

This Report will be made public on 8 October 2019

Report Number **C/19/32**

To: Cabinet
Date: 16th October 2019
Status: Non Key Decision
Assistant Director: Charlotte Spendley- Assistant Director – Finance, , Customer & Support Services
Cabinet Member: Cllr Jennifer Hollingsbee, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communities.

SUBJECT: Refresh of the Council's Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy 2019

SUMMARY: The Council is part of the statutory safeguarding role within the wider public sector, with responsibilities to children, young people and vulnerable adults. The safeguarding policy of the Council has been updated and is attached at Appendix 1. A review of safeguarding activity and current status is presented in Appendix 2.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

Cabinet is asked to agree the recommendations set out below:

- a) The Safeguarding Policy is required to be refreshed every 2 years and the last review took place in September 2017.
- b) There have been some significant changes in practice and new legislation impacting on the Council's safeguarding responsibilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- a. To note report C/19/32.
- b. To approve the refreshed safeguarding policy for adoption by the Council (Appendix 1).
- c. To note the breadth of activity carried out around safeguarding in the review at Appendix 2.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places a statutory duty on key organisations to ensure that, in discharging their functions, they have regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Similar obligations apply to young people, up to the age of 21, and vulnerable adults.
- 1.2 The Council is part of the statutory safeguarding role within the wider public sector, with responsibilities to children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- 1.3 The safeguarding policy was last published in September 2017 and is subject to a review on a 2 yearly cycle. Since the policy was last published there have been some significant changes to legislation and additional responsibilities placed on organisations including Local Authorities to address the changing trends in safeguarding matters.
- 1.4 This report highlights the changes made to the 2017 policy, and the Council's response to those in terms of practice.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The corporate safeguarding function currently sits in Communities, largely due to expertise and close synergies with community safety and related partnership activity. The function ensures the Council is fulfilling its duties through a coordinated approach across departments utilising staff in key roles (e.g. trained Designated Officers (DOs) for safeguarding and to support training needs), as well as reporting to the previous Kent Safeguarding Children's Board (KSCB) which has recently changed to the Kent Safeguarding Children Multi Agency Partnership (KSCMP) arrangements and detailed in section 2.2 below. This report presents the revised policy (Appendix 1) , looks at the changes since the last safeguarding policy was refreshed, and provides an update on the Council's safeguarding activity (in the form of a review at Appendix 2)
- 2.2 The Kent Safeguarding Childrens Board (KSCB) has been replaced with the Kent Safeguarding Children Multi –agency Partnership (KSCMP) Arrangements as a result of the Wood Review in December 2015. This is a significant change and is therefore highlighted in the revised policy and detailed in section 3.0 below.
- 2.3 The policy also reflects changes to how safeguarding concerns are referred / reported as well as providing updated contact details. Links to key documents and a revised list of staff responsible for supporting safeguarding was necessary due to the number of previously trained staff that have now left the organisation since the last policy was written.
- 2.4 There is an ongoing programme of training for staff, members and designated safeguarding leads and there is a need to ensure all measures are in place to ensure appropriate training is delivered to all staff and members.

3. SIGNIFICANT CHANGES TO THE POLICY

- 3.1 This policy takes into account the arrangements at County level and the requirements of the Kent and Medway Adult Safeguarding Board (KMASB) and the new recent arrangements that have replaced Local Safeguarding Boards for children.
- 3.2 In December 2015, the Government asked Sir Alan Wood to undertake a review into effectiveness of Local Safeguarding Children's Boards (LSCBs). His review, (published in May 2016), concluded that LSCBs did not work effectively and should be abolished. The Wood review proposed a new model of collective working that would ensure better multi-agency collaboration, placing responsibilities on three key agencies to take a strategic lead on safeguarding and the promotion of child welfare in each local authority area. The Wood Review recommendations formed a core part of the Children and Social Work Act 2017.
- 3.3 Under the Children Act 2004, (as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017), LSCBs set up by Local Authorities had to be replaced. The revised legislation requires the three 'Safeguarding Partners' (the Local Authority, the Chief Officer of Police, and Clinical Commissioning Groups) to make arrangements to work together with relevant agencies, as they consider appropriate, to safeguard and protect the welfare of children in the area. District Councils are named as relevant authorities together with other agencies.
- 3.4 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018' and 'Working Together: transitional guidance 2018' statutory documents, set out further structural requirements for the proposed new multi-agency local safeguarding partnership arrangements. The legislation and Working Together require the three Safeguarding Partners to discharge a 'shared and equal duty' to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. These arrangements had to be published by the 29th June 2019 and implemented by the 29th September 2019. The KSCB website has transitioned across to a new Partnership website www.kscmp.org.uk.
- 3.5 In Kent the arrangements are now taking shape and new structures for sub groups are being formulated with appropriate District Council leads being appointed to them.
- 3.6 Since the last Policy was published there has been a change to reporting processes to KCC. All key staff have been trained on this and this encompasses use of a Single Request for Support Form managed through a new front door system operated by KCC. Advice can be sought from KCC where it is unclear what to do through a District conversation via KCC's early help teams.
- 3.7 The Policy is also updated as new safeguarding demands have emerged with threats of suicide and mental health issues presenting themselves creating additional complexity to safeguarding concerns received. As a result a guide to support services has been produced and this is touched upon in

the Policy with some information presented in Appendix 3 of the Policy itself. The full guide is now available on the intranet.

- 3.8 A summary of safeguarding activity is attached in the form of an annual review at Appendix 2 and includes additional updates e.g. the changes made to the intranet, new training information and a new support guide to services to help sign post vulnerable people to the right services.

4. CONCLUSION

The Council has a good track record in meeting its safeguarding obligations and the adoption of this refreshed policy will ensure that statutory requirements are met and that processes and practices are up to date in dealing with safeguarding matters. It is therefore recommended that Cabinet approve the policy for adoption by the Council.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Perceived risk	Seriousness	Likelihood	Preventative action
Policy not approved by Cabinet and this will result in Council failing in it's duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults	High	Low	To approve and adopt the Policy

6. CONTACT OFFICERS AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Councillors with any questions arising out of this report should contact the following officers prior to the meeting:

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