

Evidencing compliance through training outcomes

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"A dull topic" I hear you say. Not at all. Let me start with some real examples, all of which could have been avoided or mitigated if the school involved had strong evidence of staff compliance.

How about missed safeguarding issue? One where the serious case review highlighted inadequate staff training and lack of visibility of staff safeguarding knowledge.

How about a serious GDPR breach? There are plenty where the ICO was critical of the school's inability to evidence training outcomes. I advised on one breach where a hefty fine would have been dished out had the school not been able to evidence that a particular staff member had been trained on a specific issue that caused the breach.

Perhaps now more than ever, good health and safety knowledge among staff is critical for the safety of staff, pupils and parents. Are you able to evidence not just that they attended, but that they understood?

And don't get me started on equality, diversity and inclusion, or whistleblowing. My employment team can tell you many a story about a tribunal claim falling down because of a poor understanding of these important issues.

Getting it right

It starts with good, clear, accessible, accurate policies. Get that right and you are off to a winner. Get it wrong and everything else built on that foundation will be pretty shaky. So, make sure your policies are rock solid. A good way to do it is to ask a friend or your partner to take a look. If they don't find your policy easy to follow, the chances your staff won't either.

Then it's about the training. There are four issues to focus upon:

1. Make it engaging and interactive
2. Do your due diligence on the presenter/provider
3. Ensure the content is focused on education (and your setting where appropriate)
4. Measure outcomes!

Let's not pretend compliance training is exciting: it's the job of the trainer or the online programme you are using to make it so. The more engaging the training, the better the knowledge transfer, the better your practice. If you have done your due diligence on the trainer/online platform you are using and you have ensured the content is suitably education focused, then making the session engaging should be a whole lot easier. Get those bits wrong, and you'll have little chance of good staff understanding. This is especially true of online platforms – make sure they are focused on education and created by people who know what they are talking about.

Outcomes. Ofsted and the ICO want to see them and if you have a safeguarding or health and safety issue, you will want to be able to evidence staff understanding. You can use applications like, Google Forms, Microsoft Forms, Kahoot or others to test understanding. Remember though, the art is in interpreting the results to identify skills gaps. Online compliance platforms should provide you with the ability to review individual outcomes and outcomes across the school or a particular staff group, as well providing a benchmarking report to help you identify areas of strength and weakness. That is the epitome of evidencing good compliance.

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