

Agenda Item No:

Report To: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 27 February 2018

Report Title: Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk – annual report

Report Author: James Hann – Health, Parking and Community Safety Manager

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Bradford – Portfolio Responsibility for Highways, Wellbeing and Safety



Summary: Safeguarding is the process of protecting children, young people and adults at risk from abuse or neglect, preventing impairment of their health and development, and ensuring they are growing up and developing in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care - enabling them to have optimum life chances.

This report provides members some of the highlights of the work carried since March 2017.

Key Decision: No

Affected Wards: All Wards

Recommendations: The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

- i. note the information contained within this report
- ii. recommend all Ashford Borough Council elected members complete Level 1 safeguarding training

Policy Overview: The council has a Safeguarding Policy that supports the council, its officers, borough councillors and volunteers in fulfilling their statutory responsibilities.

Financial Implications: The work is carried out within service budgets.

Risk Assessment Not applicable.

Background Papers: None

Contacts: james.hann@ashford.gov.uk
01233 330331

Agenda Item No.

Report Title: Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk – annual report

Purpose of the Report

1. This report provides the committee with:
 - an overview of the council's role and responsibilities
 - the council's safeguarding policy
 - accountability and governance
 - an indication of the work that has been carried out since March 2017
 - training
 - referrals made since April 2017
 - partnership working
 - future work

Background

2. Over the last few years the safeguarding agenda has become increasingly high profile with significant political and media focus at a national as well as local level. In response to this, duties placed on councils and other agencies have been extended.
3. The Children Act 1989 states that the child's welfare is paramount and that every child has a right to protection from abuse, neglect and exploitation. Statutory guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under Sections 10, 11 and 13 of the Children Act 2004 specifies what is required of local authorities.
4. The Care Act 2014 codified the principle of wellbeing and placed safeguarding adults' duties on a statutory basis. The council's policies and procedures are governed by this Act, which provides the legal framework for how local authorities (in this case Kent County Council) and other parts of the public sector, including the borough council, should protect adults at risk of abuse or neglect.
5. The Counter-Terrorism Act 2015 dictates that all local authorities are vital to the Prevent work which exists to reduce the risk of people being drawn into terrorism, while under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 the council has a statutory duty to report and provide notification to the National Crime Agency about any potential victims of modern slavery or trafficking.
6. Taken together, these legislative provisions place on local authorities and their partners stringent responsibilities regarding the general safeguarding of both children and adults at risk.

Ashford Borough Council's Safeguarding Policy

7. A revised over-arching Safeguarding Policy was adopted in April 2016. It provides a clear understanding of the council's role and the procedures required to respond appropriately to this increasingly complex and challenging subject.

8. The policy supports the council, its officers, elected members and volunteers in fulfilling their statutory responsibilities under the Care Act 2014, the Children Act 2014 and the Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015 statutory guidance.
9. The policy was revised in 2017 to reflect minor administrative changes.
10. The council believes that safeguarding is 'everybody's business' and is committed to ensuring children, young people and adults at risk are protected from abuse and are provided with opportunities to thrive. As a part of this ambition, a significant training programme has been rolled out to staff and made available to elected members during the past 12 months.

Accountability and Governance

11. Ultimately, accountability for safeguarding under the work of Ashford Borough Council falls to the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive and Senior Management Team are responsible for ensuring the council's responsibilities and procedures are implemented, monitored and consistently reviewed. Also, the Chief Executive is responsible for nominating an officer to represent the Council on the Local Child and Adult Safeguarding Boards and relevant subgroups.
12. The Designated Safeguarding Officer is responsible for dealing with reports or concerns about the protection of children, young people and adults at risk appropriately and in accordance with the procedures that underpin the Safeguarding Policy.
13. All borough councillors, employees and volunteers are responsible for carrying out their duties in a way that actively safeguards and promotes the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk. They must also act in a way that protects them from wrongful allegations of abuse as far as possible. They must bring safeguarding concerns to the attention of the Designated Safeguarding Officer.
14. A group of Safeguarding Lead Officers was established in 2016 to support the Designated Safeguarding Officer and they hold responsibility for safeguarding within different areas of the council's operations and alongside their normal duties:
 - Adults at risk
 - Children
 - Domestic Abuse
 - Child Sexual Exploitation
 - Prevent (preventing extremism)
 - Contracts
 - Commissioning
15. The Safeguarding Lead Officers are the operational group for safeguarding in the council and it has representatives from Community and Housing,

Actions Taken

16. Safeguarding Lead Officers meet bi-monthly to deliver key improvements in the council's safeguarding governance, policy making, procedures, working practices and monitoring.
17. The following provides some of the key achievements:
 - Developed good working arrangements with the new Ashford College
 - A safeguarding webpage, with basic signposting information, has been added to the council's website pages:
<https://www.ashford.gov.uk/transparency/data-protection/safeguarding>
 - Safeguarding clauses for when the council enters into contracts which have safeguarding elements have been agreed
 - Senior Management Team receive quarterly safeguarding reports for strategic review, operational oversight and for cascading information through the organisation
 - An intranet page, with referral forms, guidance, contact details of the safeguarding officers and links to the relevant council documents has been redesigned and is regularly updated with the latest versions of the forms and guidance documents
 - Engagement with the county's Channel panel to assess and support those who may be vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. Channel uses existing collaboration between partners to support individuals and protect them from being drawn into terrorism. Only once person in the Borough has been adopted as a Channel case since March 2017
 - Advice for the public on the steps they can take to keep themselves safe in the rare event of a firearms or weapons attack (Run, Hide, Tell) was displayed around the Civic Centre
18. The Safeguarding Lead Officers review recent Domestic Homicide Reviews and Serious Case Reviews to see if any of the lessons learnt or recommendations have an impact on the work of the council.

Training

19. Continuing the emphasis from last year awareness of safeguarding through training has been a focus since March 2017.
20. Training in safeguarding is structured on three levels, reflecting the different levels of engagement with safeguarding across the organisation.
 - Level 1 – Staff, members, volunteers or contractors with ad hoc contact in public places (e.g. Customer Services, back-office support services), who would never be left alone with a child, young person or adult at risk
 - Level 2 – Staff, members, volunteers or contractors who have a likelihood of coming into contact with 0-18 year olds, young people or adults at risk through the nature of the role and could be exposed to lone contact, but

who have no responsibility for supervision (e.g. housing officers, home visiting, site workers). Level 2 training is also required for managers who have responsibility for staff who require Level 2 training

- Level 3 – Staff, members, volunteers or contractors with responsibility for the supervision of 0-18 year olds, young people or adults at risk as part of their role (e.g. youth workers, lifeguards, events staff)
21. All staff have completed the Level 1 safeguarding awareness training. All new staff are required to complete this e-learning training within 4 weeks of joining the council.
 22. In addition, 23 members of staff have been trained in Level 2 safeguarding since March 2017, meaning 151 members of staff have now received Level 2 training.
 23. From 2017 council officers, who have been trained to deliver this level of training, have delivered Level 2 safeguarding training, removing the need to engage and pay for external trainers.
 24. The following training sessions were completed by the council's Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) and Safeguarding Lead Officers (SLO):
 - Child Sexual Exploitation – SLO for child sexual exploitation
 - Understanding Thresholds and the Referral Process – SLO for adults at risk
 - Understanding Thresholds and the Referral Process – DSO
 - Child Sexual Exploitation – Kent Police – SLO for child sexual exploitation
 - Child Sexual Exploitation – Kent Police – SLO for children
 - Child Sexual Exploitation – Kent Police – SLO for adults at risk
 - Childhood Neglect: An In-depth Understanding to help Overcome Practice and Organisational Barriers – SLO for adults at risk
 - Child Protection for Designated Staff – SLO for children
 - Domestic Abuse Awareness – SLO for children
 25. Managing Mental Health for Managers – As part of the council's commitment to employee wellbeing, a series of managing mental health and resilience courses were held in September and October 2017. These aim to support both our managers and staff in understanding the need to look after and promote their mental health and also to support their teams.
 26. The recommendations from the March 2017 Overview and Scrutiny Committee focused around training:
 - Safeguarding to form part of the induction package for new councillors
 - Level 2 safeguarding training sessions to be made available for borough councillors
 - Consideration to be given to making safeguarding training to parish councils

27. Safeguarding now forms part of the induction package for new councillors and Level 1 safeguarding training has been made available to parish councillors and clerks. To date five have requested the training and four have completed the training.
28. To date no borough councillors have completed the Level 1 safeguarding training.
29. A Level 2 safeguarding training session for borough councillors has been arranged for March 21 2018.
30. In addition to attending training, Safeguarding Lead Officers have facilitated the following awareness events
 - An event to raise awareness around child sexual exploitation was held at the Civic Centre in November 2017 and 29 staff attended.
 - A domestic abuse awareness session held on 30 November 2017. Over 50 front line professionals attended from a variety of agencies including ABC housing, KCC community wardens, schools and mental health
 - Bespoke domestic abuse training was provided to William Harvey Hospital Accident and Emergency staff, paediatric nurses and hospital administration staff. As a result, the hospital identified that domestic abuse knowledge needed enhancing within the hospital and have since secured funding to provide a hospital Independent Domestic Violence Advisor
 - A Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent (WRAP) session was held in January 2018 for 36 front line professionals

Partnership Working

31. To improve the council's partnership arrangements and knowledge safeguarding officers from various organisations have been invited to attend the Safeguarding Lead Officer meetings. Attendees in the past year have included:
 - Kent Police's Vulnerabilities Officer – role includes overseeing work on child abuse, sexual exploitation, gangs, human trafficking and modern slavery
 - Senior Practitioner Safeguarding Adults - KCC Social Services – Older Persons and Physical Disability team, Adult Social Care & Health
32. A multi-agency Community Safety Partnership (CSP) safeguarding working group completed the following:
 - College Freshers' week was well attended by a number of agencies sharing important safety messages. The college is having a positive impact on the town and staff are fully engaged with the CSP
 - Child sexual exploitation partner's intelligence form has been produced by the multi-agency team at Kent Police and has been shared with all CSP partners to encourage reporting of potential child sexual exploitation cases

- Community Safety Shop held within Community Square on 14th and 15th February 2018 focussed on “gang” activity and how young people can avoid becoming involved
33. A comprehensive summary of the partnership work undertaken on tackling domestic abuse was presented to the February Cabinet.
 34. The council follows the Kent-wide referral procedures as set out in Kent County Council’s “*Multi-agency Safeguarding Adults Policy, Protocols and Guidance for Kent and Medway*” and “*Kent and Medway Safeguarding Children Procedures*” for making referrals.
 35. There are a range of referral routes and forms available depending on the nature of the safeguarding incident in question. Access to these are provided on the council’s intranet (<http://abcinside/index.php/abc-services/health-parking-community-safety/safeguarding>)
 36. Referrals are made to various organisations such as Kent County Council’s Specialist Children’s Services, Adult Social Services, Early Help and Preventative Services, Victim Support, Kent Police and the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor.
 37. The council’s Safeguarding Policy requires each referral to be recorded on a database (called Locata) in addition to making the referral to the relevant agency.
 38. There have been 27 referrals by council officers between March 2017 and January 2018. Twelve referrals were made to KCC’s Adult Social Services, nine to KCC’s Children’s Specialist Services, two to the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor, one to Victim Support, one to the Multi-agency Protocol for dealing with cases of domestic abuse (MARAC), one to Kent Police and one to another agency.
 39. The Locata was chosen as the central record keeping as it was a password accessed system, which Community and Housing staff used to record information. The system has provide cumbersome and time consuming to log referrals and Safeguarding Lead Officers are trialling recording referrals on M3/Northgate.
 40. Safeguarding is a resource intensive area, with an increasing amount of time taken in dealing with safeguarding referrals. The complexity of each case is increasing and the time taken in working with partner agencies in trying to ensure the person is successfully safeguarded and devise and implement appropriate action plans is subsequently increasing. Making the referral is only one step in the process. However the council is not in a position to direct additional resources to this at present.

Future Work

41. Procedures for recording on the M3/Northgate database to be agreed and implemented.

42. The council has a number of volunteers working alongside council staff and their safeguarding training needs will be assessed and any training provided.
43. An awareness campaign to remind staff and borough councillors of their safeguarding responsibilities.
44. The Designated Safeguarding Officer for the past two years left the council on 9 February and the Housing Operations Manager (Income and customers) will be the new appointed Designated Safeguarding Officer.
45. The Safeguarding Management Team Champion will remain the Head of Culture.
46. The Safeguarding Lead Officers are:

	Safeguarding Lead Officers
Adults at Risk	Senior Housing Area Manager
Children	Housing's Estates & Neighbourhood Manager
Domestic Abuse	Domestic Abuse Coordinator
Child Sexual Exploitation	Learning and Development Officer
Prevent	Community Safety Team Leader
Contracts	Procurement and Support Manager
Commissioning	Funding and Partnerships Officer
Housing's Neighbourhood Services Manager provides support to both the Children and Adults at Risk SLOs	

Conclusion

47. Ashford Borough Council believes that safeguarding is 'everybody's business' and is committed to ensuring children, young people and adults at risk are protected from abuse and are provided with opportunities to thrive. As a part of this ambition, officers have undertaken a programme of work to revise the council's policy and procedures, embrace best practice, and support members, employees and volunteers to deliver our responsibilities around this agenda.

Recommendations

48. This report is noted and all Ashford Borough Council councillors are requested to complete Level 1 safeguarding training

Contacts: Designated Safeguarding Officer – James Hann
Safeguarding Management Team Champion – Christina Fuller