

Safeguarding Policy Refresh

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| Final Decision-Maker | CHE |
| Lead Head of Service | John Littlemore, Head of Housing & Community Services |
| Lead Officer and Report Author | Hannah Gaston, Policy & Information Manager |
| Classification | Public |
| Wards affected | All |

Executive Summary

For the CHE Committee to endorse the refreshed and reviewed Policy for Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk (Appendix 1). The policy has been streamlined to be more succinct and pertinent to the requirements of a local district council's level of responsibility.

Secondly, to agree to review the Safeguarding concerns raised through the new collection database tool on SharePoint. This will help to give overview of themes and trends coming through from our community, thus helping shape future services and support offers.

Purpose of Report

Decision

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the refreshed safeguarding policy is adopted
2. To review safeguarding data collected across the organisation in twelve months

Timetable

| Meeting | Date |
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| Community, Housing and Environment Committee | Tuesday 6 April 2021 |

Safeguarding Policy Refresh

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

| Issue | Implications | Sign-off |
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| Impact on Corporate Priorities | <p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe, Clean and Green <p>Accepting the recommendations will materially improve the Council's ability to achieve these. We have set out the reasons other choices will be less effective in section 2.</p> | Head of Housing & Community Services |
| Cross Cutting Objectives | <p>The report recommendation(s) supports the achievement(s) of the Health Inequalities and deprivation and social mobility are cross cutting objectives by enabling all those who touch our services to be provided with a robust Safeguarding response if required.</p> | Head of Housing & Community Services |
| Risk Management | <p>Already covered in the risk section.</p> | Head of Housing & Community Services |
| Financial | <p>The proposals set out in the recommendation are all within already approved budgetary headings and so need no new funding for implementation.</p> | Section 151 Officer & Finance Team |
| Staffing | <p>We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.</p> | Head of Housing & Community Services |
| Legal | <p>Accepting the recommendations will fulfil the Council's duties under the Care Act 2014 and the Children Act 2004.</p> | Legal Team |
| Privacy and Data Protection | <p>Accepting the recommendations will increase the volume of data held by the Council. We will hold that data in line with our retention schedules.</p> | Policy and Information Team |

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| Equalities | The Equalities Impact Assessment was revisited as part of the Policy revision. | Senior Policy & Engagement Officer |
| Public Health | We recognise that the recommendations will not negatively impact on population health or that of individuals. | Senior Public Health Officer |
| Crime and Disorder | The recommendation will have a negative impact on Crime and Disorder. The Community Protection Team have been consulted and mitigation has been proposed | Head of Housing & Community Services |
| Procurement | No procurement activity required for this recommendation to be implemented. | Head of Housing & Community Services |

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Safeguarding policy was initially written in 2016 in response to a recommendation made by Mid-Kent Audit who undertook an internal audit in 2015. That policy was again updated in 2019 but at nearly 50 pages long was well informed but challenging for staff, volunteers and others to navigate.
- 2.2 The refresh in 2020 was a response to feedback from the Safeguarding Champions, and a change of the Designated Safeguarding Officer. The policy has been reduced to 21 pages and is more pertinent for our responsibility for safeguarding as a local district council. The overall statutory responsibility for safeguarding lies with Kent County Council, but all districts and other professionals are an important part of safeguarding processes and the overall model.
- 2.3 The refreshed policy also has an updated flow chart/process map at the front to help Officers to seek the best route for reporting concerns.
- 2.4 Over the past ten to twelve months we have been refreshing not only the policy but also the Champions meeting and training. We have recruited new champions into the programme and have regular champions meetings and group supervision.
- 2.5 We also have developed a training schedule for those champions and moving forward we will be seeking to expand this training to the wider organisation.
- 2.6 Representatives from MBC also attend the Kent and Medway Safeguarding Adults Board and the Kent Safeguarding Children Multiagency Partnership, which is chaired by Alison Broom.

- 2.7 Finally, the Sharepoint central data collection point has been remodelled to again bring it up to date for requirements, and shrinking the amount of non-essential data collected. Alongside this a privacy notice has been issued on the MBC website which covers off our GDPR obligations.
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3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 To make no changes and continue to use the previous policy from 2019 which is very long winded and cumbersome to navigate. This is not the recommended route.
- 3.2 For the committee to endorse the refreshed and reviewed policy (dated January 2021) with immediate effect. Review the Safeguarding alerts raised internally via the Sharepoint system in April 2022 so Officers and members may see any themes or challenges arising from this. These findings can then be used to shape policy and services.
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4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Our preferred option is for the committee to endorse the refreshed policy. This speaks to our aspirations of having a functional and practical robust response to safeguarding across the Council.
- 4.2 The policy is succinct and doesn't over burden the reader with information which is not pertinent for a district council obligations when managing a safeguarding concern or alert.
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5. RISK

- 5.1 It is important that all customer facing organisations especially those that provide some level of social services have a Safeguarding Policy which is clear, concise and easy to understand. The refreshed version will enable the Council to fulfil its obligations and to support the safety of our local community.
- 5.2 Through the Safeguarding Champions meetings, we are trying to mitigate all potential risks and ensure staff are effectively and confidentially trained to provide a robust response to any concerns raised internally.

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 None to report
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7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 If the Committee endorses the policy, this will then be circulated to Safeguarding Champions to be discussed at the next Champions meeting. Also we will upload the document on to our MBC inter and intranet to ensure maximum coverage.
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8. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

Appendix 1: Policy for Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk

Appendix 2: Draft safeguarding briefing note for staff
