

REPORT TO:	HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 6
DATE OF MEETING:	23 APRIL 2024	CATEGORY: RECOMMENDED
REPORT FROM:	(STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF SERVICE DELIVERY)	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	SEAN MCBURNEY	DOC:
SUBJECT:	CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING UPDATE	
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE: HCS7

1.0 Recommendations

1.1 That Members note the contents of the report.

2.0 Purpose of the Report

2.1 To provide members with an update regarding safeguarding work undertaken by the District Council over the last 12 months.

3.0 Detail

3.1 "Safeguarding is everyone's business." The council not only has a legislative requirement to embed safeguarding within our roles and services, but also a moral obligation to ensure that adults and children in our District are safe from abuse and harm.

3.2 The Safeguarding Audit Report written by Central Midlands Audit Partnership in early 2023 identified two 'low risk' weaknesses with the Councils response to Safeguarding. One of these weaknesses was that the outcomes from the Councils Safeguarding Group were not being reported to elected members. The recommendation was for a separate annual report to be prepared relating to outcomes from Safeguarding Group meetings and for this to be presented to Members at the relevant Committee or via another method of communication. This report is in response to this recommendation.

3.3 The second 'low risk' weakness identified in the Audit Report was that only 47% of elected members had received recent Safeguarding training. In response to this, two Councillor safeguarding sessions were held in 2023 for elected members, these were attended by 20 Councillors, most of them newly elected. 66% of Councillors have now had safeguarding training in the last three years. A further 'mop up' session will be scheduled for 2024.

- 3.4 The Council has identified the Strategic Director of Corporate Resources as the Organisational Safeguarding Lead (OSL), this officer oversees the work of the Corporate Safeguarding Group and Chairs the meetings. All completed Cause for Concern forms are sent to the OSL for quality checking.
- 3.5 The Communities Team Manager acts as Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). This officer attends the Derbyshire County Safeguarding Lead Officers group and acts as a conduit between the County Group and the Councils Corporate Safeguarding Group. This Officer is also responsible for competing the annual Derbyshire Childrens Safeguarding Partnership Strategic and Organisational Self-Assessment, ensures Safeguarding training is delivered to staff and elected members and ensures that the Council Policy and Procedures documents are regularly reviewed. They are also responsible for ensuring online content is kept updated and relevant and offer advice to officers who have any questions or queries on how to deal with safeguarding matters.
- 3.6 The Councils Corporate Safeguarding Group meets quarterly and has representation from all Council departments. At the meeting an update is provided on the County Safeguarding Leads group, updates are provided on Cause for Concern reports which have been made and general discussions are held about cases that officers have been involved in. There is also an action plan which is reviewed at each meeting (See attached in Appendix 1 for the 2023/24 Action plan).
- 3.7 All Cause for Concern forms are now reported online on the Councils intranet site 'CONNECT', this ensures all reports are automatically saved and logged providing a clear audit trail. These reports can only be viewed by the OSL and the DSL. After each report is made by an officer, it is automatically sent to the line manager and the Councils OSL and the DSL for checking and approving.
- 3.8 Between April 2023 and March 2024, 29x Cause for Concern reports have been completed by Council officers. 26 of these were made by officers from the Housing team, one was made by Environmental Health, one by Customer Services and one by the Communities Team. The majority of these concerns resulted in referrals to DCC via Call Derbyshire or direct contact with existing Social Care workers. Other referrals went direct to the individuals GP or to the Police.
- 3.9 The Councils Safeguarding Policy was reviewed in June 2022, it is scheduled to be reviewed again in June 2025. The County Safeguarding leads group have provided a county wide policy template for all Derbyshire Councils to use. This will be adopted in 2025 by SDDC. The current Council policy has been checked against the new County template to ensure that it contains all required information.
- 3.10 In 2023 an additional intranet page was developed to enable officers to update existing Cause for Concern forms, this is especially useful for Housing Officers who will have further contact with vulnerable tenants or where an update from an agency is required.
- 3.11 In 2022 a new Safeguarding Hub was developed and added to the Councils (CONNECT) Intranet pages. This 'Hub' contains the online Cause for Concern form along with the Councils Policy and Procedure documents, and key contacts within the Council who can help advise on Safeguarding matters. There are also pages specific to Childrens and Adults safeguarding which have further information and contact details of agencies and professionals that can offer support and advice.

This Hub is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that the information is kept up to date.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 Costs associated with providing corporate e-learning safeguarding training and awareness materials are contained within existing revenue budgets.

5.0 Corporate Implications

Employment Implications

- 5.1 There are no employment implications.

Legal Implications

- 5.2 Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places a duty on local authorities to ensure any direct services they deliver, or any services contracted out to others, are discharged, and have regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This is particularly relevant to county councils who provide children's social care services but applies to all local authority services.
- 5.3 The Care Act 2014 places a specific duty on county councils that they must co-operate with each of their relevant partners, and each relevant partner must co-operate with the authority, to make whatever enquiries are necessary to determine if an adult in its area (whether or not ordinarily resident) is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and as a result of those needs is unable to protect themselves against the abuse or neglect or the risk of such abuse or neglect occurring.

Corporate Plan Implications

- 5.4 This report supports the following priorities and objectives within the new Council Plan 2024-28:

Priority – Support our Communities.

Key Aim - Support the most vulnerable people in our communities.

Risk Impact

- 5.5 As stated in 6.1 and 6.2 above the Council has a legal duty to have suitable measures in place to ensure staff and members recognise safeguarding concerns and know how to report these to the relevant organisations.

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 The Council recognises that Derbyshire County Council (DCC) and the Police are the lead agencies in the District with regard to the protection of children and adults at risk. However, the Council also recognises that everyone has a responsibility for their protection. The role of the District Council is not to investigate allegations of abuse, but it must ensure all employees, Elected Members, volunteers and contractors take appropriate action when they suspect or recognise that a child, young person or adult at risk may be a victim of harm or abuse.

7.0 Background Papers

7.1 SDDC Adult at Risk and Childrens Safeguarding Action plan 2023/24