



**EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: 14
SEPTEMBER 2023**

CABINET: 26 SEPTEMBER 2023

Report of: Head of Planning and Regulatory Services

Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor G Dowling

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SUBJECT: SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND REPORTING PROCEDURE

Wards affected: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To approve an updated Safeguarding Policy and Reporting Procedure.
- 1.2 To provide an update on the work currently being undertaken in relation to the Council's safeguarding arrangements.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

- 2.1 That the report be noted and any agreed comments be referred to Cabinet for consideration.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET

- 3.1 That any agreed comments from the Executive Overview & Scrutiny Committee be considered.
- 3.2 That Cabinet approve the updated Safeguarding Policy and Reporting Procedure attached as Appendix 1 to this report.
- 3.3 That delegated authority be given to the Head of Planning and Regulatory Services in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder to make amendments to the Safeguarding Policy and Reporting Procedure Holder during the lifetime of the document.

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Safeguarding, in the context of this report, is how agencies and organisations working with children and vulnerable adults take all reasonable measures to ensure the risks of harm to the individual's welfare are minimised. Section 11 of the Children's Act 2004 places duties on a range of organisations and individuals to ensure their functions, and any services that they contract out to others, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Similarly, Section 2 of the Care Act requires Local Authorities to ensure that the wellbeing and the rights of adults at risk must always be promoted and poor practice challenged.
- 4.2 Whilst this function is primarily the responsibility of Adult and/or Children services provided by Lancashire County Council, it is a statutory duty for all organisations, including the Council, that work with children and vulnerable adults to share the commitment and responsibilities of upper tier authorities in relation to the safeguarding requirements.
- 4.3 Under the Council's duty to comply with upper tier authorities in their safeguarding responsibilities, an annual Section 11 audit is undertaken. This audit contains information on how Council seeks to comply with the requirements to safeguard children and vulnerable adults.
- 4.4 The Council's arrangements for safeguarding are therefore contained in its Safeguarding Policy 2019.

5.0 CURRENT POSITION

- 5.1 Having reviewed previous Section 11 Audit submissions and the 2019 version of the Policy, it was felt appropriate to seek input from various sections of the Council to confirm that the previously stated position remains valid.
- 5.2 This exercise highlighted that more work was needed to:
- Update the Council's Safeguarding Policy.
 - Formalise staff training at all levels, dependent upon their interaction with children and/or vulnerable adults.
 - Ensure suitable corporate participation in safeguarding meetings at County level.
 - Raise awareness of the Policy and how to respond to concerns.
 - Review the Section 11 Audit to determine any future actions.

6.0 ISSUES

Safeguarding Policy

- 6.1 An updated draft version of the Policy is attached to this report, which includes a concise reporting procedure. The document replaces the 2019 version and has been subject to consultation with those members of staff that are named in the Policy.

Staff training

- 6.2 In order to comply with the minimum requirement of the Section 11 Audit, all staff are required to complete Level 1 safeguarding training. Level 1 training has been offered to all staff via the Council's new e-learning platform as a mandatory requirement. A 'toolbox talk' will also be developed and delivered to operational staff.
- 6.3 For those staff who have significant unsupervised access to children, young adults and/or vulnerable adults, Level 2 training is deemed necessary. This will primarily impact on Leisure Services and particularly the insourcing of relevant staff. A training needs analysis is required to highlight the number of staff employed by the Council who would be required to complete Level 2 training. Level 3 training is also typically undertaken by the Lead District Safeguarding Officer [and deputy]. As the named Officers are new to these roles, this training has been arranged at the earliest opportunity, which is September 2023.

Corporate participation in County safeguarding meetings.

- 6.4 The updated Policy states the names of lead officers who will ensure appropriate participation in such meetings.

Raise awareness of the Policy

- 6.5 As part of the Section 11 review [stated below], routine communication will be provided to all staff on the requirements of the Policy. This will be facilitated by those named members of staff withing the Policy.

Review the Section 11 Audit

- 6.6 The Section 11 audit template will be used to determine future actions to ensure the adequacy of the Council's safeguarding arrangements.

7.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The adoption of an updated Safeguarding Policy, as well as the review of the Section 11 Audit [and associated action plan] will aim to ensure that Council is compliant with statutory safeguarding responsibilities.

8.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Much of the issues in this report can be addressed within existing resources; however, additional resources will be identified following the completion of the training needs analysis and the Section 11 action plan. At this stage it is anticipated that the total cost of all external training would not exceed £3k and be met from the corporate training budget.

9.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

9.1 Safeguarding is a statutory responsibility for Local Authorities, and whether directly through its own actions and operations or indirectly through a duty to support and share the commitment and responsibilities of the upper tier authority, a failure to comply with the safeguarding regulations could result in legal action against the Council.

10.0 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Appropriate safeguarding measures link directly to the health and wellbeing of those relevant individuals who use, or are affected by, Council services.

Background Documents

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

Equality Impact Assessment

This report does not have any direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Safeguarding Policy and Reporting Procedure 2023