



PRCC.56 13/14

Committee: Prosperous  
Communities

Date: 25/03/14

**Subject: Safeguarding Policy Refresh 2014 and Section 11 Assessment**

Report by:	Michelle Howard (Home Choices Team Manager)
Contact Officer:	Michelle Howard (Home Choices Team Manager) 01427 676609 <a href="mailto:michelle.howard@west-lindsey.gov.uk">michelle.howard@west-lindsey.gov.uk</a>
Purpose / Summary:	<p>To enable members to consider the combined safeguarding children and young people, adults at risk and domestic abuse policy and procedure for approval at Committee.</p> <p>To make members aware of the work programme in place to raise awareness of and embed the principles of safeguarding across the authority</p> <p>To make members aware of the planned safeguarding audit (Section 11 Assessment) due to take place in 2014</p>

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

- a) That the combined safeguarding children and young people, adults at risk and domestic abuse policy is approved
- b) That Members support the work programme in place to raise awareness of and embed the principles of safeguarding across the authority
- c) That Members note and maintain awareness of the planned Section 11 assessment (expected May 2014)
- d) That the Prosperous Communities Committee asks officers to explore the implication of seeking Disclosure and Barring Checks for all members.

## IMPLICATIONS

### **Legal:**

The Council is required to have policies in place which set out our response to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The Children Act (2004) places a duty on key statutory agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. As a key statutory agency, West Lindsey District Council must demonstrate compliance and good practice in line with the requirements of Section 11 of the Children Act (2004).

West Lindsey District Council accepts the social, moral and legal responsibility to implement procedures, to provide a duty of care for children, young people and vulnerable adults, safeguard their wellbeing and protect them from abuse when they are engaged in services organised or provided by the Council.

### **Financial :** [FIN/104/14](#)

CMT have approved a resource allocation of £500 to enable safeguarding officers to launch the revised policy, promote awareness and embed safeguarding principles.

There are no further financial implications arising from this report.

### **Staffing :**

This policy affects every WLDC staff member, elected member, volunteer, and anyone else working for / on behalf of the Council.

Please note, this policy has been considered and supported by JSCC.

### **Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :**

West Lindsey District Council accepts the social, moral and legal responsibility to implement procedures to provide a duty of care for children, young people, adults at risk and anyone of, or experiencing domestic abuse, to safeguard their well-being and protect them from when they are engaged in services organised or provided by the Council.

### **Risk Assessment :**

N/A

### **Climate Related Risks and Opportunities :**

None arising from this report

**Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

Combined Policy and Procedure: Safeguarding Children and Young People, Adults at Risk and Domestic Abuse (attached)

**Call in and Urgency:**

**Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?**

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

**Yes**

**No**

**Key Decision:**

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

**Yes**

**No**

## **1. Background and Policy Format**

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**1.1** This report sets out some key areas of importance relating to safeguarding children, young people, adults at risk and domestic abuse.

**1.2** The Council is required to have policies in place which outline its response to safeguarding. The previous policy was due for review and officers have taken the opportunity to create a more detailed policy which incorporates revised guidance and legislation for safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk, and have also incorporated a policy to set out the Council's response to Domestic Abuse. It should also be noted that the policy is aligned with the Lincolnshire countywide domestic abuse strategy

**1.3** This policy affects every West Lindsey District Council staff member, Elected Member, volunteer and anyone working on behalf of and / or representing the council

**1.4** The combined policy has 3 distinct sections;

- Safeguarding Children and Young People
- Safeguarding Adults at Risk
- Domestic Abuse

**1.5** Each section is designed to stand alone therefore there is some duplication across the sections, however the policy document is also structured in a way that it can be used as a complete policy

**1.6** Each section provides details of legislative and policy requirements; covers how to recognise abuse / what is abuse; how to respond to concerns or disclosures; how and where to report concerns and reiterates some key point throughout, for example – 'safeguarding is everyone's responsibility'; 'your job is to inform not to investigate'.

**1.7** The corporate safeguarding structure appears throughout the policy and is supported by an explanation at the start of the policy of the roles and responsibilities of each person named within the corporate safeguarding structure.

## **2. Overview of key areas incorporated into the combined policy**

**2.1 Safeguarding Children and Young People:** Everybody has a responsibility to ensure the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults. In accordance with the Children Act (2004), as an organisation with responsibility for children and young people across its services; West Lindsey District Council has both a moral and legal obligation to ensure a duty of care. We have a responsibility to

safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children and young people who participate in or are supported by our services, and a moral obligation to be alert to child protection issues at all times. This is also applicable to adults safeguarding and welfare concerns.

**2.2** The safeguarding children and young people policy incorporates revised Government guidance 'working together 2013'. This guidance stresses the importance of joint working, and reiterates that everyone has a role to play in safeguarding.

**2.3** Working Together (2013) states that:

*"...safeguarding children – the action we take to promote the welfare of children to protect them from harm – is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play"*

The guidance also stresses the importance of sharing concerns, which we describe as 'pieces of a jigsaw' to be able to effectively safeguarding children:

*"...no single professional can have a full picture of a child's need and circumstances and, of children and families are to receive the right support at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action"*

**2.3** Safeguarding Adults at Risk: This section of the policy incorporates recent changes to the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Adults Board, who have recently endorsed the following definition for safeguarding adults:

*"...adult safeguarding incorporates the concept of prevention, empowerment and protection to enable adults who are in circumstances that make them vulnerable to retain independence, wellbeing and choice and to access their right to a life free from abuse and neglect"*

**2.4** This policy also provides guidance on mental capacity, informed choices and consent – all of which are integral to safeguarding adults at risk.

**2.5** Domestic Abuse: The domestic abuse section of the policy incorporates the Home Office definition that was revised in 2013. This is:

*"...any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality"*

**2.6** Key changes are the inclusion of coercion and control. The policy sets out types of domestic abuse, and outlines the meaning of coercion and control. The policy provides guidance on how to deal with and report concerns about domestic abuse, how to support people experiencing domestic abuse and also covers some of the reasons that domestic abuse victims find it difficult to leave an abusive relationship.

**2.7** This section of the policy makes a commitment to the principles set out in the Lincolnshire DA strategy:

- That domestic abuse will not be tolerated
- That domestic abuse is not the fault of the victim
- That staff and managers should be aware of domestic abuse, its impact and how to respond appropriately
- That partner agencies must work together to provide a joined up approach when responding to domestic abuse situations
- That prevention, provision of services and partnership working in relation to domestic abuse remains a priority
- That there is a commitment to justice for victims and reduction in risk

### **3. Reporting Safeguarding Concerns**

3.1 The policy sets out the corporate safeguarding structure and the roles and responsibilities of those named within the structure, together with how to report concerns. Also included, are details of domestic abuse champions.

3.2 The combined policy reinforces the key message that 'safeguarding is everyone's business'

3.3 An online Minerva page has been developed which will be used to raise awareness, log concerns and ensure that relevant information is available to all staff and elected members. A secure space on this site has been developed specifically for safeguarding officers in order to maintain a record of safeguarding concerns and caseloads of safeguarding officers

3.4 Concerns can be reported to safeguarding officers using an online form, telephone, or face to face. The reporting mechanism is repeated throughout the policy

### **4. Section 11 (Children Act 2004) Assessment**

4.1 It is imperative that all West Lindsey District Council staff, elected members, volunteers and anyone working on behalf of and / or representing the council understand their responsibilities to protect children, young people and adults at risk, and comply with associated policies and procedures.

4.2 All of the people named above must understand that safeguarding is everyone's business.

4.3 West Lindsey District Council will achieve this by:

- Ensuring effective policies and procedures are in place
- Demonstrating compliance and good practice in line with Section 11 of the Children Act (2004)
- Raising and maintaining awareness throughout the organisation
- Promote good practice in relation to the general welfare and wellbeing of children, young people and vulnerable adults

4.4 As a statutory agency, West Lindsey District Council is required to demonstrate compliance and good practice in line with Section 11 of the Children Act (2004). This is assessed on a three yearly basis. The next round of assessments is expected to start in May 2014.

4.5 The section 11 audit process has evolved since the previous audit in 2011. It is now an online self-assessment which is followed up by a moderator visit. Moderators are Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board members.

4.6 The standards that we will be assessed against include:

- Senior management commitment to the importance of safeguarding children
- Clear written policy
- Clear line of accountability within the organisation
- Service development includes safeguarding considerations
- Effective communication between professionals and service users
- Staff training
- Safe recruitment
- Effective interagency working and information sharing

4.7 The lead officer for the Section 11 self-assessment will be Michelle Howard, supported by all named officers within the corporate safeguarding structure.

4.8 Updates will be provided to CMT further to the completion of the Section 11 audit, along with details of any recommendations for improvement.

## **5. Embedding Safeguarding Principles**

5.1 The following aspects have been incorporated into a work programme to raise awareness of safeguarding principles, how to report concerns and to ensure all officers and members understand their safeguarding responsibilities and can report concerns appropriately

- Further to policy approval at PC, a formal launch of the policy will be held
- Team meeting briefings scheduled for all teams to raise awareness and receive feedback on current practices. Feedback will be used to develop a rolling training and awareness programme for staff

- Content of e-Learning courses via LSCB are being reviewed by safeguarding officers to establish appropriate courses for staff and elected members
- Staff training programme to be developed
- Member and CMT workshop arranged 17<sup>th</sup> March
- Pens / mugs / lanyards with the 'logo', telephone number and strap line 'safeguarding is everyone's business' have been ordered and will be used to support awareness raising
- WMT workshop scheduled for March 2014 for team managers and heads of service
- Presentation and debate at full council to be scheduled
- Elected member champions have been identified – Cllr Lawrence and Cllr Bardsley
- JSCC Chair has suggested that JSCC representatives are well placed to be ambassadors for the safeguarding policy
- Further to a debate at Leader's Panel, a report is being drafted in respect of DBS checks for elected members