

## **Demise of Sports Education and Active Learning(SEAL) and its replacement SiSS (Safeguarding in School Sport)**

SEAL has existed for 22 years in Dudley and was seen nationally as a gold standard for safeguarding in sport. Sports coaches were registered with SEAL and carried a SEAL card which meant they had all the requisite safeguarding checks, coaching qualification, first aid training and insurances. Rachael Doyle has always been the lynch pin for this and with a national reputation for safeguarding in sport, ensured the checks were carried out and that all the necessary paperwork was kept up to date through the sport & physical activity development team.

The sport & physical activity development team were transferred into Public Health in 2015 and following a restructure in 2017 their function ceased with a decision being taken that safeguarding in sport would not be in the remit of public health including SEAL. Headteachers were then advised by the local authority that as coaches' SEAL card became invalid a new list of checks would need to be carried out every time a new coach walked into their school. These checks were onerous (seven pieces of paper) and secretaries and heads quite rightly could see that this would not work and that mistakes could be made. As safeguarding is of course of the highest priority, it was felt that an alternative needed to be considered.

Brad Jones (Head of Brockmoor and DCSB primary rep at the time) spearheaded the campaign to get a replacement product. With the support of Andy Hale (Dudley School Sport Association Chair/ head of Maidensbridge) and Dave Porter (Head at Belle Vue) heads were contacted and asked if in principle for approximately £200 per year they would pay into a system whereby the SEAL process would be replaced by a web-based data base of sport coaches. School would receive log on details and any time a coach walked through the door their credentials can be checked by logging onto the website. 60 heads said yes in principle, within a few days, in the run up to Christmas!

A website designer agreed to develop the product at minimal cost and Rachael Doyle agreed that she was very happy to support the process as an independent validator to ensure that paperwork is correct and that new coaches are robustly checked before being added to the data base.

Audit has supported the process as only one web designer agreed to give a quotation or consider the product and no other consultant/validator was being sought other than Rachael Doyle due to her experience, expertise, reputation and objectivity. It was felt that conflicts of interest would arise if sports providers held a validation role. Also, Lewis Bourne has supported the process in regard to ensuring the product and process is GDPR compliant. Also, Liz Murphy independent chair of Dudley Safeguarding Children Board agrees with the development of SiSS in principle. An agreement in principle is now being circulated to all heads, which is coming back into school thick and fast.

The last stumbling block is the development of Service Level Agreements with all interested parties and we are currently awaiting advice from legal. Through sheer dogged determination we seem to have found a solution to a very difficult problem by working together. We hope that the last hurdle can be quickly overcome so that

product can be launched shortly and we can ensure that children in Dudley continue to be safeguarded in sport.

Maggie Stowe

Chair- Primary Forum