

**Staff Engagement sessions**

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**Staff Engagement Sessions**

This guidance forms part of the Beyond Referrals audit toolkit and should help schools audit their responses to harmful sexual behaviour (HSB). This guidance outlines one method that can help a school complete their beyond referrals audit – Staff engagement sessions.

# Staff engagement sessions

Staff engagement sessions provide an opportunity to speak to staff about their understanding of HSB, issues affecting students, and confidence to respond. To do this, staff need to be given an opportunity to talk about HSB and feel that they can do so honestly. Through the process of completing the audit you may wish to hold one or two staff sessions. This guidance provides some example questions that can be used.

The questions provided here are examples, use them as a basis for developing and adapting your own questions. The purpose of this conversation should be to assess the current situation and allow staff to feel comfortable to talk and reflect on their views on the school responses to HSB. It is important therefore that the conversation is confidential unless the staff member discloses a safeguarding concern that has not been responded to or has not been responded to appropriately.

Some key things to consider are:

1. **How many sessions?** One or two should be sufficient, you may want to consider splitting the groups and hosting a session for male staff and one for female staff.
2. **Who to invite –** It would be good to get a mix of staff, not just those involved in safeguarding. This could include teaching staff but also staff such as caretakers or support staff if relevant. Each session should include around 6 people but can include as few as 2 staff members.
3. **Length –** Make sure to schedule the session when staff can come and plan for 45-60 minutes if feasible.
4. **Create a non-judgemental environment –** Staff should feel comfortable to raise questions and discuss their own concerns. It is important that staff feel able to say if they don’t know something, for example what HSB is or how they should respond.
5. **Feedback –** Make sure staff know how you are using the information and how you will act on it.
6. **Confidentiality –** Make sure that information shared in the group is confidential and do not attribute comments to individual staff members.

Notes should be taken to review, these do not need to be shared. Appendix A can be used for note taking.

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**Example Questions**

General feelings of school safety (10-15 minutes)

1. What types of harmful sexual behaviour affect students in this school? (map out on flip chart paper)

School response

1. How are harmful and abusive behaviours addressed at this school?
2. Is there a clear process to follow for staff?
3. What is the process for dealing with students displaying HSB?
4. What is the process for dealing with students experiencing HSB?
5. Is there a clear process for students to follow if they are experiencing HSB?
6. What is the process?
7. How is it communicated to students?
8. Do you think school staff have the knowledge and skills they need to respond?
9. Could the school’s response be improved in any way?

Support

1. Do you feel supported to respond to HSB?
2. What could help you [prompt: training/ support from colleagues/ resources]
3. What could prevent HSB?
4. How could the school improve its response?
5. What do you think works well?

Ending

[How will you report back any changes]

Appendix: A: Notes from session

**Date of session:**

**Person leading group**

**Staff present (and roles):**

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| --- |
| Feelings of school safety |
|  |
| School response |
|  |
| Support |
|  |
| Ending – any actions or notes |
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