

NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 5 APRIL 2023



Title of Report	SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS	
Presented by	Paul Sanders Head of Community Services	
Background Papers	NWLDC Adult Safeguarding Policy 2021.pdf NWLDC Children and Young People Safeguarding Policy 2021.pdf	Public Report: Yes
Financial Implications	There are no additional financial implications arising from this report.	
	Signed off by the Section 151 Officer: Yes	
Legal Implications	No direct legal implications arising from the report.	
	Signed off by the Monitoring Officer: Yes	
Staffing and Corporate Implications	Safeguarding relies on staff volunteers to manage referrals. The Community Safety team manages the Council's statutory responsibilities. The Head of Community Services is the Council's Senior Lead Officer for safeguarding.	
	Signed off by the Head of Paid Service: Yes	
Reason Agenda Item Submitted to Scrutiny Committee	To examine the Council's performance in relation to safeguarding and compliance with duties set out in the Children's Act 2004 and the Care Act 2014.	
Recommendations	That Community Scrutiny Committee make comment on the content of the report	

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. The Council has a statutory duty to protect adults with care and support needs as well as children and young people as part of delivering services in the community. The legal framework is set out in the Care Act 2014 and the Children's Act 2004.
- 1.2. The purpose of this report is to provide assurance that the Council is meeting its statutory duty and to set out the performance since 1 April 2022. The purpose of the case studies are to highlight the types of safeguarding concerns being identified by officers and the positive impact the referrals are having on individuals and families.

- 1.3. The Council also has a duty to co-operate with the Leicestershire Safeguarding Adults Board and the Leicestershire Safeguarding Children's Partnership for the purpose of protecting children, young people and adults.

2. DISTRICT DELIVERY MODEL

- 2.1. The Head of Community Services holds the role of District Senior Lead Officer for Safeguarding and has strategic and operational responsibility for fulfilling the Council's statutory duties. The Environmental Health and Community Safety Team Manager has the role of District Lead Professional Officer and is responsible for ensuring:
 - Safeguarding concerns raised by staff are managed appropriately;
 - Policies and procedures are in place and updated; and
 - Staff are adequately trained.
- 2.2. Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO's) across different services in the Council manage referrals and concerns raised by staff on a voluntary basis. There are currently twelve DSO's.
- 2.3. A daily rota system operates for the management of new referrals. DSO's work in teams with each new case appointing a Lead DSO and a Second DSO. Lead DSO's are responsible for making appropriate referrals, ongoing case management and for following up outcomes. Second DSO's support the initial decision making.
- 2.4. Cases are managed using bespoke software (Sentinel) which was designed and developed by the Council in 2019 in conjunction with Vantage Technologies to improve processes and reduce risk.

3. TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1. The Leicestershire Safeguarding Adults Board and the Leicestershire Safeguarding Children's Partnership have produced a 'competency framework' which sets out the skills and knowledge that all staff are expected to have proportionate to their role. The Council has mapped out all staff roles and identified which 'competencies' are appropriate. Training is designed so that these competencies are met and can be evidenced.
- 3.2. All new DSO's are required to attend an initial two day accredited course and are mentored and coached by more experienced DSO's in managing cases. DSO's are also required to attend quarterly meetings and undertake at least three training events per annum.
- 3.3. All Council staff are required to complete mandatory e-learning every three years and attend additional training according to their role. The e-learning module is due to be refreshed in 2023 and all staff will undertake refresher training in Summer 2023.
- 3.4. Face to face training is being arranged as part of the Council's Leaders Programme and will be delivered to one hundred staff in September 2023.

4. AUDIT

- 4.1. The Council is required by the Leicestershire Safeguarding Adults Board and the Leicestershire Safeguarding Children's Partnership to give assurance that it is delivering quality services which keep people safe from harm and abuse.

- 4.2. The Council is required to submit an annual self-assessment in conjunction with the other districts and boroughs in Leicestershire to identify any areas which require improvement. Self-assessments completed during 2021/22 rated North West Leicestershire District Council as 'fully' or 'mostly' effective in all areas with no improvement actions identified.
- 4.3. Internally, a weekly case review meeting takes place to validate decision making, review caseload and address any risks. The meeting is attended by the Environmental Health and Community Safety Team Manager, the Community Safety Team Leader and the Community Safety Officer responsible for Safeguarding. All new cases undergo a 'First Review' and all open cases are checked to ensure they are progressing as required. Once a case is ready for closure, it undergoes a 'Final Review' at the meeting before submitting to the Head of Community Services who is responsible for agreeing the closure of cases.
- 4.4. Internal audits are also undertaken at regular intervals. An internal audit was conducted in 2020/21 and published in February 2021. The level of assurance was scored as 'Reasonable'. Areas of positive assurance included:
- Policies, procedures and guidance in relation to Safeguarding are up to date and available to staff on the Intranet.
 - Staff have received Safeguarding training and would know what action to take should they need to raise a Safeguarding concern.
 - Safeguarding referrals and case records are effectively managed using the Sentinel case management system.
- Areas for improvement related to recruitment processes and record keeping and these have been addressed during 2021-22. Progress made against action plans are reported to the Audit and Governance Committee.

5. PERFORMANCE

- 5.1. A set of performance indicators were introduced for 2022-23 which monitor case management and workload and address the key risks. The performance for the year 2022/23 is explained below:
- 5.2. During 2022-23 (April 22 to mid-March 23) DSO's managed a total of 130 referrals from members of staff in addition to providing general advice and guidance. This is in line with pre-pandemic numbers following a surge during 2020-21. This compared with 125 referrals received during 2021-22.
- 5.3. During 2022-23 100% new referrals were addressed within the corporate target of two working days.
- 5.4. 93% of safeguarding referrals made during 2022-23 resulted in a DSO making an onward referral to support agencies demonstrating a good level of knowledge and judgement amongst staff members as to when to refer. This compared with 93% in 2021-22.
- 5.5. Ten different Council services made referrals during the period indicating a high level of safeguarding awareness within the Council. The referrals were received from Customer Services, Housing Management, Housing Choices, Environmental Protection, Asset Management/Repairs, Stronger & Safer Communities, Leisure Services, Revenues & Benefits, Business Focus and Environmental Health.

6. RISKS

- 6.1. Safeguarding is captured on the Council's Corporate Risk Register due to its statutory duty and reputational risk.
- 6.2. The role of DSO is a voluntary role. The number of DSO's available to manage cases fluctuates due to personal workloads and staff leaving or stepping down from the role.
- 6.3. The Council currently has twelve trained DSO's including three new DSO's who have recently been trained in order to add capacity.

7. CASE STUDIES - DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING OFFICERS

- 7.1. Following receipt of a telephone call received from a distressed tenant, the team made referrals to both the Council's domestic abuse link worker and to Leicestershire Children's Social Care. Support was provided to both the victim of domestic abuse and others living within the property.
- 7.2. Following contact with the team by a Housing Officer, the team made referrals to the Children and Family Wellbeing Service and Adult Social Care Teams who provided support to a parent and child (with additional needs) in respect of a range of issues including accommodation hygiene, home and financial management and property adaptations.
- 7.3. Concerns were raised by the Council's housing team over a Right to Buy application received from an elderly lady. A referral was made to Adult Social Care and a report made to Action Fraud. The right to buy application was subsequently refused after an investigation was carried out.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Safeguarding has a small standalone budget which funds training and development and the maintenance of the case management system 'Sentinel'.
- 8.2 No additional funding is requested

Policies and other considerations, as appropriate	
Council Priorities:	Our communities are safe, healthy and connected
Policy Considerations:	NWLDC Adult Safeguarding Policy 2021 NWLDC Children and Young People Safeguarding Policy 2021
Safeguarding:	Considerations included in report
Equalities/Diversity:	Included in the safeguarding policy and procedures
Customer Impact:	The safeguarding service has a significant impact on some of the most vulnerable individuals in the community
Economic and Social Impact:	The outcome of a safeguarding referral can have a significant economic or social impact for the individual

Environment and Climate Change:	No impact
Consultation/Community Engagement:	Not applicable
Risks:	Safeguarding is on the corporate risk register. Risks outlined in report
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