

Report to: **Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

Date: **23rd January 2019**

Title: **Safeguarding Policy**

Portfolio Area: **Corporate Services**

Wards Affected: **All**

Relevant Scrutiny Committee: N/A

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

Date next steps can be taken:
Recommendations 2 and 3 will be presented to the Executive at its meeting on 6 February 2020

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RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Overview and Scrutiny Panel:

- 1. continue to formally review safeguarding annually;**

RECOMMEND to the Executive that:

- 2. the revised safeguarding policy dated January 2020 (Appendix A) be adopted; and**
- 3. a viability study be undertaken regarding DBS checks for all Members, with the outcome of this study being reported back to a future Overview and Scrutiny Panel meeting.**

1. Executive summary

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with the opportunity to annually scrutinise and review Safeguarding practise and procedure following recommendations from Internal Audit in October 2017 that Safeguarding should be highlighted as a stand-alone topic due to its complexity.

2. Background

Following Overview and Scrutiny recommendations in February 2019, Members agreed to review an updated Safeguarding Policy (appendix A) and also to review and scrutinise safeguarding practise and procedures on an annual basis.

The Audit Partnership has listed the next Safeguarding Internal Audit for 2020/21. The previous internal audit undertaken in 2017/8 resulted in an overall GOOD outcome. This was published with Overview and Scrutiny papers in 2018/9.

3. Outcomes/outputs

The Safeguarding Specialist meets with other District Council Safeguarding Leads on a quarterly basis to share good practice and meet with both the Devon Adult and Children Safeguarding Boards to ensure that compliance continues and areas of emerging threat and risk are known, then mitigated through work with Devon County Council or within South Hams District Council (SHDC) In 2019/20 risks identified and emerging around young people outside of the home have resulted in the Adolescent Safety Framework (ASF.) Traditionally Social Care work with young people at risk within the household, however intelligence has shown the increasing extra-familial risk of young people, these are risks outside of the household such as County Lines and Exploitation. The Safeguarding Specialist has been part of a working group led by Devon County Council in introducing the ASF and Contextual Safeguarding. Contextual Safeguarding is an approach to safeguarding that responds to young people's experiences of harm outside of the home, for example with peers, in schools and in the community. There has been some overlap with the Safeguarding and Community Safety roles, the current specialist holds both roles.

The partnerships that South Hams District Council has between other agencies and partnerships are strong. The Safeguarding and Community Safety Specialist or another relevant member of staff such as Housing Specialists regularly attend and engage in these partnerships. They include:

1. The **Community Safety Partnership** who work strategically and operationally on themes such as Drug and Alcohol reduction, Vulnerability, Suicide and provide the Council and others with free courses on issues such as Exploitation.
2. **MARAC** (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) which risk manages residents who experience Domestic and Sexual Violence, demonstrate how essential partnership working is.
3. **The Devon and Torbay Prevent Partnership** (Counter Terrorism) is also a close working partner, the safeguarding specialist is also South Hams District Council Prevent Lead and receives regular updates on any terror threats in our area and the latest updates and recommendations for local councils, including online security. Recently the Senior Leadership Team received a

briefing from the Counter Terrorism Advisor for the South West facilitated by the Specialist.

4. **Devon and Children's Family Partnership** (previously known as the Safeguarding Children's Board) and the **Devon Safeguarding Adults Board** remain close partners and the safeguarding specialist meets on a quarterly basis with both of these boards as part of the Devon District Safeguarding Officers Network where good practice is developed and shared.

In 2019 a safeguarding report management system was created with the specialist and team members from ICT. The report is able to highlight types of referral, the referring department, the type of concern, differentiation between adult and child referrals and will be helpful in providing strategic overview and to identify areas of training as required. The report holds very sensitive information, therefore only two staff members currently have access to this report. Whilst the report is helpful, but does not demonstrate the time spent with clients (particularly those adults who are suicidal) who do not wish to be referred to specialist services or those children who are already part of a Child Protection Plan. It covers referrals to social care that staff at SHDC make.

The breadth of safeguarding referrals and queries being highlighted from staff other than the "traditional" routes housing staff, continues to increase. Staff from building enforcement, planning, environmental health and customer services, in addition to housing staff, have all highlighted issues. This directly correlates to staff briefings, bite size training and regular updates and information in the Friday Flash. Raising awareness of safeguarding to our staff, supporting vulnerable people in our communities and signposting where appropriate will continue as part of daily business.

4. Options available and consideration of risk

Safeguarding by its very nature carries a degree of risk. The client group is vulnerable and sometimes chaotic.

SHDC minimise these risks by the ongoing training of staff, safeguarding champions who have expert knowledge, close working relationships with agencies such as the police and the procedures put in place.

SHDC is proactive in projects and staff training. Members have requested and received briefings on themes such as County Lines, Child Sexual Exploitation, Domestic Violence and Abuse and how to report / who to report to. All of which are helping to raise awareness on safeguarding providing a top down approach.

1. The Suicide Intervention Toolkit arose due to the increase in calls received by Council staff from members of the public who advised staff that they were thinking of suicide.
2. Exploitation workshops have been held for staff and other agencies in November 2019 which provide information and reporting advice on all areas of exploitation.

3. Dementia awareness and closer working with SHDC and the Alzheimer's Society has begun, showing SHDC commitment in responding to local risks around an aging population. Recent meetings with SHDC Members have resulted in preparation of a report to Full Council on 19th December 2019 to propose that SHDC aims to work to becoming a Dementia Friendly Council. This work will be led by the safeguarding specialist.
4. Online e-learning package for safeguarding adults is now part of the training suite and has recently been highlighted to staff to complete. This will become a mandatory course in the future.
5. The child version of the same package will come online in January 2020 and will be highlighted to staff accordingly. This will also become mandatory.

5. Proposed Way Forward

Members are required to review the revised safeguarding policy (Appendix A) and adopt this as the new policy.

Members are requested to confirm that Safeguarding be included on the annual work plan for Overview and Scrutiny committee.

Should Members have suggestions for items to be considered in the next report then they should advise the safeguarding specialist accordingly.

Member training in safeguarding requires ongoing support.

E-learning package for safeguarding children to come online in January 2020 and sit as part of the training suite, Members are requested to support this as mandatory for all staff and Members to complete.

6. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	To support ongoing training for staff and members to further highlight safeguarding in all its forms.
Legal/Governance		Crime and Disorder Act 1998 The Children Act 2004 Section 9 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004). The Care Act 2014 Anti-Social Behaviour , Crime & Policing Act 2014 Modern Slavery Act 2015
Financial		Minimal training budget required for safeguarding leads and some specialist housing staff. Safeguarding lead will then train non specialist staff to an appropriate level.

Risk		The report is for information and as such there is no risk associated with decisions to set out.
Supporting Corporate Strategy		Communities, Wellbeing
Climate Change – Carbon / Biodiversity Impact		No direct carbon/diversity impact arising from the recommendations
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity		Safeguarding legislation and WDBC procedures are applied in conjunction with equality and diversity standards.
Safeguarding		Safeguarding standards, information and signposting is open to residents, customers AND staff of SHDC.
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		Where safeguarding crosses with community safety and crime issues the safeguarding specialist will liaise with the community safety specialist.
Health, Safety and Wellbeing		The safeguarding lead works closely with public health and other partners on health and wellbeing issues including drugs, suicide, trafficking.
Other implications		n/a

Appendices:

A: Draft Safeguarding Policy

Background Documents:

None.