

11. Mid Sussex District Council Safeguarding Children and Adults Policy

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Wards Affected: All
Key Decision: No
Report to: Scrutiny Committee for Community, Housing and Planning
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Purpose of Report

Summary

1. The Safeguarding Children and Adults Policy ensures the Council's responsibility to identifying and responding to concerns around Safeguarding Children and Adults. In order to ensure the policy is understood and implemented across the organisation a training strategy has been developed to deliver the appropriate level of safeguarding training to MSDC staff.

Recommendations

2. **Members are recommended to:**
 - (i) **Review the revised Mid Sussex District Council Safeguarding Children and Adults Policy and Training Strategy.**
 - (ii) **Note the publication and response to the West Sussex Serious Case Review Findings.**
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Background

3. Section 11 of the Children's Act 2001 places a statutory duty on a range of organisations to ensure that our services safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The Care Act 2014 directs organisations on how to meet the statutory responsibility to safeguard adults at risk. In order to meet our responsibilities the policy and processes around Safeguarding Children and Adults have been revised.

The referral rate to Children and Adults Social care from Mid Sussex District Council is low in comparison to other areas. An audit of whether this rate increases following training will be undertaken in the subsequent year (April 18/19)

Policy Context

4. The existing policy was a lengthy document which was written in 2012 (with updates at intervals). Due to legislation changes and an organisational restructure both within and external to MSDC it was necessary to make a number of revisions. Following revisions to the policy it is important to ensure all staff and Elected Members are clear about their responsibilities. There are 341 staff plus Elected Members at MSDC and the training strategy addresses the need for these staff to be trained to the appropriate level for their role.

Revisions to the Policy

- The inclusion of Child Sexual Exploitation, Radicalisation/Prevent Strategy, Female Genital Mutilation and Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking. These are areas which have local and national process and legislation therefore staff need to be aware of their responsibilities.
- Inclusion of responsibilities within the Care Act 2014 and the 'Making Safeguarding Personal' agenda. This means that the adult at risk should be at the centre of all enquiries and decisions being made throughout the safeguarding process
- Updating of Service provision and procedures. There has been significant restructuring in the services provided by West Sussex County Council in relation to both Children and Adults. This is reflected in the process flow charts and referral guidance. An example of this is the introduction of the Single point of access (SPoA) for referrals through MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) and Carepoint. The Early Help Service has now changed to Integrated Prevention and Earliest Help Service (IPEH) and will operate in a locality hub model with a single point of access through MASH. Procedures are now presented in a flow chart to enable staff to direct their referrals to the correct service.

Training Strategy

The Training Strategy for Mid Sussex District Council staff delivers 3 tiers of training determined by job role and level of knowledge required. The training plan is scheduled that all staff within the organisation will be trained by March 2018 and will be subject to ongoing review and updates.

Initially training has focussed on ensuring that all staff in our key safeguarding roles have received updated training. Following this it will roll out to further staff groups. A session for Elected Members was held and further sessions can be arranged to ensure all members are able to access training.

Key teams trained (or scheduled)

Revenues and Benefits staff (across both Sites)

Wellbeing Team

Performance and Partnership

Housing needs

Training aims to enable each department to understand both basic safeguarding and also the integration of safeguarding into working practice. This includes the importance of multi agency liaison and raising the profile of District and Borough staff within the wider safeguarding network.

One of the key objectives of training is to promote the early intervention model in order to protect children and adults and enable us to provide information and services at the earliest opportunity to prevent the need for Child or Adult protection intervention. An example of this would be the Revenues and Benefits department

being able to provide information regarding the Integrated Prevention and Earliest Help Service (IPEH) in order to assist those families who are having to make difficult choices regarding financial management and potential arrears. Enabling staff to have knowledge and access to a wide range of services leads to positive outcomes for those most vulnerable in the communities.

West Sussex SCB Serious Case Review Key

5. SCR Key was published by the West Sussex Safeguarding Children Board on 9th June 2017. It relates to the investigation into the Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Littlehampton. It addresses a number of issues around inter agency liaison and processes. From a District and Boroughs perspective it addresses the need for safeguarding issues specifically CSE to have a raised profile within our communities. One of the key conclusions was that there was no response or reaction from the local community to the abuse. It identifies the needs to raise the public profile and understanding of CSE and what can be done to prevent it. **One of the recommendations is that the SCB Board should 'ensure that this issue continues to have a high public profile' (SCR Key Recommendation 1, 9.3)**

How MSDC are responding to report recommendations.

Child Sexual Exploitation is now part of our updated policy and training. Internal staff will be trained to know the indicators of CSE, it is part of all mandatory training and additional training will be delivered to those working in roles

We are aiming to launch a district wide project for Safeguarding during National Safeguarding Week (Please see attached document). This will act as a platform to raise awareness of safeguarding issues across the district and allow us to share information with the public. We will be offering basic Safeguarding Training to volunteers across the district, training for Town and Parish councillors and parent/carer sessions. Our long term aim is to make Mid Sussex A 'safeguarding aware district' in order to disrupt and deter offenders and promote the safety of young people in the locality. Initially basic safeguarding awareness and CSE will be the focus but it will allow us to promote further safeguarding campaigns.

Other Options Considered

6. The provision of a Safeguarding Children and Adults Policy is a statutory requirement therefore no other options were considered.

Financial Implications

7. No significant financial implications in terms of the Policy or Training plan.

Risk Management Implications

8. No risk management implications.

Equality and Customer Service Implications

9. An equality impact assessment has been undertaken and issues around equality and diversity are addressed in the training.

Next steps

To continue the workforce training to ensure that all MSDC staff are trained to the appropriate level for role and that additional specialist training is available i.e. Mental Health Awareness. To extend training to include Town and Parish Councils, Voluntary organisations and business community.

Increase of information available on both the internal and external websites to promote safeguarding, to direct staff and the public in reporting procedures.

To continue to raise the profile of safeguarding within the organisation and wider communities. This will include regular communications updates through social media, Mid Sussex Matters, business forums and via Town and Parish Councils.

To audit the safeguarding procedures of organisations which are contracted to provide services on behalf of the Council or are allocated grants through the Council. This is to ascertain that safeguarding procedures are of the standard that MSDC requires and to work with them to ensure safeguarding is a priority within their organisation.

Background Papers

- Mid Sussex District Council Safeguarding Children and Adults Policy.
- Mid Sussex District Council Staff Training plan.