

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

2ND DECEMBER 2009

DRAFT SAFEGUARDING POLICY FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

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| Responsible Portfolio Holder | Councillor Margaret Sherrey |
| Responsible Head of Service | Phil Street |
| Non Key Decision | |

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report introduces Bromsgrove District Council's draft safeguarding policy. The district council contributes to the safeguarding and promotion of the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults across Bromsgrove. It has a particular responsibility for those children, young people and vulnerable adults with whom it works and has contact. The policy describes the procedures and arrangements it will follow to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To seek Cabinet approval to adopt the attached Bromsgrove District Council Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy.
- 2.2 In the context of the introduction of a Shared Services Corporate Management Team, arrangements are put in place to nominate an appropriate senior officer as the corporate safeguarding officer and to be appropriately trained.
- 2.3 To ensure that those staff that have regular and on-going contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults receive appropriate awareness raising training in the corporate safeguarding policy.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The policy has been developed to put in place arrangements to meet the requirements placed on district councils to work in partnership with their Children's Services and Adult and Community Services. The Children's Act 2004 under Section 11 places a statutory duty on key people and bodies, including district councils, to make arrangements to ensure that in discharging their functions they have regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- 3.2 Many of the safeguarding issues that affect children and young people can be extended to vulnerable adults. Instances of physical, emotional,

sexual, verbal and financial abuse can be found amongst children and young people as well as vulnerable adults. They can also experience neglect and discrimination. Therefore, the safeguarding policy has been written to encompass the needs of vulnerable adults as well as children and young people.

3.3 Through this safeguarding policy the Council is demonstrating:

- Elected member and senior management commitment to the importance of safeguarding and promoting children's, young people's and vulnerable adult's welfare;
- a clear statement of the council's responsibilities towards children, young people and vulnerable adults available for all staff ;
- a clear line of accountability within the organisation for work on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults;
- service development that takes account of the need to safeguard and promote welfare
- safe recruitment procedures
- training on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children for all staff working with, or in contact with, children, young people and vulnerable adults and their families,
- effective inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children , young people and vulnerable adults
- effective information sharing.

3.4 The policy provides arrangements for lines of accountability for ensuring the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults and also informs elected members and managers of their responsibility in relation to safeguarding.

3.5 The policy places considerable emphasis on the arrangements and conditions to secure safe recruitment practices. Those post that require staff to work directly with children, young people and vulnerable adults are CRB checked. However, in the context of new legislation around the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) and to reflect the additional emphasis given to safeguarding by the draft policy the issue of safe recruitment is being further strengthened.

3.6 The provision of training will be central to the successful implementation of the policy. Certain staff will require significant training and support while other staff and elected members will have to receive awareness training in relation to safeguarding issues.

3.7 All elected members, staff and volunteers of Bromsgrove District Council should have an understanding of their duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults whilst carrying out there duties. National guidance states that District Councils should have a range of measures in place to ensure this is the case.

3.8 Currently those services which directly deliver services to children, young people and vulnerable adults do have local policies and procedures in place, but there is not a corporate policy. To address this requirement a draft Bromsgrove District Council Safeguarding Policy has been produced. This has been circulated to Worcestershire Children's Safeguarding Board for their comments and observations. Their comments have been incorporated in the draft policy and this policy is attached as appendix 1.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Whilst basic awareness training is free there may be a cost implication to provide advanced training for staff with key safeguarding and wellbeing responsibilities.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Bromsgrove District Council has a duty to ensure that its normal functions are discharged having regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area as set out in Section 11 of the Children Act 2004.

6. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

6.1 One community is a council priority and children and young people are a key group within that priority. The Council is fulfilling its statutory duties by introducing a safeguarding policy and ensuring the safety of key groups.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 Whilst services which directly deliver services to children and young people do have local policies and procedures in place no corporate policy exists. Adoption of the attached Safeguarding Policy will ensure that the Council takes a corporate approach to safeguarding.

7.2 The reputational damage to the Council would be immense if a child, young person or vulnerable adult protection issue was to occur involving anyone connected with the Council.

7.3 Significant damage could occur to the organisation if someone experiencing abuse came into contact with the Council and the issue was not identified or addressed because the Council did not have appropriate arrangements.

8. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

8.1 By adopting a safeguarding policy Council is indicating to its customers that it attaches importance to protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults. The policy demonstrates to customers that the Council

has arrangements to respond to concerns or allegations to safeguarding issues. The policy will be communicated to customers through Council publications, website and through an easy read document.

9. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Protection of children, young people and vulnerable people is a major strand in the pursuit of an effective equalities and diversity approach. Neglect, discrimination and abuse are regarded as hate crime and for people to function and have opportunities to fulfil their potential it is critical that they remain safe and free from abuse.

10. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The policy will ensure that the Council recruits appropriate staff and is not faced with the need to undertake recruitment where an appointment is regarded as unsafe.

10.2 The policy will contribute to ensuring staff are recruited with appropriate experience and competencies for work with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

10.3 The reputation of the Council will be enhanced by demonstrating its commitment to safeguarding. Furthermore, damage to its reputation and the risk of possible legal damages will be removed or reduced through the pursuit of the safeguarding policy.

11. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

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| Procurement Issues - It will be important that contractors that have contact with children, young people and vulnerable people can demonstrate they have the appropriate safeguarding policies and safe recruitment practices. |
| Personnel Implications - The policy places enormous emphasis on ensuring a safe recruitment policy and securing appropriate checking is in place for posts working directly with children, young people and vulnerable adults. |
| Governance/Performance Management - None |
| Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998 – Safeguarding policy is a contributory policy in relation to wider community safety considerations. |
| Policy – None |
| Environmental – None |

12. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

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| Portfolio Holder | Yes |
| Chief Executive | Yes |
| Executive Director (Partnerships and Projects) | Yes |
| Executive Director (Services) | Yes |
| Assistant Chief Executive | Yes |
| Head of Service | Yes |
| Head of Financial Services | Yes |
| Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services | Yes |
| Head of Organisational Development & HR | Yes |
| Corporate Procurement Team | Yes |

13. WARDS AFFECTED

‘All Wards’

14. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Bromsgrove District Council’s draft safeguarding policy

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

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