

Report title: Corporate Safeguarding Update

Meeting	Oversight and Scrutiny Management Committee (OSMC)
Date	2 August 2024
Key Decision	No – This is an update to OSMC only.
Purpose of Report	
<p>This report provides an overview of the Corporate Safeguarding Plan and progress to the Oversight and Scrutiny Management Committee (OSMC) for the purpose of review.</p>	
Recommendations	
<p>OSMC to review the report contents and provide feedback on the progress to date and future plan.</p> <p>Following the meeting, the responsibility for the corporate safeguarding arrangements across the Council is to remain with the Corporate Safeguarding Oversight Group through 2024/2025, as previously delegated by the Council’s Executive Team. This will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the continued development of robust arrangements for safeguarding children, young people and adults across the Council. • Ensure there is effective corporate oversight of safeguarding across the range of services which the Council provides and commissions. • Ensure that both good practice and areas of learning are identified and shared to develop the Council’s overall safeguarding response to successfully promote a whole family approach to practice. 	
Resource Implication:	
<p><i>Safeguarding is everyone’s business</i>, and therefore the Corporate Safeguarding Plan has a reach across all employee groups across the Council.</p> <p>Service Directors from across all areas of the Council contribute to the Corporate Safeguarding Oversight Group (CSOG); a commitment which was made by the Executive Team in 2023 to demonstrate the Council’s commitment to safeguarding children, young people and adults. The CSOG meet quarterly, through which the Corporate Safeguarding Action Plan and all subsequent service/Council wide developments are identified, endorsed and progressed.</p>	
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name	Give name and date for Cabinet / Scrutiny reports
David Shepard (Strategic Director of Growth and Regeneration).	Cabinet Member Portfolio Holder:

<p>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?</p> <p>Reviewed and confirmed as N/A</p> <p>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?</p> <p>Reviewed and confirmed as N/A</p>	<p>Executive Team Sponsor of the Corporate Safeguarding Oversight Group and Plan:</p> <p>David Shepard (Strategic Director of Growth and Regeneration)</p> <p>c/o Jill Greenfield (Service Director of Communities and Access Services).</p>
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Electoral wards affected: All wards.

Ward councillors consulted:

No specific Ward Councillors have been consulted; this is a whole Council matter.

Public or private:

This is a public report.

Has GDPR been considered?

The Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR have been considered when writing this report. The report meets all relevant regulations.

1. Executive Summary

As required in key legislation within Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2023, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 and the Care Act 2004, the Council are required to ensure there are robust arrangements in place for safeguarding children, young people and adults.

In April 2023, as required by the Kirklees Safeguarding Children Partnership (KSCP) to meet the requirements of the Children Act 2004, an Organisational Safeguarding Assessment (OSA) was completed and submitted on behalf of the overall Council at a corporate level. This combined all service areas, adopting a whole-system approach to safeguarding. The overall rating was Amber. NB. The Corporate Safeguarding Plan does not replace the robust service-specific plans within both Children’s and Adult’s Social Work Services.

The OSA identified both organisational strengths and areas for development;

Corporate Safeguarding: Strengths

- Cross Council commitment to safeguarding practice development.
- Established multi-agency working arrangements.
- Listening to Children, Young People and Adults.

Corporate Safeguarding: Areas for Development

- Corporate Safeguarding Policy

- Introductory safeguarding training and service specific requirements
- Safer Recruitment

The areas identified have formed the basis from which the Corporate Safeguarding Action Plan has since been developed, and work has been underway to ensure that all work areas within the Council have sufficient safeguarding arrangements in place.

This has been progressed and assured by the Corporate Safeguarding Oversight Group (CSOG) which was re-established in 2023.

1.1 Corporate Safeguarding Policy

In March 2022 the Corporate Safeguarding Policy was approved by Cabinet. This Policy provides comprehensive information in relation to the Council's commitment to safeguarding children, young people and adults who live and work in Kirklees. The Corporate Safeguarding Policy sets out a preventative approach that ensures safeguards are proactively put in place to prevent abuse and neglect occurring, whilst providing clear information as to the relevant escalation procedures should this be necessary.

Before the Corporate Safeguarding Policy was published, it was reviewed in December 2023 as various elements of the Policy required updating to ensure the legislation and guidance were up to date.

The Corporate Safeguarding Policy is now in use and is available to all staff. Shortly, staff newsletters will be distributed centrally to ensure awareness is raised.

A clear plan has been developed to ensure that there is sufficient reach across all service areas. The Corporate Safeguarding Policy is now included in the Corporate Induction document, alongside the Manager's Guide to Inductions. The Corporate Safeguarding Policy is also available to read as part of the Induction segment of the Council learning resource My Learning.

To embed the Corporate Safeguarding Policy, the Safeguarding Champions group are being supported and encouraged to refer to this within their relevant services areas and deliver briefing sessions where appropriate.

The corporate Communications team will continue to raise awareness of the Corporate Safeguarding Policy over time through a link highlighted alongside features on the staff intranet for relevant occasions such as Safeguarding Week.

The Corporate Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed and updated annually each December, assured by the CSOG members.

1.2 Introductory safeguarding training and service specific requirements

A significant piece of work being undertaken across the Council lead by the CSOG members is the identification, completion and assurance that relevant and proportionate safeguarding training is completed by all employees of the Council.

The majority of service areas utilise the available resources within the Council, alongside opportunities provided by the Kirklees Safeguarding Children Partnership (KSCP) and the Kirklees Safeguarding Adult Board (KSAB), to ensure all staff can access a basic level of safeguarding training. Some core courses provided by the KSCP can become full quickly,

resulting in some staff having to join waitlists. However, a number of service areas have utilised the skills and experience of internal staff members to adopt creative ways of sharing learning. This matter is under review by the KSCP, of whom have just commissioned further training through O'Neil's for the Period September-December 2024. There are 140 places available.

Support continues to be given to other non-public facing service areas whereby no training is yet in place, to identify the most appropriate level and frequency of safeguarding training.

Whilst Children and Families Services and Adults and Health Services have robust safeguarding training and development arrangements in place relevant to the age range that their role serves, further work is being undertaken to ensure that the respective service areas have completed a basic level of training in both children's and adult's safeguarding training to ensure a whole family approach to practice is promoted. This exercise has been excellent in highlighting good practice and areas for development, for which service areas have committed to expanding upon. Improvements include the review and identification of additional training as part of inductions, and consideration as to the requirement for the proportionate frequency of refresher courses applicable to each role.

As emphasised within the Policy, *safeguarding is everyone's business* and therefore the CSOG group has considered the position of the Council in respect of whether or not basic safeguarding training should ultimately become mandatory, of which all members agree this is necessary to safeguard children, young people and adults who live and work in Kirklees. The requirement for this is further exacerbated through the new Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2023 guidance which introduces the potential for lead practitioners, other than qualified Social Workers, to identify and coordinate support and lead the development of plans for children and their families. An e-learning course would be the most suitable offer to achieve mandatory basic training across the workforce. This resource already exists (*Corporate Safeguarding; Trust Your Instincts*) and although this does require updating, it has been agreed to utilise this existing offer. Initial discussions have taken place with the Learning and Organisational Development Team, and work is now underway to develop the internal e-learning offer. This will be a significant step forwards in increasing access to training at a corporate level. This is expected to be ready to be utilised from September 2024.

Introducing mandatory training through an e-learning package would enable greater quality assurance. Whilst services already utilise one to one/supervision conversations with their staff to assure that any relevant training and development needs are met., this will also be complemented by the introduction of the new My Conversation appraisal template which includes a section on safeguarding training.

Building on the mandatory minimum of introductory safeguarding training, consideration will also be given as to what other training may be required to meet legislative requirements to ensure best practice is promoted. Whilst various service areas, in particularly statutory Children's and Adult's services do have robust training pathways in place, continued consideration will be given across all services as to the application of such. For example, Prevent Statutory Duty Guidance 2024 outlines that Local Authorities are expected to ensure frontline staff have a good understanding of Prevent and the Channel process, including the identification of risk and how to make a referral. It is recommended that such training is also made mandatory for the following services, including Child and Adult Social Workers, Family Support Workers, Early Help Workers, Youth Workers, Support Workers and Learning Services staff that work directly with Children such as Education Psychology, Outreach Staff and Access to Education Workers. It is also important to extend this to include wider Community facing services also.

Enquiries have been made as to how assurances can be provided to the Council by education colleagues that necessary safeguarding training is in place. The Education Safeguarding Team has confirmed that safeguarding is ultimately the responsibility of each school, as directed in the Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance. However, new guidance in Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2023 now states that all schools, including academies, must complete a Section 175 audit which is a process to ensure that schools are fulfilling their statutory safeguarding responsibilities. This means that the Council has more oversight and therefore scrutiny of/capacity to challenge practice if and when required.

Additionally, Education based staff, including those from Early Years, Primary, Secondary, Special, Alternative Provision and Post 16 providers, are now required to be part of strategic conversations with the KSCP, which brings an additional opportunity for oversight and challenge of arrangements within schools. The Council continues to support schools by providing a traded offer to schools in respect of Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) training, with approximately 75% of schools taking this opportunity. Safeguarding training is also available for school governors to attend, with sessions running twice a year, provided by the Education Safeguarding team.

The Governance team has assured that safeguarding is covered within the Inductions for Councillors, of which sessions are delivered by the Learning and Development Team in partnership with the Kirklees Safeguarding Children Partnership. It has been agreed that the Corporate Safeguarding Policy can be shared, and the Councillor Support and Liaison Team are able to assist with further queries as and when required.

1.3 Safer Recruitment

A new Recruitment and Selection Policy and Manager's Toolkit has been developed by People Services. The Policy outlines clear steps the Council takes in relation to Safer Recruitment practices and quality assurance of such. There is helpfully a detailed table contained as an appendix within the Policy document which provides clarity on the type of references and checks required in different circumstances. This was published earlier in the year.

Considering safe recruitment practice, minimum DBS Requirements are currently met throughout the Council. This position has been reviewed on behalf of the CSOG and the Council's position on DBS checks (where a role requires) is for those to be undertaken on appointment and change of job.

Services across the Council provide letter of assurances to schools throughout Kirklees to confirm that appropriate pre-employment checks of staff have been completed. These are monitored and assured by the Children's Services Resources, Improvements and Partnerships team, who coordinate the letters to ensure they are updated annually. This process was refreshed in January 2024, and services were grouped and are now signed on behalf of by a relevant Strategic Director. This improved the efficiency of the process significantly.

The Council has also provided guidance to schools in respect of the Single Central Record (SCR), which is outlined in statutory guidance to serve as evidence that schools have conducted defined safer recruitment check, although responsibilities lies with the School Governing Body or Multi-Academy Trust.

Recent government guidance regarding criminal record checks for Councillors has been reviewed and the Governance Team have confirmed arrangements are already in place are in line with these requirements, no further action is required.

The Volunteer Policy was updated in 2023 by representatives from the Voluntary and Community Sector Team, in Partnership with Adult Services. This is available on the Intranet for all teams. There is also a toolkit available to support services with volunteers, to assist Volunteer Managers. Enquiries have identified that whilst this information is available, improvements could be made in respect of awareness of and accessibility to these documents. This will be addressed through the Corporate Safeguarding Action Plan.

Recruitment and Selection E-Learning is available as a pre-requisite to recruiting and broadly covers safer recruitment. Whilst an add on about Safer Recruitment will be developed in the future, a minimum standard is achieved by ensuring all panel members have completed the e-learning. This will be embedded through Inductions and within Annual Conversations where required.

1.4 Positive Impact and Influence

Throughout 2023/2024, the *impact* of the significant changes brought about by the work completed across the Corporate Safeguarding Plan has started to become evident. Good practice examples include;

- The Legal Governance and Commissioning Leadership team completed a review of the safeguarding training available in their respective areas. Lack of consistent safeguarding training was identified as a gap and training has since been identified and there are plans in place for the relevant teams to access this. They have utilised the knowledge and skills of a colleague to do this, which demonstrates a creative approach to practice.
- The Learning and Early Support leadership team completed a review of their learning and development plans and recognised the need to ensure basic adult training was included to ensure staff are equipped to work with whole families. The development of relevant plans are now underway. This influenced the development of wider plans in Adults and Children's Services also.
- The Culture and Visitors Economy service areas have completed a robust review of their arrangements and have formed a suitable action plan to improve areas identified, whilst informing the wider Corporate Safeguarding Plan.

Wider training and development opportunities have been progressed through the Safeguarding Champions Groups:

- The Safeguarding Champion within Local Integrated Partnerships identified a need for training for staff around Domestic Abuse, therefore identifying and arranging this for 24 frontline workers.
- The Champion for Homes and Neighbourhoods developed a training package for housing trades people/repairs to raise awareness of safeguarding responsibilities.
- Suicide Awareness Training has been secured for the Safeguarding Champions, in a response to a need they identified to support their colleagues in their operational roles.
- A Safeguarding Champion has taken obtained from the network and developed a facilitation group within the Wellness Service whereby generic learning is taken and

applied to examples relevant to roles within that service area, strengthening the team's knowledge and skills in relation to safeguarding.

2. Implications for the Council

The developments achieved and those which continue to be worked towards within the Corporate Safeguarding Plan have been considered in respect of the Council Priorities within the Council Plan 2024/2025.

2.1 Council Plan

Priority One: Address our financial position in a fair and balanced way

From 2023, Service Directors have committed to attending the Corporate Safeguarding Oversight Group (CSOG) to contribute to and progress the Corporate Safeguarding Action Plan. Whilst the time commitment must be acknowledged, this has enabled matters to be progressed efficiently to deliver positive outcomes. Safeguarding children, young people and adults who live and work in Kirklees has remained the upmost priority within the plan of work. The group has accountability for the Council's financial position and how best practice is achieved in the most cost-effective way, without compromising the safety and wellbeing of our staff and communities.

Priority Two: Strive to transform Council services to become more moder, efficient and effective

The developments made within the Corporate Safeguarding Plan provides strong foundations to build on preventative services to ensure a whole family approach to safeguarding. The Corporate Safeguarding Policy is a key document in ensuring that all those who work in Kirklees are able to effectively contribute towards keeping people safe, emphasising that *safeguarding is everyone's business*. The Recruitment and Selection Policy contributes towards a more sustainable future for the delivery of Council services by offering clear guidance to assist in the development of workforce plans that supports and promotes recruitment and selection. In all areas, the established CSOG offers a space through which necessary service developments can continue to be identified and implemented efficiently to ensure the Council adopts legislative changes or best practice learning.

Priority Three: Continue to deliver a greener, healthier Kirklees and address the challenges of climate change

All elements of the Corporate Safeguarding Plan and associated developments contributes significantly to ensuring staff have the appropriate skills and knowledge to work with partners and communities to improve physical and mental health outcomes, in particularly in respect of promoting early intervention.

Alongside the contribution towards the Council's priorities, the Corporate Safeguarding Plan continues to contribute towards the Council's Shared Outcomes through the continued commitment to safeguarding those who live and work in Kirklees:

Best Start: Children have the best start in life

The Policy and training and development opportunities will contribute towards achieving better outcomes for vulnerable children, through early identification of support needs, risk and harm to ensure the right services can support the whole family at the right time.

Well: People in Kirklees are as well as possible for as long as possible

Through identification of need and risk, people will have access to opportunities to improve their health and wellbeing. Protection of the public's health through education, support and intervention will ensure people are well supported to live a healthy and safe life.

Independent: People in Kirklees live independently and have control over their lives

The Corporate Safeguarding Plan contributes towards the capacity to recognise and support people to access the appropriate services to enable joined-up and personalised support that enables independence to be coordinated effectively.

Safe: People in Kirklees live in cohesive communities, feel safe and are protected from harm

Through training and development opportunities, the workforce will be better equipped to contribute towards high quality, joined-up and accessible services that safeguarding children and adults from harm. The range of services across the Council can contribute to identifying needs and risk, to increase the amount of people who say they feel safe in Kirklees.

Efficient: Kirklees Council works smart and deliver efficiently and effectively

Clear Safer Recruitment procedures will help ensure that employees are safe and feel happy in their job, contributing to reduced absence rates and improving retention.

2.2 Financial Implications

Whilst there is currently no explicit financial request in relation to the current plan of work, the following areas to note are as follows;

The training and development of employees specifically in relation to safeguarding does not incur an additional cost as such needs are met by internal arrangements provided by My Learning and through relevant boards including the Kirklees Safeguarding Children Partnership (KSCP) and the Kirklees Safeguarding Adult Board (KSAB).

The agreed position in relation to DBS Re-Checks within the Council does not place any additional financial demand on the Council.

There are no cost implications for people living or working in Kirklees.

3.3 Legal Implications

The Corporate Safeguarding Oversight Group and associated action plan provides assurances that the Council's legal responsibilities are met, particularly in relation to the completion of the Organisational Safeguarding Assessment and associated tasks.

3.4 Other

Developments made and assurances brought about through the coordination of the Corporate Safeguarding Action Plan contributes towards the sustained reduction of risks on the Corporate Risk Register in relation to ensuring the Council fulfils its safeguarding responsibilities.

4 Oversight and Review

Service Directors from across all areas of the Council contribute to the Corporate Safeguarding Oversight Group (CSOG); a commitment which was made by the Executive Team in 2023. The CSOG meet quarterly, which has formed the basis for the Corporate Safeguarding Action Plan and all subsequent service/Council wide developments which have been endorsed and progressed by the Service Director group. Updates on progress have been provided to the Executive Leadership team and further regular updates have been requested.

David Shepherd, Executive Director of Place, Growth and Regeneration has a sponsorship role across the Corporate Safeguarding plan and progress. This offer further oversight and assurances.

The Council's overall Corporate Safeguarding response has been reviewed by the Kirklees Safeguarding Children Partnership through the Organisational Safeguarding Assessment (OSA) which was completed in March 2023, which meets the requirements of Section 11 of the Children Act 2004. An OSA is required to be completed every two years, to form part of the wider West Yorkshire Consortium's overall assessment.

6 Next steps and timelines

The responsibility for the corporate safeguarding arrangements across the Council is to remain with the Corporate Safeguarding Oversight Group (CSOG) through 2024/2025, as previously delegated by the Council's Executive Team. The CSOG will continue to meet quarterly to review the Corporate Safeguarding Action plan to identify, agree and progress any service-wide development matters required to continuously improve safeguarding practice across the Council.

The following matters will continue to be progressed as part of the plan, alongside any other future issues that are identified;

- Further efforts will be made to raise awareness of and embed both the Corporate Safeguarding Policy and the Recruitment and Selection Policy. A further task has also been identified of doing the same in respect of the Volunteer Policy to offer greater assurances that it is utilised consistently centrally.
- Work will continue towards introducing mandatory training in relation to basic safeguarding, alongside other key subjects as and when suggested/directed in legislation/guidance. The e-learning package in relation to basic safeguarding training will be updated.
- A 'Whole Family' approach to safeguarding training and development will be adopted and assured by both Children's and Adult's Services.
- Further work will take place to seek improvements in the quality assurance mechanisms available in My Learning, insofar as possible, to improve efficiencies.

The next Organisational Safeguarding Assessment (OSA) will be required early in 2025. The Kirklees Safeguarding Children Partnership (KSCP) have not yet confirmed the process for this for the 2023/2025 period. However, it is proposed that upon completion of this assessment, this is returned to OSMC for review and scrutiny to provide assurances that the Corporate

Safeguarding Plan has contributed significantly to the improvement of the Council's overall position.

7 Contact officer

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8 Background Papers and History of Decisions

Corporate Safeguarding Policy: 8 March 2022

9 Appendices

- a) Corporate Safeguarding Policy
- b) Recruitment and Selection Policy Statement
- c) Council Structure for Letters of Assurance
- d) Organisational Safeguarding Assessment 2023

10 Service Director responsible

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