

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
SOCIAL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 6 APRIL 2016
REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR (FINANCE AND OPERATIONS)

SAFEGUARDING REPORT 2015-16

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Council is required by law to have a *Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedure* for any employee, member or contractor to who, in the course of their daily activities, comes into contact with a child or vulnerable adult.
- 1.2 As a local authority with a responsibility for children and vulnerable adults, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council ('the Council') has both a moral and a legal obligation to ensure the highest possible standard of care for those vulnerable people who use, and have access to, our services as well as those services we commission and contract out to other organisations.
- 1.3 The Council is committed to doing its utmost to provide safe activities and opportunities for its residents by ensuring that it meets its legal obligations in this respect.
- 1.4 The Council takes seriously its duty of care for children and vulnerable adults and has a duty to cooperate with the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (the Children Act 2004), the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board (the Care Act 2014) and other partners.
- 1.5 The Council's aim is to facilitate the best possible professional practice from itself, its employees, elected members, volunteers and those individuals, companies or organisations that provide goods or services, or undertake work for and on behalf of the Council.
- 1.6 The Council has a statement of intent around safeguarding which is:

"The Council is committed to ensuring that children and vulnerable adults are protected and kept safe from harm whilst they are engaged in any activity associated with the Council. We also have a duty of care to protect those individuals who work with children and vulnerable adults whether paid, full-time, part-time or voluntary."

2 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the content of this report.

Implications

3 Financial Implication(s)

- 3.1 There are no financial implications directly related to the content of this report.

4 Link to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 The subject of this report is linked to the Council's Corporate Priority 'Our Community', and is linked to a statutory requirement under *The Children Act 1989 & 2004 and The Care Act 2014*.

5 Legal Implication(s)

- 5.1 Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places a duty on District Councils to safeguard and promote the welfare of children directly, and when contracting out their services.
- 5.2 The Council has a duty through the Care Act 2015 to cooperate with the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board in making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of vulnerable adults.
- 5.3 Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on the Council when exercises its functions to have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'.
- 5.4 Modern Slavery Act 2015 places a duty on all local authorities, under section 52 of the Act, to notify the Secretary of State upon developing reasonable grounds to believe that a person may be a victim of slavery or human trafficking.

6 Climate Change Implication(s)

- 6.1 There are no climate change implications directly arising from this report.

7 Risk Management Implications

- 7.1 Safeguarding is listed as a key risk on the council's Strategic Risk Register, and is scored an 8 which is classified as a low risk.

8 Explanation

- 8.1 The Council is committed to ensuring that children and vulnerable adults are protected, and kept safe from harm, whilst they are engaged in any activity associated with the Council. The Council also has a duty of care to protect those individuals who work with children and vulnerable adults whether they are in paid, full-time, part-time or voluntary work.
- 8.2 The Council recently adopted a new Safeguarding Policy and Procedure in March 2015 which set out what its procedures are for dealing within any referrals from employees, volunteers or elected members. It also highlights a new system of Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSOs) drawn from across the Council's services and their responsibilities. At the time of writing this report the Policy is being reviewed and updated to ensure it meets legislative requirements and is fit for purpose, once completed it will be presented to Executive Board for approval.
- 8.3 Safeguarding responsibilities now feed into the Council's Corporate Governance Group. The Council's Safeguarding legal requirements are also now stated within the Council's constitution.
- 8.4 The DSO group has been meeting over the past year, within those meetings the DSOs have been provided advanced safeguarding training and updates which they have the responsibility to then pass onto their individual departments. The

meetings have also enabled us to review cases that have come through the Council which has provided DSOs with a better understanding about information which is required in relation to a referral to Hertfordshire County Council (HCC)

- 8.5 A Safeguarding Action Plan has been prepared, which is monitored at the DSO Group. This is attached at Appendix A. At the time of writing this report SIAS are conducting an audit of the council's Safeguarding procedures and practices. The findings will be reported to Audit Committee later in the year. Any actions arising from this will be fed into the Action Plan.
- 8.6 The Council's Hackney Carriage Officer has taken the lead on raising awareness around Child Sexual Exploitation; he has received training and has a programme underway to ensure the Borough's taxi drivers have been provided with the required information in order to gain their licence.
- 8.7 The Council now has four fully trained officers who can provide Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent (WRAP) training around PREVENT. This training has been and is still being rolled out to all front line officers.
- 8.8 At the time of writing this report the Council is finalising an online safeguarding course which will be made available to all staff, volunteers and members.
- 8.9 The council's most 'at risk' contracts were audited over January – March 2015 on their commitment and resilience around Safeguarding. These contractors and their clients have been working together to ensure that contractors (where required) have developed better practices around Safeguarding. This ranged from updating their policies to better reporting structures in their organisations.

It is the responsibility of those Client Officers within the Council to review these audits and ensure that their contractors are consistent with the Council's legal obligations.

- 8.10 For reference, the Council's senior Safeguarding Officer is currently Bob Baldock (Director, Governance), the lead Member for Safeguarding is Councillor Darren Bennett and the Lead Safeguarding Officer is Matt Rayner.

9 Equality and Diversity

- 9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has not been carried out as this report, as it is for information only.

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Date March 2016

Safeguarding Action Plan 2015/16

ACTIONS	LEAD OFFICER	BY WHEN	STATUS	OUTCOMES & NOTES
Ensure that each department has a copy of the Safeguarding Poster and a DSO contacts posters up in their Offices	Individual DSO Officers	Ongoing	Completed for 2015/16	All DSOs reminded
Update the e-team pages so all information is on there for staff to view as and when required	Policy & Culture Client and Administration Officer	Ongoing	Completed for 2015/16	Annual Target
Update the public website to ensure it incorporates the requirements of the Care Act	Communications Manager	June 2016	Reviewed on a regular basis and as per legal updates	In the action plan for 2016/17
Produce an annual report to SOSC on Safeguarding	Community Partnership Manager	31.03.2016	Completed	
Update and review the Safeguarding Policy	Community Partnership Manager	28.02.2016	Delayed but in progress	To be completed by May 2016
To annually survey our relevant contractors to check on their practices and procedures in relation to safeguarding issues.	Procurement Manager	31.01.2016	Delayed but in progress	Completed as part of annual review of all contracts
Contract managers to review the responses to the annual Safeguarding Audit to make sure they are compliant with agreed council policy	Relevant Client Officers & HoST	31.03.2016	Delayed but in progress	Completed as part of annual review of all contracts
To ensure that any outstanding issues relating to contracts are addressed on a regular basis	Relevant Client Officers	31.03.2016	Completed	Annual Target
Ensure there are mechanisms in place that meet the Council's legal responsibilities around safeguarding Children and Vulnerable adults when commissioning services on behalf of the Council.	HoST	31.03.2016	Ongoing target for officers	Included in Contract procedure rules and within procurement guidance

To make guidance available to all those who currently manage relevant contracts so they are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities	Relevant Client Officers	01.09.2015	Completed	Guidance provided to HoST and passed down to all managers
Ensure that HoST are aware that the learning and development questions within the 2015/2016 Appraisal also relates to employees and their thoughts around safeguarding	HoST and Human Resources	31.03.2016	On target	Appraisals still taking place
Training needs to be assessed by each individual service area and incorporated in the Annual Training Plan.	HoST/HR Manager	28.3.2016	On target	Appraisals still taking place
Records relating to children/young people and vulnerable adults safeguarding cases are stored securely and safely	Policy & Culture Client and Administration Officer	Ongoing	Ongoing target	Annual Target
Work with the Housing Trust and Steria to ensure that the new reception at Campus East has appropriately trained staff to deal with any issues.	Head of Policy and Culture	31.03.2016	Completed	
A full legal framework to be provided which details where the borough council's responsibilities lie with regards to safeguarding (including legislation around Child Sexual Exploitation)	Head of Law and Administration	01.09.2015	Delayed for 2016/17 Action Plan	Agreement to roll forward to 2016/17 and to consider seeking external advice, due to the number of additional legal responsibilities placed on the local authority
To ensure that appropriate training (including CSE) is organised and provided to all councillors as stated within the council's safeguarding policy	Governance Service Manager	31.12.2015	Complete	Training provided in advance of Full Council