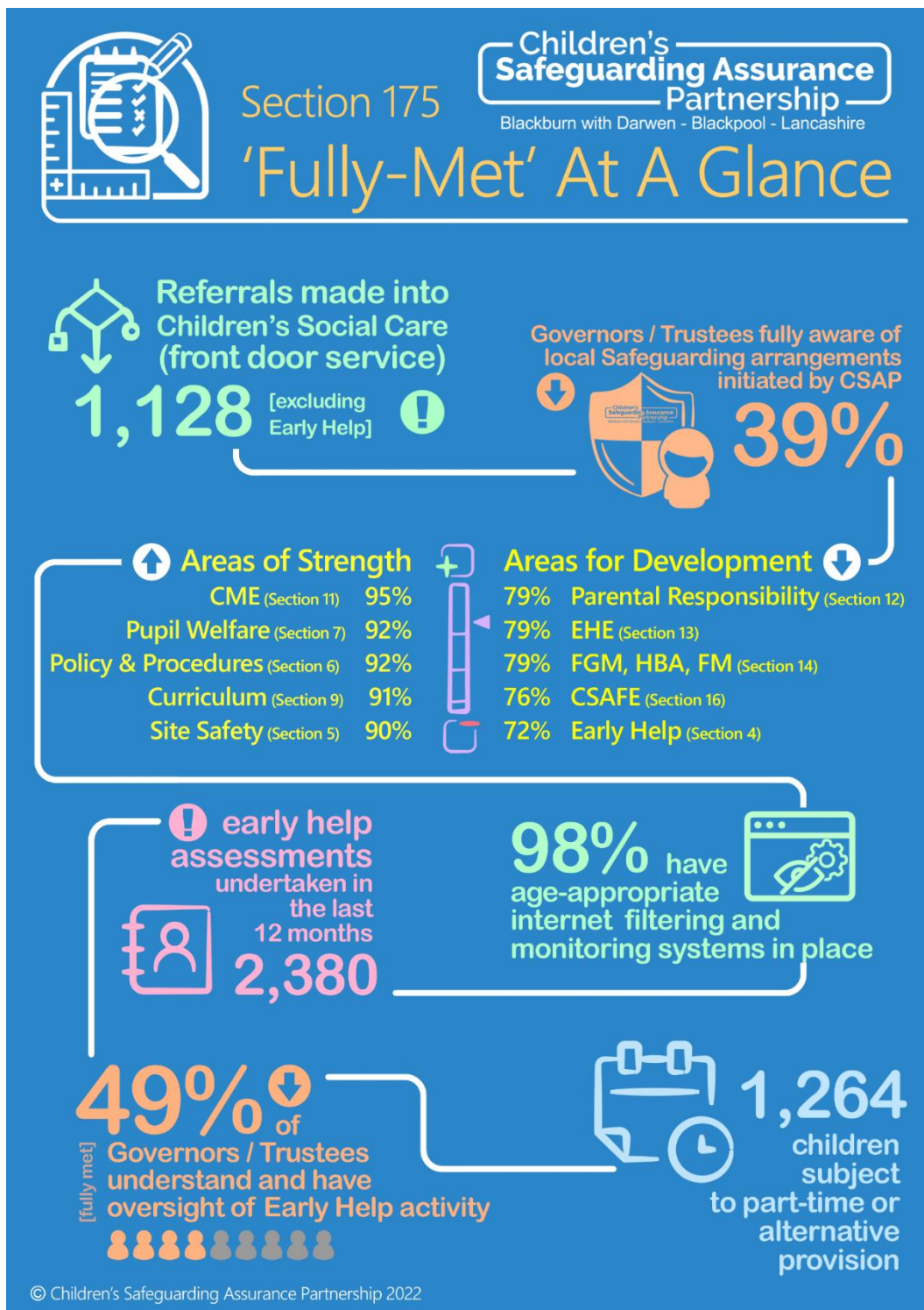
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<sup>2</sup> Pupil Numbers (2021/22) - Blackpool: 19,500 & Lancashire: 178,800

consideration should be given to the potential for future inclusion of schools and colleges in the Blackburn with Darwen locality.

Whilst the above recommendations are not intended to be exhaustive, they seek to outline suggested responsibilities for the two Local Authorities. In addition, the CSAP Joint Business Unit should develop a clear communications and engagement plan that will raise awareness of the role of the Partnership and its position with education settings across the region.

## Appendix 1: Section 175/157 At a Glance Infographic<sup>3</sup>



<sup>3</sup> Statistics reference combined Blackpool and Lancashire responses