

**Name of meeting:** Council (Reference from Cabinet)

**Date:** 13 July 2022

**Title of report:** **Corporate Safeguarding Policy**

**Purpose of report:** To present the refreshed version of the Corporate Safeguarding Policy for approval by Council.

<b>Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?</b>	<b>No financial implications but all wards could be positively affected by staff, elected members and volunteers increasing their understanding of roles, responsibilities and referral mechanisms to safeguard children and adults at risk of abuse and neglect across the district</b>
<b>Key Decision - Is it in the <u>Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports)</u>?</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> &amp; name</b>	<b>David Shepherd – Strategic Director of Growth and Regeneration and Executive Team Sponsor of the Corporate Safeguarding Oversight Group</b>
<b>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?</b>	<b>Yes – 18/02/2022</b>
<b>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?</b>	<b>Yes – 24/02/2022</b>
<b>Cabinet member <a href="#">portfolio</a></b>	<b>Cllr C Pattison</b>

**Electoral wards affected:** N/A

**Ward councillors consulted:** N/A

**Public or private:** Public

**Has GDPR been considered?** This report contains no information that falls within the scope of the General Data Protection Regulation

## 1. Summary

The responsibility for undertaking an overview of safeguarding arrangements across the Council was delegated to the Corporate Safeguarding Oversight Group by the Council's Executive Team.

The main responsibilities of the Corporate Safeguarding Oversight Group are to:

- ensure that robust arrangements for safeguarding children and adults are in place within and across the Council
- ensure there is effective corporate oversight of safeguarding across the range of services which the Council provides and commissions
- ensure that robust multi-agency arrangements are in place to safeguard children and vulnerable adults, and that key partners have appropriate safeguarding systems in place

The existing Cross Council Corporate Safeguarding Policy was signed off at Cabinet in 2019, however, due to the pandemic, the full roll out stalled somewhat so it was agreed at the Corporate Safeguarding Oversight Group that a Task and Finish Group would be established in order to review the policy. This was to ensure that it could be updated where needed and take into account any further additions that may be needed due to service changes and progression of other parallel work streams, such as the Safer Recruitment work and revised Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) guidance and referral routes.

Cabinet considered the refreshed Policy further at its meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> March 2022 and asked that it also be considered and adopted by Council and become one of the policies on the Policy Framework in Article 4 of the Constitution. A potential change to the Policy Framework to include the Cross Council Corporate Safeguarding Policy was considered at Corporate Governance and Audit Committee on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2022 and Annual Council on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2022 and it was agreed to amend the Policy Framework to include the policy once considered and agreed by a meeting of Council.

## 2. Information required to take a decision

The Policy is underpinned by the Council's commitment in the Council Plan to make it clear that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, by joining up with partners, ensuring children and adults have good access to well informed advice, support and decision making, and there are effective, timely and proportionate responses when abuse or neglect occur. The Policy will act to enable all Council employees including those who are not directly involved in safeguarding, to understand their role and responsibilities when they have a safeguarding concern, how to report it and where to find additional information. There is also an expectation that all of the workforce, Councillors and volunteers share an objective to help keep children, young people and adults at risk safe by contributing to:

- Identifying where there are concerns and taking action to address them in partnership with other agencies
- Preventing unsuitable people from working with children, young people and adults at risk
- Ensuring the whole workforce understands safeguarding and their accountabilities and responsibilities
- Promoting safe practice and challenge poor and unsafe practice

The Policy sets out a preventive approach that ensures safeguards are proactively put in place to prevent abuse and neglect occurring

The Council requires a competent workforce of individuals who are able to identify instances in which there are grounds for concern about the welfare of a child or adult and initiate or take appropriate action to keep them safe.

The information contained within the Policy will need to be communicated to all affected stakeholders and staff. All employees will need to be made aware of their duties to safeguard as per the principles outlined in the Policy.

### 3. Implications for the Council

- **Working with People**

Kirklees Council believes that every child, young person and adult, has the right to live safe from harm, abuse and neglect and the key message of the Corporate Safeguarding Policy is that **‘Safeguarding is Everybody’s Business’** and that all employees, (paid or unpaid) have a duty of care to safeguard, prevent, and report any concerns (regardless of whether or not there is direct contact with children, young people and/or adults as defined by job roles).

The Policy will enable all Council employees, elected members, commissioners, and volunteers to understand their role and responsibilities when they have a safeguarding concern, how to report it and where to find additional information.

There are clear anticipated benefits attached to the refresh and roll out of the policy, not just for people working within the organisation, but also for the public because, as the understanding of safeguarding increases, it will encourage more staff, elected members and volunteers to know how to confidently refer children, young people and adults at risk of abuse and neglect at an early stage so that steps can be put in place to help keep the most vulnerable people in Kirklees safe. This also includes opportunities for staff and services to continue to empower people to make better choices and signpost effectively where people have mental capacity but choose to make risky decisions, as well as increase understanding of how people who lack capacity can be supported by working with the person, their advocate, family and friends in the ethos of making safeguarding personal.

- **Working with Partners**

Social Services are the lead services for dealing with enquiries regarding allegations / concerns that children and adults may be suffering significant harm, but everyone working or contracted within the Council has a responsibility to safeguard the welfare of children, young people and adults, whatever the role of the individual. This will require better and more transparent working relationships between every team in the Council to ensure clear and accessible lines of communication and governance. Whilst the Cross Council Corporate Safeguarding Policy is a Council Policy, joint working with partners such as the Police, CCGs and the voluntary sector are critical to ensuring people are kept safe from harm so there are mechanisms in place to ensure our partners can provide assurances that they have similar policies in place, mainly through the work of the Safeguarding Adults Board and Safeguarding Children’s Partnership. However, once the Kirklees Policy is signed off, it will be shared again with partners, should they want to adopt anything in it for their own. As part of the flightpath to Cabinet, the Cross Council Safeguarding Policy has been shared at various multi-agency partnership groups so partners are aware of this work and have had chance to comment on the revised version.

- **Place Based Working**

This whole system, whole family approach focuses on community, developing place-based safeguarding practices based on local knowledge, networks and need. The Policy will seek to enable and support staff to be innovative and creative in their roles, particularly those who work on the front-line, but who may not be directly involved in safeguarding. By encouraging staff to be thoughtful about the communities they work in, to understand issues related to safeguarding and how to escalate, the council can foster a working environment which is responsive and tuned into the needs of Kirklees diverse communities.

- **Climate Change and Air Quality**

No impact on climate change and air quality.

- **Improving outcomes for children**

At the heart of the Cross Council Safeguarding Policy is a desire and commitment to keeping children safe. The Policy sets out the legal requirements for doing this and what needs to be done if anyone suspects a child is at risk of harm, abuse and/or neglect. As the Policy encourages everyone to report a concern, it is hoped more children will be protected, therefore improving their whole life outcomes. It should be noted that this ethos extends to adults who are at risk as well.

- **Other (eg Legal/Financial or Human Resources)**

Legal - possible impacts include:

- if referrals to children's and adults services increase, it is likely there will be a greater demand on Legal Officers for advice and representation that could lead to Court applications
- There could also be an increase in demand on data security and GDPR advice

HR – possible impacts include:

- ongoing work with regards to Safer Recruitment (including DBS checks) and possible more involvement should LADO/Person in Position of Trust referrals increase
- implications for HR and OD for ongoing training and awareness raising (and particularly in the induction of staff processes)
- the general support of promoting the culture of transparency and enabling employees to be aware of/have a good understanding of the policy; how this underpins their role; how they carry out their duties and contribute to the Council as an organisation

#### **Do you need an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)?**

This has been completed as part of the refreshed policy which was considered by Cabinet.

#### **4. Consultees and their opinions**

As part of the engagement process, the Cross Council Corporate Safeguarding Policy has been to the following forums:

- Leader's Management Group
- Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee
- Executive Team
- Portfolio Briefings (Children's and Adults)
- Kirklees Safeguarding Adults Board
- Children's Safeguarding Partnership
- Inclusive Communities Board
- Health & Wellbeing Board
- Adult's and Children's SLTs
- People Service SLT
- Trade Unions
- Employee Networks

The Policy has been well received and the following feedback has been noted and will be acted on:

- The need for the final version to be available in fully accessible formats in the interests of inclusivity
- The need to ensure that when the training plan is developed to run alongside the roll out of the Policy, that it includes specific training for elected members so that they know as community leaders who they can speak to, and also to consider roles, responsibilities and where restrictions may lie (such as those associated with information sharing and GDPR)

- It is recognised that the Policy has needed to be fairly lengthy so that the required information could be captured. However, as this is rolled out, the Task and Finish Group will consider a range of options as to how best to reach the various services, including the dispersed workforce in a variety of ways and in a way that is appropriate for the audience (such as providing factsheets, credit card style cards with information on, potentially create some simple e-learning packages that can be accessed from personal mobile phones).

## **5. Next steps and timelines**

Following sign off at Cabinet and Council, the Corporate Safeguarding Oversight Group will establish the Communication Plan for the wider roll out of the Policy. There will also be a Training workstream established (bringing in subject matter experts in areas such as domestic abuse, modern day slavery etc) to undertake a training needs analysis and agree on what training is required; where and at what level. This will also consider training across other sectors where the Council, as regulators have a role to promote safeguarding. These areas of work will be discussed as part of the Corporate Safeguarding Oversight Group meetings and it is expected that this work will be continual to factor in refresher training and opportunities to push the key messages of the Policy throughout its lifetime.

## **6. Officer recommendations and reasons**

- That the refreshed Corporate Safeguarding Policy be approved and adopted by Council;
- That approval be given to delegate responsibility to the Strategic Director responsible for sponsoring the Corporate Safeguarding Oversight Group in conjunction with the Portfolio Lead for the Corporate Safeguarding Oversight Group and with the Corporate Safeguarding Oversight Group, to review the policy and guidance annually and make technical amendments where appropriate, allowing engagement to take place with stakeholders;
- That should there be new legislative requirements that would require a more fundamental change the policy would be brought back to Cabinet and Council for approval.
- That the Corporate Safeguarding Policy be included on the Policy Framework.

## **7. Recommendation of Cabinet**

The report was considered at the meeting of Cabinet on 8 March 2022. The recommendation is now referred to Council to be endorsed as follows;

- That the refreshed Corporate Safeguarding Policy be approved and adopted by the Council ;
- That approval be given to delegate responsibility to the Strategic Director responsible for sponsoring the Corporate Safeguarding Oversight Group in conjunction with the Portfolio Lead for the Corporate Safeguarding Oversight Group and with the Corporate Safeguarding Oversight Group, to review the policy and guidance annually and make technical amendments where appropriate, allowing engagement to take place with stakeholders;
- That should there be new legislative requirements that would require a more fundamental change the policy would be brought back to Cabinet and Council for approval.
- That the Corporate Safeguarding Policy be included on the Policy Framework.

## **8. Contact officer**

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## **9. Background Papers and History of Decisions**

Previous Policy:

Corporate Safeguarding Policy

Key Decision Notice

ET – 02/10/2018 Noted and Endorsed

Corporate Safeguarding Oversight Group – 16/08/2019 For info/ update

SLT Childrens – 10/09/2019 Approved

SLT Adults – 16/09/2019 Approved

SLT Corporate – 19/09/2019 Approved

Corporate Safeguarding Oversight Group – 26/09/2019 Approved

ET – 01/10/2019 Approved

Portfolio Holder Briefing 07/10/2019 – Approved

Cabinet – 05/11/2019 – Approved

Revised Policy:

Cross Council Safeguarding Policy (appended)

Key Decision Notice (appended)

Executive Team – 18/01/2022 - approved

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

List of other consultees outlined under section 4

## **10. Service Director responsible**

David Shepherd (Strategic Director for Growth and Regeneration)

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