

**Bolsover District Council**

**Executive**

**25<sup>th</sup> April 2016**

**Safeguarding Adults and Child Protection update and Policies**

**Report of the Executive Director - Transformation**

This report is public

**Purpose of the Report**

- To seek members approval on changes to the Child Protection Policy and the introduction of a new Safeguarding Adults Policy.
- To update members on activity around Safeguarding for both vulnerable adults and children.
- To provide an overview of the county wide Vulnerable Adults Risk Management panels (VARM) and the Council's involvement in this process.

**1 Report Details**

- 1.1 In August 2013, Executive approved the Council's revised Child Protection Policy. A further revision to this Policy has now been completed to take into account recent changes and guidance from Derbyshire County Council and the development of a "script" for improved safeguarding referrals (please refer to **Appendix A**). The Adult Safeguarding Policy has also been developed and has been included for Members consideration (please refer to **Appendix B**). The policies will ensure that the Council has the right policy framework in place to assist in discharging its safeguarding duties effectively.
- 1.2. Since the last update report Safeguarding Link Officers have been amended this reflects changes in duties and focus of various officers. The Safeguarding Link Officers are currently:
- Paul Hackett – Corporate Lead Officer, Joint Executive Director - Transformation
  - Deborah Whallett – Lead Safeguarding Link Officer (Child)
  - Diane Bonsor – Lead Safeguarding Link Officer (Adults)
  - Dawn Clarke – Joint Assistant Director Finance and Revenues and Benefits
  - Lee Hickin – Joint Assistant Director Leisure
  - Janice Bartrop – HR Officer
  - Melanie Osborne – Senior Parenting Practitioner
  - Alison Donohoe – Customer Services Manager

- 1.3 A joint Corporate Safeguarding Officer Group incorporating BDC, NEDDC and Rykneld Homes meets on a bi-monthly basis to ensure that activity around safeguarding is co-ordinated and that staff and members are aware of the appropriate processes.
- 1.4 As part of the current process for publicising these policies, information is available via ERIC and a dedicated safeguarding page is available. However, upon the adoption of the new Policies by Members, further comprehensive guidance and referral forms will be made available on ERIC.
- 1.5. Other activities to raise awareness of safeguarding have included:
- A revision to the staff quick reference cards which detail signs of abuse, how to refer and contact details for all Safeguarding Link Officers is in the process of being distributed to all staff and Members.
  - Dedicated Safeguarding page on ERIC which will be updated with details of the new Child and Adults Safeguarding Policies upon adoption.
  - Regular bulletins on ERIC.
  - Vulnerable Adults Risk Management (VARM) training has been provided by DCC and DFRS to relevant staff.
  - Safeguarding awareness training has been held throughout 2015 and 8 further sessions were delivered from January to March 2016.
    - 96 Bolsover District Council employees attended the first tranche of Safeguarding awareness training. Attendance at the further training included 16 Members and a further 55 employees.
    - Other individual training has also been undertaken by appropriate officers e.g. VARM training
  - A Licensing visit to Oxford City (November 2015) took place with Members and officers to learn best practice following the Oxford serious case review into child sexual exploitation (CSE). As a result of this visit the licensing website and taxi licensing tests have been altered to accommodate lessons learned from this experience. This visit reassured officers that the Council is taking the right action to help prevent CSE. Oxford City have requested some of our safeguarding materials to improve their own services.
  - CSE presentation by Adele Gladman at full Council in July 2015
  - The Council also uses the Section 11 Audit tool regularly to assess its safeguarding procedures. Section 11 refers to this area of the Children's Act 2004 which places a duty on all organisations who work with children and young people, to ensure that they have arrangements in place that reflect the importance of safeguarding.
  - Following a request from Executive Director – Transformation Internal Audit have also been scheduled to undertake an audit on our safeguarding procedures to obtain some external perspective.

## **1.6 Vulnerable Adult Risk Management Meeting (VARM)**

The Derbyshire Safeguarding Adults Board has developed the VARM Policy to provide professionals with a framework to facilitate effective multi agency working with vulnerable adults who are deemed to have mental capacity and who are at risk of serious harm. These are vulnerable adults who do not meet DCC's Safeguarding Adults process but who do need to be considered and risk assessed via another process. It doesn't replace other existing processes such as the Mental Health Act or MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Committee for domestic abuse case at risk of homicide).

The VARM process is a multi agency approach designed to discuss, identify and document high risk cases, and formulate an action plan identifying appropriate agency responsibility for actions. The VARM panel is chaired and coordinated by an initiating Officer.

Key agencies involved include Adult Safeguarding, Derbyshire Fire and Rescue, Derbyshire Constabulary, Environmental Health Officers, Housing, Probation, Alcohol and Drug Services. Each agency is required to nominate VARM champions; at Bolsover District Council the officers below are the nominated VARM champions:

- Diane Bonsor – Housing Needs Manager
- Deborah Whallett – Housing Enforcement Manager

The Council has been increasingly involved in VARM cases since January 2014 and have often acted as the lead agency.

## **1.7 Referrals**

### VARM Referrals

Council Officers from the Housing Department, Community Safety Team and Environmental Health have or are still involved in 8 VARM meetings. The triggers for the VARMS have been wide ranging from unsuitable hazardous condition of property, vulnerability due to learning disability and mental health issues.

### Child Protection Referrals

Since January 2015 there have been 4 referrals to DCC regarding child protection issues. Child Safeguarding referrals were received from:

- Parenting Officer - 1
- Housing Officer – 2
- Elected Member - 1

### Adult Protection Referrals

Since January 2015 there have been 9 referrals to DCC regarding adult protection issues. Adult Safeguarding referrals were received from:

- Environmental Health - 1
- Domestic Abuse Officer - 2
- Housing Officer - 5
- Parenting Officer - 1

## **2 Conclusions and Reasons for Recommendation**

- 2.1 That the Child Protection Safeguarding Policy is working well, but needs to be updated in light of changes introduced by Derbyshire County Council and to reflect changes in good practice. Also as a result of the introduction of the Care Act (2014) and subsequent changes by Derbyshire County Council the introduction of a Safeguarding Adults Policy is required.

## **3 Consultation and Equality Impact**

- 3.1 The policies have been reviewed by appropriate safeguarding officers at Derbyshire County Council.

## **4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection**

- 4.1 None

## **5 Implications**

### **5.1 Finance and Risk Implications**

All Derbyshire County Council multi agency training on safeguarding is free of charge. Though it should be noted that costs would be incurred for travel and potentially some back filling of roles for staff who were attending training.

### **5.2 Legal Implications including Data Protection**

The Council has a duty to ensure it places appropriate emphasis on safeguarding both Children and Vulnerable Adults through various pieces of legislation. The main legislation for these policy areas are the Children's Act 2004 and the Care Act 2014.

### **5.3 Human Resources Implications**

None

## **6 Recommendations**

- 6.1 That members approve the new Safeguarding Adults Policy and the revised Child Protection Safeguarding policy.
- 6.2 That members note the Vulnerable Adults Risk Management (VARM) information.
- 6.3 That the report is noted.

**7 Decision Information**

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| <b>Is the decision a Key Decision?</b><br>(A Key Decision is one which results in income or expenditure to the Council of £50,000 or more or which has a significant impact on two or more District wards) | No  |
| <b>District Wards Affected</b>   | All |
| <b>Links to Corporate Plan priorities or Policy Framework</b>  |     |

**8 Document Information**

| <b>Appendix No</b>   | <b>Title</b>   |
|--|--|
| A<br>B   | Child Protection Policy<br>Adult Safeguarding Policy |
| <b>Background Papers</b> (These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Cabinet (NEDDC) or Executive (BDC) you must provide copies of the background papers) |  |
|  |  |
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