

Bolsover, Chesterfield and North East Derbyshire District Councils'

Internal Audit Consortium

Internal Audit Report

Authority:	Chesterfield Borough Council
Subject:	Safeguarding
Date of Issue:	24th May 2017

Report Distribution:	Executive Director Policy & Communications Manager
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INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

POLICY & COMMUNICATIONS

SAFEGUARDING

Introduction

An internal audit review of the procedures relating to Safeguarding arrangements in operation has recently been undertaken to ensure that the Council is compliant in their safeguarding duties and responsibilities.

Scope and Objectives

The primary objectives of the review were to confirm: -

- Safeguarding, Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults Risk Management policies are in place.
- That lead officer and key contacts are designated and responsibilities assigned.
- That adequate training programmes have been established.
- Whether a Section 11 audits has been completed.
- Procedures are in place to record and process cases referred.
- Recruitment policies include safeguarding arrangements.
- DBS checks are completed for designated posts.
- Safeguarding issues are fully embedded within procurement practices.
- Information sharing and interagency working arrangements are in place.
- Safeguarding case recording is effectively secured.
- Details of serious case reviews are obtained and disseminated to increase awareness.

Conclusion

The conclusion of the audit was that the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements is **limited assurance** (Certain important controls are either not in place or not operating effectively. There is a risk that the system may not achieve its objectives. Some key risks were not well managed).

It is acknowledged that the majority of issues have been identified by the Policy and Communications Manager and are detailed within the S11 self-assessment audit and if/when the actions required are completed this would result in an improved classification. (Appendix 1: Internal Audit Consortium Opinion Definitions)

Findings and Recommendations

Background:

1. Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places a statutory duty on key people and bodies including district councils to make arrangements to ensure that in discharging their functions they have regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. District councils contribute to the five outcomes of the government's vision for children's services – 'Every Child Matters', in several ways:
 - housing - preventing homelessness, providing supported accommodation for young parents and care leavers;
 - planning - providing appropriate play facilities in new housing developments, making road safety schemes child friendly;
 - culture, leisure and learning opportunities - for example: provision of local leisure centres, art, crèche and playgroup facilities, museums and theatres;
 - environmental health services - for example: promoting the health of children, particularly in relation to food hygiene and nutrition;
 - work on community safety and as a licensing authority;
 - roll-out of children's centres;
 - delivering benefits; and
 - local employment
2. In terms of vulnerable adults, upper tier councils have the statutory duty under the Care Act 2014 to establish Safeguarding Adult Boards and to lead a multi-agency local adult safeguarding system that seeks to prevent abuse and neglect and stop it quickly when it happens. The Council works as an agency within the Derbyshire Safeguarding Adults Board with representatives attending quarterly meetings
3. The range of situations where a safeguarding incident may occur is significant, from minor risks occurring as a result of an isolated case of poor practice through to major risks resulting from multiple allegations of abuse that involve or may impact upon multiple victims. To be effective, policies and procedures should provide clarification and guidance across a range of situations and allow incidents to be effectively categorised and investigated.

Previous Audit Recommendations

4. As this was the first audit review of safeguarding, no recommendations had previously been made

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies

5. The Safeguarding – Protecting Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedures was approved by the Joint Cabinet and General Committee in December 2015.
6. It is scheduled for review in December 2018 (3 years after introduction), with the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing having delegated authority to approve essential safeguarding policy and procedure amendments between the formal review periods.

7. The S11 self-assessment recently undertaken by the Policy and Communications Manager indicates a schedule review every 2 years.
8. It was also evidenced that the Policy and information regarding safeguarding is available on the Councils intranet site 'Aspire'
9. It is recognised that the Employee Code of Conduct is out of date and consequently does not refer to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This issue is highlighted within the S11 self-assessment audit, and has a target date of December 2017 to update the code of conduct to raise awareness. In addition the code is to be covered within induction training for all new starters (R3)
10. It was confirmed that the Councils Whistle Blowing Policy was updated in January 2016 and incorporates appropriate references to safeguarding policy and requirements

Lead Officer and Key Contacts

11. The Executive Director is the Senior Leadership Team lead for safeguarding with the Policy and Communications Manager the designated lead officer for safeguarding.
12. Safeguarding is not explicit within the job descriptions of the Executive Director nor the Policy and Communications Manager; however it is within their key responsibilities and service plan.
13. Safeguarding leads were identified for all service areas, with leads also identified with key partnership services (Arvato and Kier)
14. A review of safeguarding leads identified employees that had left and an omission in that the OSD didn't appear to have a safeguarding lead.
15. By discussion with the Policy and Communications Manager it was confirmed that due to restructures within the organisation an update to service level safeguarding roles is required
16. This issue has been identified and addressed on the S11 self- assessment audit concluded in April 2017 (R3)
17. A safeguarding group consisting of safeguarding leads has been formulated, however due to the restructures the last meeting was 29th November 2016. Again the membership will need review once the update to service level safeguarding roles is concluded. (addressed on the S11 self-assessment audit R3)
18. Scheduled quarterly meetings have been established in respect of 2017/18 with the next meeting scheduled for 24th May 2017.
19. It is anticipated that key messages, feedback and lessons learnt will be discussed at these meetings and any appropriate information disseminated accordingly.

20. A review of minutes confirms the above.

Recommendations	
R1	Consideration should be given to incorporating the overall responsibility for safeguarding within the job description of the Executive Director/Policy and Communications Manager. (Priority: Low)

Training

21. Level 2 training has been completed by both the Executive Director and the Policy and Communications Manager, who in turn have cascaded the information to appropriate safeguard leads.
22. In addition bespoke training courses (offered by DCC or Safer Derbyshire) are attended where appropriate.
23. During 2016/17, mandatory safeguarding training to Level 1 was initiated for all staff either via on-line training or attendance at briefing seminars. A review of statistics on numbers completing the training indicates that 62% of staff completed the training. (348 on-line plus 218 attendance at briefing session; payroll indicates number of employees as 910 (689 monthly paid and 221 weekly paid)
24. In addition the Policy and Communications Manager during June 2016 provided a core brief to Service Managers for use at team meetings
25. It was confirmed that the induction checklist incorporates a session on safeguarding to ensure all new starters are aware of the policy.
26. The S11 self-assessment highlights that further training may be required once the review of safeguarding leads is concluded (R3).
27. In addition it was anticipated that mandatory safeguarding for all staff will be available on the new e-learning system in May 2017, which would assist in monitoring and ensuring that staff have completed the training. Refresher training then being required on a 3 yearly basis.
28. The target date of May 2017 is unlikely to be achieved due to the additional workload within the service as a result of elections.
29. It was confirmed that mandatory Information Security Training has been loaded onto the Aspire Learning module with a completion date of 9th May 2017 for all users.

Recommendation	
R2	It is essential that training is adequately monitored to ensure all appropriate employees undertake necessary training within the given timescales (i.e. Information Security Training, Safeguard Training) (Priority: Medium)

Section 11 Self-Assessment

- 30. It was confirmed that a S11 self-assessment has been completed in March 2017 and the points raised will be discussed at the Safeguarding Officers group.
- 31. A review of the S11 self-assessment concludes that the majority of issues identified during the course of the audit have been highlighted with appropriate action to be taken
- 32. In addition Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Board has recently requested completion of the Strategic and Organisational Self-Assessment S11 Audit Tool, which the Policy and Communications Manager has completed and returned on the 24th April 2017.

Recommendation	
R3	It is essential that the issues identified within the S11 self-assessment are addressed within the timescales indicated by the Policy and Communications Manager (Priority: High)

Procedures for Recording and Processing Cases

- 33. Details of all cases are held on the Councils 'S' Drive. It was confirmed with IT that access to the folder is restricted specifically to designated officers within the Policy Service
- 34. As the folder is maintained on the server, the contingency and back up arrangements are in place as with all other systems data.
- 35. No specific cases were reviewed during the audit

Recruitment and DBS checks

- 36. A report is being prepared in respect of providing an update as a review of Disclosure and Barring Service checks across the Council
- 37. The review details job roles and posts and the level of check currently undertaken and the level of check required to comply with the DBS Code of Practice
- 38. The report is still in draft stage, but is hoped will be presented to CMT/SLT in the near future, and has been identified on the S11 self-assessment with a target completion time of September 2017 (R3)

Procurement Practices

- 39. The Authority does not currently have a procurement strategy.
- 40. It is envisaged that there will be a Joint Procurement Strategy with the NHS Procurement team

41. It was established that the NHS Procurement Unit are reviewing their documentation to incorporate a clause in respect of safeguarding within the standard documents
42. To ensure agreement with CBC the NHS Procurement Unit have contacted CBC legal team, who are currently reviewing CBC contract documentation and have agreed to send the NHS copy documentation to replace existing on completion. The legal team objective is to capture a phrase which covers compliance with all Council policies which may then be utilised for all Council contracts
43. In instances where goods/services are procured direct by a service, the service needs to potentially add to the industry standard terms and conditions any supplementary Local Government T&C' such as compliance with policies e.g. safeguarding

Recommendation	
R4	<p>The Safeguarding Lead Officer should liaise with relevant parties to :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that the procurement strategy being prepared incorporates adequate reference to 'safeguarding' • ensure that on conclusion of the legal review of CBC contract documentation, any revisions (in particular reference to safeguarding) is disseminated to all relevant parties. • provide a procedure that where contract documentation is not in place, contractors are aware and accept responsibilities in relation to safeguarding <p>(Priority: High)</p>

Hire Contracts

44. It was confirmed that the standard hire contract with regard to Venues incorporates appropriate wording in respect of safeguarding
45. A review of hire contracts in respect of the Leisure Centre (QPSC) identified that safeguarding was contained within the Insurance Arrangements and relates solely to DBS checks.
46. Discussion with a small number of employees(across three service areas) as to the process of how to process any potential concerns in respect of safeguarding varied from referral to the Council's safeguarding policy and guidelines, to input on the Councils SHE (Health and Safety system) with an e-mail direct to the Policy and Communications Manager
47. It is noted that the S11 self-assessment refers to a poster to be developed and displayed in all CBC and partner staffing areas which will include referral routes and information sharing, and is an example of learning from 'best practice' at other Derbyshire Authorities (R3)

Recommendations	
R5	It would be prudent to review the hire terms and conditions with the objective of ensuring the adequacy of the safeguarding clauses and ensuring consistency across services (Priority: Low)
R6	Safeguarding needs to be further embedded within the Authority to ensure all employees are aware of the procedure to follow should safeguarding issues arise (Priority: Medium)

Information Sharing and Interagency Working

48. The CBC safeguarding group has Terms of Reference and key objectives which includes identify, support and share best practice on safeguarding and related emerging issues, feeding into and from key relationships
49. The S11 self-assessment has identified that there is an opportunity to improve the timing of CBC safeguarding group meetings to coincide with Derbyshire level activity and to learn form best practice at other Derbyshire Authorities (R3)
50. It was confirmed that the Executive Director attends the Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Board
51. BDC and Amber Valley BC represent the District Councils at Derbyshire Safeguarding Adults Board. Safeguarding Leads at all Districts are consulted and given access to agenda and papers prior to the meeting taking place so that they can raise any issues. In addition there is feedback and access to minutes
52. The role of the District Councils is to refer safeguarding adult and child cases on to DCC Social Services and the Police as appropriate as they are the lead organisations with the responsibility for investigation and case management. District Councils' responsibilities are discharged upon notification of the case to the lead organisations

Acknowledgement

53. The auditor would like to thank the Policy and Communications Manager for her helpful assistance during the audit

Internal Audit Consortium Opinion Definitions

Assurance Level	Definition
Substantial Assurance	There is a sound system of controls in place, designed to achieve the system objectives. Controls are being consistently applied and risks well managed.
Reasonable Assurance	The majority of controls are in place and operating effectively, although some control improvements are required. The system should achieve its objectives. Risks are generally well managed.
Limited Assurance	Certain important controls are either not in place or not operating effectively. There is a risk that the system may not achieve its objectives. Some key risks were not well managed.
Inadequate Assurance	There are fundamental control weaknesses, leaving the system/service open to material errors or abuse and exposes the Council to significant risk. There is little assurance of achieving the desired objectives.

Internal Audit Report – Implementation Schedule

Report Title:		Safeguarding				Report Date:		24 th May 2017	
						Response Due By Date:		15th June 2017	
Recommendations		Priority (High, Medium, Low)	Agreed	To be Implemented By:		Disagreed	Further Discussion Required	Comments	
				Officer	Date				
R1	Consideration should be given to incorporating the overall responsibility for safeguarding within the job description of the Executive Director/Policy and Communications Manager.	L	In part	MR	Sept 2017			Safeguarding has been identified within the SLT key responsibilities document as being assigned to an Executive Director. The Policy and Communications Manager JD to include Safeguarding.	
R2	It is essential that training is adequately monitored to ensure all appropriate employees undertake necessary training within the given timescales (i.e. Information Security Training, Safeguard Training)	M	Agreed	HR	Mar 2018			Information security training has now been completed. Safeguarding training will be in the next tranche for aspire learning.	
R3	It is essential that the issues identified within the S11 self-assessment are addressed within the timescales indicated by the Policy and Communications Manager	H	Agreed	DR	Mar 2018				

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Please tick the appropriate response (✓) and give comments for all recommendations not agreed.

Signed Head of Service:	Donna Reddish – Policy and Communications Manager	Date:	15.06.17
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Note: In respect of any High priority recommendations please forward evidence of their implementation to internal audit as soon as possible.