

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 27 MARCH 2012
title: SAFEGUARDING POLICY & PROCEDURES
submitted by: JOHN HEAP, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
principal author: CHRIS HUGHES, HEAD OF CULTURAL & LEISURE SERVICES

1 PURPOSE

To ask Committee to endorse the adoption of the enclosed document, relating to the Council's role in safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

2 RELEVANCE TO THE COUNCIL'S AMBITIONS AND PRIORITIES

- **Council Ambitions** – The contents of this report contribute to the Council's ambitions for making people's lives safer and healthier
- **Community Objectives** – Access for all, community cohesion, community safety and improving the health and well being of local people
- **Corporate Priorities** - Equality and equal access to services.
- Other Considerations - None

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Borough Council has had a Child Protection policy in place for a number of years, but this has mainly focussed on the work of culture/leisure staff who, traditionally, have had the greatest access to children as part of their work.
- 3.2 In more recent years, the role of the Council has expanded, and it is now involved in a range of partnership activities that have a connection with children and vulnerable adults, for example, Crime Reduction, Health & Wellbeing Partnerships, and Children's Trusts.
- 3.3 The Council was recently contacted by Lancashire Safeguarding Children's Board, along with NHS East Lancashire, and asked to review our policies and procedures in line with good practice within the sector. The audit was difficult to interpret at the time, as it was written for services whose main focus was the care of children and adults. Having said that, it did raise a number of areas where our own policies/ procedures needed updating.
- 3.4 The need for more robust procedures is even more urgent within our current arrangements with East Lancashire, where we are commissioned to deliver a range of healthy lifestyle programmes. Robust safe guideline policies are now a requirement under future contracts.

4 CURRENT SITUATION

- 4.1 Irrespective of the expectations of external parties, it would be good practice to review all our policies and practices to ensure they reflect good practice within the sector.

- 4.2 With this in mind, the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committee took on the task of reviewing the Council's approach to Safeguarding. At their meeting on 31 January 2012, a draft policy was discussed, along with an action plan that would address actions that were required to implement the policies. The action plan identified the following issues, how they should be addressed, and a timetable for their implementation. The action plan (enclosed) has since been discussed by appropriate officers, and endorsed by the Council's Corporate Management Team.
- 4.3 The main underpinning document is the proposed Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults Policy & Procedures that sets out definitions, required action in the event of an incident, and the main points of contact. As an appendix to the policy, there are also a range of good practice guides that advise on specific issues.
- 4.4 A new safeguarding section will be set up on the Council's intranet, where staff will be able to access advice and support on all safeguarding issues.

5 RISK ASSESSMENT

The approval of this report may have the following implications:

- **Resources** – There are no direct financial implications
- **Technical, Environmental and Legal** – Although not a legal document, the revised policy/procedures are needed to satisfy contractual arrangements, and would support any actions if an incident were to occur.
- **Political** – Not having robust safeguarding arrangements could exclude the Council from future partnership arrangements.
- **Reputation** – The report demonstrates the Council is taking a leadership role on safeguarding within the Ribble Valley

6 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

6.1 Notes the contents of the report and enclosed Action Plan.

6.2 Agrees to the adoption of the enclosed Safeguarding Policy / Procedures.

JOHN C HEAP
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

For further information, please contact Chris Hughes 01200 414479

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS
ACTION PLAN

ISSUE	DETAIL	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	TIMESCALE
Operational Policy Procedure	Current documents are out of date	Re-write documents to include current practice and incorporate vulnerable adults	Chris Hughes/Colin Winterbottom/Tom Bamber/Peter Fletcher	Feb 2012
Senior Management Involvement	The need to demonstrate that senior management own the policy and processes	Identify a senior officer as safeguarding lead for the Council and report issues/progress to CMT on a programmed basis and to Heads of Service Group	Chris Hughes	Ongoing
Member Involvement	The need to demonstrate political support	Identify a member champion for safeguarding	Cllr Brunskill is currently Children's Trust rep	Ongoing
Corporate Documents	There are a range of current documents that would benefit from minor amendments in order to highlight the importance of safeguarding and incorporate revised procedures	Review the following documents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment and Selection • Induction procedures • CRB Thresholds • I.T./Internet usage policy • Whistleblowing • Disciplinary procedures • Training Policy 	Michelle Smith	March 2012
Embedding Safeguarding in normal business	The need to demonstrate that safeguarding issues are considered in decision making, where appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include safeguarding in the Risk Assessment section of committee reports • Include safeguarding on Health and Safety Working group agenda • Form a small working group to review policies/working practice on a programmed basis 	CMT	

ISSUE	DETAIL	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	TIMESCALE
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include safeguarding in performance appraisals, where appropriate • Ensure risk assessments are carried out where safeguarding may be an issue 		
Awareness/Training	The need to make all staff aware of policies/procedures and provide appropriate training for staff who regularly come into contact with children/vulnerable adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a safeguarding section on the Internet/Intranet • Use Backchat to keep staff informed • Identify training needs and access training via Lancs Safeguarding Board or other external providers 		
Engagement	The need to demonstrate that the needs of young people and vulnerable adults are taken into consideration when developing policy/practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have representation on the Children' Trust Engagement sub group • Have representation on the LSP People and Communities theme group 	Chris Hughes	
Leadership	The need to ensure that any organisation working with, or for the Council, has appropriate safeguarding policies/procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that compliance is written into and future agreements • Signpost organisations to support/advice sources 		
Joint Working/Information Sharing	The need to work together to ensure the best outcome for vulnerable children and adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify key contacts within partner organisations • Sign up to a joint information sharing protocol 		As appropriate
Equality and Diversity	The need to ensure that policies do not exclude any sections of the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out an equalities impact assessment on all new/revised policies/procedures 	Equalities Impact Assessment working group	Michelle Smith

ISSUE	DETAIL	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	TIMESCALE
Section 11 Audit	Re-submit section 11 audit	Demonstrate that arrangements are fit for purpose	Chris Hughes	March 2012
Approval of Policy	Report to P+F Committee		Chris Hughes	March 2012

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

POLICY CONTEXT

Core Principles

It is the council's aim to ensure that people it comes into contact with are protected from neglect, physical, sexual and emotional harm whilst participating in activities or using services run by the Borough Council, in partnership with others or on premises owned by the Council.

In the context of children and vulnerable adults the council will endeavour to ensure that any child or vulnerable adult coming into contact with its staff, elected members and other people/organisations providing services in partnership with the council will have a positive experience. It will ensure that the behaviour of any individuals within the above groups will always be beyond reproach.

The Council is involved on a day-to-day basis, providing services that contribute to the health, wellbeing and safety of children and vulnerable adults. Such services include teaching people to swim, contributing to road safety issues and dealing with homelessness.

This policy however is specifically designed to help us recognise major problems/concerns and how we can deal with them in an effective, appropriate and timely manner.

This is why it is important for the council to be confident that staff are aware of their responsibilities when working with children and vulnerable adults. This will be achieved in the following ways –

- Carrying out advanced CRB checks under the Vetting and Barring Scheme (VBS) as part of the council's recruitment and selection process for those candidates who meet a specified threshold for working with children and vulnerable adults
- Giving Safer Working Practice guidance to all staff as part of their induction process and on an ongoing basis
- Providing training at an appropriate level
- Providing a mechanism for staff to raise concerns about the conduct of others

What do we mean by Safeguarding Children?

All young people have the right to be safe and protected from harm. Unfortunately, despite such aspirations we recognise that there are people who seek to harm them and so it is important that we do something when we become aware that abuse or neglect is taking place. There are many forms of abuse –

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Neglect
- Sexual Abuse
- Bullying

What do we mean by Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults?

Safeguarding adults includes areas of work that enable an adult to retain independence, wellbeing and choice and live a life that is free from abuse.

A vulnerable adult is defined as a person who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or might be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation. Once again it is important that we do something when we become aware that abuse or neglect is taking place. The forms of abuse are broadly similar to those associated with children but include others such as financial exploitation.

SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURE

When anyone becomes aware that a child or vulnerable adult might be at risk or suffering from abuse or neglect, they have a duty to do something about it. The diagrams below demonstrate the process for reporting concerns.

In reporting a concern it is important that you record everything in writing, using the template provide under 'Safe Working Practice Guidance' in the safeguarding section on the Intranet. This may involve speaking to the child or vulnerable adult making the accusation. If this is the case make sure you follow the guidance notes attached to the reporting form. Always keep any written information in a secure place and only share it with the people identified in this document.

Concern about a child or young persons safety or welfare

Gather as much information you can regarding the issue/accusation and record any information/actions and keep a safe copy

Pass on your concerns as soon as you are able to any of the following officials, Colin Winterbottom 01200 414588 - 07725602739
Tracy Balko 01200 414484
Rachel Stott 01200 414567 – 07725602725
Michelle Smith 01200 414402 – 07921 473670

They will then contact Children's service, 0845 0530009
Email address; CSC.ACScustomerservices@lancashire.gov.uk
(If you are unable to contact any of the above then you should contact children's services directly, ensuring you inform a named officer as soon as possible

If you feel a child is in immediate and serious danger then you should contact the police immediately 999 informing one of the named officers of your actions

Concern about a vulnerable adults safety or welfare

Follow the same procedure as above but use the following

Concern/allegation concerning a person working with children/vulnerable young people

Other Related Documents/Information

Useful Web Sites

www.lancashire.gov.uk/corporate/web/?siteid=3829&pageid=2074&e=e

www.lancashire.gov.uk/acs/sitessafeguarding/professionals/?siteis=3552&pageid=10778

www.eastlancspct.nhs.uk/about-us/safeguarding/

Additional guidance Notes for Staff

The following guidance notes provide advice to staff who may find themselves dealing with specific issues as a result of their roles and responsibilities. These can be found on the Council's Intranet under 'Safeguarding'

1. Duty of Care
2. Spotting signs of neglect and abuse
3. Confidentiality
4. Power and Position of Trust
5. First Aid administration
6. Photography and Video
7. Transporting children and young people
8. Sharing concerns and recording incidents
9. Social/physical contact
10. One to one situations