

## **STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Report to the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

**9 July 2018**

<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk of Abuse and Neglect</b>
<b>PORTFOLIO HOLDER:</b>	<b>Cllr Mike Bowen - Portfolio Holder for Communities, Leisure, Sport, Parks, Countryside &amp; Housing</b>
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	<b>Executive Director (People) and Monitoring Officer</b>
<b>WARDS INVOLVED:</b>	<b>All</b>

#### **Appendices Attached**

Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk of Abuse and Neglect Policy and Procedure (Appendix 1)

#### **1. Reason for the Report**

The Council last revised its Safeguarding Policy in 2016. An amended policy is presented to reflect recent legislative and other changes. The report also provides an update to Councillors on the Council's actions to meet its safeguarding duties.

#### **2. Recommendation**

2.1 That the Panel notes the actions taken by the Council in response to its safeguarding duties and the amended Safeguarding Policy.

#### **3. Executive Summary**

3.1 The Council is committed to ensuring the safety and protection of people using its services. In response, the Council has developed policies and procedures to ensure that children and adults at risk of abuse and neglect are safeguarded when using services provided by or on behalf of the Council in accordance with the relevant legislation and statutory guidance.

- 3.2 The Council approved a Child Protection Policy in 2006 and subsequently updated the policy to incorporate adults at risk of abuse and neglect in 2014. The introduction of the Care Act in May 2014 necessitated some changes and a revised policy was agreed by the Council in 2016. Further revisions have been made and a new policy is attached at Appendix 1 of the report.
- 3.3 The Council has established an officer group, chaired by the Executive Director (People) to co-ordinate the Council's response to safeguarding.
- 3.4 Recent actions include: updating the Council's safeguarding policy, providing safeguarding training for staff members; updating recruitment and training procedures, and reviewing staff safety arrangements. The Council has also supported the work of the Safer and Stronger Communities Strategy Group to safeguard the local community.

#### **4. How this report links to Corporate Priorities**

- 4.1 The Council is committed to providing quality services.

#### **5. Options and Analysis**

- 5.1 None.

#### **6. Implications**

##### 6.1 Community Safety - (Crime and Disorder Act 1998)

The Council's policy assists the Council to ensure the safety of children and adults at risk of abuse and neglect.

##### 6.2 Workforce

The Council's policy requires all staff with direct or indirect access to children or adults at risk of abuse or neglect to be vetted, checked and provided with an appropriate level of training. There is a requirement that every member of staff has an awareness of the Council's policy.

##### 6.3 Equality and Diversity/Equality Impact Assessment

There are no specific implications.

##### 6.4 Financial Considerations

The policy commits the Council to ensure appropriate training for staff and members.

##### 6.5 Legal

The policy assists the Council to fulfil its statutory duties with respect to the protection of children and adults at risk of abuse and neglect.

6.6 Sustainability

No specific implications.

6.7 Internal and External Consultation

No specific implications.

6.8 Risk Assessment

Implementation of the policy will assist the Council to manage risks in relation to the impact of its services and activities on individual children and adults at risk of abuse and neglect.

## **7. Background and Detail**

7.1 The Council approved a Child Protection Policy in 2006 and subsequently updated the policy to incorporate adults at risk of abuse and neglect in 2014. The introduction of the Care Act in May 2014 necessitated some changes and a revised policy was agreed by the Council in 2016.

7.2 The Council's officer group, chaired by the Executive Director (People), continues to meet on a quarterly basis to co-ordinate the Council's response to safeguarding.

### *Activity since the last annual report*

7.3 An amended Safeguarding Policy has been produced for approval by Councillors (attached at Appendix 1) to reflect legislative changes, notably the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation, and other minor procedural changes.

7.4 All staff members have received appropriate safeguarding training either on-line or face-to-face. Any further needs for specific safeguarding training will be identified through the annual PEP process. New recruits will receive training as and when required. The Council's on-line Safeguarding Children's and Adults Course was updated in January 2018.

7.5 Staff safety arrangements have been reviewed to have one consistent approach across the Alliance. This safeguards both colleagues, who are now aware if a customer poses additional risk and also customers who have different needs that need to be met. The register is reviewed quarterly to ensure that it remains up-to-date.

- 7.6 An internal audit of the Council's safeguarding requirements was completed in January 2018, which concluded that the controls in place provide satisfactory assurance that risks are being adequately managed. The audit did not reveal any significant risks but highlighted two medium level risks:
- Both HPBC and SMDC have a 'Recruitment and Selection Procedure' which had not been updated for some time, and therefore did not adequately reflect current procedures e.g. policy refers to Criminal Records Checks which are no longer relevant and have been superseded by the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS).
  - A review of staff with access to the register of concerns highlighted that Northgate staff have full access (read, modify and delete access) to this information which is extremely personal and sensitive. A review of staff with access to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) spreadsheet stored on the Council's network also highlighted staff who have full access who do not required it as part of their role.
- 7.7 A revised Recruitment and Selection procedure has been produced and will be considered by the Joint Consultative Committee in July 2018. Access for Northgate staff has been reduced and now only the on-site team have access to the folders for administrative purposes. Similarly, access to the DBS database has also now been restricted.
- 7.8 One of the priorities of the Safer and Stronger Communities Strategy Group has been support for vulnerable people. Work has included:
- The partnership contracted ARCH to provide a domestic violence worker to carry out joint welfare and safeguarding visits with police officers following reports or Incidents of domestic violence to:
    - Reduce repeat incidents of domestic violence by increasing the safety of victims and their children through improving access to available support and advice.
    - Increase confidence in the Police through a multi-agency approach that encourages victims to report incidents of domestic violence and holds perpetrators to account.
    - Improve the experience of the criminal justice system for vulnerable victims of domestic violence and their children through the presence of a specialist worker at welfare visits.
    - A work club that aims to prevent re-offending by offering support to ex-offenders to gain Employment. Places are also offered to members of the Building Resilient Families and Communities cohort with the aim of reducing Offending and involvement in anti-social behaviour, which helps to safeguard the wider community.

- A theatre education programme to raise awareness of how to identify different types of bullying, how to stop or prevent it and where to go for support.
- The Connected Youth project safeguards individuals vulnerable to CSE. Connected Youth CIC raised awareness around the growing concern of sexual exploitation/abuse through our supportive detached project.
- Engagement of young people by Sporting Communities through a detached youth work model using sport and socialisation as a means of changing behaviour and promoting a positive image of young people, tackling more complex societal issues and creating an opportunity for young people's voices, aspirations and needs to be captured and acted on locally.
- A Sanctuary Scheme which aims to safeguard households at risk of domestic abuse and violence to remain safely in their current home, where suitable and appropriate, with security adaptation measures and support.
- The Safe & Sound Service to reduce victimisation and helps to safeguard those affected by crime or live in fear of crime by offering additional security measures in their own home.
- Funding an Independent Sexual Violence Advisor to provide immediate and appropriate responses to sexual violence, including sexual abuse current and historic, sexual assault and rape.
- An event raising awareness of Modern Day Slavery amongst partner agencies, Councillors and others.

Mark Trillo

**Executive Director (People) and Monitoring Officer**

**Background Papers**

**Location**

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