

Report to: **Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

Date: **24 January 2019**

Title: **Safeguarding Update**

Portfolio Area: **Corporate Services**

Wards Affected: **All**

Relevant Scrutiny Committee: N/A

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

Date next steps can be taken:  
(e.g. referral on of recommendation or implementation of substantive decision)

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**Recommendations:**

**That Members:**

- 1. review safeguarding as an annual standing agenda item;**
- 2. make suggestions for other safeguarding items to be included in the next report; should Recommendation 1 be agreed;**
- 3. are sighted on how we meet our safeguarding duties, measures in place and associated risk;**
- 4. support safeguarding briefings for new and existing Members after May 2019; and**
- 5. support a Safeguarding Policy review in 2019/20.**

**1. Executive summary**

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with the opportunity to scrutinise and review Safeguarding practise and procedure following recommendations from Internal Audit in October 2017 that Safeguarding should be highlighted as a standalone topic due to its complexity.

## 2. Background

South Hams and West Devon Councils Internal Audit team, working in conjunction with Devon Audit Partnership looked at Safeguarding as a separate item for the first time in September 2017. The report was published in October 2017 (appendix A), with overall Audit Opinion being that Safeguarding was of a GOOD standard.

Five areas were covered, as detailed below, with two of these areas meeting a HIGH standard.

- 1. The governance arrangements are sufficiently robust – HIGH standard
- 2. Statutory requirements are complied with – GOOD standard
- 3. There are suitable partnership agreements in place with other organisations – GOOD standard
- 4. Policies and Procedures are adequate to support the Councils work – GOOD standard
- 5. There are suitable financial arrangements – HIGH standard

## 3. Outcomes/outputs

The Safeguarding Specialist meets with other District Council Safeguarding Leads on a quarterly basis to share good practice and meet with both the Devon Adult and Children Safeguarding Boards to ensure that compliance continues and areas of risk are known, then mitigated through work with Devon County Council or within South Hams District Council (SHDC.)

Annually SHDC is obliged to complete the statutory document – Section 11 Audit Report which places duties on us to ensure that our functions and any services that we contract out to others are discharged and have regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This report has highlighted areas – such as our telephone welcome message – where there was not compliance. This message has now been amended.

The partnership we have between other agencies and partnerships is strong. One of the closest working partnerships is with the **Community Safety Partnership** where several safeguarding issues have been addressed. These areas include the Taxi Driver training in how to identify child sexual exploitation and trafficking and the Suicide Intervention briefings. Other areas include regular engagement with the **MARAC** (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) which risk manages residents who experience Domestic and Sexual Violence, demonstrate how essential partnership working is. **The Devon and Torbay Prevent Partnership** is also a close working partner, the safeguarding lead has regular updates on any terror threats in our area and the latest updates and recommendations for local councils, including online security.

In addition to external stakeholders, the breadth of safeguarding referrals and queries being highlighted from staff other than the “traditional” routes housing staff, continues to increase. Staff from building enforcement, planning, environmental health and customer services, in addition to housing staff, have all highlighted issues within the last few months. This is likely to be directly correlated to an increase in staff briefings, small group sessions with Customer Service Teams and articles in the Friday Flash to continue to highlight safeguarding and embed as part of SHDC every day considerations. Educating and supporting staff with safeguarding queries will continue as part of daily business.

A Safeguarding plan has been created in Devon and SHDC is held in high regard by other Devon district councils as leading areas of work in this field due to the safeguarding work and projects demonstrated.

Due to collaboration with other district councils we are able to maintain a good level of Safeguarding management in areas such as policy – where all districts use the same policy, which was jointly agreed and adopted by councils in New Devon, in order that agencies such as social care and police need only reference one safeguarding policy across Devon. Procedure and delivery differ across Devon however.

#### **4. Options available and consideration of risk**

Safeguarding by its very nature carries a degree of risk. The client group is vulnerable and sometimes chaotic.

SHDC minimise these risks by the ongoing training of staff, safeguarding champions who have expert knowledge, close working relationships with agencies such as the police and the procedures put in place.

SHDC is proactive in projects and staff training. The Suicide Intervention Toolkit arose due to the increase in calls received by Council staff from members of the public who advised staff that they were thinking of suicide. Briefing sessions were held in the Chamber at Follaton House in November. Sessions were an hour in duration and all agencies took away Suicide Intervention Toolkits, kits created to provide information and signposting for staff – the main message being “It’s safe to talk about suicide” and providing delegates with the tools to support them in such circumstances. The training was dual, to safeguard our staff when in these situations professionally but also to be able to provide information and advice to anyone calling or visiting the offices who is suicidal.

In 2019/20 the current safeguarding policy will require review, this has been factored into the work stream for the next financial year.

## 5. Proposed Way Forward

This is the first Safeguarding report for the Overview and Scrutiny Panel to consider. Members are required to confirm that Safeguarding should be included on the annual work plan for the Overview and Scrutiny Panel going forward.

Should Members have suggestions for items to be considered in the next report then they should advise the safeguarding specialist accordingly.

Member training in safeguarding requires ongoing support and this has been identified as a need going forward. An online training package is currently being developed between the safeguarding lead and Human Resources team and should be rolled out before April 2019 to staff and Members. Group training and briefings are also important in addition to online training. Following elections in May 2019 a refresh in safeguarding briefings for new and existing Members would be preferable.

The safeguarding lead/specialist should continue to develop the W2 safeguarding processes in order to obtain more detailed reports as necessary.

The safeguarding lead/specialist should review the corporate safeguarding policy.

## 6. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	To support ongoing training for staff and members to further highlight safeguarding in all its forms.
Legal/Governance	Y	Crime and Disorder Act 1998 The Children Act 2004 Section 9 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004). The Care Act 2014 Anti-Social Behaviour , Crime & Policing Act 2014 Modern Slavery Act 2015
Financial	Y	Minimal training budget required for safeguarding leads and some specialist housing staff. Safeguarding lead will then train non specialist staff to an appropriate level.
Risk	N	The report is for information and as such there is no risk associated with decisions to set out.
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity	Y	Safeguarding legislation and SHDC procedures are applied in conjunction with equality and diversity standards.

Safeguarding	Y	Safeguarding standards, information and signposting is open to residents, customers AND staff of SHDC.
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder	Y	Where safeguarding crosses with community safety and crime issues the safeguarding specialist will liaise with the community safety specialist.
Health, Safety and Wellbeing	Y	The safeguarding lead works closely with public health and other partners on health and wellbeing issues including drugs, suicide, trafficking.
Other implications		n/a